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Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Emotional Intelligence of EFL Teachers in Saudi Arabia: Implications to Teaching Performance and Institutional Effectiveness

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Abstract
Many studies have extensively investigated the antecedents, consequences, and relationships of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) and Emotional Intelligence (EI) in corporate and industrial settings, but not in educational contexts particularly in the field of English language teaching. To expand the existing literature in OCB and EI, this study investigated the levels and relationship of OCB and EI of college English teachers in an English language institute in the western region of Saudi Arabia. It tried to answer the following research questions: 1) What is the level of OCB and EI of the respondents? 2) Is there a significant relationship between the respondents’ OCB and EI? Using descriptive correlational research design with adapted organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence scales as data gathering instruments, this study found that the respondents had very high level of OCB. Specifically, the findings revealed that the OCBs under altruism, civic virtue, and compliance dimensions were rated as very high while those under sportsmanship and courtesy were assessed as high. Findings also indicated that the EFL teachers had high level of EI. Lastly, the study proved that there was a significant, positive relationship between the respondents’ organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional intelligence. Based on the findings, the study concludes that the respondents have the potential to excel in their job and are able to contribute to overall institutional effectiveness. This asset should be enriched and sustained by implementing more relevant OCB/EI-friendly policies and practices that support conducive school climate, transformational leadership, and emotional well-being.

Keywords: EFL teachers, emotional intelligence, English language teaching in Saudi Arabia, organizational citizenship behavior, teaching performance

Introduction

Recent developments in English language education have brought new challenges for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. New policies on accessibility and inclusivity have made EFL teachers’ roles, duties and responsibilities more demanding. Moreover, new digital trends have also made English Language Teaching (ELT) landscape more complex, compelling EFL teachers to learn new skills and competencies to pace up with the changing learning ecosystems. Further, new perspectives arising as results of continuous inquiries in language teaching and learning have also changed existing ELT paradigms requiring EFL teachers to make necessary adjustments on views and approaches to effectively help learners succeed in their learning. Clearly, recent transformations in language teaching have made EFL teachers’ work more stressful and challenging, hence the need to develop and maintain highly committed and resilient teachers who can perform beyond expectations and survive in times of uncertainties and complexities.

Developing committed and emotionally resilient teachers plays significant role in ensuring school effectiveness and improvement. In order to develop a culture of willingness and commitment in an educational organization, it is important to identify and promote the characteristics and actions that lead to Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs). OCBs are discretionary extra-role behaviors beneficial to employees and organization as a whole (Hazzi, 2018; Organ, 2018; Somech & Oplatka, 2015). Examples of teacher organizational citizenship behaviors include providing additional help to slow learners outside class hours and organizing extra-curricular activities without extra pay. Similarly, in order to develop emotional resilience in school in time of complexities, Emotional Intelligence (EI) of teachers should also be examined. EI is the “ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). It is positively correlated with good social relations, productive working relationships, effective interpersonal behaviors, and general social competency (Bracket, Rivers, Shiffman, Lerner, & Salovey, 2006). When teachers exhibit high levels of OCBs and EI at work, they foster harmony, productivity, and effectiveness (Somech & Oplatka, 2015).

In view of the foregoing claims, this study aims to examine the organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional intelligence of EFL teachers in a multicultural higher education institution (HEI) in Saudi Arabia. In a country with many educational institutions employing many expatriates from different countries of varying cultures, exhibiting organizational citizenship behaviors can be uncommon. Also, with top-down pressures of curriculum reforms, quality assurance and accreditation programs, and other national and institutional policies affecting personal and professional lives of teachers, becoming emotionally resilient is also difficult. Therefore, to help establish a collaborative, friendly, and healthy working environment in the HEI, this study aimed to answer the following research questions: 1) What are the organizational citizenship behaviors of the EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia and to what extent are they exhibited? 2) What is the level of emotional intelligence of the respondents? 3) Is there a significant relationship between the respondents’ organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence? It also tried to confirm the following hypothesis: 1) There is no significant relationship between the respondents’ organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence.
Having a unique focus and context, this study fills the gaps in literature on organizational citizenship behaviour and emotional intelligence. For decades, many studies have already investigated the nature, components, antecedents, consequences, and factors facilitating and inhibiting OCBs and EI. Some studies have also examined the relationships of the two. However, to the author’s knowledge, no study has been conducted yet on the same line of inquiry focusing on EFL teachers working in a multinational and multicultural academic environment. Further, no study of the same focus has also investigated the relationship between EFL teachers’ OCB and EI. This is the first attempt to examine OCB and EI of EFL teachers in a context where most are contract-based foreign workers situated in a very culturally diverse and politically driven work environment. Results of this study can expand understanding and bring in new perspectives on teacher OCB and EI. It can also help school leaders in formulating more relevant policies that promote OCB and increase EI in schools leading to institutional effectiveness and improvement.

Literature Review

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organizational Citizenship Behaviors (OCBs) are discretionary, beyond-role behaviors and gestures that are not explicitly recognized by the formal reward system but are considered important in promoting organizational effectiveness (Organ, 2018; Somech & Oplatka, 2015). Contextually viewed and valued, these behaviors maintain and enhance the social and psychological contexts that support performance in the organization (Pickford & Joy, 2016). They help create social capital, increase efficiency, enhance productivity, and ensure overall success in the organization (Mallick, Pradhan, Tewari, & Jena, 2014; Wei, 2014).

OCB has different categories and dimensions. These include altruism which involves behaviors helping co-workers, generalized compliance which consists of more impersonal conscientious behaviors, and courtesy which comprises gestures preventing problems for colleagues at work. These OCB categories can help an organization promote efficiency through reduced need for supervision, training, and crisis management costs (Pickford & Joy, 2016). Another type of OCB is sportsmanship which refers to willingness to forbear minor inconveniences without appeal or protest. This allows organizations to sustain efficiency and effectiveness by focusing on more important job functions. Finally, the last type of OCBs is civic virtue which includes constructive involvement in issues of governance. This helps organizations save costs by providing constructive suggestions.

OCB is found to be helpful in promoting quality and innovation in organization (Yaakobi & Weisberg, 2020). It facilitates knowledge sharing and promotes job satisfaction, mental health, physical health, job retention, and service-oriented behaviors among employees (De Geus, Ingrams, Tummers, & Pandey, 2020). Display of OCBs also fosters organizational efficiency as it can reduce the need for supervision, training and crisis management costs, allow managers to focus on important job functions, and encourage employees to get involved in giving constructive suggestions that may help improve the organization (Hazzi, 2018). In general, OCBs are found to be important in promoting higher level of organizational productivity, quality, and effectiveness (Organ, 2018; Somech & Oplatka, 2015).
Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) refers to the capacity to perceive, understand, control, and evaluate emotions (Fernandez-Abascal & Martin-Diaz, 2015; Vesely, Saklofske, & Leschied, 2013). More specifically, it is the ability to recognize one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to distinguish among them, and use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions (Gong, Chen, & Wang, 2019; Serrat, 2017). Pekaar, Van der Linde, Bakker, and Born (2017) conceptualize it as knowledge about emotional processes and the tendency or ability to use this knowledge to regulate social and emotional behavior.

There are different approaches and measures of EI including: 1) ability EI which examines relatively discrete mental abilities that process emotional information; 2) trait EI which postulates that EI is a personality trait occupying lower levels of personality hierarchies; and 3) mixed EI which measures a combination of traits, social skills, and competencies that overlap with other personality measures (Fernandez-Abascal & Martin-Diaz, 2015; O’Connor, Kaya, & Martin, 2019). EI has also different domains and competencies such as self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017). Self-awareness refers to the ability to understand one’s modes, emotions, and drives as well as its effect on others, while self-management includes the ability to control emotion, adapt to different situations, and focus on achieving goals (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017). Social awareness on the other hand involves the ability to understand others and the whole organization, while relationship management comprises the ability to influence and mentor others, manage conflict, and promote teamwork and inspirational leadership (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017).

The effects and benefits of EI have been explored in decades and results vary depending on contexts and variables involved. In recent studies, it was gleaned that EI develops mental, physical, emotional health and well-being of teachers (Fernandez-Abascal & Martin-Diaz, 2015; Jacobs, Kemps, & Mitchell, 2014). It also facilitates development of competencies that lead to improved psychological health and teaching success and, in turn, positive student outcomes (Vesely, Saklofske, & Leschied, 2013). Further, it was also found that school leaders’ high EI can positively impact teachers’ job outcomes and satisfaction (Wong, Wong, & Peng, 2010) and that teachers’ high emotional intelligence can lead to success in teaching and teachers’ efficacy (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010; Kocoglu, 2011). Moreover, EI can also promote students’ academic achievement by enhancing the effects of students’ self-perceptions of ability and self-esteem (Curci, Lanciano, & Soleti, 2014). In some contexts, EI has an impact on work efficiency, behavior, motivation, and job satisfaction (Gutierrez-Moret, Ibanez-Martinez, Aguilar-Moya, & Vidal-Infer, 2016), while in others, EI affects psychological capital and job performance (Mohammad & Jais, 2016; O’Boyle, Humphrey, Pollack, Hawver, & Story, 2010; Pekaar, Van der Linden, Bakker, & Born, 2017). Recently, Fernandez-Abascal & Martin-Diaz (2019) found that EI develops empathy, while Issah (2018) noted that it can help leaders provide effective leadership by being able to engage with staff, build commitment, forge working relationships, and increase staff satisfaction and retention.

Relationships between Organizational Citizenship Behavior and Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence (EI) does not directly affect organizational effectiveness. It goes through the informal routes of social mechanism which may be organizational citizenship behavior
(OCB) (Turnipseed & Vandewaa, 2012). Turnipseed and Vandewaa (2012) argue that employees with high EI have greater tendency to help their peers (altruism) and appropriately respond to different organizational situations (compliance). They further argue that those who have high ability to perceive and understand emotions may be less likely to violate organizational norms. Moreover, they contend that employees with high EI are likely to have and use better social skills and be more socially adept. In addition, they believe that employees with high EI tend to be more sensitive and are able to understand the many complex social relationships in organizations, hence more likely to engage in OCBs. Lastly, they claim that those who are capable of evaluating and managing their emotions tend to effectively achieve desired organizational results.

Related studies from different contexts found that there is a positive link between OCB and EI (Bighami, Soltani, Panah, & Abdi, 2013; Chehrazi, Shakib, & Azad, 2014; Turnipseed & Vandewaa, 2012). Turnipseed (2017) in his more recent study exploring the linkages between the four dimensions of emotional intelligence and organizational citizenship behavior also found that the EI dimensions of perceiving, understanding, and managing emotions had positive effects on OCB towards individuals (OCB-I) and OCB towards organization (OCB-O) while using emotions had no link to OCB at all. Miao, Humphrey, and Qian (2017) also investigated the effects of EI on OCB and discovered that effects are stronger in healthcare and service industries than in industries where emotional labor demands are lower. In a more recent study, Miao, Humphrey, and Qian (2020) found EI-OCB relationship and it is stronger in long-term oriented and restraint cultures.

Methods

Research Design

Since the purpose of this study is to describe the characteristics and condition of a certain group and investigate the relationships of different variables, the descriptive correlational research design was used (Mertler, 2019). To determine the organizational citizenship behaviors (OCB) and emotional intelligence (EI) of the respondents, the descriptive survey method was utilized. On the other hand, to establish relationship between the respondents’ OCB and EI, the correlational method was employed. In the first phase of the study, the variables (OCB and EI) were described. In the second phase, the relationship between the variables were examined.

Respondents

The respondents of the study were 37 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lecturers and professors in a higher education institution in the western region of Saudi Arabia. Majority (84%) of them are expatriates from different countries like United Kingdom, United States of America, Canada, Malaysia, Jordan, Pakistan, India, Philippines, Nigeria, and Sudan. Most of them are male (62.2%) aged 35 years and above with teaching experience of over 15 years (62.1%). 83.8% have masters, while 8.1% have Ph.Ds. No random sampling was conducted since the aim was to involve all faculty members to collect more comprehensive data. Out of 45 invited participants, only 37 completed the online questionnaires. The study was conducted at an English Language Institute in the west coast of Saudi Arabia offering foundation English programs among young Saudis aspiring to pursue engineering, management, computer science, logistics, and interior design programs. The Institute has three campuses catering to male and female college/university students and adult learners working in various industries. As an institution employing different nationalities with personal, professional, and cultural differences, it often deals with opposing views and practices.
Also, as a government institution rife with top-down pressures and office politics, working condition is demanding and stressful.

**Instruments**
To determine the organizational citizenship behaviors of the respondents and the extent they are exhibited, the adapted version of Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) Scale developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990) was used. The scale comprises 24 randomly distributed items representing such domains as sportsmanship, altruism, civic virtue, courtesy, and compliance. On the other hand, to ascertain the level of emotional intelligence of the respondents, the Emotional Intelligence (EI) Scale developed by Schutte, et al. (1998) was administered. It is composed of 33 items eliciting participants’ EI competencies and attitudes.

**Data Collection**
The data gathering procedure started with seeking approval from the school administration. Upon approval, the questionnaires on organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional intelligence were administered online through Google Forms. Though the survey link was emailed directly to all EFL faculty members in the institution, participation in the study was voluntary. Institutional policy on research ethics was observed throughout the duration of the study. Respondents were given two weeks to complete the online questionnaires with few reminders sent in between. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics thereafter.

**Data Analysis**
The responses in the Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB) Scale and Emotional Intelligence (EI) Scale were analyzed using 5-point Likert Scale and Weighted Mean. The relationship between OCB and EI was analyzed using Pearson’s correlation (r) and t-test.

The levels of OCB and EI are analyzed using the following scale and description:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Qualitative Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.21 – 5.00</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.41 – 4.20</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.61 – 3.40</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.81 – 2.60</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.00 – 1.80</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results**
Q1. What are the organizational citizenship behaviors of the respondents and to what extent are they exhibited?

Table 2. The organizational citizenship behavior of the respondents and the extent they are exhibited

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Wt. Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sportsmanship</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above shows the organizational citizenship behaviors of the respondents according to dimensions with corresponding weighted means. As revealed, OCBs under Civic Virtue (CV) has the highest average weighted mean of 4.55 (Very High), followed by those under Altruism (AL) and Compliance with the average weighted means of 4.36 (Very High) and 4.30 (Very High) respectively. OCBs under Sportsmanship (SS) have an average weighted mean of 4.12 (High), while those under Courtesy (CR) have 3.98 (High). Overall, the general average weighted mean of the organizational citizenship behaviors of the respondents is 4.27, which is qualitatively described as very high.

Q2. What is the level of emotional intelligence of the respondents?

Table 3. Emotional Intelligence (EI) of the respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Average Wt. Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 2. The instrument used was adapted from the EI scale developed by Schutte, et al. (1998). Table two presents the results of the 33-item emotional intelligence (EI) scale conducted among 37 respondents. As reflected the overall average weighted mean is 4.07, which is qualitatively described as high.

Q3. Is there a significant relationship between the respondents’ organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence?

Table 4. Correlation between respondents’ organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Decision</th>
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<tr>
<td>Organizational Citizenship Behavior</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.360</td>
<td>.6636</td>
<td>5.248</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>$H_0$ rejected*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Intelligence</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.336</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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Note 3. *Using t = 5.248 > CV = 2.03 as parameter of rejection

Table four reflects the correlation between the respondents’ organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence. A Pearson’s correlation was run to determine the relationship between the 37 respondents’ EI and OCB values. Results indicate that there is a strong, positive correlation between EI and OCB ($r = .664, N = 37, p<.01$). The t-test value was also computed to determine the significance of relationship between the respondents’ OCB and EI. Using 0.05 level of
significance, the critical value (CV = ±2.03 two tailed) was obtained using the \( t \) distribution table with degrees of freedom (n-2) by interpolation. Since the \( t \) value (5.248) is greater than CV (2.03), the \( H_0 \) (null hypothesis) is rejected, hence a significant relationship between OCB and EI. This suggests that there is a tendency for high OCB of the respondents to go with high EI levels (and vice versa).

**Discussion**

Results revealed that there was a very high level of organizational citizenship behaviors among the respondents. This was despite cultural diversity, professional competition, office politics, and security of tenure issues within the organization. Results seem to be interesting since in culturally diverse organizations where majority of the workers are foreigners who are not permanently employed, it is unlikely for organizational commitment, willingness, and helping to be very high. Somech and Oplatka (2015) in their study identified factors that may have partly and indirectly influenced this result, such as job satisfaction, sense of educational calling, perceived organizational trust, and support from leaders. With very high level of OCBs, the findings imply that the respondents may also have high level of self-efficacy, sense of self-fulfilment, and teaching efficacy and performance (Mallick, et al., 2014; Organ, 2018; Somech, & Oplatka, 2015; Wei, 2014). Findings also indicate that respondents may yield more teaching quality and innovation (Yaakobi & Weisberg, 2020), knowledge sharing, job satisfaction, mental health, physical health, job retention, and learner-centered behaviors (De Geus, et al, 2020; Hazzi, 2018). The respondents’ level of OCBs further implies that the organization (school) where they work at may have organizational efficiency and effectiveness (De Geus, et al., 2020; Hazzi, 2018; Organ, 2018) and higher productivity and better quality of service (Somech & Oplatka, 2015).

Findings of this study also revealed that the respondents’ level of emotional intelligence (EI) was high. This suggests that the respondents can efficiently and effectively perceive, understand, control, and evaluate their own and others’ emotions to guide their decisions and actions particularly in teaching. Having this level of EI indicates that the respondents can effectively sense and handle their feelings, motivate themselves to get jobs done, creatively perform at their level best, and easily control their relationships with others. Results imply that respondents may be able to sustain and promote mental, physical, emotional health and well-being in school (Fernandez-Abascal & Martin-Diaz, 2015; Jacobs, Kemps, & Mitchell, 2014). They may also easily develop competencies that lead to teaching success, efficacy, and positive student outcomes or academic achievement (Ghanizadeh & Moafian, 2010; Kocoglu, 2011; Vesely, et al., 2013). Lastly, they may have the tendency to produce positive job outcomes, excellent job performance, develop work efficiency, job satisfaction, and empathy towards their colleagues and students (Fernandez-Abascal & Martin-Diaz, 2019; Gutierrez-Moret, et al, 2016; O’Boyle, et al., 2010; Pekaar, et al., 2017; Wong, Wong, & Peng, 2010). The high EI of the respondents may help facilitate growth and improvement in the organization.

Finally, this study also revealed positive, strong correlation between organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence of the respondents. It supports previous findings of Turnipseed (2017), Turnipseed and Vandewaa (2012), Chehrazi, Shakib, and Azad (2014), and Bighami, Soltani, Panah, and Abdi (2013) where positive relationship between OCB and EI was established at different levels. In the study of Turnipseed and Vandewaa (2012), for example, it
was found that employees with high EI tend to display altruism, civic virtue, and compliance OCBs. It was also discovered that relationship between EI and OCB is stronger in healthcare and service sectors. This study being conducted in a new, different context with English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers as respondents expands literature on OCB-EI relationship. It advances that even in the field of English language teaching in an institution rife with cultural diversity and uncertainties, strong OCB-EI relationship can possibly thrive. Several factors may have influenced this result. One could be the nature of the teaching profession itself. Teaching is viewed as a service-oriented profession and that teachers are expected to be patient, resilient, committed, compliant, and service-oriented individuals. Others could be some shared cultural beliefs among respondents and favorable organizational dynamics.

Conclusion
This study investigated the levels and relationship of the organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional intelligence of EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia. Using descriptive-correlational research method, this study found that the respondents had very high level of OCB. Specifically, the findings revealed that the OCBs under altruism, civic virtue, and compliance dimensions were rated as very high while those under sportsmanship and courtesy were assessed as high. Findings also indicated that the EFL teachers had high level of EI. Lastly, the study proved that there was a significant, positive relationship between the respondents’ organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional intelligence.

Based on the findings arrived at, it can be concluded that the respondents have the acceptable levels of organizational citizenship behaviors and emotional intelligence, which are believed to be helpful in promoting outstanding teaching performance and school effectiveness. Results of this study also confirm that there is significant relationship between organizational citizenship behavior and emotional intelligence, a desirable phenomenon in an educational organization that can help foster better quality of learning outcomes, teaching efficiency and effectiveness, job satisfaction, resilience, and institutional performance. Though the scope, number of respondents, and the complexity of the measures used are quite limited, findings of this study can still contribute to the existing literature on OCB and EI, particularly in the emerging area of Teacher OCB where the construct is validated in various contexts. More sophisticated research involving more diverse groups of EFL teachers with focus on investigating the antecedents of teacher OCB and EI and their relationships to certain performance indicators or teaching outcomes can be conducted to advance new knowledge within this field of inquiry.

While the results of this study is favourable at the time it was conducted, it is important to note that it is not always the case in other contexts. Therefore, in order to sustain or even increase the existing levels of OCB and EI as well as the strong positive correlation between the two, it is important that relevant OCB/EI-friendly policies and practices are always in place. The organization should always be aware of the OCB practices of its employees and implement corresponding programs and activities that help them sustain job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job efficacy, and sense of educational calling. Moreover, the organization should cultivate organizational trust and collectivism, increase any form of organizational support, maintain conducive organizational/school climate, and practice transformational and participative leadership. It is also important that the organization regularly implements activities that promote
emotional well-being of the teachers. Trainings or workshops on increasing emotional intelligence can be conducted for this purpose. Effective and committed teachers are assets of any learning institution. It is when they are developed in all aspects that they bring effectiveness to the whole organization.

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References


A Developmental Step in the Right Direction: The Case for Concept-Based Instruction in the Omani ESP Classroom

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Abstract
This article reports on the results of action research conducted in a university ESP classroom in Oman. The impetus for this research was the practitioner’s dissatisfaction with the current practice of introducing the grammatical concept of the English passive and its subsequent results. Framed within the sociocultural theory of cognitive development, this paper investigates the effectiveness of concept-based instruction (CBI). As a pedagogical approach, CBI targets a learner’s internalization of the concept of a language constituent that assists the learner with the meaning making abilities of sentences where the English passive is used. Twenty-two university students enrolled in an ESP course participated in the study. The data was collected through the teacher’s observations, students’ artifacts, and students’ feedback on the effectiveness of CBI. Data analysis reveals the effectiveness of CBI in heightening learner awareness of the concept of a language constituent, developing learner knowledge of the English passive, and improving their meaning-making abilities at the phrasal and sentential levels.

Keywords: concept-based instruction (CBI), language constituents, meaning-making abilities, sociocultural theory, Vygotsky

Introduction

This paper investigates the development of the concept of a language constituent in the context of teaching the English passive in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom in one of the universities located in the Sultanate of Oman. It claims that applying systematic methodology of concept-based instruction (CBI) developed by Gal’perin (1989, 2010) facilitates both learning the passive in English and the communicative ability to use language forms to communicate meaning, making the process of learning EFL more meaningful and purposeful.

Theoretical Framework

The study is couched within the theoretical framework of Vygotsky’s (1978, 1987) sociocultural theory which emphasizes the importance of sociocultural artifacts (e.g., language) in the cognitive development of an individual. For Vygotsky, transforming purely biological lower level functions into higher psychological functions (i.e. abstract thinking, scientific conceptualizing, creativity) is mediated by the sociocultural tools and signs developed by a society in the process of its cultural and historic development. Within this theoretical context, CBI can be defined as a pedagogical approach that targets teaching scientific linguistic concepts. These abstract concepts mediate learner’s understanding of grammatical categories, e.g., mood, tense, voice, and aspect. The goal of the CBI is to assist learners in concept internalization, which allows for conscious manipulation of these complex categories. The ultimate result is an improvement of learners’ meaning-making abilities, leading to their language development (see García, 2017, p. 4).

It should be noted that scientific concepts as an example of higher psychological processes develop differently from spontaneous concepts that are acquired by a learner as a result of their everyday observations and experiences. In this context, education and school instruction has a decisive role in the development of scientific concepts (Vygotsky, 1987). According to Vygotsky, when instruction targets the higher levels of cognitive performance that a learner is capable of with the guidance of a more knowledgeable other, it expands their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), leading to a qualitative leap in their cognitive development. The statement that instruction plays an important role in an individual’s cognitive development is reflected in Vygotsky’s famous principle, according to which one step in teaching and learning can lead to a hundred steps in development (Vygotsky, as cited in Zaretsky, 2012).

Vygotsky’s ideas on the important role of instruction in a learner’s cognitive development have been further developed by Gal’perin and his PhD students (see e.g., Arievitch & Haenen, 2005; Haenen, 2001). According to Arievitch and Haenen (2005), the contribution of Gal’perin is that he developed a methodology of “systematic construction of mental actions in specially organized teaching and learning activities” (p. 155). In other words, Gal’perin and his students developed specific methodological steps that showed how one type of material action become mental action, thus focusing on the genesis of concept formation.

According to Gal’perin (1989, 2010), the goal of any activity is to make changes to or manipulate an object to achieve certain results; thus, any goal-oriented activity can be characterized and/or measured according to the changes that an activity introduces to the object. By analogy, mental activity is understood as the ability to make changes to and/or manipulate the object mentally, in abstraction, without any actual hands-on changes to the object that can occur.
with or without the assistance of the object’s’ material representations, such as diagrams, pictures, charts, or notes. The question is: How can this ability be developed?

Based on the empirical research that investigates the process of how this ability can be developed for the teaching and learning of reading and writing in Russian, algebra, geometry and arithmetic (for an overview of this work, see Arievitch & Stetsenko, 2000), Gal’perin (1989, 2010) concluded that the development of this mental ability goes through specific stages. The first step is orientation, whose goal is to introduce a learner to an activity that should be presented to a learner as “tomorrow’s knowledge”. A learner receives an overview of the activity’s content as well as the system of supporting points (i.e. scaffolding points) for the realization of the activity. The realization of the activity takes place at the next three levels: material, verbal and mental. At the material stage, the changes to the object are performed with the assistance of hands-on object manipulations or with the assistance of blueprints, charts, notes, etc. This is followed by the verbal stage, where the action is realized verbally either as overt (i.e. communicative thinking) or covert (dialogic thinking) speech without the assistance of other supporting external objects, and it becomes the verbal spoken realization of this activity. The final stage includes the internalization of an activity that is performed mentally, in the learner’s mind. During the process, the activity can undergo changes from its full realization at the material level to its generalized and reduced form at the last stage, when the activity is performed by the person as pure thinking. In other words, the activity transforms itself into a concept internalized by a learner.

Literature Review

This section provides an overview of two studies that investigated the potential CBI has for teaching and learning specific grammatical forms by second language learners. The empirical evidence obtained in the studies provides valuable insights for the methodology and pedagogy of teaching grammatical forms in second language classrooms.

Swain et al. (2009) investigate the effect of *languaging* as “a form of verbalization used to mediate the solution(s) to complex problems and tasks” (p. 5). Swain proposed the term *languaging* as an extension of her Output Hypothesis (1985) that relates to the cognitive process of negotiating and producing meaningful, comprehensible output as part of language learning. In this study, nine university students *languaged* about the grammatical category of voice in French in response to the explanatory cards given to them. Specifically, the participants used English as a mediating tool to facilitate the process of concept formation of the grammatical category of voice (active, passive and middle) in French. Results showed the relationship between the quality and quantity of languaging measured by languaging units (LU), i.e. cognitively complex on-task talk, and the depth of learning of the grammatical concept of voice, which was measured by the immediate and delayed post-tests and a stimulated recall. The quantity of LUs was measured in the number of LUs produced by the participants, and the quality of LUs was measured by the participants’ ability to engage in the processes of inferencing, analyzing, elaboration, and hypothesis formation. The results of the study have demonstrated that the LUs produced by the highest, middle and lowest *languagers* were qualitatively and quantitatively different, providing empirical support for the crucial role of language in mediating cognition and cognitive development.
Gánem-Gutiérrez and Harun (2011) conducted a pilot study that investigated the potential of CBI for improving the conceptual understanding of tense and aspect by advanced English learners enrolled in a postgraduate program in a British university. The study focused on the role of CBI materials (diagrams, charts, tables) and verbalization as a mediating tool for constructing deep understanding of the grammatical concepts of tense and aspect. The study contained the following stages: (i) pre-test, and (ii) independent work of the participants with CBI materials that consisted of 23 PowerPoint slides. During this stage, participants were asked to verbalize their thoughts and explain what they understood while completing the tasks presented on the PowerPoint slides. This stage was followed by a post-test. Results revealed that the participants gained a deeper understanding of the concept of aspect. The study materials developed based on the CBI principles and verbalization stage also assisted the participants with improving form and meaning contrasts (e.g., the contrast between simple past and present perfect in form and meaning). The study concluded with a call for more empirical evidence that would preclude the learners from viewing grammar as a series of discrete grammatical rules that have to be memorized and assist in promoting their understanding of how the grammatical system works to express meaning. The study discussed in this paper aims to address this call by providing empirical evidence obtained in a different context (i.e. in the Omani context of teaching English as a foreign language to Arabic L1 speakers).

Context of the Study

According to Article 3 of the Omani constitution, Arabic is the official language of the State (Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, 2020). Approximately 41 percent of Oman’s population consists of non-Omanis who collectively speak more than 30 languages and dialects (Eberhard et al., 2020). This fact explains the unique status of English in Oman as the lingua franca that connects members of the nation’s highly diversified workforce. Despite English’s status, continuous educational reforms and tremendous efforts undertaken by all stakeholders (e.g., education policy makers, curriculum and learning materials designers, teacher training institutions, teachers and researchers), the English proficiency of Omani students in the public educational system remains low. In fact, more than 80% of high school graduates are required to take courses in English, Mathematics, IT and general study skills in the General Foundation Program (GFP) upon entering Oman’s higher education system (Denman & Al-Mahrooqi, 2019). This program serves as a bridge program that equips high school graduates with the necessary academic skills required by their university programs. One of the reasons behind low student proficiency in English is the inadequate type of instruction used by teachers at the secondary and post-secondary levels. According to Al-Issa and Al-Bulushi (2012, p. 150), copying and memorization strategies are prioritized over critical thinking and independent learning for successful completion of school and university requirements.

Research Question and Methodology

The impetus for the study discussed in this paper is the practitioner’s intention to address the gap between current teaching practices and those the practitioners aspire to. Therefore, the research question investigated is whether the introduction of CBI that would lead learners to internalize the concept of a language constituent that can assist them with meaning making abilities at the phrasal and sentential levels; specifically, to what extent can CBI facilitate a better understanding of the changes that take place between active and passive sentences in English? It
is hypothesized that the internalizing the concept of a language constituent can facilitate students’ meaning making abilities, making their learning process more meaningful and purposeful.

The methodology used to answer the research question raised in the study is action research (AR), is a type of research that is carried out by the practitioner. Burns (2015) placed AR with other types of research (i.e. quantitative and qualitative research), stating that the purpose of this research is to identify problems and find solutions of one’s own social environment. In this type of research, “cases [are] studied reflectively though cyclical observational and non-observational means” (p. 291). According to Burns (2015) as well as Dosemagen and Schwalbach (2019), the goals of AR are threefold: to identify an emergent problem in the classroom and/or in a broader social context, to question the current practice and propose an intervention that would hopefully bring positive change and improvement in teaching practices, and to develop students’ and teachers’ knowledge.

In this study, the following instruments were used for data collection: teacher’s observations of the macro and micro situations of learning, collection of students’ artifacts (sample sentences produced by students), students’ feedback on the effectiveness of the intervention proposed in the study as well as other- and self-observations. The validity of the AR findings is ensured by data triangulation obtained from multiple sources.

**Teacher’s Observations: The Participants**

Participants (N=22: 17 males, 15 females), ranging in age from 18 to 25, were enrolled in the English for Engineering and Sciences I course. [1] To be enrolled in the course, the participants should meet the requirements of the GFP, which states that students must achieve a band of 4.5 or higher on the Academic Module of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) test, or an equivalent test developed by the GFP before they continue their studies in their respective majors at the university level (Ismail, 2011, p. 19). Since all the participants met the requirements of the GFP, their skill level was described as modest users of language. This means that they had “partial command of the language and cope[d] with overall meaning in most situations, although they [were] likely to make many mistakes” (IELTS, 2020).

Despite the standard measure of students’ language proficiency, the teacher observed a great variability in their skills and knowledge. A diagnostic test administered by the teacher at the beginning of the term (see Appendix 1) yielded an average score of 2.5 out of 5 with a score variability from 0 to 5. The results of the diagnostic test showed that the students struggled with reading and interpreting the text, which resulted in failure to supply the correct vocabulary items and successfully complete a true-false comprehension check exercise.

The evidence obtained from the diagnostic test supported the overall observation of the problems encountered by the students while completing communicative tasks. Students’ view of the language as a combination of discrete language forms that can be randomly manipulated outside of their communicative contexts prevented them from constructing meaning at the phrasal, sentential and discourse levels in all four language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) (see Authors, 2020). The teacher’s observations and students’ feedback prompted the teacher to seek an alternative way of instruction, which would assist the students in their meaning-
making abilities at the phrasal, sentential and discourse level by focusing on the concept of language constituents.

**Teacher’s Observations: Learning the English Passive**

Acquisition of the English passive was selected as a target language form for the study. It should be noted that the English passive was selected and introduced as a language form into the syllabus of the Basic Academic English, a prerequisite for an ESP course. Typically, the following rule of thumb is presented to the students. To change a sentence from active to passive, learners are instructed to identify the subject and the object, place the object in the subject position, make changes in the verb, and position the subject in the object position by introducing it with the preposition *by*. This explanation is usually followed by the practice where the students are asked to practice the passive verbs in decontextualized sentences; learners’ knowledge of the passive is typically assessed through decontextualized sentences presented to them. The challenges that the EFL learners experience while making the changes from active to passive has to do with the sentences that include a complex subject and/or a complex object. In addition, as the students typically lack the conceptual understanding behind the change from active into passive, they start moving the parts of the sentence in a random manner, which results in ungrammatical and/or semantically awkward sentences. Below are some of the examples from the first grammar quiz that was administered to the students (see Appendix 1). To make the task more communicative, the students were first asked to read a passage that tells the story behind Chanel No. 5, a famous French perfume, and then change the sentences from active into passive.

The analysis of the students’ sentences produced in writing as a result of this exercise reveals that the ungrammaticality and the semantic anomaly of the sentences can be explained by the learners’ inability to identify the major sentence constituents, such as a noun phrase (NP) as the sentential subject, verb phrase (VP) as the predicate and another NP the sentential object. The students also lacked the conceptual understanding that the relationship between the constituents within the phrase is rule-governed, in that movement can only include constituents rather than words in those constituents.

The problem that students encountered can be illustrated by the samples of ungrammatical and semantically anomalous sentences produced by the students presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Active sentences provided to the students as prompts</th>
<th>Ungrammatical or semantically incorrect sentences produced by the students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) a. The chemists presented the samples to Chanel.</td>
<td>1) b. *Chanel was presented by chemists. [1]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) a. Chanel picked number 5.</td>
<td>2) b. *Chanel was picked by number 5.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) a. Chanel invited the perfumer and his friends to a popular restaurant to celebrate the success.</td>
<td>3) b. *Perfumer who invited by Chanel his friends to be a popular restaurant to celebrate the success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) a. At that time, chemists already isolated chemicals called aldehydes, which could artificially create these smells.</td>
<td>4) b. *At that time, were chemists already isolated chemicals called aldehydes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data presented in Table 1 shows that in the sentence in (1b), the indirect object NP is confused with the direct object PP, resulting in a semantically anomalous sentence, where instead of the perfume samples, Chanel was presented to the chemist. In (2b), no changes were made to the position of the subject NP and the object NP in the passive sentence; however, changes were made to the active form of the verb *picked* (i.e. *was picked*), and the direct object NP is introduced by the preposition *by*, resulting in a grammatical although semantically anomalous sentence. In (3a), the data shows that a student failed to make the required transformation from the active into the passive due to their inability to parse the sentence as having two coordinating NP objects and a non-finite clause, which resulted in the ungrammatical sentence in (3b). The ungrammatical sentence presented in (4b) shows that it is even more challenging for the students to change the sentence from active into passive when the sentence contains a relative clause.

**Constituents**

One striking feature of natural languages is that sentences are not simply a string of words (see e.g., Jacobson, 2006; Tallerman, 2020). Rather, they are sets of self-contained structural units, each forming a constituent. To illustrate, let us look at the following example from English.

(1) I saw Peggy [at the bank].

In this example, the string of words in square brackets forms a unit called the prepositional phrase (PP). To prove that the bracketed string is a constituent, one of the diagnostics used in linguistics is called substitution. The grammaticality of the example in (2) and ungrammaticality of the example in (3) show that only constituents can be replaced by other constituents. For example, in (2), one can use *there* instead of *at the bank* in (2).

(2) I saw Peggy [there].

Notice that substituting *there* for a smaller bit of [at the bank] such as [bank] leads to ungrammaticality, as is shown in (3).

(3) *I saw Peggy at the [there]

So far, it has been shown that the PP [at the bank] is a self-contained unit, called a constituent. For this paper, we limit our discussion to a substitution test only. The reader is referred to Tallerman (2020), who discusses other tests, e.g. topicalization and sentence fragment, that help linguists decide whether or not a specific string of words is a constituent.

In addition to the syntactic tests introduced above, one can claim that [at the bank] is a unit even at the semantic level, since unlike [bank], which does not denote anything, [at the bank] denotes a location. [3]

In addition to the syntactic and semantic evidence cited, there are laboratory experiments that provide evidence that constituents are psychologically real. In one particular experiment (see e.g., Fodor & Bever, 1965), participants were asked to listen to sentences which included clicking noises at different positions in the sentence. Some of the sentences included clicking noises at constituent boundaries (for example, between the subject and the predicate), others were included randomly within constituents. When asked about the position of the clicking noises, participants reported hearing clicking noises at constituent boundaries even in those cases where the clicking noises were actually within the constituents. In other words, participants actually parsed sentences into constituents rather than into words.
The Intervention: CBI

This section describes the intervention, whose goal was to introduce the learners to the concept of constituents as meaningful units of language. The impetus behind the intervention was the hypothesis that by internalizing the concept of constituents, the students would improve (i) their understanding of the English passive, and (ii) their abilities to make meaning at the phrasal and sentential levels. The intervention was developed by using Gal’perin’s methodology of CBI that consists of material, verbal, and mental stages in learners’ development of the concept. The intervention started by orienting the students to the following activity. The students were introduced to the concept of constituents and the way they are used to construct meaning in active and passive sentences included in the scientific text.

At the material stage, the students were asked to identify the logical units of language by boxing the subject and object constituents in the sentences presented here in Table 3. At this stage, constituents were presented to the students as logical, meaning making units of language with one unit or constituent containing more than one word, as in sentences (2-4) and in sentence (4), where one constituent is nested within another constituent.

Table 2. Constituents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample sentences</th>
<th>No. of words in the subject/ No of constituents</th>
<th>No of words in the object/ No of constituents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Engineers build structures.</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Engineers from Oman build steel structures.</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Smart engineers from Oman build beautiful steel structures.</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Smart engineers from Oman build beautiful steel structures that are corrosion-resistant.</td>
<td>??</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The purpose of this hands-on, material stage was to initiate the process of concept formation that would facilitate learners’ understanding of a sentence as a linguistic unit that consists of smaller units (constituents). This exercise also targeted the students’ ability to notice the difference between the two conceptually different linguistic levels (i.e. word level and phrasal level) and that the transformation of the sentence from active into passive takes place at the phrasal rather than word level.

The material stage of the instruction was followed by the verbal stage, where the students were presented with the following sentences (adapted from Gibbs, 1996).
1) Researchers from the University of New Mexico created an artificial muscle substance that is twice as strong as human muscles and contracts nearly as fast.
2) Scientists can use artificial muscles in robotics, medical implants and virtual reality.
3) Embedded sensors can monitor the health of structures that undergo a lot of wear and tear.
4) Engineers can save both money and lives with smart structures.
In this stage, the learners were asked to read the sentences and to (i) identify NP subjects and objects, (ii) specify the number of words in each constituent, and (iii) change the sentences from active into passive. This task was performed as a whole class activity, where the learners had an opportunity to discuss the concept of constituents and the required transformation with their teacher and peers.

The task included into the verbal external stage of the CBI was followed by the mental internal stage, where the students were asked to change the sentences adapted from Gibbs (1996) from active into passive. This activity was performed by the learners as a quiz.

1) Engineers design devices from exotic materials.
2) You can find smart materials in everything from laptop computers to concrete bridges.
3) Engineers demonstrate the inventions that stretch, twist and respond in novel ways.
4) Researchers embed silicon pressure sensors into tires to improve fuel economy and reduce wear.
5) One researcher constructed a wireless sensor.
6) He implanted the sensor into a human muscle.

The lesson concluded with an open-ended discussion, where the learners were given an opportunity to share their feedback on the effectiveness of the intervention administered in the lesson.

**Results and Discussion**

The teacher observed that the learners were able to quickly supply the missing number of constituents and the words in the sentences included in Table 2, which is 1 subject constituent/1 word and 1 object constituent/ 1 word in sentence (1), 1 subject constituent/ 3 words and 1 object constituent/ 2 words in sentence (2), 1 subject constituent/ 4 words and 1 object constituent/ 3 words in sentence 3, 1 subject constituent/ 4 words and 1 object constituent/ 7 words in sentence 4. While doing this exercise, the students were able to come to understand that the subject NP and the object NP as constituents can contain more than one word. Moreover, to transform an active sentence into a passive sentence, the learners had to make changes to the position of the constituents rather than words in a sentence. Conceptually speaking, by successfully completing this exercise, the learners demonstrated awareness of the difference between the two linguistic levels (i.e. word level and phrasal level) that both contribute to the meaning of a sentence.

Next, the teacher was interested to know if the concept formation at the material and verbal stages was internalized at the mental stage. Initially, while assessing students’ performance on the quizzes administered to the students during the mental stage, the teacher discovered that the total number of ungrammatical sentences produced by the students exceeded the total number of grammatical sentences (i.e. 71 ungrammatical sentences vs. 61 grammatical sentences). In analyzing the samples of grammatical and ungrammatical sentences, the teacher was guided by the following questions: Does the students’ failure to produce the grammatical sentences mean that they failed to internalize the concept of constituency?

A closer analysis of the data, samples of which are presented in Table 3 below, constitutes evidence that the learners have internalized the concept of constituents despite the number of
ungrammatical sentences they produced. Column 1 of Table 3 includes a list of sentences presented to the learners on the quiz, column 2 shows the targeted grammatical sentence produced by some of the learners and column 3 contains some samples of ungrammatical sentences. These ungrammatical sentences were further divided by the teacher into ‘bad’ ungrammatical sentences and ‘good’ ungrammatical sentences.

A sentence is considered to be ‘a bad’ ungrammatical sentence when it does not show any evidence that the learner internalized the concept of constituency. A sentence is referred to as ‘a good’ ungrammatical sentence when it demonstrates that the concept of a constituent has been internalized by the learner. ‘A good’ ungrammatical sentence is therefore considered to be a developmental step in the right direction in the learner’s understanding of the English passive and in developing meaning making abilities at the phrasal and sentential level. To illustrate, the analysis of the ungrammatical sentences presented in Table 3 (1c) below shows that while changing the sentence from active into passive, in addition to the error in the verb form, a learner failed to identify two NP constituents, i.e. the direct object NP devices and the indirect object from exotic materials, which resulted in the ungrammaticality of the sentence in (1c). In a similar manner, all other examples of ‘bad’ ungrammatical sentences in (1c) through (6c) present evidence that the learners who produced them attempted to make changes from active into passive without showing any awareness of the concept of constituents, as these attempts were made to make changes in the position of the words rather than constituents. The samples of the sentences in (1d) through (6d) also show that the sentences are not target-like and/or can be semantically anomalous, such as the sentence in (3d), where the clausal constituent that stretch, twist and respond in novel ways modifies the NP engineers rather than the NP devices, thus creating a humorous effect. However, the sentences in (1d-6d) demonstrate that the concept of constituents has been internalized by the learners since successful attempts were made to change the position of constituents rather than separate words while changing the sentences from active into passive.

Table 3. A Breakdown of Ungrammatical and Grammatical Sentences Produced by the Students on the Quiz

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Grammatical</th>
<th>Ungrammatical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. a) Engineers design devices from exotic materials.</td>
<td>b) Devices from exotic materials are designed by engineers.</td>
<td>c) *Exotic materials are engineers design devices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>d) *Devices from exotic materials by engineers devised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

‘Bad’ ungrammatical sentences: 7
‘Good’ ungrammatical sentences: 3
2. a) You can find smart materials in everything from laptop computers to concrete bridges.

b) Smart materials can be found in everything from laptop computers to concrete bridges.

c) *Laptop computers are concrete bridges to can find smart materials.

d) *Smart materials in everything can be found from laptop computers to concrete bridges.

Total: 8

14

‘Bad’ ungrammatical sentences: 6
‘Good’ ungrammatical sentences: 8

3. a) Engineers demonstrate the inventions that stretch, twist and respond in novel ways.

b) The inventions that stretch, twist and respond in novel ways are demonstrated by engineers.

c) *Inventions them stretch is built by engineers demonstrate.

d) #The inventions are demonstrated by engineers that stretch, twist and respond in novel ways.

Total: 12

10

‘Bad’ ungrammatical sentences: 7
‘Good’ ungrammatical sentences: 3

4. a) Researchers embed silicon pressure sensors into tires to improve fuel economy and reduce wear.

b) Silicon pressure sensors are embedded into tires by the researchers to improve fuel economy and reduce wear.

c) *Silicon pressure sensors into tires to improve fuel economy and reduce wear embedded by researchers.

d) *To improve fuel economy and reduce wear are embedded silicon pressure sensor into this by researchers.

Total: 8

14

‘Bad’ ungrammatical sentences: 11
‘Good’ ungrammatical sentences: 3

5. a) One researcher constructed a wireless sensor.

b) A wireless sensor was constructed by one researcher.

c) *A wireless sensor are researcher constructed.

d) *Wireless sensor are by one researcher constructed.

Total: 14

8

‘Bad’ ungrammatical sentences: 5
‘Good’ ungrammatical sentences: 3

6. a) He implanted the sensor into a human muscle.

b) The sensor was implanted into a human muscle.

c) *Human muscle sensor one implanted by him.

d) #The sensor into a human muscle is implanted by him.

Total: 7

15

‘Bad’ ungrammatical sentences: 8
‘Good’ ungrammatical sentences: 7

Total grammatical sentences: 61

Total ungrammatical sentences: 71

Total of grammatical sentences including ‘good’ ungrammatical sentences: 88
The analysis of the data presented in Table 3 also shows that when the number of ‘good’ ungrammatical sentences (i.e. 27) was added to the number of grammatical sentences (i.e. 61), this number exceeded the total number of ungrammatical sentences (i.e. 88 grammatical and ‘good’ ungrammatical sentences vs. 71 ungrammatical sentences). The results of the analysis demonstrate that the intervention was successful in developing learners’ understanding of the differences between active and passive sentences in English and in developing their meaning making abilities.

It is also claimed that learners’ awareness of the concept of constituency influenced their motivation and active engagement in the lesson, as observed by the teacher. Thus, when the learners were asked to provide their feedback in English and Arabic on the lesson, the learners commented positively on the type of instruction that was introduced to them. For example, one learner commented on the fact that understanding the concept of constituents made it easier for him to analyze the sentences. He explained that as a result of the type of analysis performed by him in class, “objects become separate from [the] verb and [the] subject, and [there are] specific words for each component”.

Some students identified the challenges they face when trying to parse longer sentences in English. For example, one student mentioned in Arabic that "يجب أن نلاحظ أن الجمل الطويلة معقدة وصعبة ([the task] it is difficult, as some sentences are long and complicated). The concept of constituents made it easier for the learners to analyze longer sentences, as mentioned by one student, “this way we can change long sentences easier”. Other learners commented on the fact that the concept of constituents is really important for understanding the passive, and that constituents may include a different number of smaller units (i.e. words). One stated, ‘yes, [this type of instruction] was easy because it made me write the passive easy. Another said, ‘هذا الطريقة سهلة لأن طرق نجيب إداراتية إذا أرادنا’ ‘This is easy, as it makes it easy for us to tell whether there is one or two [words in the constituent]’. One of the learners mentioned the importance of multiple activities presented to them while learning the passive. He/she stated, “Understanding passive was much easier for me as we had many practices in class”. A number of students acknowledged the challenges they face while learning the English passive. Specifically, they stated that learning the passive was difficult, and they failed to make the required changes. One student mentioned that it was “difficult because sometimes I cannot change the verb to passive”. This type of feedback identified the problem in the intervention activities administered to the students. In the activities, more emphasis was given to the changes in the NP subject and object constituents and less emphasis to the changes in the verb form although the required changes in the verb form were reviewed with the students during the orientation stage.

Conclusion

The impetus for conducting the study discussed in this paper was the practitioner’s realization that students in an Omani ESP program at the university level struggle with learning one grammatical structure in the syllabus, namely the English passive. Trying to pin down the root of the problem, the practitioner came to the conclusion that the major problem lies in the fact that there is a long history of teaching practice that starts in schools and continues at the university level, where the concept of constituents is not introduced to the learners. This results in a systematic behavior on the part of the students to look at language only at the word level and not at the phrase or sentence level. Having realized that, the practitioner decided to adopt an alternative

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type of teaching, namely CBI, inspired by Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory and Gal’perin’s development of the theory. Using different tools for data collection (e.g. teacher’s observations, students’ feedback, and a CBI-based lesson plan) and carefully teasing apart the ‘bad’ ungrammatical sentences and the ‘good’ ungrammatical sentences, we claim that the intervention was successful. The analysis of the data collected in the study demonstrated that the learners were able to internalize the concept of constituents, which constitutes a qualitative developmental step forward in the process of foreign language learning. The approach to data analysis introduced in this paper provides evidence that developmental leaps take place. In other words, CBI can do a better job than other types of instruction in helping teachers observe how language learners develop concepts and abstract thinking.

Notes
1. The students were informed that the teacher would be conducting an action research in which they would be the participants. The teacher has explained what type of information would be collected from the students. The students have provided their consent to take part in the action research and to share the results of their work (e.g., their writing samples and their written feedback) for the publication purposes.
2. The symbol * marks an ungrammatical sentence, and the symbol # marks a semantically anomalous sentence.
3. In Model Theoretic semantics, a word such as bank would not denote anything. In order for it to be a semantically saturated unit, a function, namely an article, has to apply to it to make it a semantically saturated unit (Kearns 2011, pp. 57-78).

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References
A Developmental Step in the Right Direction: The Case for Concept-Based

Ahmed & Lenchuk


Appendix A

Diagnostic Test

Read the passage about an astrolabe and fill in the blanks with the words below. (Please keep in mind that sometimes, not always, you have to change the form of the word in order to make a sentence grammatical)

Innovative, surveying, use, marine, navigators, invent, use, uses, primary, creative, useful, latitude, end-users, navigation, device, reading, navigation

Astrolabes (2019)

An astrolabe is a ________ that was first ________ by astronomers and ________ . One of its ________ applications is to determine local ________ on land and calm seas. Translated from the Greek language, an astrolabe means the one who catches the stars. During the Islamic Golden Age, the word was translated as "ākhidhu al-Nujuum" (أَخِذُ الْنَجْوُمِ), which means "star-taker". The first astrolabe was ________ by the Greeks and further developed by the Arabs. It was widely ________ throughout the Muslim world. It was ________ in ________ and as a way of finding the Qibla, the direction of Mecca. Eighth-century mathematician Muhammad al-Fazari is the first person who built the astrolabe in the Islamic world. It is believed that first astrolabes had more than 1,000 ________ in many areas, such as astronomy, astrology, ________, ________, timekeeping and prayer. An astrolabe also has a ________ application because it was used by sailors to get an accurate ________ of latitude while at sea. One of the more ________ and ________ applications of an astrolabe is its use in watches, which became quite popular among the ________ . These watches are quite expensive and their prices can reach up to more than $30,000.

Read the following statements and decide whether the statement is True (T) or False (F)

1. An astrolabe is a modern invention. 
2. It prevented sailors from being lost at sea. 
3. It allowed precise positioning of the stars. 
4. It was first invented by the Chinese. 
5. An astrolabe does not have any modern applications.
Appendix B

Quiz 1 (grammar: the passive)

The Story Behind the Classic Perfume (BBC News, 2011)

Read the following text and (i) underline the 4 verb forms in the passive; (ii) change the sentences written below from the active to the passive.

There is a very interesting story behind the famous perfume called Chanel No 5. It is believed that the perfume was created as a result of a scientific mistake.

In 1920s, the fragrance of lemons and oranges was used to create perfumes. The problem is that these things are very fresh but they don't last on the skin. At that time, chemists already isolated chemicals called aldehydes, which could artificially create these smells. But they were very powerful so perfumers didn't want to use them.

One perfumer whose name was Ernest Beaux took up Chanel's challenge to create a new perfume. It took him several months to perfect a new fragrance. Finally, 10 samples of a new perfume were created. The chemist presented the samples to Chanel. He numbered the samples from 1 to 5 and 20 to 24. Chanel picked number five. The perfume was actually the result of a laboratory mistake. A large dose of aldehyde was added to the perfume by mistake.

Chanel invited the perfumer and his friends to a popular restaurant to celebrate the success. She used a clever marketing trick. She sprayed the perfume around the table. Each woman that passed stopped and asked what the fragrance was and where it came from. The perfume became an immediate success.

*Change the sentences from the active to the passive*

1. The chemist presented the samples to Chanel.
2. He numbered the samples from 1 to 5 and 20 to 24.
3. Chanel picked number five.
4. Chanel invited the perfumer and his friends to a popular restaurant to celebrate the success.
5. At that time, chemists already isolated chemicals called aldehydes, which could artificially create these smells.
The Notion of Emotion in EFL Learning and Teaching in Saudi Arabia: A Critical Review of 20 Years of Research

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Abstract
This paper provides a broad critical review of the research that examined the emotional factors such as learners’ attitudes, motivation, language anxiety, autonomy, and self-esteem in the context of learning English as a foreign language (EFL) in Saudi Arabia over a period of 20 years (2000-2020). The aim of this critical review is to answer some questions relating to identifying the most common themes of research efforts in this area, the strengths, and weaknesses among it; and to explain how such efforts have contributed to the development of English language learning/teaching within the Saudi context. The study is significant in that the findings identified some issues with thematic orientation in Saudi EFL emotion research—particularly regarding under- and over-explored topics due to an element of randomness in how research topics related to EFL emotions are often selected and explored, with some topic areas receiving excessive attention and others receiving little or no attention. Some issues related to research design and methodology were also acknowledged and assessed. The study suggests that it is useful to develop ways to coordinate and streamline future research on EFL emotions in Saudi Arabia and to work towards developing new research protocols that investigate the practicalities of language learning emotions in real learning situations.

Keywords: anxiety, attitudes, EFL learning/teaching, emotion, motivation, Saudi Arabia

Introduction
According to Aragão (2001), the term emotion in the context of second/foreign language acquisition is a subcomponent of the broad term affect that encompasses emotion and other concepts such as feeling, mood, attitude, personality factors, and learner variables that influence language learning. Stevick (1980) hypothesized that success in language learning depends more on what goes on inside and between the people in the classroom. Arnold (2011) presumed that the inside domain refers to the individual factors of the language learner, such as self-esteem, anxiety, inhibition, attitudes, motivation, and learner styles.

The key goal of this paper is to provide a comprehensive critical review of the research conducted by Saudi scholars over the past 20 years (between 2000 and 2020) that investigated the role of emotional factors in learning English in the Saudi EFL context. There are many diverse reasons for choosing this specific timeframe to review. First, studies conducted before 2000 are quite outdated and are therefore considered to be irrelevant to the dynamic present and future reforms in teaching/learning English in Saudi Arabia. In addition, the volume of EFL emotion research in Saudi Arabia before 2000 was rather small in terms of both the number of studies that were conducted and the scope of the topics that were examined. Although the scale of the research on EFL emotions in Saudi Arabia also remained relatively low during the period between 2000 and 2010, there has been strong growth in this type of research since 2010. Since then, EFL emotion research in the country has witnessed a sharp steadily rise.

Most of the literature reviewed in this paper is devoted to examining a wide range of widely recognized issues that fall under the category of L2 psychological/emotional factors that have been found to affect the process of attaining non-primary languages. Among these variables are learners’ motivation, attitudes, anxiety, autonomy, and self-esteem.

Literature Review
In view of the vast nature of the present review due to the considerable proportion of Saudi EFL research that has addressed emotional variables, a categorization of this literature based on the covered themes is necessary.

Research on L2 Motivation
Of all emotional factors, L2 motivation has been the most researched emotional variable in the past 20 years in the Saudi EFL context. This research was dedicated to investigate the levels and types of L2 motivation among Saudi EFL learners, the correlation between learner motivation and other emotional factors, language skills, learning strategies, and EFL achievement, and many other aspects.

A large body of language motivation research has been devoted to examining the levels and types of L2 motivation of Saudi EFL learners. Out of all motivation orientations, instrumental motivation has been found to be the dominant type of motivation among Saudi EFL learners as acknowledged by Alfawzan (2012), Alkaabi (2016), Alrabai (2014a), Daif-Allah and Aljumah (2020), Massri (2017), and Moskovsky and Alrabai (2009), among many others. Students who
participated in these studies reported a strong desire to attain competence in English because they perceived it to be particularly beneficial for career building and professional advancement. Nevertheless, Saudi students in other studies (e.g. Sharma, 2018; Zayed and Al-Ghamdi, 2019) demonstrated higher integrative motivation than instrumental motivation. This reflects their interest and willingness to learn EFL for integrative motives, such as a desire to go overseas to study or work, and their readiness to interact with the target language and its culture and community.

Regarding other types of motivation, the learners in the study of Moskovsky and Alrabai (2009) reported high intrinsic motivation which, according to the researchers, does not reflect genuine learner motivation but rather mere positive attitudes towards learning English since it is inconsistent with their generally low competence. The majority of the participants in Alkaabi’s (2016) study had high extrinsic motivation to learn English, with female students showing higher intrinsic motivation than male students.

A few studies have explored the relationship between learner motivation and other emotional variables. The findings of Sharma (2018) demonstrated a strong significant correlation between learners’ attitudes and motivation. Likewise, a strong correlation was found among motivation, attitudes, and self-confidence in a study by Zayed and Al-Ghamdi (2019). In this study, a significant but weak correlation was observed between motivation and anxiety.

Changes in learner motivation over time in terms of levels and type of orientation is another aspect of the L2 motivation research that has been conducted by some Saudi scholars (e.g., AlMaiman, 2005; Al Shaye, 2014). The findings of AlMaiman’s (2005) study revealed a significant decline in the motivation of Saudi year seven school children after one year of exposure to English instruction. The participating students from year nine and year 12 in Al Shaye’s (2014) study were found to hold different motivational orientations because at different points in time, they had different goals.

The role of learner L2 motivation in relation to specific language skills has been investigated by other studies. The results of Alshamrany (2019) showed a positive and significant correlation between the motivation and attitudes and speaking ability of Saudi EFL students (i.e., motivation and attitudes had a positive influence on students’ speaking proficiency).

Other studies have tested the relationship between the use of language learning strategies and learner motivation. For example, the findings of Al-Otaibi’s (2004) study revealed a strong correlation between students’ degree of motivation and language learning strategy use, with highly motivated participants using more strategies than students with moderate or low levels of motivation.

There have been many attempts to explore Saudi learners’ L2 motivational intensity. Alrahaili (2013) emphasized that learner attitudes were related to both intended and actual learning efforts (motivational intensity). However, he acknowledged that intended efforts were not
necessarily reflected in actual efforts for most participating students in his study. In Al-Hoorie’s (2018) investigation, motivational intensity was significantly lower in second-semester students than in first-semester students in terms of their effort dedicated to daily study and preparation for exams.

The demotivating constraints that learners encounter while learning English in Saudi Arabia have also been thoroughly explored (see, e.g. Al Johani, 2009; Al-Khairy, 2013; Alrabai, 2016). These studies identified the primary reasons for the low motivation of Saudi learners such as the inappropriate teacher behaviors, the lack of teacher support, lack of encouragements or praise to students, overcorrecting students’ mistakes, criticizing students’ learning attempts, the unappealing textbooks, peer pressure, inappropriate teaching methods, the insufficient use of modern teaching aids, students’ low self-esteem, low self-confidence, high language anxiety, low motivational intensity, and low autonomy.

Some comparative studies have attempted to establish the extent to which the context (EFL vs. ESL) can influence Saudi learner motivation. The results of Fodah’s (2013) study indicated that Saudi ESL learners had slightly higher levels of motivation than EFL learners. In addition, relatively minor differences were observed in the prevailing types of motivation between the two groups, with stronger instrumental orientation found among learners in the EFL context. In a similar study, Alnatheer (2013) found that the Saudi ESL students who study in Australia demonstrated higher levels of motivation than the EFL cohort of learners who study in Saudi Arabia. The ESL learners in this study showed significantly higher levels of communicative competence than EFL learners.

Very few studies have examined the role of technology in enhancing Saudi learners’ L2 motivation. The findings of a study by Ali and Bin-Hady (2019) revealed that learning English through WhatsApp had a positive influence on students' attitudes, anxiety, and motivation.

Teacher motivation is another domain of L2 motivation research in Saudi Arabia. Shoaib’s (2004) research emphasized that Saudi EFL teachers’ strong commitment to their jobs as EFL instructors is usually challenged with a range of administrative and institutional obstacles, which are considered to be key demotivating factors for Saudi EFL practitioners.

Dörnyei’s (2005, 2009) L2 motivational self-system theory influentially inspired some recent Saudi motivation research. A noteworthy Saudi study that produced evidence in support of the influence of learner self-guides on learning intentions in the Saudi setting was the study of Almuaawi (2013). Assulaimani (2015) produced another notable study whose key objective was to examine the extent to which learner self-guides are linked to, and can be used to predict, L2 proficiency. Assulaimani’s results were consistent with previous research assumptions regarding learners’ learning intentions in that participants’ self-guides were indeed linked to higher intended efforts. However, other findings of the study were unpredicted in that the relationship between self-guides and learner achievement occurred in the opposite direction (i.e., low levels of self-guides were linked to high achievement (and vice versa).
Teachers’ and learners’ perceptions of potential strategies that might help enhance learner motivation in language classes have also been explored. For example, teachers in the study of Alshehri and Etherington (2017) believed that students are motivated by strategies that help them achieve better academic outcomes, whereas students believed being more motivated by strategies that promote social aspects of actual learning, such as participation and interaction. Similarly, Shousha (2018) investigated the perceptions of teachers and students regarding ten motivational strategies proposed by Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) to motivate language learners. In this study, some motivational strategies (e.g. “develop a good relationship with the learners”) were almost equally important to both teachers and students.

Other studies have gone beyond the theoretical suggestions proposed by earlier studies and take a more practical approach by attempting to assess the actual effectiveness of teachers’ in-class motivational practices for learner motivation. For example, a frequently described ground-breaking study by Alrabai (2010) on teachers’ motivational strategies has had notable achievements in this regard. Alrabai’s research was the first empirical study to examine the theoretical link established by earlier studies (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei, 2007; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008) between teachers’ motivational practices in the classroom and their learners’ language learning motivation. Alrabai utilized a controlled intervention that involved 14 teachers and nearly 300 Saudi EFL learners who represented a variety of age ranges, education levels, as well as diverse geographic and demographic backgrounds. A set of preselected motivational strategies for EFL delivery were utilized in the experimental group, whereas the control group was exposed to traditional EFL teaching. The findings of Alrabai’s research showed a statistically significant increase in only the motivation levels of the experimental group and can be seen as providing incontrovertible evidence of the capacity of teachers’ motivational behaviors to enhance their learners’ motivation. The empirical investigations conducted by Alqahtani (2015) and Alrabai (2014a) supplied strong independent support for Alrabai’s (2010) findings. The protocols of these two studies included an EFL proficiency measure that enabled them to provide compelling evidence that teachers’ motivational practices usually lead not only to learners’ enhanced motivation, but also to better EFL learning outcomes.

Research on L2 Attitudes

In the past 20 years, many studies have attempted to explore the attitudes of Saudi learners concerning EFL learning in recent years (e.g. Alkaff, 2013; Alsamadani and Ibnian, 2015; Faruk, 2014; Massri, 2017). All these studies verified the positive attitudes that Saudi EFL learners hold towards English language, English language speakers, and English language learning.

Alrahaili’s (2013) study is one of the prominent studies on learner attitudes in Saudi Arabia. This study deployed a new research protocol in that it went beyond exploring the levels and types of language attitudes among a specific group of L2 learners to identify the factors that underlie the prevailing EFL attitudes in the Saudi context. Alrahaili conceptualized language attitudes as falling into two quite different categories, namely, attitudes towards the target language (TL) and the TL speakers and their culture, and attitudes towards the learning situation (the teacher, the course, the
learning resources, peer relationships, the classroom dynamics, etc.). This conceptualization was built on Stephan and Stephan’s (1996) integrated threat theory—as the conceptual basis of the social-psychological predictors of L2 learner attitudes. One novel idea in Alrahaili study was that the two categories of attitudes emerge from different factors. According to this study, TL attitudes are determined by sociopsychological constructs such as in-group contact, in-group identification, para-social contact, and perceived out-group threat. Attitudes regarding the learning situation are, on the other hand, basically dependent on learners’ beliefs about language learning.

The findings reported by the above studies confirm that there have been positive changes in the social attitudes towards and perceptions of the English language and its speakers among Saudis. These recent changes could be attributed to Saudis’ growing access to the TL and its community and culture via social networks, as suggested by Alrabai (2016), and to the increased awareness of both Saudi individuals and the Saudi government of the importance of the English language due to its importance as a lingua franca within the globalized knowledge economy (Kirkpatrick & Barnawi, 2017). According to Mitchell and Alfurai (2016), the global importance of English has required the Saudi government to invest heavily in EFL provision and to launch reforms within Saudi educational settings to enable Saudi citizens to effectively participate in the global workplace and society. One of the major educational reforms implemented by the Saudi government in recent years was the launch of the King Abdullah Scholarship Program in 2005 to enable Saudi students to take university courses at English-speaking universities. This reform, according to Alrabai (2016), was associated with a rising interest among Saudis to seek knowledge in the English language about English-speaking countries and has played a major role in the positive shift in Saudi students’ attitudes with respect to the English language and its community.

The factors that affect Saudi EFL learners’ attitudes towards learning English have been examined by Saudi scholars. Some research has been conducted to determine the extent to which religion influences Saudi learners’ attitudes concerning EFL learning. By building on a study by Aldosari (1992), Alswuail (2015) conducted an attitudinal study in which she investigated the impact of culture and religion on EFL learners’ attitudes and their engagement in English language classes and the attitudes of EFL teachers and religious officials towards English language. Similar to Aldosari (1992), Alswuail (2015) found that learners and teachers held very positive attitudes towards English and observed a significant positive correlation between learners’ attitudes and their language class engagement. The key difference in Alswuail’s findings compared to the results of Aldosari concerns the attitudes of religious officials, who reported basically positive attitudes towards English learning. This is a very significant finding, as it reflects a positive cultural shift within the Saudi community in relation to the English language and its speakers.

Apart from religious, cultural, and social barriers, some instructional and institutional factors impact Saudi learner attitudes with respect to learning English. Students in the study of Alsamadani and Ibnian (2015) recognized lack of vocabulary, a lack of teacher support, and a lack of exposure to English in daily life situations as the factors that affect their English learning attitudes. Additionally, Massri (2017) acknowledged family obligations and/or pressure, financial
implications, higher education achievements and travel/study abroad as other factors that influence the attitudes of Saudi EFL learners.

The association between learner attitudes and interrelated emotional variables has also been explored in previous research. The majority of participants in Alkaabi’s (2016) study reported high extrinsic motivation to learn English associated with positive attitudes towards English and its native speakers. Female students in this study showed higher intrinsic motivation to learn English and higher positive attitudes towards both learning English and to the native speakers of English than male students.

**Research on L2 Anxiety**

Similar to many other EFL contexts, there have been many recent attempts to investigate the issue of foreign language anxiety (FLA) in the Saudi context.

Investigating the levels and sources of FLA was the most researched issue in Saudi Arabia. Al-Saraj (2014) investigated language anxiety among female Saudi learners and determined that the behavior of language teachers was the primary source of learners’ anxiety in addition to other factors including a fear of negative evaluation, a competitive learning atmosphere, the style of teacher-learner interaction, and the teaching method.

Alrabai (2014b) reported on the findings of a three-year, large-scale study that involved three rounds of data collection to investigate the levels and sources of FLA among 1,389 Saudi EFL learners. The majority of participants in this study reported moderate to high levels of FLA. In addition, four sources of FLA appeared among learners: communication anxiety; comprehension apprehension; negative attitudes regarding English class; and test anxiety. Based on the highly consistent findings from the three rounds of data collection, the study proposed a context-based model of FLA in the Saudi EFL context.

Al-Khasawneh (2016) assessed the level and sources of foreign language learning anxiety among 97 English major Saudi university students. The participants reported moderate levels of language anxiety; with the following being the main sources of language anxiety among students: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety.

Asif (2017) explored the views of 100 EFL lecturers in Saudi Arabia concerning the sources of language anxiety among EFL learners in Saudi Arabia from the teacher perspective. Respondents specified L1 interference with the L2; a fear of making mistakes; a gloomy classroom environment; performance anxiety; a lack of English vocabulary; and the cultural differences between learners and the TL community as causes of language anxiety among their learners.

Gawi (2020) examined the level and sources of FLA among fifty Saudi male students studying English language at Albaha University. Participants in this study exhibited an overall moderate level of foreign language classroom anxiety represented in moderate levels of test
anxiety, low levels of fear of negative evaluation, and higher levels of communicative apprehension.

In addition to the above studies that reported on global language anxiety, other studies have attempted to investigate learner anxiety regarding specific language skills. Aljafen (2013) established that Saudi EFL students in his study shared almost the same moderate levels of English writing anxiety. The causes of writing anxiety identified in the study included learners’ unsuccessful past learning experiences, their lack of confidence in writing, and the assessment procedures that their institution follow.

Al Yami (2015) examined the causes of speaking anxiety among nine Saudi ESL learners who studied in Australia and the manifestations of such anxiety. In this study, the triggers of anxiety were classified into socio-contextual factors (e.g., gender proximity and teacher behavior), psycho-linguistic factors (e.g., a lack of confidence and a fear of incorrect L2 usage), and combined overlapping factors (e.g., speaker perceptions of the listening audience and linguistically demanding classroom tasks). The data collected via semi-structured interviews and an online questionnaire in a study by Rafada and Madini (2017a) indicated that EFL teachers' behavior and practices, a lack of vocabulary, language test structure and procedures, the classroom atmosphere, and peer anxiety were the main sources of learner’ speaking anxiety.

More recently, the research of Al-Khotaba et al (2019) established a significant negative correlation between foreign language speaking anxiety and the speaking achievement of 100 preparatory-year Saudi university EFL learners: learners with high language anxiety had lower achievement on the speaking test, while learners with low language speaking anxiety had high achievement on the speaking test.

The relationship between learner anxiety and other emotional factors has been investigated in the Saudi setting. A study by Almurshed and Aljuaythin (2019) revealed completely contradictory findings in relation to the association between learner anxiety and motivation: learners were found to be highly motivated to learn English but reported experiencing high levels of FLA. This surprising finding contradicted a well-established conclusion in the L2 research (see, e.g., Liu, 2012; Tahernezhad, Behjat, & Kargar, 2014) that language anxiety is negatively correlated with language motivation (i.e., high levels of language anxiety usually lead to a low of motivation in learners, and vice versa).

Some studies attempted to identify the relationship between learner anxiety and language performance. The results of Tanielian (2017) demonstrated a moderate, negative correlation between Saudi learners’ FLA and their language performance, which is a well-established finding among previous research (e.g., Aida, 1994; Saito & Samimy, 1996; Salehi & Marefat, 2014; and many others).

Because earlier research established that language anxiety is prevalent among Saudi EFL learners, there have been attempts to suggest strategies that might support learners in coping with
their language anxiety and help teachers control their students’ anxiety. In this regard, students in the study of Al Yami (2015) recommended that learners learn additional vocabulary and sufficiently prepare prior to speaking to cope with their language anxiety. In addition, Asif (2017) proposed that using effective teaching tactics, such as humor, friendly relationships, and supportive learning environments, and using technology, attractive learning material and efficient ways of correcting learner errors can help minimize anxiety among Saudi EFL learners. Furthermore, Rafada and Madini (2017b) suggested using English internet sites, traveling abroad, talking to native speakers, performing more presentations, etc. to control learners’ language anxiety.

Shifting from the theoretical domain to application, Alrabai (2015) investigated the practicality of certain teacher strategies in controlling learners’ anxiety in the language classroom. He first identified the levels and types of anxiety among over 500 Saudi EFL learners at the first phase of his study. At the second phase, teachers in the treatment classes utilized a set of anxiety-reducing strategies that specifically targeted the sources of language anxiety previously established among learners at the first phase as part of an experimental 8-week treatment with a group of over 230 Saudi EFL learners. A well-matched control group in terms of size and learners’ characteristics was not exposed to any anxiety-reducing strategies. The effect size of the treatment revealed a considerable decrease in anxiety levels in the experimental group, compared with an increase in the level of anxiety in the control group. These findings empirically validate the theoretical assumptions about the teachers’ capacity to control learner’s anxiety in language classroom.

**Research on L2 Autonomy**

There is widespread recognition among Saudi EFL researchers, teachers, and learners regarding Saudi EFL learners’ general lack of autonomy (e.g. Alsaedi, 2012). Nevertheless, research efforts dedicated to the issue of learner autonomy have until very recently been rather limited in Saudi Arabia.

Some studies have been conducted to explore the levels of autonomy of Saudi EFL learners. Saudi participants in the study of Alzubi, Singh, and Pandian (2017) exhibited a low level of learner autonomy, as demonstrated by low levels of linguistic confidence, social comparison, and locus of control. Alrabai (2017a) measured the EFL autonomy of a large participant sample of 630 Saudi school and college students and its association with their academic achievement using a questionnaire survey and achievement tests. A significant correlation between learner autonomy and English achievement among the Saudi EFL learners involved in this study was established, as the learners were found to have low levels of autonomy and low achievement.

Other studies in the Saudi context have been conducted to test learners’ readiness to be involved in autonomous/independent EFL learning. For instance, Tamer’s (2013) study assessed the readiness of 121 male Saudi university students with respect to their perceptions of responsibilities, abilities, motivation, and inside/outside class self-directed activities. This study had inconsistent findings: learners reported high levels of motivation and confidence in their abilities, but they reported low responsibility for their own learning. The narrow scope of the study (all the participants were of the same gender, were studying at the same school level, and were...
recruited from only one institution) could be a reason for the inconsistent findings. By building on Tamer’s (2013) study, Alrabai (2017b) used a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews to gain insights from a population of 319 Saudi EFL students regarding their readiness for independent learning. Learners showed low perceived responsibility levels, decision-making abilities, motivation, and involvement in self-directed learning confirming a low readiness for independent learning.

A large body of research has explored the teacher and learner perceptions of the role of autonomy in EFL teaching/learning in Saudi Arabia (Al Asmari, 2013; Almusharraf, 2018; Alrabai, 2017c; Asiri & Shukri, 2018, 2020; Javid, 2018). EFL learners in these studies believed that promoting learner autonomy could productively increase students’ language learning and were also willing to take responsibility for their learning when encouraged by their teachers to do so. Teachers, on the other hand, highlighted their learners’ low ability to learn independently perceiving their students as being passive, dependent, lacking initiative, and non-autonomous. Teachers also confirmed their limited experience with how to promote learner autonomy in the language classroom because they lacked the requisite knowledge, proper training and professional expertise in this regard.

**Research on L2 Self-Esteem**

Research on learner self-esteem in the Saudi EFL context has been very limited. After an extensive search of the related literature, this researcher is aware of only two self-esteem studies conducted in this context to date. The first is the study of Al-Hattab (2006) who examined the relationship of global self-esteem, situational self-esteem, and task self-esteem with writing achievement among 81 Saudi EFL school students. The learners in this study demonstrated average global self-esteem. A positive correlation has been identified between learners’ writing achievement and only their situational and task self-esteem.

The second study on learner self-esteem in Saudi Arabia is the study of Alrabai (2017d) who examined the levels of self-esteem among a sample of 263 Saudi EFL learners. The learners demonstrated low levels of self-esteem, with no gender differences in self-esteem detected between male and female participants. The researcher attributed the low self-esteem of Saudi EFL learners to a variety of misbehaviors demonstrated by the teacher toward his students, such as harsh criticism, unfair comparisons, unrealistic expectations, and an absence of praise, warmth, affection or interest.

**Discussion**

Considering the number of studies and the range of topics reviewed in this paper, it seems virtually indisputable that the Saudi research effort in the area of language-related emotions has made remarkable progress over the past 20 years. The researcher has witnessed an ever-growing number of publications on language-related emotions by Saudi Alrabais—some of them in leading journals on applied linguistics. It seems undeniable that some of the studies reviewed here have made important contributions to the field—both to L2 teaching/learning practices and to L2 acquisition theory more generally. Most impressively, this research effort not only shows steady
growth but also seems to be building increasing strength and momentum; the thing that merits to be acknowledged and thoroughly commended.

However, we can also point to a number of weak aspects in most of the studies reviewed here. Identifying these weaknesses and giving them due consideration is essential to ensure the future growth and success of the research on emotions in EFL learning in Saudi Arabia. The first point of weakness concerns the majority of the research that was selected for investigation, which seems to be characterized by an element of randomness and imbalance. As the above review has shown, some issues/areas related to language emotion have received a considerable amount of attention, while others have been largely or even completely neglected. For example, learner motivation (especially with respect to the types of motivation) is an area that has been given an extraordinary amount of attention, particularly relative to some other topics such as learner self-esteem which remains one of the rarely investigated topics in the Saudi EFL context. In addition, no study has investigated the relation between emotions and some pedagogical aspects of language delivery, such as teaching methodology and teaching materials.

Moreover, the bulk of the research effort on emotional factors seems to have been devoted to developing the theoretical aspects of these constructs. The studies that utilize in-class experimental interventions remain very rare. To date, only four studies of this type have been conducted in the Saudi EFL context (Alqahtani, 2015; Alrabai, 2010; 2014a [on learner motivation]; and Alrabai, 2015 [on learner anxiety]). All of these studies were, however, concerned with examining the instructional interventions utilized by EFL teachers, while none of them examined the usefulness of the self-regulating strategies used by EFL learners that could greatly help in regulating their emotions. Additionally, no study has attempted to implement experimental treatments in language classes in Saudi Arabia for the purpose of supporting, for example, learner autonomy or learner self-esteem. This is because researchers avoid conducting experimental studies of this nature since they are time- and effort-consuming and are truly challenging in terms of the study design, execution, data collection and analysis, findings, interpretation, etc. The findings of these types of studies, however, remain very reliable since they have the capacity to illustrate the role of emotions in EFL learning.

Additionally, there is a noticeable tendency among the Saudi EFL research on language-related emotions to focus on investigating emotional factors (e.g., the levels of attitudes, motivation, and anxiety) in relation to specific language skills (e.g., writing and speaking). The studies by Aljafen (2013), Al-Khotaba et al. (2019), Alshamrany (2019), and Al Yami (2015) are examples of this kind of research. It is well acknowledged that academic literacy encompasses four language skills, specifically, writing, listening, reading, and speaking, in addition to other skills such as critical thinking, reasoning and study skills. According to Asif (2017), focusing on writing and speaking may give the false impression that academic literacy practices are mutually exclusive or separable individual skills, while in reality, they are neither mutually exclusive nor separable.
A potential explanation for the over- or under-exploration of certain topics is that some researchers may have already had clearly defined interests in a particular area and chose a research topic on this basis with little or no consideration about its overall strategic importance. In the majority of Saudi EFL emotions research, a topic is selected simply because it is aligned with a prospective supervisor’s research interests with no global or strategic considerations necessarily playing a role in the topic selection process. This tendency has probably contributed to the sense of arbitrariness in the thematic orientation of Saudi EFL research that we alluded to above; it may also have played a role in how the study design and methodology were conceived for a number of studies.

In addition to the problems related to the randomness and imbalance in the selection of topics, this review has also identified a number of serious weaknesses in the methodological designs of various language emotion projects in Saudi Arabia. Most of the studies reviewed adopted nonexperimental designs. These studies followed typical descriptive and/or correlational research methods by describing a specific phenomenon (e.g., high anxiety among Saudi EFL learners) or attempting to identify the correlational relationship between variables (e.g., attitudes vs. motivation) without attempting to investigate this relationship in more detail. In addition, most of the studies reviewed were cross-sectional. This research design involves the assessment of linear relationships between the research variables at a single point in time and can only infer the possibility of cause-effect relationships based on established correlations among the variables. This design, however, does not allow for a determination of the cause-and-effect relationships among the research variables and cannot therefore be used to make valid claims about actual causality. Even in some studies that implemented experimental treatments and adapted longitudinal research designs (e.g., Alqahtani, 2015; Alrabai, 2010, 2014a, 2015), the design was not fully experimental but rather quasi-experimental because of a lack of the random assignment of the participating learners to conditions (in all of these studies, students were not randomly assigned to the study groups (experimental vs. control) but rather were assigned to their teacher groups based on their teachers’ allocation).

Regarding causality, Alqahtani (2015) and Alrabai (2014a) were the only researchers who attempted to investigate the causal relationship of motivation, as an emotional factor, with learner EFL achievement. However, these two studies and all the other studies reviewed in this paper did not empirically assess the causality of other emotions (e.g., anxiety, attitudes, and self-esteem) with learner achievement. Furthermore, no study in the Saudi context has attempted to experimentally establish causal relationships among different emotional variables (i.e., which emotional variable(s) cause(s)/predict(s) other emotional variables). Some of the researchers whose work has been reviewed here should be commended for the sampling procedures that they followed. The study of Alrabai (2010) can be described as exemplary in this regard. Similarly, Alrahaili (2013) and Assulaimani (2015) employed mixed-gender sampling. Their study samples included participants of both genders; a dedicated female research assistant was hired to recruit and collect data from female participants in each of the two studies. Nonetheless, some of the studies that we have discussed here (e.g., Almurshed & Aljuaythin, 2019; Al Yami, 2015; Fodah, 2013; Massri, 2017) are vulnerable to criticism concerning the size of their participant samples.
Further, other studies lacked diversity in the sample selection. In a large number of the reviewed studies, a single-sex sample (either male or female) was used (e.g., Alqahtani, 2015; Alrabai, 2014a; Rafada & Madini, 2017a, 2017b). Other studies recruited participants from only one institution (see, e.g., Aljafen, 2013; Al-Khasawneh, 2016; Tamer, 2013; Tanielian, 2017). In addition, most of these studies also focused on the role of emotions in learners at the university level, which has resulted in widespread concern about the role of emotions in learners at the school level. These flawed sampling procedures undeniably influenced the validity and generalizability of their findings. In the case of investigations with small sample sizes, the generalizability of study findings is contested since it is illogical to generalize the behaviors of a small number of participants to the entire community of Saudi EFL learners. Although single-sex sampling is clearly a reflection of the separated nature of the Saudi educational system based on deeply rooted Saudi religious, social, and cultural norms, the findings of the single-sex investigations remain unrepresentative of the entire population of Saudi English language learners.

Data collection instruments are another weak aspect of the methodologies of the Saudi investigations of EFL emotions. Most of the reviewed studies followed a quantitative approach for data collection by employing questionnaire surveys. Although no one would deny the usefulness and practicality of surveys as they have the capacity to capture broad tendencies and enable the collection of a large portion of data over short periods of time, surveys typically lack the ability for an in-depth examination of the phenomenon under investigation since the responses to surveys may be influenced by a variety of factors. Only a handful of the studies reviewed here (e.g., Alqahtani, 2015; Alrabai, 2014a, 2015; Alrahaili, 2013) took advantage of the wealth of other available data collection options (e.g., classroom observations).

Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper provides critical commentary on some of the key issues related to the role of emotion in EFL teaching/learning in the Saudi context over the past 20 years. By examining both the demonstrated strengths and the perceived weaknesses of the Saudi research on EFL emotion during this period, the paper identifies areas that deserve further examination and offers ideas about how future this research can be streamlined and how a unified and consolidated EFL research program can be achieved. The paper also considers ways in which EFL teaching and learning practices can be improved and better learning outcomes can be achieved by considering the role of emotion in this process.

The identified areas of weakness included issues related to the thematic orientation of the Saudi research on EFL and emotion—particularly under- and over-explored topics—and the research design and methodology. This paper identifies an element of randomness in the way that EFL research topics are often selected and explored, with some topic areas receiving a disproportionately large amount of attention (e.g., motivation, attitudes, and anxiety) and others receiving little or no attention. We assert that research efforts should be more balanced and should give due attention to the entire spectrum of interrelated emotional factors that are currently known to play a role in the process of L2 acquisition and to contribute to a learner’s emerging L2 competence. Undeniably important and interesting domains of L2 research that deserve to be
explored further are learners’ autonomy, self-esteem and language aptitude. In addition, each of
the learner emotions should be examined regarding all language skills to build a deeper
understanding of their relationships and contributions to each individual language skill.

To avoid imbalance and randomness in the investigation of topics, it would be useful to
develop ways to coordinate and streamline future emotion-related research in Saudi Arabia and to
work towards the development of a unified and consolidated EFL emotion research program in the
country. One way to bring this about would be the establishment of a specialized association in
Saudi Arabia—for example, a National Association of Psycholinguistics—which would be
responsible for guiding Saudi research in the psycholinguistics area (including emotions about
EFL). A National Association for Psycholinguistics Research would have the capacity to bridge
the gap between academic research efforts and actual EFL delivery by facilitating and optimizing
the implementation of emotion research findings into actual classroom practices.

Importantly, it is necessary for EFL emotion research to take a more practical classroom-
oriented approach to the study of these factors and focus on designing and implementing
experimental interventions with the purpose of boosting teacher practices and learner emotional
behavior. Given the interrelated relationship between emotions in language learning, it is necessary
to conduct research investigations that truly assess the causal relationships among the variables via
the utilization of experimental interventions and longitudinal studies rather than cross-sectional
studies. A longitudinal design implemented via an experimental intervention allows stringent
inferences of causality by examining the relationships among the study variables and can therefore
help build a deeper understanding of the relationships among the variables under investigation.

Apart from the need to achieve greater thematic balance in the research topic section, the
Saudi EFL emotion research will need to adopt a more stringent research design (i.e., empirical,
experimental, and longitudinal), more representative sampling (i.e., size and matching), more
diverse instruments and data collection techniques (i.e., qualitative, quantitative, mixed), more
stringent data analyses (including effect sizes), etc.

EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia are to acknowledge the fact that they play a crucial role in
managing their learners’ emotional states—including their anxiety, attitudes, motivation, self-
estee, and autonomy—because anything that they do in the classroom can positively or
negatively influence their learners (Alrabai, 2015, 2017d; Alshehri, 2014, etc.).

The Saudi government has played a critical role in promoting EFL education in the country.
There are therefore compelling reasons to maintain and even strengthen the scholarship program
to enable more Saudi nationals to complete their education in English-speaking countries. The
benefits from this approach would be multiple, substantial and long-lasting.

A significant limitation of this paper is that it did not, due to space limits, review some
Saudi studies relating to other affective factors (e.g. learner learning styles). While such factors
remain of little importance compared to other ultimately important factors (e.g. motivation and anxiety), it, nonetheless, falls on future research to bridge this gap.

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References


The Notion of Emotion in EFL Learning and Teaching in Saudi Arabia

Alrabai

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Corpus-based Analysis of Lexicosemantic Behaviour of Nervous System Diseases Names

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Abstract:
Terminology represents a significant factor in healthcare communication between specialists and patients. The present paper deals with the lexicosemantic characteristics of multi-word lexical units multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, epidural abscess, Huntington’s chorea, and carpal tunnel syndrome. The research questions focus on collocations, word combinations, and concordances in which they regularly appear; the first lemma to the left and the first lemma to the right from the studied lexeme demonstrate the principal positions of our interest. Simultaneously, the researcher considers their semantic restrictions, semantic prosody, and grammatical relations that influence their lexical features. The whole linguistic material is investigated in the framework of the text corpus English Web 2015 (enTenTen15) with the help of the search tool Sketch Engine. To begin the research, the frequencies of these lexical units are elaborated. The researcher also looks into the morphological classification of the studied words as these two factors affect them from the lexicological perspective. The research outcomes confirm that the nervous disease names appear in a wide range of structures, and they considerably contribute to successful communication in the medical surroundings. Moreover, the results indicate that the lexicosemantic behaviour of the terms reflects extralinguistic factors (psychological, social) of individual communication acts. The phenomenon is to be further examined and interpreted within the corpus analyses of other chosen lexical units, not only from the field of medicine. Eventually, the researcher outlines possible pedagogical implications of the research results in the process of teaching English.

Keywords: corpus-based analysis, collocation, concordance, lemma, lexicosemantics, meaning, nervous system disease names

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Introduction

The textual or linguistic corpus is defined as an extensive collection of linguistic information and texts elaborated with the help of computers, which is applicable for research in linguistics (Baker, Hardie & McEnery, 2006). Sinclair (1991, p. 14) provided a similar definition of corpus; he defines a corpus as “a collection of naturally occurring language texts, chosen to characterize a state or variety of a language”. In recent decades, research papers applying various corpus linguistics techniques to the study of diverse linguistic phenomena have been increasing. As one of the most significant developments in vocabulary studies, it delivers an empirical basis for determining vocabulary behaviour instead of relying on tradition or intuition. Consequently, corpora have transformed how we research vocabulary systems (Schmitt, 2010; Friginal, 2017).

Corpus linguistics is a branch of linguistics that investigates languages based on discourse. Regarding this, corpus linguists have to find a suitable sample of the discourse to work with; the sample is called the corpus (Halliday, Čermáková, Teubert & Yallop, 2004, p. 100). Corpus linguistics, corpus tools, and corpus evidence offer a broader and more delicate perspective into the language in use, to understand how language works in specific contexts (Leláková, 2018).

Moving to the specific area of semantics aspects investigation, the researcher considers words in context. Therefore, corpus concordances enable us to realize how much the meanings of words derive from context; there raises a controversial question of whether words have an independent sense at all (Moon, 2006). One possible response is that corpora show us specific contexts in which a word appears, and it is our knowledge of the word that relates it to its associations with other words (McEnery & Hardie, 2006).

Primarily, the lexical units multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, epidural abscess, Huntington’s chorea, and carpal tunnel syndrome have been chosen as a research sample for the purpose to specify the structures in which they emerge, and to deduce the lexicosemantic characteristics arising from them. Based on the theoretical background, three research questions have been formulated:

1. What are the most typical collocations in which the nervous system disease names appear?
2. What semantic qualities reflect the adjectives placed before the nervous system disease names?
3. What is the capability of nervous system disease names to be predetermined by formal expressive means of the morphological category of determination?

The principal objective of the research is to study collocations, word combinations, and concordances in which the lexical units multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, epidural abscess, Huntington’s chorea, and carpal tunnel syndrome regularly appear. The predominant analysed position is the first lemma to the left and the first lemma to the right from the studied lexical unit. The following aim is to outline, summarize, and exemplify their typical lexicosemantic features. Simultaneously, the research intention is to draw general conclusions about the functioning of nervous system disease names in the textual corpus English Web 2015 (enTenTen15).
Literature Review

Language use is of evident practical importance to healthcare professionals, healthcare students who communicate medical ideas regularly, and non-professionals, who constitute their experience of health and illness. Healthcare communication and its various aspects have become a significant theme of research within Applied Linguistics. Previous studies on health communication have contributed significantly to the analysis of its sociological factors; simultaneously, it is necessary to highlight their close focus on language in use to point up the leading role of language in the practice of health care and medicine (Svenja, Brown, Carter, Crawford & Sahota, 2004). The processes of globalisation are reflected in the change of lexical composition of the language, as new forms of professional relations between people are appearing (Semeniuk, Leleka, Moskalenko, 2020).

Furthermore, several health communication studies have applied corpus methodologies. However, they rarely appear in comparison with other linguistic themes from different branches, such as lexicography, lexicology, morphology (Fellbaum, 2007; Gavioli, 2005; Kadorová & Ondráčková., 2005; Jones & Waller, 2015). More recently, Skelton, Wearn & Hobbs (2002) demonstrated the advantages of integrating qualitative with quantitative approaches in the framework of corpus linguistics. They claim that it is only qualitative methods, such as concordance lines with subsequently extended stretches of text that can explain the available patterns of health language functioning. By way of contrast, quantitative methods identify general patterns that exist in a complex context describable only partially quantitatively (Atkins & Harvey, 2006, Flowerdew, 2004). The recent approaches emphasize the selection of optimal significance tests, and estimate the similarity of distribution patterns (Wallis, 2020).

Regarding other linguistic research methods, a comparative approach was adopted by (Svenja et al., 2004); they compare a corpus of health professionals’ language with a corpus of general spoken English and identify a set of keywords that appear with greater frequency in professional communication. These methodological procedures enabled the authors to characterize specific communication while identifying its prevailing tendencies.

From the sociolinguistic perspective, McEnery & Hardie (2006, p. 117) emphasize that “it is becoming more and more common for sociolinguistically sampled data to be compiled and described in a corpus-like manner”. So far, the study of nervous system illness and disease names in the corpus environment has not been a topic of considerable interest; out of these reasons, the researcher strives to uncover this linguistically challenging issue. The researcher’s aim of investigating these lexical units in a corpus framework has been motivated by the claim that the linguistic material would be best described on examples that appear in natural discourse. Corpus linguistic methodologies will be adopted to research in this field.

Data and Methodology

For the needs of the research, the researcher has worked with the English monolingual synchronic annotated textual corpus English Web 2015 (enTenTen15). As a corpus-based paper, it aims to identify recurrent patterns in which the keywords occur to examine their discourse functions, lexical and semantic peculiarities, and sociological factors in the background.
To search for, sort, and classify the chosen lexical units *multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, epidural abscess, Huntington’s chorea,* and *carpal tunnel syndrome* in the corpus, the researcher will utilize methods of corpus linguistics together with statistical methods interconnected in the unique tool for searching in corpus Sketch Engine. It is essential to emphasize that, on the one hand, the corpora allow the scholar to see the language in the context of discourse. On the other hand, the language samples provided by the corpora do not immediately display specific linguistic phenomena in the most general way. On the grounds of this, the researcher will also apply methods of generalization and classification of linguistic phenomena.

The researcher takes the computerized corpora and computational tools as a starting point for a qualitative analysis, enabling her to study the immediate discourse in which the keywords occur together with broader psychological and social contexts in which they find their positions. The principal criterion is that the researcher selects only statistically significant words for our analyses; the researcher excludes lemmas that display frequency per million < 0.01.

Overall, the choice of nouns for a more in-depth analysis has been reasonably motivated by their frequency. However, scientists understand frequency as a relative phenomenon; different corpora result in other frequency lists. According to Mahlberg (2005), single words in frequency lists give information about a text’s content; nevertheless, their position in the list does not tell us much about meaning. As Stubbs (2001) points out: “The computer findings (frequencies, comparisons or graphs) are not the interpretation of the meaning of the text, but the presentation of some of its formal features”. These standard features have to be linked to contextual features to uncover the meaning of the studied words. Finally, some of the analysed lexical units belong to the group of compound nouns. Scholars do not view the concept of the unit of meaning as the criterion for fixed expressions as arbitrary (Halliday et al., 2004).

Another important point about the selection of nouns for this study is the fact the number of nervous system disease names that the researcher could handle here is limited. The aim has been merely to work with a manageable amount of information that is to be presented within this paper. To build a complex picture of the semantic behaviour of names of nervous system diseases, the researcher has selected nouns/compound nouns in the three positions of the frequency scale:

- lexical units with high frequency: *multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease*;
- lexical units with frequency in the middle of the scale: *carpal tunnel syndrome*;
- lexical units with low frequency: *epidural abscess, Huntington’s chorea*.
Table 1. *Number of concordances of the studied lexical units and their frequency per million in English Web 2015 (enTenTen15)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nervous system disease</th>
<th>Number of concordances</th>
<th>Frequency per million</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s disease</td>
<td>66,368</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkinson’s disease</td>
<td>44,109</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multiple sclerosis</td>
<td>43,258</td>
<td>2.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amyotrophic lateral sclerosis</td>
<td>53,222</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpal tunnel syndrome</td>
<td>4127</td>
<td>0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epidural abscess</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntington’s chorea</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Results**

The first phase of the research is represented by observing collocations, combinations, and concordances of the studied lexical units in the corpus English Web 2015 (enTenTen15). From a methodological procedure point of view, it is more convenient to treat a phrase as a collocation than to describe it as the co-occurrence of two single words. This section outlines, summarizes, and exemplifies the qualitative analysis results together with the semantic implications emerging from them.

**Alzheimer’s Disease**

The corpus evidence manifests the occurrence of compound noun *Alzheimer’s disease* in a wide range of structures. Its word-class patterns are apparent: the compound noun prevails with determiners; different modifiers ranging from adjectives to nominal and verbal prepositional phrases modify the lexical unit.

Adjectives (marginally of domestic origin) that in the English Web 2015 (enTenTen15) Corpus precede the compound noun *Alzheimer’s disease* are classified from the point of view of their semantic signs in the following way:

- adjectives denoting temporal aspects: *sporadic, developing, onset, late-onset, early-onset, advancing*;
- adjectives denoting the subjective attitude (the most extensive subgroup): *mild, mild-to-moderate, moderate, while severe Alzheimer’s disease* is the prevailing combination in this context: the power of emotive words has been recognized and proved;
- adjectives connecting *Alzheimer’s disease* with the psychic state of the patient: *dementia, predementia*.

In contrast, there was no increased frequency in *early-onset sporadic Alzheimer’s disease* or patients with vascular dementia. (bio2rdf.org)
The evidence obtained from the corpus implies that verbs that expand the elements of meaning of the compound noun *Alzheimer’s disease* appear in more semantically relevant collocations that regular dictionaries provide us with: *treat, develop, prevent, moderate, diagnose, detect, cause, fight, combat*. What is more, the verb *face* displays metaphorical connotations within six concordances:

The clinic provides diagnosis, assessment, and research for thousands of individuals who *face* Alzheimer’s disease and other memory disorders. (mind.uci.edu)

The most frequent lexical units in the position the first lemma to the left from the compound noun *Alzheimer’s disease* are prepositions creating prepositional phrases; they are the descriptions of diverse external conditions connected with the treatment of the disease: the preposition *of*: *(the treatment of)*; the preposition *with*: *(affected with)*; the preposition *in*: *(progress in)*, the preposition *for*: *(immunotherapies for)*; the preposition *about*: *(think about)*.

The nouns often associate with emotions, and these are predominantly negative ones. The researcher considers about one-third of the concordances to have a neutral tone, and only one-tenth of them are of a positive manner. The contribution of these nouns to the communicative message becomes clear thanks to the specific context in which they appear.

Seen from the perspective of nouns semantics and hyponymic relations, the compound noun *Alzheimer’s disease* has the potential to be combined with various conditions; but still there emerge several subgroups which unite meanings further specifying its features or signs: *cataracts, diabetes, obesity, inflammation, hypertension, atherosclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, nervous system deterioration, muscle breakdown, chronic fatigue syndrome*. The specific example below highlights the point mentioned above; at the same time, it indicates a possible connection between *Alzheimer’s disease* and the mental health of the patient:


Another way of examining the compound noun *Alzheimer’s* is to observe its capability to be predetermined by the definite or indefinite articles. The definite article is utilized in 1430 concordances as the first lemma to the left; it fulfils two primary functions in this position:

- the cataphoric reference (we learn more about the disease later form the context): *to find the cure for the Alzheimer’s disease that had claimed his grandmother*;
- to modify a noun following the disease’s name, not the disease itself (part of a proper name): *The Alzheimer’s Disease Center, the Alzheimer’s Disease Neuroimaging Initiative, the Alzheimer’s Disease Fund*.

The indefinite article appears in 248 concordances with *Alzheimer’s disease*; it executes solely one function – the indefinite article with the descriptive role; the noun going after *Alzheimer’s disease* is specified by the health condition: *an Alzheimer’s disease patient, treatment, blood test*. 
Parkinson’s Disease

Studying the significant collocations in which the compound noun Parkinson’s disease displays its potential, the researcher commences with adjectives since their use in the position first lemma to the left from the compound noun Parkinson's disease is particularly noteworthy; on the one hand, they express meanings that the speakers of the English language naturally utilize in connection with health conditions: advancing, recessive, familial, idiopathic, early, sporadic, inherited, untreated Parkinson’s disease. On the other hand, there are present several emotionally coloured adjectives as in the example below: severe, moderate, promising Parkinson’s disease and marginally adjectives associated with the mental health of the patient: debilitating Parkinson’s disease.

Concerning the verbs that express procedural meanings in the surroundings of the compound noun Parkinson’s disease, they display wide semantic variations on the scale from positive to negative connotations: treat, battle, cure, diagnose, study, prevent Parkinson’s disease on one end of the plate and develop, cause Parkinson’s disease on its other end.

The most frequent nouns occurring in the hyponymic relation with the compound noun Parkinson’s disease include the subsequent structures: stroke, cancer, heart disease, blindness, diabetes. They possess the capacity to denote more health conditions existing together with Parkinson’s disease, with which patients have to struggle.

Formal expressive means of determination are applied with the compound noun Parkinson’s disease in the English Web 2015 (enTenTen15), hence to a lesser degree than with the compound noun multiple sclerosis. The application of possessive pronouns her, their, my, our, his in front of the health condition’s name demonstrates its direct influence on the patient’s life. Furthermore, the researcher spots collocations with the quantifier all. They modify a noun that follows the analysed lexical unit: all Parkinson's disease patients, all Parkinson’s disease sufferers. The determiners belong to the linguistic signs signifying a relationship between the words and external discourse reality. In contrast, being of peripheral importance within the English Web 2015 (enTenTen15), the indefinite article a is applied in 243 concordances. The researcher again acknowledges it as having a descriptive role not for the compound noun Parkinson’s disease itself, but for a noun placed after it: Parkinson’s disease model, patient, target.

The structure a noun/verb + the preposition about + Parkinson’s disease possesses the capacity to indicate several social and psychological factors in the studied discourse – we make sense of the social experience of health through it; the examples are literal, but such uses also imply psychological states of the members of communication acts: learn the basics about, information about, learn more about, articles about, talking about, awareness about, myths about, facts about, questions about, a new song about, tweet about, presentations about.

There’s a new song about Parkinson’s Disease called "Blame it on the Parkinson's". (wilkins-pf.org)

The structure of a noun/verb + the preposition with + Parkinson’s disease is still very much associated with people connected with the disease both directly and indirectly: diagnosed with,
patients with, individuals with, persons with, people with, adults with, subjects with, sufferers with, struggling with, affected with.

Most patients with Parkinson’s disease (PD) show unilateral motor impairment. (fapesp.br)

Multiple Sclerosis

Within the adjectival collocations (we search for the first adjective to the left from the studied lexical unit) in which the compound noun multiple sclerosis appears, the adjective progressive is the most frequent one that emerges with it identifying its most predictable feature. Further, the compound noun multiple sclerosis is preceded by the adjectives of both: native: (battling, treating) and Latin or Greek origin: (relapsing, remitting, chronic-progressive, secondary-progressive, paediatric multiple sclerosis).

In the example below, the meaning of multiple sclerosis is specified via the application of two following adjectives:

The report deals with values of cell number and total protein in intermittent and chronic-progressive multiple sclerosis taking into account age and sex. (scda.org.sg)

The spread of the compound noun multiple sclerosis in various registers of the English language is also illustrated by formal expressive means of category of determination applicable with it. Multiple sclerosis belongs to few lexical units within our research material that are further determined by possessive pronouns your, their, by the quantifier all, and the cardinal numeral first.

To make sure you’re adequately equipped for your multiple sclerosis, it’s crucial to develop a comfortable relationship with your physician and care team, Beaver said. (healthpassion.info)

As for the nouns that become known around the compound noun multiple sclerosis in the equal syntactical position as hyponyms, they are semantically related to further health conditions that are associated with it, and they create hyponymic chains of nervous and other body systems diseases: rheumatism, hepatitis C, tuberculosis, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, lupus erythematosus, cerebral palsy, spina bifida. The example below represents part of a longer stretch of text that we analyse in terms of patterns as corpus linguistic conclusions presuppose that meaning is observable through designs (Mahlberg, 2005, p. 162).

Significant collocations of the compound noun multiple sclerosis are observable when it becomes part of a phrase modifying another noun (we study the first lemma to the right from the studied lexical unit): a potential multiple sclerosis treatment, sufferer, symptoms, therapy, diagnosis. The collocations might be in concord with already established notions in dictionaries or display original word combinations: multiple sclerosis is not a disease but a condition. From a sociolinguistic point of view, they are noteworthy for the understanding of humans and their
behaviour and institutions. In addition to this, a limited number of these nouns have the potential to appear also in front of the analysed compound noun: *therapy of, diagnosis of multiple sclerosis, treatment of multiple sclerosis*. Their possible double position demonstrates their extralinguistic importance manifested in the communication situations between health specialists and patients.

The compound noun *multiple sclerosis* is part of a complex network of textual relations. The examples of the continuity function are also evidence of the textual complexity on which the creation of meaning becomes dependent. To illustrate this, the cases when the prepositions *in* or *on* are relevant demonstrate the scientists’ interest in the disease research: *studies in multiple sclerosis, research in multiple sclerosis, a trusted source of information on multiple sclerosis*.

With regards to the preposition *with* (5589 concordances) (0.3 per million) that is the most frequent lemma to the left from *multiple sclerosis*, it is manageable to decode elements of meaning that communicate the considerable impact of the health condition on the patients’ lives: *people living with diagnosed with, battle with, struggle with, experiences with multiple sclerosis*.

Furthermore, we frequently find the preposition *of* in the genitive phrase modifiers: *features of, aspects of, the prognosis of, a sufferer of, signs of, manifestations of, stages of, forms of, a victim of*. Additionally, there exist combinations with the compound noun *multiple sclerosis* directly expressing the variety of the health condition, as illustrated in the following examples: *subsets of, variant of, subgroups of, classification of*.

**Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis**

When investigating and understanding the language both doctors and patients use concerning the compound noun *amyotrophic lateral sclerosis*, we observe only a restricted number of lexical units in the first lemma to the left from it. This particular piece of information closely connects its terminological nature and etymological properties.

To identify statistically significant adjectives that provide a useful insight into the semantic behaviour of the compound noun, we spot only these in the English Web 2015 (enTenTen15) with the frequency higher than 0.1 per million lemmas: *sporadic, familial, inherited, juvenile advanced, developing amyotrophic lateral sclerosis*. Moreover, one can find the verbs *defeat, battle, treat, cure, combat, cause amyotrophic lateral sclerosis* plentifully in the same position.

Could an overeager response to viral infections predispose certain people to *juvenile amyotrophic lateral sclerosis*? (researchals.org)

When searching for additional sociolinguistic aspects that are covered by the structure a noun + a preposition + *amyotrophic lateral sclerosis*, the subsequent dominant communication elements are classified:

- information spread about the disease: *schooling about, learning more about, know about, scientific knowledge about*;
- consequences (often lethal) of the disease: *suffer from, mortality from, die from*. 
The excess *mortality from* amyotrophic lateral sclerosis seems to be associated with above-average exposure to electromagnetic fields and may be due to repeated episodes with electric shocks. (emfs.info)

The position of the preposition *with* in the structure mentioned above deserves particular regard; it enables to name those affected by the health condition. Among the most frequent collocates with the preposition are the following words: *patients with, subjects with, individuals with, people with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.*

In the specific case of *amyotrophic lateral sclerosis*, the determinate power of the definite and indefinite articles is suppressed to a minimal extent. The definite article (79 concordances) is suggested on the whole in proper name structures: *The Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis Association.* Scholars recommend the indefinite article (13 concordances) when the member of the communication act describes the noun in more detail: *an amyotrophic lateral sclerosis research project, an amyotrophic lateral sclerosis clinical trial.*

**Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**

Analyzing the first lemma to the left, the compound noun *carpal tunnel syndrome* appears to be semantically further modified by several different word classes; the adjectives in the position are twofold:

- denoting subjective qualities (prevailing): developing, severe, conquering, mild, moderate, recurrent; it is noticeable that there exist even cases when they contradict each other;
- denoting objective qualities: idiopathic, bilateral, work-related carpal tunnel syndrome.

Aetiology of work-related carpal tunnel syndrome: the role of lumbrical muscles and tool size on carpal tunnel pressures. (mayo.edu)

Moving to the word class of verbs, they are the first lemma to the left from the compound noun *carpal tunnel syndrome* only of a limited number: *include, prevent, develop, avoid, relieve, diagnose, identify, eliminate, treat carpal tunnel syndrome.* As it is evident from this enumeration, most of them express meanings to help people suffering from the condition. The only exception out of this model is the verb *have.* It appears to be the most frequent verb with general meaning in this setting.

The ergonomic design helps prevent carpal tunnel syndrome while working at a keyboard. (odeecompany.net)

In the English Web 2015 (enTenTen15) Corpus, there were recorded numerous nominal structures with prepositions *with* and *of* which add extra information to the compound noun *carpal tunnel syndrome;* it is evident that they facilitate associating different senses with different patterns or structures. By way of example, practices in the first subgroup express a reference point for a person affected by the health condition: *patients with, individuals with, people with; symptoms of, treatment of, studies of, the study of.*
Current projects include a large, prospective study of carpal tunnel syndrome and other upper extremity disorders. (wustl.edu)

The references with carpal tunnel syndrome found in the English Web 2015 (enTenTen15) Corpus mirror the language users’ understanding of reality, their attitudes, and either objective or subjective evaluations:

- the generic use of the indefinite article (23 concordances) demonstrating any representative member of the class;

A clinical investigation can usually confirm or exclude a carpal tunnel syndrome or an ulnar nerve entrapment at the elbow or wrist level. Still, sometimes a neurophysiologic investigation is necessary to confirm the diagnosis. (vibrosense.eu)

- the indefinite article with a descriptive role (6 concordances) providing more precise information about the noun; a severe carpal tunnel syndrome;

- the definite article with the direct anaphoric reference (76 concordances) with the noun mentioned earlier in the context:

Epidural Abscess

The compound noun epidural abscess appears in discourses abundant in terminology that are not intended for the general public as the applied vocabulary makes the understanding more complicated. Mostly adjectives of Latin or Greek origin form the field of medicine spinal, intracranial, lumbar, cervical, spontaneous, anterior, paraspinal (25) are localized in the first lemma to the left from the compound noun epidural abscess. The only exceptions out of this model are the adjectives chronic epidural abscess, untreated epidural abscess, and the spontaneous epidural abscess that are more general.

On the same grounds, we distinguish lexical units of Greek and Latin origin in the structure: a noun + the preposition with + epidural abscess: primary cutaneous nocardiosis with epidural abscess, spondylodiscitis with epidural abscess and within hyponymic relation: phlegmon, arachnoiditis, discitis, vertebral osteomyelitis.

These include not only meningitis but also damage to the spinal cord, nerve injury, and an epidural abscess, which can cause incontinence, urinary retention, fever, and back pain. (treatedbackpain.org)

By way of contrast, with the most names of diseases in question, epidural abscess displays particular concrete (visible, touchable) features, it is classified as countable, and the indefinite article is preferable to fulfill language users’ needs; indeed, it is the context that determines the choice of the article:

Being treated for illnesses such as blood infections, sinus infections, and ear infections can help reduce your risk of developing an epidural abscess. (columbianeurology.org)

The indefinite article has been recorded as the most frequent lexical unit (48 concordances) in the first lemma to the left from the compound noun epidural abscess; in contrast to this, the definite
article is found only in 4 concordances. The morphological behaviour of the countable noun regulates the application of individual articles and the semantic references that naturally emerge from it – its descriptive or classifying roles. However, in this respect, the patterns for countable nouns are difficult to relate to the uncountable nouns patterns.

Huntington’s Chorea
Out of the lexical units studied by us, the compound noun Huntington’s chorea is the least covered in the concordances in the English Web 2015 (enTenTen15). Its etymological and stylistic peculiarities predestine it to collocate with other lexical units within the discourse only in the limited scope. In other words, there are no adjectives that would add further semantic traits to it; nouns + prepositions that occur in its closest surroundings are exclusively from the field of medicine: a medication for, the genetic illness of, genetic testing of. The same is valid both for the active and passive verbal structures in these positions: investigate, inherit, treat Huntington’s chorea and became hospitalized with, was treated for (marginally, is known as, was named, is called).

You’re right, of course. The disease was originally named 'Huntington’s Chorea' from the Greek word 'chorea' meaning 'to dance' after the involuntary jerky (dance-like) movements characteristic of the disease. (nhsinform.scot)

The compound noun Huntington's chorea is most often recorded in the surroundings of tardive dyskinesia, Wilson’s disease, Tourette syndrome, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), multiple sclerosis, tardive dystonia; with the help of these lexemes, semantic fields of illnesses symptoms are created. The connection between Huntington’s chorea and other possible psychic problems of the patients is indicated by hyponymic relations with denominations like Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder, degeneration.

The compound noun Huntington's chorea is the only one out of the ten studied lexical units that do not present any formal expressive means of the category of determination within the English Web 2015 (enTenTen15). To list relations between each entry and other entries from the research, the number of definite, indefinite, and zero articles applied with each of them has been enumerated (Table two).

Table 2. Number of concordances containing the definite, indefinite, or zero articles with the analysed names of nervous system diseases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nervous system disease</th>
<th>Definite article</th>
<th>Indefinite article</th>
<th>Zero article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s disease</td>
<td>1 430</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>64 690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkinson's disease</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>43 053</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multiple sclerosis</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43 237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amyotrophic lateral sclerosis</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpal tunnel syndrome</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>4 018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epidural abscess</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntington’s chorea</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research interpretation

Morphological and lexico-semantic characteristics of lexical units multiple sclerosis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, epidural abscess, Huntington’s chorea and carpal tunnel syndrome in English Web 2015 (enTenTen15) copy general principals of grammatical system functioning of contemporary language. At the same time, they reflect the needs of its users which include various extralinguistic factors (sociological, psychological and others).

The frequency criteria lead to distinctions between the nouns, but they also point out similarities. Similarities between meanings are evident when we compare the contexts in which the implications occur, and contextual descriptions find their grounds in various factors. Individual word classes senses are distinguished through types of noun collocate, the entity being described; thus, the researcher groups the names of nervous system diseases and word classes that collocate with them. On that account, we focus attention on the statistical calculation of word classes as recorded in the position of the first lemma to the left from the analysed units (Table three).

Table 3. Percentage representation (%) of word classes as recorded in the position the first lemma to the left from the analysed units

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nervous system disease</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Prepositions</th>
<th>Articles</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alzheimer’s disease</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkinson’s disease</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multiple sclerosis</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>amyotrophic lateral sclerosis</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpal tunnel syndrome</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epidural abscess</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huntington’s chorea</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other related and fundamental issue made about the investigated lexical units (the first lemma to the left or the right) concerns their mutual interchangeability in numerous contexts. This phenomenon is predetermined by several factors, and it is associated with the introduced theoretical background (Moon, 2006; Halliday et al., 2004):

- most lexical units in question are semantically related;
- the users of the language do not always perceive the discrete semantic nuances of individual words;
- the real utilization of names is strongly tied to extralinguistic reality;
its frequent occurrence confirms the centrality of this phenomenon within the investigated field.

**Conclusion**

After studying the lexical units to answer the research question one, it is possible to conclude that the most typical collocations in which the nervous system disease names appear are prepositional nominal phrases, adjectival phrases, and hyponymic structures.

Regarding the research question two, the analysis has shown that the adjectives before the nervous system disease names denote mostly negative subjective qualities and emotions. They are only marginally of terminological character. This fact is in concord with the presupposition that linguistic elements reflect the mental state of a language user.

The investigation within the research question three has proved that the nervous system disease names display a significant determinative power. It is noticeable that the non-specifying use of the zero articles is possible with all names of the nervous system diseases, while the definite and indefinite articles are restricted to particular manifestations of their syntactic potential and are used for a unique effect.

The methodology employed in this paper might encourage future studies in the area of corpus linguistics, focusing on the specific issues not only from general English but ESP and media discourse as well (Karpenko, 2017). One of the future research goals would be to classify our concordances according to a domain, genre, text type, or publication date; to observe whether the terminology is used differently in books addressed at a professional audience from texts written for the general public or to distinguish a possible change of meaning over the time axis.

In the present paper, the relationship between diseases of the nervous system and mental disorders has emerged into the foreground. One of the future specific research areas would be to conduct a study highlighting the mutual interconnections between the diseases mentioned above and mental health conditions like addictions, autism, bipolar disorder, depression, and others. Broader research perspectives are available when studying the linguistic phenomena in parallel (English-Slovak or English-Russian) corpora since languages influence each other semantically (Lacková et al., 2019).

The results presented above lead to several recommendations for English teachers to elaborate vocabulary in the teaching process, especially at medical universities. Furthermore, this paper might contribute to the understanding of processes that underline the choice of lexical units in given contexts, both from linguistic and psychological points of view. Therefore, the corpus analysis results have practical relevance for health practitioners and educators concerned with health issues.

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References


Investigation of Factors Influencing Speaking Performance of Saudi EFL Learners

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Abstract
Equal focus needs be placed on teaching all four basic skills of language learning: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, it is observed that due attention is not devoted to developing speaking skills in Saudi EFL learners; this task is especially challenging as English is not widely used or spoken in their day-to-day communication. The current study aims to investigate the psychological factors which affect learners’ speaking performance by: (a) examining the strategies learners use for developing speaking skills, (b) identifying obstacles confronted by learners in developing speaking skills, and (c) suggesting ways to facilitate the acquisition of English speaking skills. The research seeks answers to these questions: (1) What are some psychological factors affecting speaking skills of students? (2) Why do learners find speaking in English so difficult? I distributed a questionnaire among 200 female and male participants majoring in various fields at Majmaah university in Saudi Arabia. I employed SPSS to analyze the accumulated data and displayed the results in descriptive tables. The results reveal that affective factors impacting students’ performance in speaking skills are shyness, peer pressure, anxiety, and fear of making mistakes. Other factors that hinder speaking performance are paucity of necessary vocabulary, lack of exposure to the target language, and scarce opportunities to practice speaking outside the classroom. The study contributes to the existing English language learning (ELL) literature through its focus on the affective factors impacting speaking performance in Arabic-speaking EFL learners.

Keywords: affective factors, language learners, motivation, speaking performance, teaching strategies

Introduction

Teaching English as a spoken skill has always been, and remains, challenging for language instructors when it comes to their Arabic-speaking students because English is a foreign language to these learners. Instructors are faced with teaching this language to students for whom English is not used in day-to-day affairs (McArthur, 2005). To successfully teach speaking skills, teachers need to understand the factors that affect students’ speaking skills. During the process of learning English, Arab students of English as a foreign language (EFL) encounter numerous challenges in this whole process; one of the significant problems they face is the non-availability of natural and interactive environments which could enable them to master the language easily (Rabab’ah, 2003). Several studies (Hamad, 2013; Al-Seghayer, 2014; Mahboob & Elyas, 2014; Alrabai, 2014; and Alrashidi & Phan, 2015) have found lack of motivation and scant skills to be major obstacles for Arab students in giving a good performance in the classroom. Indeed, Thirusanku and Yunus (2014) reported that Arab students studying in Kuala Lumpur, an international city where English is spoken widely and fluently, (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2014) acquired a higher level of proficiency as compared to their counterparts studying English in the Arab world (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2014). Thus, exposure to the target language is one of the main factors that hinder the progress in developing fluency in English language.

Research Objectives and Questions

This study examines psychological factors that affect learners’ progress in developing their speaking skills. There are three main goals of this research:

a. Scrutinize the strategies learners use for developing speaking skills.

b. Identify obstacles confronted by learners in developing speaking skills.

c. Suggest solutions for making it easier to acquire English speaking skills.

Thus, this research is intended to contribute to the existing literature on the subject by answering these two questions with regard to Arabic-speaking EFL learners:

1. What are some psychological factors affecting speaking skills of students?

2. Why do learners find speaking in English so difficult?

For the first research question, I hypothesized that fear of failure is one major factor. For the second research question, I expected that learners would cite the lack of opportunities to speak English in their daily life as a substantial hindrance.

Barriers to Progress in Developing Speaking Skills

Of the four foundational skills, speaking has gained much importance in language pedagogy. However, the activity of speaking is not as easy as it might seem. It needs a lot of effort. Learners encounter hindrances that are classified into five major categories, and which have internal and/or external sources: (1) insufficient exposure to the target language, (2) low motivation, (3) anxiety and lack of confidence, (4) inadequate language knowledge, and (5) ineffective teaching pedagogy. These five obstacles are discussed in turn, below.
Lack of Exposure to Language

The most significant role in language learning is often played by the learner’s environment (an external factor). Once a language learner gets a comprehensive atmosphere with other speakers of the target language, they could begin to communicate more effectively in that language. Undeniably, the social milieu plays a vital part as it promotes L2 learners’ enthusiasm and motivation, goals, and proficiency levels (Beebe, 1985; Kumaravadivelu, 2006). Moreover, Wong-Fillmore (1989) concluded through her research work that a conducive environment provides a learner with opportunities to learn a second language with ease. Similarly, those students who have ample chances to use the L2, especially in natural situations on a daily basis, could perform better. In contrast, in such countries where learners study English as a foreign language and do not get any chance outside of school to practice the language, face challenges in mastering and retaining the L2. It could be inferred that Arab students’ minimal L2 exposure works as a barrier to language learning and makes it difficult for them to become proficient in the language (Khan, 2011; Alrasheedi & Phan, 2015). This lack of competence is not limited to Arab students only, but is found in other parts of the world where students confront the same problems. According to Wang (2009), more exposure to written practice as compared to speaking practice of the L2 is a major obstacle to improving the speaking performance of Chinese students.

Lack of Motivation

Motivation is an essential factor to achieve proficiency in a second language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). Ausubel’s (1968) cognitive theory of learning posited a circular relationship between learning and motivation: “motivation can promote learning and learning can produce motivation again” (Hong & Ganapathy, 2017, p. 17). Gardner and Lambert (1972) identified two types of motivation when it comes to language learning: instrumental and integrative. Instrumental motivation is the drive to learn the L2 for some sort of material gain or advantage, such as improving one’s job opportunities or an increase in salary or income; integrative motivation is when people want to learn the L2 with a view to “participating in the culture of its people” (Mahadi & Jafari, 2012, p. 232). Thus, motivation derives from both external and internal sources.

When it comes to learning another language, motivation of either type includes two important ingredients: first is the need on the part of learners to communicate and second is the way they perceive the target language (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Ideally, a learner should attempt to speak the L2 at every occasion and in every situation. This would result in the learner’s appreciation for the spoken language, and thus their motivation would be increased and enhanced. Another factor is that if the learner has a positive attitude toward the target language and its speakers’ culture and traditions, then a desire to learn and communicate would develop in that learner. Recent relevant studies (Ahmed 2015a, 2015b; Al Asmari, 2013; Alkaff, 2013; Al Noursi, 2013; Al samadani & Ibnian, 2015; Khan, 2011; Tanni, 2015) give credence to the concept that motivation is irreplaceably crucial if one is to master a foreign language.

Students’ Anxiety and Lack of Confidence

Anxiety and (lack of) confidence are internally produced, but can be exacerbated or mitigated by external factors. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) identified “foreign language anxiety” (p. 125) as a particular form of anxiety experienced by learners. Speaking performance in the target language is affected by the student’s anxiety level. Goh and Burns (2012) observed that anxiety affects learners adversely and leaves them stressful. This type of experience creates
hurdles for learners and compels them to step back from participating in speaking activities. Speakers also fear that they might be ridiculed by listeners (Horwitz et al., 1986). Therefore, they remain unprepared to take risks and thus put themselves into a troubling situation. Alhmadi (2014) likewise noted that anxiety occurs naturally when one learns speaking skills, and Asif (2017) has found that Saudi EFL learners become fearful when they speak the language. Conversely, self-esteem and self-efficacy (cognitively construed forms of self-confidence) have been shown to positively impact motivation and language skills in learners (Piran, 2014), as has attitude on the part of the learner (Ahmed, 2015a, 2015b; Al Asmari, 2013; Alkaff, 2013; Al Noursi, 2013; Al samadani & Ibnian, 2015; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Soomro & Farooq, 2018; Tanni, 2015).

Inadequate Familiarity With English

One cannot speak articulately unless one possesses adequate knowledge of the target language, and this is an external factor. Students need a firm understanding of sound production, including phonemes and their combinations, in order to utter them correctly (Canale & Swain, 1980). Interference from L1 creates difficulties for learners to pronounce certain words. They have to learn stress, rhythm and intonation. Goh and Burns (2012) found that scant vocabulary and no grip on grammar prevent learners from expressing their thoughts accurately. To sum up, learners must put in utmost efforts to enhance vocabulary, improve phonological knowledge, and rectify their grammatical errors. Similarly, teachers need to use effectual techniques to enhance their students’ language competency.

Ineffective Teaching Methodology

The teaching method is an external factor that influences learners’ attitudes and motivation. If it is engaging and student-centered, it is more likely to reduce anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986), increase self-efficacy (Piran, 2014), and thus motivate students. The teacher’s lesson plan and guidelines should be designed to enhance students’ communication competency. This could be achieved through Communicative Language Teaching (CLT; Littlewood & William, 1981), which helps students to develop their spoken skills. In CLT, the role of the student is not only as receiver but they are active and participate energetically. The teacher has various roles to play: not only to impart knowledge, but also to help and guide students in the right direction. Unfortunately, research has shown that in Arab countries most classes continue to be teacher-centered and utilize rote learning rather than learner-centered and skills-based learning (Alhaisoni & Rahman, 2013, p. 115). It is the reason learners are not given due opportunity to practice and thus are lacking in spoken competency. Gubaily (2012), and Alhaisoni and Rahman (2013) observed that such methods employed by teachers in the Arabian peninsula were ineffective and did not foster motivation; these researchers have suggested to put into practice student-centered methods of instruction. Similarly, Fareh (2010) highlighted that a significant challenge was inadequate teaching training of EFL instructors in Arab countries. Alhaisoni and Rahman (2013) echoed this concern; they also mentioned the need to equip students with sufficient knowledge of basic skills and recommended that English teachers in the Kingdom must abandon obsolete methods of teaching such as “the lecture mode of instruction and the dictation of notes” (p. 117).

Research Methodology and Design

The method applied in this study is quantitative in nature; the survey questionnaire was distributed among 100 female and 100 male undergraduate students from various disciplines.
questionnaire was patterned after from the one used by Soomro and Farooq (2018), adapted to the needs and requirements of the context in which this present study was conducted. Questionnaires were distributed to student-participants randomly selected from both male and female sections in Majmaah University’s College of Education. Questionnaires were apportioned to male and female students equally. Male participants returned seventy-one completely filled questionnaires, which makes a response rate of more than 70%, compared to 81 questionnaires returned from female participants: a response rate of 81%. The analysis of the data was carried out via the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and the results displayed in descriptive tables.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Cronbach’s alpha was run to measure the reliability of results in all sections of the questionnaire. The range of alpha scale for all question items in all three sections was above 0.8; thus, the reliability of the constructs is .80 (i.e., 80%) which is above than the required value, that is, 0.60 (Cronbach, 1951). Therefore, the results of this study are reliable. The survey results are displayed in Tables 1, 2, and 3 in the subsequent subsections.

Strategies to Teach Speaking Skills

Table 1
Questionnaire Section 1: Strategies to Teach Speaking Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section 1: Strategies to teach speaking skills</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher designs and uses speaking activities in the classroom.</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The topical knowledge helps the students to prepare and perform the task.</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the task, the teacher encourages the students to go on with their task.</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher clarifies pronunciation points during the lesson to help students improving their speaking skills.</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>1.540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher interrupts and makes corrections (like pronunciation, structure, etc.)</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>1.352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When a student gets stuck during the tasks, the teacher helps and guides them to continue.</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher listens patiently and provides feedback to individual students after the task is performed.</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher encourages students to speak in English during pair and group work.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher conducts role play activities and uses picture description in the class to improve speaking skills of the students.</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean value for the first two items ($M = 3.35$, $SD < 1.6$) suggest that students believe that teachers do design and use speaking activities in the classroom and that the topical knowledge (the relevance of such activities) does assist students to perform tasks (namely, speaking) in the classroom. However, learners feel that they do not get a required level of encouragement from the
teachers and teachers do not spend enough time on clarifying pronunciation points. Students also think that teachers interrupt and make corrections (like pronunciation, structure, etc.). One positive point that emerged was that students feel that they get sufficient support ($M = 3.60, SD = 1.5$) when they have found themselves stuck while performing classroom tasks. Teachers’ feedback is one of the areas where students feel dissatisfied. Although teachers do not support or encourage individual students ($M = 2.55, SD = 1.67$) while they perform tasks, teachers are perceived to be relatively better at extending support for the pair (dyad) and group work. The participants’ responses ($M = 3.40, SD = 1.36$) indicate that teachers also arrange role play activities and use picture descriptions in the class.

### External and Internal factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>Questionnaire Section 2: External and Internal Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Section 2: External and internal factors</td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students are provided ample time to perform a speaking task.</td>
<td>3.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students prepare well before performing the speaking task.</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students feel motivated and confident while performing the speaking task.</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the speaking task, other students/listeners are supportive and tolerant.</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are shy students who can’t speak in the class.</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some students switch over to L1 during the speaking task.</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students practice English language outside the classroom to improve their speaking skills.</td>
<td>2.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher gets irritated by the mistakes made by students in speaking task and stops them.</td>
<td>2.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teacher scolds students who don’t speak or speak with poor pronunciation.</td>
<td>2.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students are capable of identifying their weaknesses and strengths in speaking tasks.</td>
<td>2.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students don’t have knowledge of the culture of native speakers of English.</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students make a lot of pauses or use ‘ah,’ ‘um,’ etc. in their speaking tasks.</td>
<td>4.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The students construct sentences in L1 and then translate the same into English. 
Valid N (listwise)

Investigating the factors (both internal and external) affecting the speaking skills of learners, the results show that students have pointed to a variety of factors that they believe do have an effect. The most important factor ($M = 4.20, SD = 1.255$) is that students do not have knowledge of the culture of native speakers of English. This is followed closely by another major factor ($M = 4.15, SD = 1.53$), in which learners introduce pauses or hesitation markers such as “um” or “ah” to fill their speech. A third factor ($M = 4.10, SD = 1.418$) is that students construct sentences in L1 and then translate the same into English. This is known as “mother tongue interference,” in which learners think in L1 before producing output in L2. A fourth salient factor ($M = 4.05, SD = 1.57$) is that students will give up on the L2 in the middle of the speaking activity and switch to L1. Students face a great deal of difficulty, as indicated by their reports that they make a lot of pauses in performing their speaking tasks. That is why learners think they are not capable ($M = 2.30, SD = 1.4$) of identifying their weaknesses and strengths in speaking tasks. It is worth noting that in such circumstances teachers do not scold those students who do not try to speak or who speak with poor pronunciation. Students report that they do not practice English language outside the classroom in order to improve their speaking skills. In addition, students feel shy in performing speaking tasks in the classroom. Learners also think that they do not have sufficient motivation and confidence to perform better at spoken tasks. The survey participants reported that their fellow students are supportive and tolerant when one of their classmates performs a speaking task ($M = 3.45, SD = 1.866$).

**Difficulties and Needs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire Section 3: Difficulties and Needs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The students like to improve their speaking skills.</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>.829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students feel anxious before performing the speaking task.</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>.795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure to perform well helps the students to perform better.</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students have got a lot of opportunities to practice their speaking skills outside the classroom.</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>1.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students cannot perform well as they are afraid of making mistakes during the task.</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>.556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some students can’t perform well as they forget or can’t think of some ideas during the task.</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>.847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency in oral skills is necessary for securing a good job in future.</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students feel difficulty in comprehending other speakers so can’t respond properly.</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>.451</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The students have got excellent grasp of vocabulary and use proper words when speaking.

The descriptive table indicates that students report that they wish to improve their speaking skills ($M = 3.86$, $SD < 1$). However, more than half of the student–participants believe that they do not get enough opportunities to practice their speaking skills outside the classroom ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.274$). Other factors that inhibit learners from performing are anxiety and pressure: almost two-thirds of all respondents report that they cannot perform well as they are afraid of making mistakes during the task ($M = 4.21$, $SD = .556$) or because they forget or cannot come up with ideas during the speaking activity ($M = 4.01$, $SD = .847$). Although students realize (by strongly agreeing to the proposition) that competency in oral skills is necessary for securing a good job in future ($M = 4.35$, $SD = .892$), they cannot excel in this area as they have neither a solid stock of vocabulary nor strong knowledge about the use of appropriate and correct lexical words in speaking ($M = 2.16$, $SD = 1.3$). They also felt strongly that they have problems in comprehending other speakers, such that they were unable to provide an appropriate spoken response ($M = 4.28$, $SD = .45$). Eachers apparently play their part in designing and presenting speaking activities. However, learners report not being able to perform at a level that encourages their teachers. Many of these students realize that teachers do try their level best to devote time to and assist their students, but despite this the students report being unable to achieve the desired results.

The internal and external factors elicited by the survey items were predominantly linguistic and psychological in nature. Some sociocultural factors also surfaced in the responses, such as peer pressure, the expectation that a student must obey and not disappoint the teacher, and that students lack knowledge of the culture associated with the target language, all of which create difficulties for them to develop speaking skills. Students also reported relying more on the grammar translation approach, in which they construct sentences in L1 and then translate the same into English. Thus, a variety of internal and external factors, including shyness, peer pressure, and anxiety, affect their performance. These findings correspond with those of Soomro and Farooq (2018). The respondents reported that they were unable to give their best performance in the class due to hesitation caused by the fear that they might make mistakes in speaking. This study found that learners are prone to shyness and are fearful of making errors and confronting criticism. Moreover, the survey revealed that during speaking tasks students conversed in their mother tongue more often than in the target language. Overall, they lack exposure to the target language even in the classroom, and this is further aggravated by the environment outside the classroom, where opportunities are scarce to practice their target language in natural situations.

The current study matches findings of Soomro and Farooq (2018) that language learning happens if learners are provided with a conducive environment either inside or outside of the classroom. The results of this investigation revealed that students do not pay attention to discussion even inside the class, nor are they able to point out their own strengths and weaknesses; these factors make it really difficult to achieve target competency. The responses showed inadequate motivation on the part of learners, which is congruous with the findings of Littlewood and William (1981). It pointed out that communication skills are correlated with learners’ motivation and the people around them. This study has found that students fall prey to hesitation and shyness, both of
which adversely affect their speaking capabilities. There is compatibility between these findings and those reported by Rabab’ah (2003), indicating that a broad range of factors are at play which negatively affect the speaking performance of EFL learners. Those factors include unconducive milieu, ineffective curricula, and apathy and low motivation on the part of learners. For example, many students think that insufficient stock of vocabulary is a major cause of their incapability to communicate in English.

The survey results show that speaking in the target language in the classroom, with at least some level of accompanying structure and support, is clearly daunting to these learners. Certainly, attempting to practice this skill outside the classroom is an even more challenging task. Nevertheless, students realize that proficiency in English speaking is essential to get good jobs. They wish to master this skill. However, they are unable to develop such skills due to the multiple barriers just discussed.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

As this study has highlighted, numerous and varied psychological, linguistic, and sociocultural factors impact the speaking performance of these university-level English language learners in Saudi Arabia. The influencing factors are both external and internal. The barriers students face are considerable, but there are some straightforward ways to address and mitigate these problems. On the academic research front, it is essential that more research be carried out in order to understand more precisely how different factors influence Saudi EFL learners. The second part of Soomro and Farooq’s (2018) study, a survey of EFL teachers, could be carried out in universities and language institutes around the Kingdom. Such studies involving large survey populations of learners and instructors may provide valuable data to inform the work of teachers and administrators alike.

On the policy and pedagogy front, EFL instructors and college administrators in Saudi Arabia have crucial roles to play if real improvement in learners’ speaking performance is to be achieved. Teachers must be trained to utilize important strategies and techniques to teach speaking skills. They must also be supported by their institutions and administrations in developing and fostering a positive, conducive learning environment and providing all necessary facilities to expose learners to the target language culture by using appropriate methodologies. English speaking must not be confined to classrooms only. Students should be motivated to speak English in every place and at every opportunity. Institutions and instructors should stress to learners the importance of practicing the L2 outside the classroom in authentic situations, and point them to possible opportunities for doing so. Learners should be spurred on to communicate in English in a variety of environments; teachers can encourage students to leverage different social media platforms and watch and listen to English-language content such as videos, podcasts, and films, so as to expand their vocabularies, improve their diction, and thus enhance their speaking skills. Colleges and universities should provide facilities such as well-stocked libraries and internet access in the lab, so that students can obtain useful information about the language. These activities would optimally be accorded classwork credit and be monitored by the instructors in order to further increase students’ integrative motivation. To increase instrumental motivation, teachers ought to help students increase their awareness and understanding of the doors that mastery of speaking performance in the English language can open for them in their future careers.
With the material and moral support of their institutions and administrators, teachers need to rethink their traditional role in order to fulfill students’ psychological, academic, and social needs. As discussed earlier, studies have shown the strong influence of psychological factors. Therefore, instructors should understand the individual student’s type of motivation and attitude; teachers should learn simple but effective ways to boost learners’ self-esteem, thus increasing their positive attitude toward the target language. Teachers ought to be cognizant that relaxation can help in overcoming speaking anxiety; hence, they must do their best to provide an anxiety-free language learning environment so that learners can overcome these psychological impediments. To this end, employing Krashen’s (2002) “affective filter” hypothesis and Gardner’s (2011) theory of “multiple intelligences” and “frames of mind” as strategies can be beneficial for both students and teachers. They should utilize effectual methods of teaching so that English speaking becomes interesting and engaging for students.

In agreement with Soomro and Farooq (2018), I recommend that the use of English language must be prioritized in the classroom. Students should be discouraged from conversing in the native language so that target language competency and speaking performance mastery may be achieved. Instructors must not criticize learners for their mistakes; instead, teachers ought to gently guide students to self-correct.

It is clear that teachers and administrations need to tackle students’ problems on multiple levels. On an individual level, they should provide students with one-on-one guidance and motivation. For this purpose, instructors and college guidance counselors can establish fixed office hours and encourage students to make use of these opportunities for individualized attention.

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Declaration of conflicting interests
The author has no conflicts of interest to declare.

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Does Conferencing Feedback Improve Non-English Majors’ Paragraph-Writing?
A Case Study in Vietnam

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Abstract
Corrective feedback in learning English as a foreign language (EFL), especially in writing skills, has been investigated for years. Feedback is in various modes, including direct, indirect, electronic, and conferencing between teachers and students. The current study attempted to apply teacher-student conferencing feedback to a class of non-English majors of low English proficiency levels at a local college, located in Can Tho City, South of Vietnam. The study aimed to determine: (1) Does conferencing feedback improve the target students’ writing skills? (2) How do these students react to conferencing feedback? Answers to these questions are useful because they are supposed to provide more insights into the existing knowledge about the nature of conferencing feedback regarding its potential to be applied in different cultural contexts. The data-collecting instruments of pre-post tests and pre-post questionnaire surveys were employed. There were five conferences between the teacher and the participants during the intervention program. The results showed that conferencing feedback enhanced the participants’ English writing performance through the intervention. It also gained their positive attitudes demonstrated in the post questionnaire. Thereby, discussions and recommendations are provided.

Keywords: Conference, conferencing feedback, non-English majors, paragraph writing, Vietnam

Introduction

Learning English as a foreign language is not an easy job for most students, predominantly non-English majored ones. And when it comes to language skills, writing is widely deemed the most challenging to the learner because this complex skill requires the writer to undergo proper training and regular writing practice to be able to use suitable grammatical structures, lexical items, written conventions, and mechanical techniques. Nguyen (2019) contended, “These challenges make writing one of the most difficult skills to develop and create an overreliance on the teacher for all kinds of corrections and guidance” (p.121). Over the past years, upon working at a local college (located in Can Tho City, Vietnam), the researcher of the current study had access to non-English majored students’ academic data and has witnessed students’ poor writing performance. Most of them are poor writers in English, and their writing skills do not seem to improve unless significant instructional changes should be made. Many English teachers at this College have repeatedly complained about how they struggled to improve students’ writing skills. The students whose scores in writing were low often demonstrated modest self-esteem, humble efforts, and developed negative attitudes towards writing tests and writing instruction. This improvement-needing status is commonly found among most Vietnamese learners of English (Luu, 2014; Nguyen, 2016). Therefore, something should be done about it because

Writing is important in studying all subjects and in all professions. Only by writing well can you give a good account of yourself as a student, and when applying for employment, and in a career when you write letters, instructions and reports. It is by your writing that others know you.” (Barrass, 1995, p.2)

Teachers have the distinct responsibility to nurture a student’s learning and to provide feedback in such a manner that the student does not leave the classroom feeling defeated (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990), and it should be considered “as a means of drawing learners’ attention to accurate language use without disrupting communicative classroom interaction” (Loewen, 2012, p.24). Therefore, how to approach the evaluation of student writing and deliver subsequent feedback to best help improve their writing skills is the researcher’s great concern. However, written corrective feedback traditionally used does not always prove to be very useful because it “tends to show students that the teacher's agenda is more important than their own, that what they wanted to say is less relevant than the teacher's impression of what they should have said” (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982, p.158). One study by Kamberi (2013), using several types of feedback (corrective, electronic, metalinguistic, conferencing, peer-feedback), reported that the participants most valued direct corrective feedback and conferencing feedback. However, Kamberi concluded that “from a learner’s perspective, there were mixed perceptions on which strategy was the most effective in error correction” (p.1689). Another study by Alhumidi and Uba (2016) informed that indirect feedback effectively improved their writing and language skills. Furthermore, previous research on multiple components associated with conferencing feedback (CF), such as student personalities and cultural backgrounds (Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Sperling, 1990); participant abilities (Freedman & Sperling, 1985); teacher attitudes (Walker & Elias, 1987), etc., has yet to gain ultimate conclusions on CF. Thus, further research on CF should be explored as an alternative approach to student writing feedback. As Goldstein and Conrad (1990) noted: “writing conferences are not stable entities, but rather, dynamic events affected by context and participants.” (p.459)
Since no study on conferencing feedback has been done at this local College, the current study was aimed to implement it to non-English majored students of low English proficiency levels in their English paragraph writing class. To its goal, two main questions are raised: (1) Does conferencing feedback improve the target students’ writing skills? (2) How do these students react to conferencing feedback? Answers to these questions are useful because they are supposed to provide more insights into the existing knowledge about the nature of CF regarding its potential to be applied in different cultural contexts. They also help the researcher make valid instructional modifications and suggestions to her colleagues from this research-site College and elsewhere.

**Literature Review**

The term “feedback” is used to describe the information that comes back from the reader to the writer (in the educational setting, they are teachers and students). Feedback is considered a source of input that encourages writers to improve their written work and develop their writing skills (Hyland & Hyland, 2001). Therefore, feedback plays a crucial role in students’ revision activities, and it contributes to the quality of their subsequent writings (Freedman, 1985; Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Nguyen, 2019).

**Conferencing Feedback**

Teacher-student conferencing feedback (CF) is a form of feedback in which the teacher meets each student individually and makes oral comments about the student’s writing. This can be done in class time or outside the classroom. This feedback is “conversational dialogue” in which meanings are continually being negotiated while emphasizing the two-way communication (Freedman & Sperling, 1985). It is “individual, one-on-one teacher-student conversations about the students' writing or writing process.” (Bayraktar, 2012, p.709)

**Different Labels for Conferencing Feedback**

Over the last decades, CF has been studied at various dimensions under different labels, such as assisted performance (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978), one-to-one teaching (Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983), one-to-one interaction (Sperling, 1991); response sessions (Hansen, 1987), conversational dialogue (Freedman, 1985), meaningful contact (Lerner, 2005), and dynamic assessment (Ableeva, 2010; Afshari, Amirian, & Tavakoli, 2020; Poehner, 2008).

Though CF is labeled under several names, its process and purpose are consistently defined by researchers. For example, all conferences have a goal, following predictable procedures, and putting students in the position of partners for collaboration (Anderson, 2000). In these conferences, there is no single process to follow. Instead, they can be conducted differently according to the student's needs, writing proficiency levels, and roles (Newkirk, 1989).

**Kinds of Conferencing Feedback**

Different researchers have different classifications of conferencing feedback. Unlike Calkins (1986), who divides conferences into content, design, process, evaluation, and editing, Anderson (2000) classifies conferences into four categories: rehearsal, drafting, revision, and editing. Reigstad and McAndrew (1980), in contrast, group conferences into three subcategories: student-centered, teacher-centered, and collaborative. In student-centered conferences, students are treated as conventional equals and fellow writers since they initiate a conversation about
various problems, and the tutor suggests strategies or alternatives. In teacher-centered conferences, the student tends to sit passively when the teacher reads through the draft, corrects mechanical mistakes, and supplies alternative to improve writing. In a collaborative conference, both the teacher and the student have equal chances to start and initiate the conversation.

**Characteristics of Useful Conferencing Feedback**

The goals of CF are to inform students about their writing skills and progress. Besides, students can talk, ask questions, provide possible solutions, and get adequate feedback from a more experienced writer during a one-on-one writing conference. To reach these positive outcomes, CF should be carefully planned and conducted based on the following characteristics (Anderson, 2000; Atwell, 1998; Bayraktar, 2012; Graves, 1983; Sommers, 1982): (i) Being predictable: predictable conferences make students familiar with the steps and the procedures, and help save time; (ii) Being focused: when determining what to focus on, teachers need to remember two principles: focus on one or two of students' writing problems, and dealing with content and meaning before usage and convention; (iii) Providing solutions: teachers should tell students what to do or what to write; (iv) Exchanging roles between teachers and students: students should be encouraged to ask questions and provide solutions; (v) Providing meaningful conversation: both teachers and students should talk during the conferences; (iv) Having humor: the playful atmosphere is necessary for having a productive writing conference.

**Previous Studies**

As noted above, research related to corrective feedback and CF has been concerned by many researchers (Afshari et al., 2020; Alhumidi & Uba, 2016; Ahmadi & Besharati, 2017; An, 2019; Bayraktar, 2012; Goldstein & Conrad, 1990; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Hyland & Hyland, 2001; Kamberi, 2013; Lee, 2008; Leung, 2008; Loewen, 2012; Patthey-Chavez & Ferris, 1997; Saito, 1994; Silva, 1997; Sperling, 1990; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978; etc.). Three typical studies are described below.

In the study by Baleghizadeh and Gordani (2012), three groups of EFL students participated in a 12-week course of academic writing. The first experimental group received direct corrective feedback on grammatical errors in their papers, while the second experimental one was provided with both immediate feedback and teacher-student conferences during which the class discussed and gave their ideas about the problems with the errors made. The control group received only the teacher’s comment on the content of their writings (i.e., no feedback on grammatical errors). The results showed that the student-teacher conference feedback group was significantly better than the other two groups.

Yamalee and Tangkiengsirisin (2019) conducted a study at a private university in Bangkok, Thailand. It involved 20-sophomore English-majored undergraduates being a sample/experimental group. For the integrated treatment program to this group, during a one-semester compulsory course of “Paragraph Writing” (p.253), each student’s writing drafts were provided with written feedback/comments first by the teacher, then followed by teacher-student conferencing. The results found that students improved their writing via a pre-post test pattern, and all of them had a positive attitude towards implementing integrated feedback in the classroom.
A recent study was done by Afshari et al. (2020) among English-majored male students in an Iranian university. This study applied “group-dynamic assessment” (p.445). For the experimental group, a student wrote his essay on the board, and other students were asked to read the sentences silently and just observe (the interactions between the teacher and the assigned student). They were not allowed to mention the errors, provide corrections, or guide the student on the board. In each session, each student’s essay was written on the board, and the teacher tried to guide him to correct his errors through mediation, i.e., the teacher first asked him to read his essay carefully, find, and fix the errors he could detect by himself. For the errors the student could not notice, the teacher started guiding him with the most implicit hints and gradually moved towards more explicit ones. When the student could not complete the task even with the most explicit hints, the teacher turned to another student to go through the same procedures. The results found that the experimental group outperformed the comparison group who received only regular feedback. This study also showed that the former group expressed a very positive attitude towards applying group-dynamic assessment in writing classes.

Most participants in previous studies were English-majored. Thus, it is justifiable for the present study to apply CF and test its benefits to non-English-majored students, whose numbers are far more in most colleges and universities in the current Vietnam’s context.

Method

Research Design

The current study followed a single-group pre-post quasi-experimental design (Bhattacherjee, 2012). A pre-test and post-test research design was used to collect quantitative data about the effectiveness of teacher-student conferencing feedback. This pre-test and post-test design measured whether there was a significant difference in students’ writing skills before and after the intervention. Besides, to get information about how students perceived the use of CF (the treatment program), a subsequent questionnaire survey was conducted. This survey is significant because students’ feelings and attitudes toward CF are valuable information for the field (Bayraktara, 2012).

Participants

The participants for the pre-test and post-test were 48 students (17 females and 31 males) from one entire existing class in one College (located in Can Tho City, South of Vietnam), where the researcher is working fulltime. Thus, this sampling technique was a convenient one. The participants were all the first-year students majoring in Law Service, (i.e., non-English majors). They were all EFL Vietnamese students whose ages ranged from 18 to 20. Although they did learn English at secondary school for some years, their English proficiency was still at low levels, especially the writing skill, because their English experience at secondary school was mostly grammar knowledge and reading skills to serve their high school graduation exams.

The researcher is also the teacher in charge of teaching this class. Working at this College for several years, she was motivated by the CF framework and attempted to apply it in her class. She believed that students, especially those who were more potent in English writing, were enthusiastic about conferencing-feedback because it allowed them to learn more about the mistakes they made and get actively involved in the discussion. However, she also understood that
giving feedback to weak students, whose works were poorly-written, was hard since it was sometimes challenging for the teacher to find positive comments. Besides, some students were so quiet and did not contribute much to the conferencing process. Because of this, the conference might turn out to be teacher-centered, which was not expected. Furthermore, some students would complain about not being able to spare time for the meetings, and others tended to feel disappointed and lose motivation if there was too much focus on the mistakes they made.

Course-book

The course-book currently used for non-majored classes at this College is “American English File” (by Latham-Koeing, Oxenden, & Seligson 2008). The book is integrated-skills of listening, reading, speaking, and writing, with a balanced focus on vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and functional language. The course lasted 15 weeks (from January 4th to May 7th, 2019). During the course, the students were required to take four progress-tests and one mid-term test (i.e., five tests in total), in which writing was included. Each test was designed into four parts: vocabulary (20%), grammar (30%), reading (20%), and writing (30%). For writing, in the first test, students were required to write a paragraph on how often they spent their time with friends, while the second required them to write a description of their vacation. In test three, they were asked to write a paragraph about healthy food. For test four, they wrote a paragraph about a movie they had seen recently. In the mid-term test, they were required to write a paragraph about a book they liked best.

Conferencing-Feedback Procedure

On the first day, intending to guard against violation or invasion of the students’ privacy, the teacher asked the students whether they were willing to participate in a study. Since all of the students agreed to take part in, the teacher then introduced CF to the class. First, the teacher started by explaining the concept of “conferencing-feedback.” The teacher also informed the students that this would be used as a tool for feedback during the course. Clear and detailed guidelines for CF were also provided. The students were encouraged to discuss and ask questions about things they were not clear and whether they agreed with the given suggestions. The teacher’s purpose was to help the students figure out the whole picture of their future work and minimize their potential confusion.

Thereby, some planning and preparations should be done to ensure each successful conferencing feedback. Since the feedback was the teacher’s responses to the students’ work, it occurred after they had finished each of their four tests. On grading the students’ writing papers, the teacher noted instances of strengths and problems for easy references and briefly commented on the student’s note-card. After that, the teacher arranged the subsequent feedback conferences. Since it was impossible to comment on everything due to the shortage of time, the teacher just focused on some issues that stood out clearly. One week before each conferencing session, the teacher reminded the students to sign up for writing feedback and then informed them about the conference schedule. The time allotted for each student's feedback was from five to seven minutes.

At the beginning of each conference, the teacher explained the agenda of the meeting. To avoid a teacher-dominated conference atmosphere, the teacher asked each student what aspects of the draft he/she liked and which they wanted to change. Then, the teacher returned the draft,
allowing the student to read the comments and asked if they found anything unclear and provided an explanation if necessary. The whole rest of the conference flowed naturally from the student’s questions and concerns. The teacher also asked the students to make notes about the ideas and suggestions. However, not all the students who participated in the conferences were enthusiastic about CF. Some of them were shy, reluctant, and uncommunicative. Therefore, the teacher, sensitive to each student’s needs and moods, had to adjust her working styles accordingly. She also paid much attention to avoid discouraging or causing embarrassment to the students by focusing more on what the students had done well rather than the mistakes they made. For the teacher, conferences were opportunities to learn about the students as human beings and their strengths and weaknesses in writing. Teacher-student conferences aimed to encourage students to let their voices heard and to ensure that students would benefit from the meetings as much as possible. The conference session ended before students were reminded not to throw away the draft and do follow-up activities such as rewriting the paragraph if appropriate. Detailed information about the CF sessions was as follows:

Table 1. Information about CF sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback sessions</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>The total amount of time</th>
<th>Number of students present</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st session</td>
<td>February 15th, 2019</td>
<td>Three hours</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd session</td>
<td>March 9th, 2019</td>
<td>Two hours and 45 minutes</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd session</td>
<td>March 16th, 2019</td>
<td>Three hours</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th session</td>
<td>April 13th, 2019</td>
<td>Three hours and 10 minutes</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th session</td>
<td>April 27, 2019</td>
<td>Three hours and 17 minutes</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-and-posttest Instrument

The tests were aimed at investigating whether CF would make a difference in the student’s paragraph-writing scores between the pre-test and post-test. Convinced by Alderson, Clapham, and Wall (1995), the researcher chose a similar pre-test and post-test because they were based on the course objectives rather than the course content. The question of whether students would be allowed to select the topic was not considered since it did not make a difference to test takers’ scores (Jennings, Fox, Graves, & Shohamy, 1999). To avoid students’ performances not being influenced by what they just learned in the course such as vacation, food, health, and movies, the researcher chose a neutral topic that was more relevant to the students’ low proficiency level and would better demonstrate students’ writing skills. Also, with the belief that using identical tests would affect the reliability of the samples due to their familiarity with the topic, the researcher chose topically different but rhetorically similar topics for the pre-test and post-test. Intending to prevent subjectivity and risk of reliability bias due to involvement in the issue, the researcher consulted four experienced colleagues for their views of the chosen topics (Table two). These teachers all agreed that the topics were relevant to the student level and appropriate for the research.
Table 2. *Writing prompts for the pre-test and post-test*

| Pre-test | You have 30 minutes to complete this test. Write a paragraph to describe your *close friend*. Describe his/her appearance, personality, and the reason why you are close to each other. You should write at least 100 words. |
| Post-test | You have 30 minutes to complete this test. Write a paragraph to describe a *famous person* that you admire. Describe his/her appearance, personality, and the reason why you admire him/her. You should write at least 100 words. |

*Test Administration*

The time allocated for the pre-test was 30 minutes. It was conducted during the first class session with the presence of the researcher as an invigilator. Prior to its administration, the researcher explained the purpose of the test and asked if the students agreed to participate. Since all the students volunteered to participate in the research, the test was conducted. First, the researcher asked the students to sit apart to ensure that they did the test independently. The researcher also informed the students that no materials for reference were allowed during the test. Then the teacher wrote the writing prompt on the board for the students to copy down. The students were allowed to ask if there was anything they did not understand about the prompt. Since no questions were posed, the test started at 7:30 AM on January 4th, 2019. It ended at 8 AM on the same day. Then, the students were asked to stop writing, and the researcher collected 48 writing scripts.

The post-test was also administered to the same class in the last class session (May 7th, 2019). It took place in the same procedures, rules, environment, and time duration as in the pre-test. The test was also administered with the researcher as the invigilator. There were no questions for clarification about the writing prompt from the test-takers during the test. Then, 48 writing scripts were received.

*Method of Marking*

In the current study, the researcher chose the analytical method for marking the writing scripts since it was the most relevant to the scope of the study: to measure writing proficiency characterized by writing sub-skills such as task fulfillment, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Thus, a marking-scheme currently used on writing courses at this College was employed (see Appendix A). According to this scheme, writing competency is characterized by content, organization, mechanics, grammar, and style. Each of these characteristics is accompanied by explicit descriptors of what is meant by the different band-scales. A range of possible scores is given for each band. These scores can be converted into an overall ten-point grade.

*The Raters*

For consistency in marking, many facets of scoring were taken into consideration, including raters’ gender, personality, professional background, and experience. Two markers participated in this study. They were both female writing teachers who were experienced, careful, and responsible in every aspect of language teaching and assessment. They were aged 42 and 45,
and both have gained more than 10-year experience in teaching and writing-marking. Adequate training was provided to the raters by the researcher. Its primary purpose was to establish consistency in marking between the raters (inter-rater consistency) and within the same rater (intra-raters consistency). Rater training was conducted through pre-marking training on-site. Initially, the raters read and discussed the scales together before practicing marking a sample script together. Next, ratings were compared to check whether markers had similar expectations before going on with the rest of the scripts. After discussing for a while, the researcher and two raters together set up the working-criteria for marking as follows:

(i) The time needed for marking each script was about between three and five minutes.
(ii) Answers that do not adhere to the writing prompt got no point.
(iii) Illegible handwriting was not judged.
(iv) The paragraph should be written with 100 words, at least. If the candidate only wrote a few words, the paragraph would be deemed too short for assessment, and consequently was awarded no point.

Then, each rater worked independently with both the pre- and post-test scripts (blind-marking, i.e., no student’s name on the script). When all the scripts were marked, the researcher checked the inter-rater coefficient. Initially, it was only 0.86 or 86% agreement. Thus, a post-marking discussion between the researcher and the raters was held, and all the scripts were double-checked one by one to raise the agreement to 100%.

**Questionnaire Instrument**

To know how the subjects perceived of CF, the researcher used the questionnaire because it allowed the researcher to reach a broad audience in a limited time. A well-designed questionnaire can provide keen insights into how participants think and perceive the situation (Bernard, 2000). Besides, it would elicit easily countable answers on a range of standard questions/statements. In this questionnaire, there was a series of questions/statements to which the respondents were to react either by writing out their answers or checking an option among the existing answers. The questionnaire survey was administered at the beginning (pre-questionnaire) and the end of the experiment program (post-questionnaire). Since the participants were still at a low proficiency level of English, the researcher chose to use simple wording for the questionnaire and translated it into Vietnamese to be easy for them to answer.

The first section of the questionnaire was designed to get some demographic information about the respondents so that the researcher could best interpret the results of the questionnaire. There were three questions for this part, aiming to get information about age, gender, and learning experience of the subjects. The second section, a five-scale question format, was used so that the respondents could tick to which degree they agreed with the issues related to CF in comparison with the regular feedback, ranging from *strongly disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree,* and *strongly agree.* The option ‘strongly agree’ means ‘clearly aware of’ and ‘strongly support’ CF use. The aim of each question was specified in details as follows:

- Block 1, finding out whether the respondent thinks CF is a useful tool to improve students’ writing skills: statements 1 – 13 (13 statements in total).
Block 2, finding out the students' attitudes towards CF: statements 14 – 20 (seven statements).

The researcher believed that, with this question format, it was easy for the respondent to respond and comfortable for the researcher to quantify the data since these options could be coded to check reliability. Twenty questions were designed in this section.

The third section was to obtain the respondent's viewpoints on CF. They were open-ended questions, which required the respondents to write down their own opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of CF. The researcher believed that by designing some open-ended questions in the questionnaire, more qualitative information could be obtained and allowed the researcher to look at the issues from multiple angles. After the questionnaire was designed entirely, it was translated into Vietnamese to suit the level of the target participants.

Piloting the Questionnaire

To get feedback from professional colleagues, the researcher consulted four writing teachers who understood the survey purpose to examine the survey critically and determined whether the questionnaire was appropriate to accomplish the survey objectives. The feedback elicited from those colleagues was then used for editing the questionnaire to make it more transparent and more effective. The final version of the questionnaire was then used for a pilot survey with seven students from a different class. Since the questionnaire was translated into Vietnamese, the pilot respondents did not find any problems reading or making sense.

Administering the Questionnaire

During the questionnaire administration, everything was considered so that the respondents would feel comfortable. First, the researcher gave clear overall directions, including some information about the purpose of the survey and what they were expected to do. Then, the questionnaires were distributed in an orderly manner. When the administration was going on, the researcher circulated among the respondents to help when ambiguities or confusion arose. The questionnaires were completed after approximately eight to 10 minutes. Finally, samples were collected from both the pre- and post-questionnaire.

Findings

Pre-posttest Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Pre-test scores</th>
<th>Post-test scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>4.813</td>
<td>6.260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>5.000</td>
<td>6.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std deviation</td>
<td>1.6231</td>
<td>1.3487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low - high</td>
<td>1.5-7.5</td>
<td>3.5 - 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table three shows a difference between the pre-test and post-test scores across all statistic aspects. The means, median, and mode increased from the pre-test to the post-test (4.81, 5.00, 5.00
to 6.26, 6.50, 7.00, respectively). On the contrary, the standard deviation, range, and low-high were found in a decreasing pattern from the pre-test to the post-test, indicating the distance among the subjects’ scores become narrowed down at the end of the CF treatment program. To determine whether there is a significant difference in the mean scores before and after the treatment (4.81 and 6.26, respectively), an independent sample t-test analysis was done.

Table 4. Independent sample t-test results (n=48)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-4.754</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-1.448</td>
<td>.305</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since Table four reveals that the value $p$ (Sig. 2-tailed) = .000 is smaller than 0.05 ($p \leq 0.05$), there is a statistically significant difference between the two tests in mean scores. Thus, it supports the conclusion that the target students have achieved better writing performances from the pre-test to the post-test.

Questionnaire Results

Although 48 students took both pre-test and post-test, only 41 volunteered to partake in the questionnaire survey. After coding the respondents’ choices into numbers, with 1='Strongly disagree’, 2='Disagree’, 3='Uncertain’, 4='Agree’, and 5='Strongly agree’. The data were then entered into the excel sheet and then analyzed using the statistical SPSS version 20. The reliability level was .897, and .723 for the pre-questionnaire, and the post-questionnaire.

In Table five, the first statement block was designed to investigate the respondents’ views on the effects of CF on English writing skills before (pre-questionnaire) and after (post-questionnaire) the treatment program.

Table 5. First block’s descriptive statistics of questionnaire scores (n=41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements: 1 - 12</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-questionnaire</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>2.8405</td>
<td>.5462</td>
<td>.0853</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-questionnaire</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.4390</td>
<td>.5030</td>
<td>.0785</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen from the table above, the pre-questionnaire mean is lower than that of the post-questionnaire (2.84 and 3.43, respectively). Also, the t-test result is $p=.000$, indicating a statistically significant difference between the two means. In other words, the positive effects of CF on writing performances among the participants have been acknowledged.

Likewise, Table six below displays the participants’ positive attitudes towards CF found increasing mean from the pre- to the post-questionnaire.

Table 6. Second block’s descriptive statistics of questionnaire scores (n=41)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements: 13 - 20</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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All these suggest that after the treatment program, there is a statistical difference in what respondents believed about the effectiveness of CF in improving writing skills and enhancing their learning attitudes.

For section B, of 41 taking part in the questionnaire, only 33 students answered the open-ended questions. Among them, 27 (out of 33 students, accounting for 81.1%) stated that CF was very beneficial, while six students (18.1%) preferred the regular feedback. Most of them (72.7%) wrote that CF helped them recognize long-existing grammatical errors they had never identified before. Similarly, 60.6% of the respondents stated that CF was thought-provoking and fun decoding what the teacher underlined as mistakes. Besides, 42.4% of the respondents wrote that CF gave them opportunities to tell the teacher what they intended to express in the tests. Some respondents (12.2%) also cited that CF with the teacher helped them realize their strengths and weaknesses in writing skills. In contrast, some others appreciated the opportunity of being more exposed to different views and more information than other types of feedback. However, a small number of respondents were not in favor of CF. Some of them (12.2%) said that they did not feel very comfortable at CF, while some other (9.1%) felt embarrassed when realizing their stupid errors in writing, and some (15.2%) could not afford enough time for all their conferences.

Discussion

The obtained results from the pre- and post-test (Table three, four) in the current study show a possible effect of CF on students’ writing performances (even though not all the participants were present in all the given feedback sessions, see Table one above). This finding matches those reported by Afshari et al. (2020), Ahmadi and Besharati (2017), Baleghizadeh and Gordani (2012), Freedman (1985), Hyland and Hyland (2001), Leung (2008), Yamalee and Tangkiengsirisin (2019), who endorsed that CF improves students’ writing performance. This is mostly because the one-on-one dialogue in CF helps the writer notice those issues, errors, and problems that may arise in the written draft. This kind of feedback provides students with more authentic opportunities for negotiation and interaction. As a result, those students who receive CF will likely take sufficient time (mediated by the teacher) reconsidering their works, reflecting, and possibly making necessary modifications for better-written output. Added to these is that students attain the sense of how they are doing and which aspects of writing they should pay more attention to (Brookhart, 2008; Lee, 2008; Saito, 1994). These repetitive activities on purpose in the writing class are supposed, sooner or later, to transform the involved student from being other-regulated to self-regulate in lifelong learning afterward.

In addition to improved writing performance, as seen in the questionnaire results (Table five, and six), the treatment program in the current study did impact positively on the participants’ attitudes towards CF, demonstrated by a significant difference in their scoring between the pre- and post-questionnaire. This finding is aligned with the relevant literature discussed by Afshari et al. (2020), Ahmadi and Besharati (2017), Freedman (1985), Hyland and Hyland (2001),
Yamalle and Tangkiengsirisin (2019), etc., which reveal that CF boosts students’ learning motivation since it is more fun and helpful than the regular feedback. Furthermore, CF is believed to render a channel for two-way communication so that meanings can always be negotiated (Freeman, 1985; Hyland & Hyland, 2001). The finding also confirms the argument presented by Brannon and Knoblauch (1982) and Sommers (1982) that CF gives students opportunities to discuss what they intend to express or have their voice heard, i.e., making democracy and learner-centeredness present in the classroom. Thereby, it proves that CF applied in the current study has worked quite well as a learning motivator for non-English majors of low English proficiency level in Vietnam’s present context, which has yet to be reported within the country.

However, since it was the first time they practiced FC, the participants’ reservations in the open-ended question section were understandable. Time-constraint, feeling anxious, and lack of comport were the significant drawbacks noted by the surveyed subjects in the current study. These negative points have been reported in previous research. Hattie and Timperley (2007)’s study warned that when CF is predominately negative, it can discourage student effort and achievement. Meanwhile, Hyland and Hyland (2001) contended that conferencing requires large amounts of time and specific interaction skills, which some teachers and students may not have. Therefore, teachers should be sensitive to the needs of students and adjust their working styles accordingly because each student participating in a conference brings to that conference a unique personality that may affect how that student behaves in the conference (Goldstein & Conrard, 1990). They should also have to resist the temptation to adopt the attitude “the teacher ‘knows best,’ knows what the writer should do and how it should be done, and feels protective because his or her competence is superior to that of the writer” (Brannon & Knoblauch, 1982, p.159). Otherwise, students will probably benefit from FC, not as much as they should.

Conclusion

Writing skills in English learning as a foreign language is deemed challenging to most students, predominantly non-English majored ones, because this skill requires them to master pertinent knowledge and sub-skills. On the obtained results of the participants’ improved writings via CF, the current study proves the potential of CF implementation to non-English majored students of low English levels in Vietnam’s present context. Though time-consuming and limited in certain aspects, this mode of feedback, if conducted properly, does contribute to improving the learner’s writing performances and their learning motivation mediated by the teacher who purposefully and tactfully engages the learner to productively reflect on their written output containing strengths and weaknesses, and learn how to progress on their own for better learning.

The current study’s findings, however, should not be generalized widely elsewhere within the country and beyond owing to its limited participant sample and instruments for data collection. It also lacks a control group for result comparison. Therefore, it is recommended that this study be replicated with a combination of descriptive and experimental research methods, a larger number of participants from the same language background, motivation, and learning styles. Also, the kinds of discourse strategies used by the teacher and the student, and the reasons for their variation are rich sources for further research. Besides, how instructional modes, students’ level of proficiency, and cultural background affect CF outcomes should be the focus of future studies. It
is hoped that the result of this study will be of some use to future research so that a thorough understanding of this issue and confirmation of the findings will be obtained.

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Tran Thi Thuy Diem is an English instructor at Can Tho College, Can Tho City, Vietnam. She has worked there for more than 10 years. She received his MA degree in TESOL from Can Tho University, Vietnam.

References


Appendix A: Marking Scheme

Table 7. Rubric for evaluation of paragraph writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Point Value</th>
<th>2 points</th>
<th>1 point</th>
<th>0.5 points</th>
<th>0 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic Sentence</strong></td>
<td>Interesting, original topic sentence, reflecting thought and insight; focused on one interesting main idea.</td>
<td>A clearly stated topic sentence presents one main idea.</td>
<td>The acceptable topic sentence presents one idea.</td>
<td>Missing, invalid, or inappropriate topic sentence; the main idea is missing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supporting Details</strong></td>
<td>Interesting, concrete, and descriptive examples and details with explanations that relate to the topic.</td>
<td>Examples and details relate to the topic and some explanation is included.</td>
<td>A sufficient number of examples and details that relate to the topic.</td>
<td>Insufficient, vague, or undeveloped examples.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization and Transitions</strong></td>
<td>A thoughtful, logical progression of supporting examples;</td>
<td>Details are arranged in a logical progression;</td>
<td>Acceptable arrangement of examples;</td>
<td>No discernible pattern of organization;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Questionnaire for Students

This questionnaire aims at surveying the learner’s view of the conventional assessments in use. Your completion of this questionnaire is highly appreciated. Please note that individual questionnaires are entirely anonymous, and the data collected are used in the research paper only.

Section A:
1. Your age:
2. Sex: Male Female
3. How long have you been learning English? ______ years.

Section B. In this section, we are seeking your opinions about the effectiveness of conferencing feedback (CF). Please tick to which degree you agree with the following statements.

Directions: There are five options and tick √ for your case to each statement.
1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Unsure; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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Appendix B: Questionnaire for Students

This questionnaire aims at surveying the learner’s view of the conventional assessments in use. Your completion of this questionnaire is highly appreciated. Please note that individual questionnaires are entirely anonymous, and the data collected are used in the research paper only.

Section A:
1. Your age:
2. Sex: Male Female
3. How long have you been learning English? ______ years.

Section B. In this section, we are seeking your opinions about the effectiveness of conferencing feedback (CF). Please tick to which degree you agree with the following statements.

Directions: There are five options and tick √ for your case to each statement.
1=Strongly disagree; 2=Disagree; 3=Unsure; 4=Agree; 5=Strongly agree.

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<th>Statements</th>
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<td>9. Students attend more to the mistakes in CF.</td>
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<td>10. CF encourages students to rethink about the mistakes in writing.</td>
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<td>11. CF tells students how much progress they have made in writing.</td>
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<td>12. CF provides students with authentic opportunities for negotiation and interaction on writing skills, which do not exist in traditional classroom activities.</td>
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<td>13. CF is very negotiable between the teacher and students.</td>
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<td>14. Students may feel comfortable with the role teachers expect them to play in conferences.</td>
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<td>15. Students’ motivation will be enhanced if they receive CF.</td>
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<td>16. Students are encouraged to question the teacher’s feedback or asking the teacher to clarify what they mean by their comments.</td>
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<td>17. Students feel motivated in CF because it is a kind of classroom democracy.</td>
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<td>18. CF is believed to preserve students’ right to have their voices heard.</td>
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<td>19. CF enhances students’ learning motivation.</td>
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<td>20. CF is an excellent way to encourage the development of autonomy.</td>
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Section C. Please answer these questions.

What type of feedback do you think benefit you more?

- _____ Conferencing feedback  
- _____ Traditional feedback

Why: .............................................................................................................................................
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*Thank you for spending time on giving the responses!*
Exploring Communicative Language Teaching Principles Alignment of English Textbook in Saudi Arabia Middle School

Ahmed O. Alharbi
School of Education, University of Glasgow
Glasgow, United Kingdom

Abstract
This paper aims to analyse an English language textbook used in “middle school” (high school) in Saudi Arabia in-depth, to ascertain the type of pedagogy pushed by the teacher’s book. The criteria of analysis are adapted from Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). These criteria are used to analyses the textbook in terms of how communicative it is and personalised, how authentic, how meaningful; its degree of linguistic complexity; whether it is scaffolded, accuracy or fluency oriented; and how much of all each of these categories is in the textbook activities. The methodology of this paper is qualitative and presents only one aspect, textbook analysis, of a broader case study which forms part of a Ph.D. project that explores the factors behind the failure of implementation of CLT in Saudi Arabia. The results of this analysis show that in the textbook there is a careful balance between accuracy and fluency. There are some personalised and meaningful activities, however most of the activities lack of authenticity which limits freedom for the students in using the target language.

Keywords: accuracy, authenticity, English, fluency, linguistic, meaningful, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), scaffolded, textbook, Saudi Arabia, middle school

Introduction

The English language has spread all over the world, leading to a rethinking of how the language should be learned. Consequently, English language learning is now widespread in Saudi Arabia, where the language plays a significant role in different fields. However, the outcomes of English language learning in Saudi schools are below those outlined by the Saudi government in 2004 when they implemented a new curriculum based on communicative language teaching (CLT). Many studies, such as those of Abdulkader (2019), Alharbi (2019), Wajid and Saleem (2016) and Mangaleswaran and Aziz (2019), have explored the outcomes of these Saudi students now that the new English curriculum has been in place for more than 10 years. The results of these studies show that the outcomes are very weak. These students are experiencing difficulties writing simple sentences and communicating in basic English (Bhuiyan, 2016).

The new official CLT-based policy is supposedly student-centred and can be summarised as aiming to improve the “four skills” of English (listening, speaking, reading and writing), to increase awareness of other cultures, and to help the students learn the language for everyday use. These new ideas are said to emphasise the identity of the students, which is foundational to this new policy. This curriculum attempts to move away from the traditional curriculum based on a policy aiming at student improvement in terms of their level of language proficiency in order to ensure their access to scientific and technical fields, to transfer knowledge and to use English to spread Islam (Elyas & Badawood, 2016). These previous professional and religious aims did not emphasise language as a means of communication or for everyday use. The former curriculum was teacher-centred and it included no pair or group work in the classroom; in 2001, there was a reform of the official curriculum in general and the English curriculum in particular.

The new curriculum has implemented new strategies and techniques to enable the students to use the language more functionally in the classroom. It aims to allow the students more space to use their language and thus notes that teaching should become more student-centred. It has a new focus on helping students to communicate in everyday situations, which is a core aspect of CLT, as well as aiming to facilitate students in acquiring language skills that are suitable for them in a range of future jobs, to make the students aware of how significant English is and that English is becoming the language of the world. This new perspective runs alongside the continued aim of improving the four skills in English. There is also a new emphasis on developing respect for other cultures and other religions, as well as reinforcing Saudi students’ national identity, which is taken to be the Arabic culture and Islamic religion of Saudi Arabia (Elyas & Badawood, 2016). However, a lot of research has found that the implementation of this new curriculum has not yet been successful, despite theoretical support for the approach (Abahussain, 2016; Al-Garni & Almuhammad, 2019; Al-Nasser, 2015; Al-Seghayer, 2014; Al Asmari, 2015; Batawi, 2007).

The studies cited above provide different reasons why CLT has failed, the most common being that Saudi students and teachers reject communicative classroom teaching. The reasons that they give for this include the low language level of the students, making it difficult for them to use the target language, and the teacher tending to dominate the classroom so that the new curriculum is perceived as a threat to teacher control. Some of these studies also state that the new emphasis
does not match the assessment orientation and the focus of both the students and the teachers is still on passing exams rather than learning English as a life skill.

CLT typically entails allowing the students to use the language in a way that helps them to communicate more meaningfully. CLT thus increases the level of authenticity when teaching the language. When the language taught is for everyday use, it is usually authentic text that is chosen as the teaching material and the students can thus become familiar with this. This choice is aligned with the theory of Hymes (1972) that the use of more appropriate, authentic texts can help to provide useful everyday language that is real and has context.

The current article presents some work from the researcher’s PhD project addressing the degree to which CLT English language teaching in Saudi Arabian high schools has been successful. It engages an analysis of the textbook material to do so. The rationale of this article is to explore how one of the Saudi textbooks reflects CLT principles with a view to understanding why the new communicative curriculum has failed to achieve the intended targets in its first decade of implementation. The research question of this article is as follows: How does the Saudi Arabian middle school textbook reflect communicative language teaching principles?

Literature Review

CLT is an approach to language teaching based on the theory of communicative competence that was first proposed by Hymes (1972). Hymes argued that there is a need to look at the appropriateness of the language used in a specific context; language is used according to who and what the context is and what the reason for the communicative function is. This was itself a response to Chomsky (1965), who argued that the ability to use mechanisms of language is innate and, as we are born with language, it is used regardless of the context. Chomsky called this innate ability to use language universal grammar. Hymes, however, approached the topic from a different perspective, considering language in use. He argued that it is impossible to disconnect the language from the context; instead it is necessary to consider how to speak, to whom and in what manner (Nunan, 1999).

Brown (2007) suggested that CLT should adopt communicative competence principles, but based on a broad approach rather than a specific method. Therefore, CLT may be seen as an approach with principles focusing on language learning by using meaningful communication and authentic language. The first principle of CLT is that the form is not the only focus; instead, all aspects of competencies are important. The second principle is that the learner’s fluency is as important as accuracy. The third is that the language used in the CLT classroom has to be productive for the learners. Productive language means that the language is not planned, and instead the learners have the use of resources with the freedom to let them expand their language. As no language is known or predictable, but instead it depends on what emerges in the lesson, this increases the chance of communication in the target language. The fourth principle is that the language used in the CLT classroom should be meaningful: the language should be personal to the speakers and they should relate it to their everyday language use. The final principle is that the language to be used should be authentic. Authenticity in this regard means that it is:
drawn from a wide variety of contexts, including TV and radio broadcasts, conversations, discussions and meetings of all kinds, talks, and announcements [as well as] magazines, stories, printed material and instructions, hotel brochures and airport notices, bank instructions, and a wide range of written messages (Nunan, 1999, p. 80)

The principles of CLT detailed above act as a bridge between what is learned in the classroom and the language used outside the classroom. Due to the fact that the language is used in the classroom to prepare the students, they should learn a similar version of the language to the one they will need to communicate outside the classroom, rather than only learning language to pass exams. Another communicative strategy to be found in the CLT classroom is the information gap. In an information gap task, the students individually lack information, and the task they are set encourages engagement with other members of the class in order to fill this gap, thereby requiring communication (Kumaravadivelu, 2006), which encourages the students to communicate in order to meet the pedagogical aims of the lesson.

One of the most important aspects of CLT is the textbook. Saudi Arabia has a very centralised education system that is heavily based on teaching the textbook (Ministry of Education, 2002). Indeed, the textbook may be seen as the “visible heart of any English Language Teaching (ELT) programme” (Sheldon, 1988, p. 237) and it plays a significant role in teaching the language as it suggests what kind of pedagogy to employ, what content to teach and how to teach it, with a sequence to follow. It provides the techniques and the strategies to be used, as well as outlining activities. In Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Education has changed not only the textbook but the entire pedagogy, and the power of the textbook is such that it can be seen as the guide in this shift. Therefore, it is very important to consider what the textbook is aiming to achieve. In this regard, analysing the textbook is useful because it exemplifies the type of pedagogy in use in the classroom.

In order to develop the English curriculum, the Saudi Ministry of Education asked for help from companies in the US and Europe to design suitable English textbooks for the new curriculum. Sami Al-Shuwaikh (director of Tatweer Educational Services, tasked with the responsibility of developing the textbooks), commented on this aspect of the curriculum reform:

The textbooks design will aim to develop the four English skills, the communication skills by using different strategies and the textbooks will include 30% of the Saudi and Islamic identity and the rest will be from the global identity but content that does not conflict with the local identity (Nassir, 2013)

These textbooks are provided for free to all schools, public and private. Communicative competence is one of the main goals of these textbooks, achieved through different types of communicative activities, such as role play, group work, group discussions and problem-solving. The textbooks also use different types of “real-world” materials, such as articles from magazines and newspapers, pictures, texts, reports, advertisements and posters. Interaction is emphasised through communication and conversation based on both the audio and the written text with a view to increasing the students’ communicative abilities both inside and outside the classroom.
(Abahussain, 2016; Farooq, 2015; Al Asmari, 2015; Al-Garni & Almuhammadi, 2019; Wajid & Saleem).

In his study, Abahussain (2016) discussed the use of the new textbooks by teachers who had recently graduated and were now teaching English in secondary schools. He found that these teachers used the textbooks differently from the communicative approach outlined in the lesson guide given to the teacher, which was communicative. These teachers made use of the communicative activities by engaging traditional methods such as the grammar translation method (GTM). The study concluded that the textbooks lack support material that aligns with the need for authenticity and meaningfully helps the teachers to teach the lessons outlined by these textbooks. It founded that activities were outdated and there were no resources in the school for teachers and students to access the internet and thus further materials. This study, however, did not consider in any depth whether the lessons being taught aligned with the CLT principals.

Farooq (2015) studied the changes that teachers face in implementing a communicative curriculum based on these textbooks in Saudi Arabia. Farooq found that the study was evaluate the CLT in these textbooks has an impact on the students’ level. He found that a lack of suitable materials and time pressure stopped the teachers from teaching CLT effectively. Farooq further noted that the level of students does not depend on the textbooks alone, but also on the teacher, their language proficiency, and how they teach. Farooq (2015) found that these teachers have a high level of CLT awareness with regard to these textbooks and a high level of how to evaluate the students compences. However, this study did not provide a frame work that could provide a deeper and clearer understanding of the teachers’ awareness of CLT and whether this was alinged with CLT principals.

Al Asmari (2015) focused on the challenges that stopped the teachers from implementing the CLT methods and tasks suggested in the Saudi textbooks. He found that not only was the CLT challenging the teacher, but also the English itself was regarded as a challenge. This is because English as a foreign language is treated as a subject to study but not as a set of skills to aquire. With regard to the CLT in the texbooks, Al Asmari found that there was a lack of the necessary training to help the teacher implement these textbook tasks. He suggested that more time was needed to prepare for the communicative acitivies and there was a clash between the CLT and the Saudi educational system. Al Asmari (2015) further found that the educational system stopped the teachers from being able to teach these textbook in alignment with CLT principles. He suggested that there was a lack of authenticity in the activities in these texbooks. However, this work did not consider the elements of CLT in the texbooks and what elements clashed with educational systems and how.

AL-Garni and Almuhammadi (2019) assessed the impact of CLT on teachers and students in their study. The study explored English in the textbook activities, such as role paying, problem-solving and interviewing, and the impact of this on the students’ learning. They found that the teachers had difficulty preparing materials for communicative activities. However, there was no framework used to evaluate these textbooks activities.
Wajid and Saleem (2016) explored how both students and teachers view CLT in Saudi textbooks. They found that the quality of the material was low, which made the communicative activities a challenge to implement. They also suggested that there was a conflict between the CLT teacher’s role and the traditional Saudi role of the teacher. Even though this study involved students and teachers to note these challenges that emerged from the textbooks, the study did not discuss the lesson guides with regard to what was required and what kind of pedagogy was outlined in these lesson guides.

Finally, Almalki (2014) explored the English textbooks series in secondary schools, considering teacher perceptions of these textbooks. The study found that most of the teachers believe some parts of the new curriculum are too difficult because they are beyond the learners’ level. However, this study did not provide examples of these difficult activities, but instead only based this finding on student perceptions. The gap from the above studies is that nobody has undertaken a textbook analysis based on CLT principles as a framework to investigate how well the textbook aligns with the CLT principles.

**Methods**

This research forms part of my ongoing PhD study of the factors behind the failure of the implementation of CLT in Saudi Arabian middle schools. The research design is that of a qualitative case study, which enables the researcher to apply the required depth to explore these phenomena (Yin, 2009) using interviews with four teachers, before and after classroom observation. I also conducted two focus groups with students of two of these teachers, as well as textbook analysis – which is the only aspect of the research presented in this article.

The researcher used a set of criteria to analyse one unit of the textbook, *Lift off 6*, which is used in the third year of middle school in Saudi Arabia. The typical age of the students in this grade is 14 years old. The textbook is given to the students for free at the start of each year.

The criteria I used analyses the textbook and is adapted from the CLT approach (Brown, 2000). I assessed the activities and the textbook aims in terms of: whether or not they are communicative; meaningful; free; authentic; personalised (whether the activities relate to the students’ personal experience and let them use the language personally; whether or not they are scaffolded; accuracy or fluency-oriented; and whether an information gap exists.

I choose one unit at random because all the units are typical and designed in the same way.

**Analysis**

Lesson one, which is entitled “If I were the New Manager”, presents fictional text in the format of a graphic novel and the lesson entails the children being asked questions related to this (*Lift off 6*, 2016, p. 22). The following lesson includes multiple-choice questions, which can be answered on the page, then the second exercise includes grammar correction – both in relation to reading and speaking – and the final part entails a listening exercise. Overall, this lesson can be regarded as meaningful because it creates a story/scenario; however, as this scenario seems to be created for the purpose of the lesson, it is not authentic. The lesson overall is scaffolding knowledge and building towards a larger exercise and knowledge base. It is personalised to a degree as it does
seem to be based in the country and so there is an element of locality. Later exercises also draw on the students’ own personal experiences. There is a general drive towards accuracy and a high level of complexity. The final exercise offers a certain degree of freedom, while the rest have a very clear right/wrong dichotomy.

**Unit Three: Lesson One**

**Activity A: Reading**

In the teacher’s book the aim of this lesson is outlined as: “to read for gist; to introduce the vocabulary of the lesson” (*Lift off 6*, 2016, p. 22). The sequence of this activity is to: “Look at the pictures and establish the setting (a football match). Choose two students to read the parts of the supporters. Do not help with vocabulary yet. Students use their voting cards to show their answer.” This reading exercise thereby establishes background knowledge and perhaps the relevant vocabulary for the rest of the lesson. The teacher is encouraged not to correct the students as they read, but to ask for the “best” title for the exercise; this is seemingly a subjective choice, but notably the teacher’s book outlines a clear answer to this. This does not seem to fulfil the communicative criteria as it limits the potential for discussion and there is limited freedom. The textbook offers the potential for freedom, while the teacher’s book limits this and adds further constraints and control. However, it is personalised as it involves Saudi names.

**Activity B: Reading and Speaking**

The aim of this activity is: “to read for specific information”. The sequence is: “In pairs, students use the cartoon to answer the questions. Monitor their corrections. Note any common problems. Choose pairs to share and discuss their answers with the class. Review any outstanding vocabulary issues or other common problems” (*Lift off 6*, 2016, p. 22). This activity has the potential for communicativeness as it asks the teacher to use pair work to fulfil the information gap activity. This also may be meaningful to the students as they consult a panel of images. It is personalised as the pictures show a Saudi sports team with Saudi names. It is more fluency than accuracy oriented as it asks the students to discuss in pairs and suggests that the teacher should monitor but not correct the students.

**Activity C: Listening and Speaking**

The aim of this activity is: “to improve pronunciation, stress and intonation; to promote fluency”. The sequence is: “Say now ‘listen and repeat’. Play track 12. Students repeat, following in their books. Monitor and repeat if necessary. Students repeat the dialogue in pairs. Choose pairs to demonstrate to the class” (*Lift off 6*, 2016, p. 23). This exercise is a pair work exercise focusing on encouraging the students to engage with the pictures. The questions are very simple, engaging a spot-the-difference style approach, and they only require focus on what is in the picture. There seems to be a sense of encouraging enjoyment in this exercise. There is no information gap and a relatively low level of complexity – the students do have to supplement words, but the structure and form of the sentence is given to them. This is controlled and there is limited space for freedom as there is quite a clear answer being sought (clearer than it was in exercise A). There seems to be a focus on accuracy rather than fluency as the sentence is fed to them, requiring only the supplementing of a word or two, and then the teacher’s book is clear that they should be monitoring the answers and using the opportunity at the end of the exercise to ensure the vocabulary is correct.
This exercise is meaningful as it draws on a story evoking lifelike events. However, it is not authentic because this is fictional text.

This is a very structured exercise that asks the students to listen to and repeat a section of audio relating to the football match theme. The focus outlined in the teacher’s book is very clearly on accuracy in relation to various levels: pronunciation, stress and fluency. There seems to be a very strong focus on correctness and this is perhaps more controlled than the ideal CLT approach that requires a greater level of freedom. Again, it is meaningful but not authentic, as with the above exercises. By this stage, there is a level of scaffolding – this exercise is clearly building on and using knowledge that has been developed in the previous stages, although in itself the exercise does not involve much scaffolding. The homework activity seems to be less meaningful than the rest of the lesson and it is unlikely to engage the students’ attention as it entails them learning a list of words rather than continuing with the story element of the lesson. There is a potentially high level of complexity in this exercise as the students need to understand in order to repeat with a good level of accuracy. While this exercise is supposed to be aimed at promoting fluency, in fact the focus seems to be on accuracy and getting detailed elements, such as pronunciation and intonation, correct.

Activity D: Language Help

The aim of this fourth activity is: “to introduce the second conditional with If I were (person) + I would/d + (verb)”. The sequence of this activity is:

1. Read the language help information. Highlight the two examples in the cartoon (If I were the referee, I’d show a red card; If I were the manager, I’d change all of your team.). Elicit more examples from the students. Note: Teach If I were … as a phrase. The students don’t need to understand the grammar yet.

There is a high level of complexity in this exercise as this entails introducing (and working on) a very difficult grammar point for the students. There is a lower level of meaningfulness in this exercise as the teacher’s book sets a model and asks the students to apply it. The teacher’s book explicitly states that the students do not need to understand the grammar behind this. There is also no information gap here or any kind of search for understanding by the students. There is a lower level of scaffolding because the use of the running theme – football – seems to be more superficial, and indeed the students could move away from this with very little difficulty, and still be correct. This activity has the potential for less engagement as the teacher is asked to elicit responses from students, which may not include everyone. Added to the lack of explanation, this could lead to a lack of attention.

Activity E: Reading

The aim of this activity is: “to practice giving reasons and brief explanations for opinions”. The sequence of this activity is: “Read through the advice and then the list of reasons. Help with vocabulary. Students complete the task and vote on the answers, making corrections where needed” (Lift off 6, 2016, p. 23). There is a focus on meanings and reasons in this exercise; this seems to be a relatively low complexity activity that encourages the students to engage with the text and draws the focus back to the topic at hand after the previous exercise has perhaps drifted.
away. The teacher is encouraged to develop any vocabulary that emerges out of this and there seems to be a strong element of scaffolding. This is not authentic because it is not real material, which is clearly illustrated by the fact that the grammar is a bit low level. There is no freedom in this exercise as there are a predefined set of answers and no scope for moving away from these. Nonetheless, there is potentially an element of fluency focus as this is pushing towards understanding full sentences and phrases.

**Activity F: Speaking**

The aim of this activity is: “to practise asking for and giving advice and giving reasons for opinions” (*Lift off 6*, 2016, p. 23). The sequence of this activity is: “Ask students to give advice using If I were you, I’d … and the sentences in Exercise E. Choose two students to demonstrate using the speech bubbles. Students complete the task in pairs. Monitor for the target Structure” The activity builds on the previous two sections to create further difficulty in the sentences the students are creating. It fits with activity D but lacks the focus on understanding the grammar. Instead, the focus is on applying it and using it in context. There is potentially more freedom in this activity as the students could move away from the format given, particularly in activity E. In this sense the activity is also more personalised and it is more communicative because they are being asked to work in pairs to create this dialogue independently. There is a focus on accuracy as the teacher is instructed to monitor the structure and the language uses as the students work in pairs. There is a high level of meaningfulness in this exercise as the focus is on applying reason.

**Activity G: Pronunciation**

The aim of this activity is: “to differentiate between different sounds in English” (*Lift off 6*, 2016, p. 23). The sequence of this activity is outlined as: “Play track 13. Students listen and tick the sound they hear. Monitor. Check answers as a class.” There is thus a strong element of meaninglessness in this activity as the sounds are being lifted out of context. The exercise requires the students to listen to a sentence and then select a correct pronunciation from a list of options. This is very controlled and provides a very clear right/wrong dichotomy. The teacher’s book simply instructs the teacher to “monitor”. There is no freedom in this activity, it is not particularly complex and the focus is on accuracy with a detailed attention to creating the correct sounds. This drifts away from scaffolding as there has been little emphasis on this aspect in the class so far. There is also a lack of authenticity to this this is text created for the textbook. This activity is thus very de-personalised.

**Activity H Listening**

The final two activities are not mentioned in the teacher’s book, which is presumably an error, but could also be construed as offering the teachers greater freedom. The teacher’s book does suggest a variation on activity F, supplementing a new phrase, but again it does not explain the reasoning for this grammar use. There is little information on activity H in the teacher’s book, so it is to draw conclusions on this, but it would presumably be a similar format to the activities discussed above.

Aims: “Repeat Exercise F, using Why don’t you and You’d better as revision”

Activity I WRITING

Aims: “Workbook pages 100 and 101 Final activity” (*Lift off 6*, 2016, p. 23)
The sequence of this activity is: “Students write a short list of possible problems. Working in pairs or small groups, they take turns reading a problem. Their partner has to give advice using If I were you, I’d…” There is a strong focus on meaningfulness in this activity, as the students are encouraged to create and write advice for one another based on a set of problems outlined – notably only the last of the four relates to football, which has been the subject discussed throughout the lesson. There is a far greater level of freedom to create and develop ideas here, as well as some scaffolding on some of the topics that have been discussed above – still without explanation of the grammar points though. As this is a writing task, the students are presumably working on their own in this. There is no information gap, but a relatively high level of complexity. This is very personalised as the students are given the freedom to develop their own ideas. The lack of advice in the teacher’s book – whether on purpose or by mistake – also contributes to this as it means there is no clear idea of what is expected and there is no right or wrong answer outlined.

Table 1. Summary of key results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Activity requirement</th>
<th>Aim of the activity</th>
<th>Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>“tick the best title for the cartoon”</td>
<td>“to read for gist; to introduce the vocabulary of the lesson”</td>
<td>Limited freedom, communicative, fluency orientated and personalised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>“correct the sentences”</td>
<td>“to read for specific information.”</td>
<td>Communicative, information gap, personalised and fluency orientated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>“repeat the story in the cartoon”</td>
<td>“to improve pronunciation, stress and intonation; to promote fluency”</td>
<td>Low level of complexity, controlled, scaffolded, limited freedom, accuracy orientated and meaningful, but not authentic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>“read and remember”</td>
<td>“to introduce the second conditional with If I were (person) + I would/’d + (verb)”</td>
<td>High level of complexity, less meaningful, no information gap and not scaffolded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>“write the letter of the reason next to the correct advice”</td>
<td>“to practise giving reasons and brief explanations for opinions.”</td>
<td>Meaningful, low level of complexity, not authentic, accuracy over fluency and no freedom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>“give advice or suggestions to the new manager”</td>
<td>to practise asking for and giving advice and giving reasons for opinions.”</td>
<td>Meaningful, scaffolded, more freedom, accuracy orientated and personalised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>“listen and tick (X) the correct sound”</td>
<td>“to differentiate between different sounds in English.”</td>
<td>Meaningful, accuracy orientated, very controlled, no freedom, low level of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Exploring Communicative Language Teaching Principles

Alharbi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Complexity, not scaffolded, not authentic and not personalised</th>
<th>Meaningful and personalised. No freedom, no information gap, no freedom and with a high level of complexity; no scaffolding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“now listen and repeat”</td>
<td>“repeat Exercise F, using Why don’t you and You’d better as revision”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

Brown (2000) noted that the first principle of CLT is that form is not the only focus. While some of the activities discussed above do prioritise form, fitting with what can be considered the old system of teaching, there is potential for exercises A and B to be interpreted in a more communicative way. This aspect could be reduced or enhanced in the hands of the teacher. The textbook suggests the use of some communicative aspects, as mentioned above, but it is very controlling and activities in which students use the language more freely are very limited. Interestingly, the handing of the activities in the two texts also sometimes shows conflict between the students’ textbook and the teacher’s book, as in activity A, when the teacher’s book limits the student’s use of the language, but the textbook is asking the students to use their language. Teachers may also face problems when the time for teaching content is limited. This reduces the freedom of the teacher, as they are pushed to complete what is advised by the teacher’s book, and limits their freedom in terms of how to use the material. Many of these activities concentrate on improving pronunciation, which tends to increase its importance, and the teacher’s book advises minimising the mistakes relating to tone and stress.

However, in the production of language, CLT is not only focused on accuracy but also fluency as the use of the language to communicate is important, as the name suggests. As Brown (2000) stated, the focus on accuracy should not decrease the focus on fluency. Nunan (1999) added that emphasising accuracy can limit the meaning and stop the flow of communication among the students. Some of the above activities are indeed promoting accuracy over fluency, but some encourage fluency as well. One of the biggest challenges in using this textbook is that teachers are asked to finish the textbook within limited time. This ultimately does not allow them to introduce their contribution to the lesson and it pushes them to stay with the textbook guidance only, ignoring the potential for teacher freedom. This high degree of control in turn pushes the teacher to control the students. Therefore, whilst there is indeed an element of authenticity throughout this textbook, this type of control may affect the teacher’s ability to teach communicatively.

The principles of CLT provide a path for the students and assist them in achieving more compared to what they have learnt in the class. However, this may conflict with the centrality of Saudi education as CLT encourages production not prediction. Also, some of the activities in the curriculum are still not student-focused. For a CLT approach, as noted in the literature review section, the concepts of meaningfulness, authenticity and information gap are key. Students are encouraged to learn in a way that is meaningful to them, that is applicable to the real world and that encourages them to seek out information as they would in real life. In the textbook analysis
above, there is some sense that these principles are at the forefront, but often the approach falls back onto the old style. The previous curriculum was mainly about learning the language to pass the exam, rather than acquiring skills for the use of the language.

A change in the entire teaching process and style is essential if the radical changes involved in CLT are to be applied (Abahussain, 2016). The previous curriculum was teacher-centred, it did not include practicing the English language and it was focused on traditional methods, such as the teacher being the main route to learning. One of the most important aspects of improving communication is using the language meaningfully, drawing on language that can be used in everyday life. The previous curriculum lacked activities that use pair and group work and information gap activities. Typically, the students could complete each activity without communication and they were not allowed to use the language freely. Consequently, the change to the new curriculum is radical. Notions of correctness may limit the confidence of the students in using the new language as the textbook asks, however, because neither the teacher nor the students are familiar with the language.

Based on the above, it is clear that the textbook still uses a high level of control, which in itself does not fit with the CLT approach to language teaching. The move from the traditional curriculum, in which the teacher is at the centre, to CLT, which centres the student, is therefore only slowly filtering into the education system.

Conclusion
This paper has explored one aspect of my PhD project related to CLT implementation in schools in Saudi Arabia. This entailed exploring the textbook based on CLT principles. I have used these principles as criteria to judge the material in the textbook: whether it is communicative, meaningful, authentic and personalised; whether there is scaffolding; whether the activities are accuracy or fluency oriented; and what degree of complexity they exhibit. Most of the activities discussed above are communicative to some degree as there are many opportunities provided for pair work and group discussions and many have an information gap that encourages the students to discuss together to complete the task. The various activities that are personalised and meaningful use examples from Saudi Arabia that the students are familiar with and that are meaningful to them. Most of the activities have a low level of complexity. There is a careful balance between accuracy and fluency as some tend to be more accuracy orientated while others more fluency orientated; and the scaffolding is shown by the activities using sequencing. Most of the activities are very controlled and provide limited opportunities for the students to use their language freely.

Implications
Limited teaching time and a high dependency on textbooks are the major issues that could be addressed by removing the less important content from the textbooks. The rather controlling teacher’s book guidance may constrain the aims of CLT. Changing the pedagogy of Saudi Arabia requires a broader approach than simply changing the textbooks, as communication in English, by definition, cannot be done by reading textbooks. Teaching English using CLT may necessitate giving teachers more space to increase the opportunities for the students to use the language more meaningfully. Finally, it is recommended that Saudi Arabia continue the process of updating its
CLT-based policy in order to promote its quality. This cannot be done without improving teacher education; therefore, there is a need to focus on this aspect.

Limitations
This paper does not present how the textbook is used in the setting in actual practice, which is why the PhD project incorporates classroom observations and both teacher individual interviews, before and after observation, and a student focus groups. This limitation prevents a clearer picture being formed of how CLT is implemented.

Recommendations
Future research should consider how well the language policy is reflected in the textbook and what can motivate the students to practice in everyday life contexts using English as a foreign language. Further research could also consider what kind of modifications to the textbook would improve the engagement of the students and the teachers.

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Cognitive Load Theory and its Relation to Instructional Design: Perspectives of Some Algerian University Teachers of English

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Abstract
Cognitive Load Theory is a theory that can be used by educators to design effective instructions. It has been applied in many areas, including teaching English as a foreign language as it contributes to positive outcomes. Before designing instructions, teachers should well understand the theory of Cognitive Load alongside human brain architecture. Sometimes students are taught more than they can learn due to their limited cognitive capacities which teachers do not consider. Students, therefore, often experience a cognitive overload which may lead to learning failure. So to what extent Algerian university teachers of English are aware of cognitive load theory? This research aims at exploring the perspectives of Algerian university teachers of English on the theory of cognitive load and its connection to instructional design. The study is expected to increase teachers' awareness of the importance of cognitive load theory in instructional design. 21 English language teachers from different universities of Algeria were enrolled in this query. A questionnaire was used to examine the respondents’ knowledge of the theory and their instructional design experiences. Even though the early expectation was that teachers are knowledgeable about the theory, the research findings showed that teachers lack sufficient knowledge of the theory; yet, they tend to work with some of its techniques when they design instructions.

Keywords: cognitive load theory, EFL Algerian University teachers, human cognitive architecture, instructional design, instructional design techniques

Introduction

Effective teaching/learning process is influenced by various factors including instructional design. In fact, instructional design has a significant impact on students’ understanding of knowledge. Hence, in order to improve students’ performance, teachers need to understand the evidence base that helps develop students’ practice through concepts related to instructional design particularly, those related to cognition. Over the last decade, there has been considerable interest in areas of cognition and education. The knowledge of the cognitive processes involved in understanding instructional material has been progressed by cognitive science to a point where it is becoming evident that the traditional methods of instructional design are inadequate anymore. New Instructional procedures guided by the Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) have become accessible (Chandler & Sweller, 1991).

Cognitive load theory originated in the 1980s and has been developed by researchers around the world in many disciplines since the 1990s (Schnotz & Kürschner, 2007). It can be applied in many areas of teaching including, teaching foreign languages (Diao & Sweller, 2007). The theory highlights the role of cognitive capacity in working memory for successful learning outcomes (Van Merrienboer & Sweller, 2005). Since it is limited in capacity, learners must keep a considerable number of working memory elements while in tandem, relating them to understand the material. This load often results in exceeding working memory capacity, i.e., overloaded. Consequently, successful learning is forced to occur within the limits of working memory. Inevitably, (CLT) provides theoretical and empirical support for explicit models of instruction. Research in (CLT) demonstrates that instructional techniques are most effective when they are designed to accord with human cognitive architecture (Schnotz & Kürschner, 2007).

Foreign languages university students, sometimes, are taught more than they can learn; they are overwhelmed by the enormous amount of knowledge. Sweller (1988) claimed that students sometimes are being taught incorrectly because the teaching strategies do not consider how they learn. According to him, the human working memory capacity is minimal and cannot process a massive amount of information at the same time (Sweller, Van Merrienboer, & Paas, 1998). Therefore, it is of paramount importance for teachers to take into consideration students’ cognitive capacities. Otherwise, students will be overwhelmed and the learning outcomes would not comply with the teaching objectives. Consequently, the learning process would fail.

In the same line of thought, Sweller et al. (1998) argued that (CLT) links cognition and instruction, and it has become one of the most critical theories in the field of instructional design. The role of teachers is to analyze, solve performance problems, and implement solutions that make students knowledgeable; they should build instructional materials based on the students’ cognitive processing abilities (Sweller, 1994). The present study aims to explore the extent to which Algerian University teachers of English are aware of the theory and its significance and to inquire about teachers’ experiences toward instruction design. Hence, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent Algerian university teachers of English are aware of cognitive load theory?
2. To what extent they apply the techniques of cognitive load theory to instructional design?
The significance of this research is that it intends to add to the theoretical stockpile the way in which teachers can design instructions based on the use of (CLT) and its techniques. Moreover, it will be of considerable value for the practical guidelines with which EFL teachers will be equipped with to design effective instructions that do not overload the students' memory. Finally, the current study is expected to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of (CLT) and its relation to designing instructions.

Literature Review
Cognitive Load Theory
It is a psychological theory that is originated from the field of cognitive science. Initially, it had emerged from the work of Australian cognitive educational psychologist John Sweller in the late 1980s (Sweller, 1988). It was developed to explain the effects of the design of learning materials on what happens in the human brain when learning takes place. The theory emphasizes that the working memory capacity has limitations when dealing with novel information (van Merrienboer & Sweller, 2005). That is to say, it is the total amount of mental activity applied to an individual cognitive system within a given time. The theory aims to provide instructional techniques that fit within the characteristics of working memory (Sweller et al., 1998). By simultaneously considering the structure of information and the human cognitive architecture, theorists have been able to generate a unique variety of procedures (Paas, Renkl, & Sweller, 2003).

Human Cognitive Architecture
The efficiency of instructional materials significantly depends on considering the characteristics of the human cognitive system (Sweller, 1994). Researchers have used (CLT) to propose that different used instructional procedures are inadequate because they necessitate students to engage in needless cognitive activities which impose a heavy load on working memory.

The human cognitive architecture has three suppositions. First, the working memory is limited in capacity and duration. This kind of memory is the system where small quantities of information are stored for a short period (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968). Clark, Nguyen, and Sweller (2011) claimed that humans are able to process “two or three” items of information at the same time in working memory before it could be stored in long-term memory. However, according to Miller (1956), an individual is capable of retaining only “seven plus or minus two” items of information at any point in time. In consequence, if the amount of information presented exceeds the abilities of students’ working memory, then the information cannot be retained. The second supposition is that long-term memory is unlimited. Long-term memory according to Atkinson and Shiffrin in contrast to working memory, is the kind of memory that stores huge amounts of information for a limited amount of time (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968). (CLT) assumes that knowledge is stored in long-term memory in the form of “schemas” (Kalyuga, 2010). In this way, schemas can make the retrieving of knowledge from long-term memory to working memory effortlessly. As a result, the load on working memory will be reduced (Sweller et al., 1998). The last supposition is that the load imposed on students’ working memory during instruction can be adjusted. That is to say, that students’ load impact information processing in working memory so the load can be increased or decreased (Mousavi, Low, & Sweller, 1995).
Types of Cognitive Load

Instructions can impose three kinds of load on students' cognitive system (Van Merrienboer & Sweller, 2005).

Intrinsic Load

It is imposed by the inherent difficulty of the material and the level of expertise of students in the subject matter (Sweller, 1994). In simple terms, it is the natural complexity of information that must be understood. It is caused by cognitive activities that are essential for establishing key connections between elements of information, integrating them with available knowledge and building new knowledge structures in working memory which is referred to as “element interactivity” (Sweller, 2010).

Extraneous Load

Also known as ineffective load, it is a major type of load caused by instructional features that are not beneficial for learning. According to Sweller, it is a diversion of cognitive resources on activities irrelevant to performance and does not directly contribute to learning (Sweller, 2010). It is caused by factors related to design such as poor design, presentation format, and non-essential material.

Germane Load

In contrast, is the effective and beneficial type of load. It refers to the load imposed on the working memory by the process of learning (Sweller et al., 1998). It is the process of transferring information into the long-term memory caused by challenging the student to apply effort toward understanding the material.

Based on the conceptions of load types, theorists assert that instructional material has greatest effectiveness when all types of load should not overburden working memory capacity. Educators must seek to reduce extraneous load, optimize intrinsic load, and increase germane load (Van Merrienboer & Sweller, 2005). The first reason for unsuccessful learning is that working memory overload frequently results from extra extraneous and intrinsic load (Sweller, 2010). A second reason for optimal learning outcomes is that sufficient working memory capacity should be occupied by germane load (Van Merrienboer & Sweller, 2005). In fact, the extent to which instructional features contribute to extraneous or germane load may depend on the learner and the extent to which the individual experiences intrinsic load.

Instructional Design Techniques to Reduce Cognitive Overload

Learning should aid students to manage essential processing so that it does not burden their cognitive system. For example, the most common problem in the learning process occurs when the presented material includes extraneous material. In such a situation, the student is primed to engage in extraneous processing that is not relevant to learning the essential material. The following are set of techniques that have been created by (CLT) to design instructions that do not overload learners' memories, thus achieving successful learning.
Worked Example Effect

According to Sweller, is about providing explicit details regarding the steps required to solve a problem so that students will be able to focus on a particular learning goal rather than expending cognitive resources (Sweller et al., 1998). In other words, it provides procedures to solve a specific problem that has already been solved. Yet, it is crucial to consider the students’ level of expertise because as their expertise increases, the heavy use of worked examples becomes less and less effective ultimately becoming redundant (Pachman, Sweller, & Kalyuga, 2013).

Split Attention Effect

Sometimes, students are required to process multiple sources of information at the same time to understand the material. Hence, it occurs in the inefficient acquisition of information (Chandler & Sweller, 1991). In this case, students are required to hold both sources of information in their working memory simultaneously and to mentally integrate them resulting in a high load on the working memory. For effective instructional design, split attention can be minimized by presenting information with a dual-mode (Chandler & Sweller, 1992).

Redundancy Effect

Students do not learn effectively when they are presented with supplementary information that is not directly relevant to learning objectives (Diao & Sweller, 2007); this is because they have to process irrelevant information attempting to settle the two incoming streams so that their working memory is directed to unnecessary information. Sweller (1998) asserted that providing students with extra information is advantageous. However, redundancy might be harmless when it provides redundant information which may lead to an instructional failure (Diao & Sweller, 2007).

Modality Effect

There are auditory and visual streams which process information in a largely independent manner so that the amount of information that can be processed by working memory may be determined by the modality of presentation (Tindall-Ford, Chandler, & Sweller, 1997). It can help manage essential processing via distributing the cognitive processing across both processing channels (Mousavi et al., 1995).

Complexity Effect

Direct instructions tend to agree on how the human brain learns efficiently so that such explicit models of instructions are supported by (CLT) (Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006). Explicit instruction is an approach in which the teacher provides partial guidance for students by telling them how to handle a situation. Nevertheless, this direct guidance depends on the level of students’ expertise (Luke, 2014).

Learning a foreign language tends to be hard when considering how the human brain holds an enormous amount of information in working memory, and then moves it into long-term memory to construct schema. It is important to carefully research the various types of cognitive load so that designing educational materials that will help promote, not hinder, English language learning. However, (CLT) has not been extensively researched in the Algerian context. Therefore, it is important for university teachers in Algeria, especially English language teachers, to refer to what
is in the brains of their students by considering (CLT) and its useful techniques for instructional design.

**Methods**

**Research Design**

In order to examine the perspectives of university teachers of English on the concept of (CLT) and its connection to instructional design, the current exploratory research embodied a quantitative approach through the use of a questionnaire for data collection, selecting the department of English in different Algerian universities to be the fieldwork.

**Participants**

The subject population in the present research was permanent English language teachers from several Algerian universities in different cities. The key selection criterion was based, first, on the assumption that permanent English language teachers do know procedures to design instruction and to express their opinions out of their experiences, and, second, on the supposition that the selection of different universities might lead to valid data that can be generalized over all universities of Algeria. The sample under exploration consists of twenty-one teachers who were randomly selected and volunteered to participate in this research study. As far as their academic level is concerned, they were ranged between: Assistant lecturers (A and B), Associate professors (A and B), and Professors. As for their experience, they were teaching English at the university for at least more than two years to more than fifteen years.

**Instruments**

One research tool was used to gather data in this study. The researchers developed a questionnaire with a deliberate focus on the research questions identified previously. The questionnaire comprised three main parts including, a combination of multiple-choice, close-ended, and open-ended questions (see Appendix). Part one deals with the background information and characteristics of the participants. Part two examines teachers’ knowledge of (CLT). The last part scrutinizes teachers’ experiences to instruction design. For valid results, the questionnaire was piloted by three university teachers who made some remarks and recommended changes.

**Setting**

Data were collected during May 2020. However, due to the pandemic of Covid-19, it was not possible to distribute the questionnaire to teachers, but it was sent to them through e-mails via Google forms.

**Data Collection and Analysis Procedures**

This questionnaire allowed for the collection of quantitative data that were analyzed by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software program (Version 26) alongside qualitative data in which themes and patterns were identified.
Table one displays different background information related to the participants. Firstly, the majority were males (15) and only (6) females. As one can notice, the universities were from the different regions of Algeria: east, west, north, and south. We estimated that this diversity would lead to valid data that can be generalized over all Algeria universities. Thirdly, the majority of teachers (71.46%) had high academic ranks: Associate professors (A and B) and Professors, and only 28.54% were Assistant lecturers (A and B); this also corresponded to their experience in teaching English; in fact, 62% of participants have more than ten years of experience in teaching English at university while (38%) had less than ten years of teaching experience. These data were relevant as this research involves teachers to share their opinions regarding instruction design based on what they have experienced. In the last section, we identified the selected teachers’ perceptions towards the task of designing instructions. Unexpectedly, only one teacher asserted that the task of instruction design is easy, while the majority (81%) declared to be moderate and (14.3%) claimed to be a difficult task.

Part Two: Section One: Teachers’ Knowledge of (CLT)

When designing instructions, which model(s) or theory do you rely on?

From the teachers’ answers, various models and theories were suggested: socio-constructive theory, (CLT), kemp's model, and Bloom’s Taxonomy, etc. As teachers claimed, they select the
model which best suits the organization of the lecture or the task while taking into account students’ learning styles, learning strategies, and individual differences.

*Are you familiar with (CLT)?*

Responses to this question were divided almost equally; (47.6%) of the respondents confirmed their knowledge of the theory while (52.4%) indicated their ignorance.

*What do you know about it?*

All participants (47.6%) shared their opinions and knowledge concerning (CLT). The following are some answers of the teachers who claimed that they know (CLT):

*Too much information kills information, the active dynamic working memory cannot process many things at the same time; cognitive load can be negative if it is not structured in carefully designed instructions according to thinking levels and learning strategies.*

Another respondent asserted, *(CLT) is built on the premise that the brain can only do so many things at once and we should be intentional about what we ask it to do.*

All teachers agreed on the fact that (CLT) aims at understanding the link between the load produced by the learning task and the students’ ability to process new data. Moreover, they stressed its importance in designing instructions.

*Could you identify cognitive load’s different types?*

Among (47.4%) who claimed that they are familiar with (CLT), only (28.6%) could demonstrate the three types of cognitive load.

*Do you think that (CLT) may impact effective teaching practice?*

The majority of teachers (71.4%) said that they have no idea. Interestingly, no respondent stated the reverse of the claim, and only (28.6%) confirmed the significant impact of (CLT) on teaching practices. One participant clarified this idea saying that: *(CLT) is important in the way that it helps teachers to design lessons in relation to students' cognitive capacities.*

*Do you think that it is essential to design instructions in a manner that reduces a particular load type?*

Most participants claimed that they do not know how instructional design can reduce or increase a particular load type. However, only 7 teachers could demonstrate positive responses. These findings can be traced back to what was discussed earlier in which their refrain from answering was due to the lack of awareness towards that theory. The following comment of a respondent argues his viewpoint:

*I can’t really say more, for as I mentioned earlier, I don’t know a lot about the theory.*

*To what extent instructional design, according to how human brains process and store information, can be effective?*

The majority of answers were: “no idea”; yet (28.6%) have provided their viewpoints and the following themes were disclosed: Instructional design can be effective when,

- The lecture is well designed.
- There is a progression of instructional design.
- Meeting students' needs.
Respecting the way the brain processes information.
From the themes above, it is apparent that they are dissimilar; this is reflected in the nature of teachers’ unrelated and imprecise responses. This assumes that even those teachers who claimed that they are familiar with the theory, do miss in-depth knowledge. One respondent claimed that: “It can be effective when there is a progression of instructional design according to lower-order thinking skills towards higher-order thinking skills.”

Another teacher explained: “It takes into account the way the brain processes knowledge and information.”

Do you think that explicit instructions are more effective than partial guidance?
From the participants’ answers, three main themes emerged. They are ordered according to the recurrence:

- It depends on the students’ needs, capacities, task, learning styles, learning strategies, etc.
- Agreed, in which it can give positive results.
- Disagreed, in which partial and gradual guidance is more effective than explicit and direct instructions.

The following comments are from the respondents:
“I think this largely depends on the students you teach. Direct instructions can be very good. Also, gradual guidance can give great results.”
“For sure. The process is clear for the students from the beginning, nothing is fuzzy.”
“That partial guidance may serve in strengthening the instruction where learners act with their critical thinking, so it is pedagogically better than direct and explicit instruction.”

What do you know about the worked example effect?
The majority of the answers were “no idea”. Only three participants provided their responses indicating that the strategy was somewhat effective in reducing cognitive overload. One teacher explained the idea by saying: “This technique is very effective since information enters our brain via working memory. That is the memory we use while paying attention to details in the classroom.”

From the respondents’ answers, it seems that they lack a big deal of knowledge on what (CLT) is and what it is concerned with.

When do you support the gradual incorporation of independent problem-solving tasks?
Three major themes have emerged:

- A high degree of difficulty
- All the time
- No idea

From the themes above, those who are not familiar with (CLT) could not share their opinions. Yet, from those who pretended familiarity with the concept, two suggestions were provided; the gradual incorporation of problem-solving can be used all the time or when there is a high degree of difficulty.

Does the redundancy effect produce a positive learning outcome?
From the respondents’ responses, three themes were disclosed:

- Positive outcomes.
- Negative outcomes.
- No idea.
One teacher explained:  
“Yes it does, in the sense that it provides more opportunities for practice, consolidation, rehearsing, and improvement of learner strategy use.”

Another teacher clarified:  
“I don’t think so. It might deviate the students from what they really need to learn and grasp.”

How can you eliminate the split-attention effect when providing instructions?  
The majority of the answers were vague and imprecise. It is apparent that teachers were not sure about their answers as it is reflected in the nature of their broad and unclear responses. The following are some comments of respondents that may illustrate their viewpoints:

“It can be eliminated by varying the modes of communication while designing the tasks.”

“Writing instructions is a skill that shows to what extent instructions lead learners to perform what they are supposed to do. Clarity, precision, concision, and exemplification of instructions reduce to a great extent the split attention.”

“We have to present the information related to the instruction in an integrated format.”

Do you think that using more than one mode of communication facilitates effective learning?  
All participants approved the fact that using multiple modes of communication may bring effective and positive outcomes. Some teachers justified their response, saying that:

“Yes, I believe in the eclecticism of materials. Our students have different learning styles which must be taken into consideration while designing instructions.”

Another teacher emphasized the idea by saying:

“Definitely, incidental or programmed learning experiences depend on our senses and our perceptions of knowledge. So modes of communication have to be diversified.”

Section Two: Teachers’ Experiences to Instructional Design 

Table 2. Participants’ knowledge towards instructions and human brain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Freq</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge related to Instruction Design</td>
<td>I can design effective learning instructions.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I make instructions transparent to students.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I introduce the appropriate amount of information to explain the material.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I provide clues about how to process, select, and organize the material.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I demonstrate instructions by modeling.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I evaluate instructions by checking for understanding.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Brain</td>
<td>I think that instructional techniques are most effective when they are designed to accord with how human brains use knowledge.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I support explicit models of instruction because they accord with how human brains learn.

I think that if working memory is overfull, there is a risk that the content being taught will not be understood, and learning will slow down.

In the first category, most teachers (85.7%) stated that they could design effective learning instructions through making instructions transparent to students, introducing the appropriate amount of information to explain the material, and providing clues about how to process, select, and organize the material. Teachers, also, said that they evaluate instructions by checking for understanding, while no one asserted the opposite concerning the previous claims. Whether they demonstrate instructions by modeling or not, the majority (57.1%) agreed.

In the next category, the majority of respondents (71.4%) believe that instructional techniques are most effective when they are designed to accord with how the human brain learns and uses knowledge. When they were asked if they support explicit models of instructions, of the teachers, only (47.6 %) have agreed. In accordance, (47.6%) of the participants think that if working memory is overfull, there will be a risk that the content being taught will not be understood and that learning will slow down.

Table 3. Participants’ experiences towards instructional design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I take prior knowledge of the learner into account when designing instructions.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity</td>
<td>I take the complexity of the material into account when designing instructions.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I introduce the elements of the material in a simple-to-complex order.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I introduce the material in its full complexity from the beginning, and then I direct the learners' attention to the individual interacting elements.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WorkedExample</td>
<td>I provide explicit details regarding the steps necessary to solve a problem, rather than having students discover information by themselves.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I use problems that have already been solved to design tests.  
I use gradual integration of examples as students gain expertise.  

| Redundency | I usually use redundant information in learning materials. | 6 | 28.5% | 6 | 28.5% | 9 | 42.8% |
| I do not provide an unneeded repetition of essential material. | 4 | 19.1% | 10 | 47.6% | 7 | 33.3% |
| I eliminate interesting but extraneous material. | 6 | 28.5% | 9 | 42.8% | 6 | 28.5% |
| I usually design instructions by reducing what is not directly relevant to learning. | 0 | / | 10 | 47.6% | 11 | 52.3% |

| Split Attention | I present the same information in multiple forms. | 3 | 14.3% | 9 | 42.8% | 9 | 42.8% |
| I provide engaged processing pathways; two separate sources of information simultaneously. | 4 | 19.1% | 4 | 19.1% | 13 | 61.9% |
| I require students to focus on multiple disparate objects at once. | 3 | 14.3% | 10 | 47.6% | 8 | 38.1% |

| Modality | I avoid presenting identical streams of printed words and/or verbal words and graphics. | 3 | 14.3% | 11 | 52.3% | 7 | 33.3% |
| I present printed words and/or verbal words and corresponding graphics simultaneously. | 3 | 14.3% | 5 | 23.8% | 13 | 61.9% |

For the first category, the majority (85.7%) claimed that they take prior knowledge of the students into account when designing instructions. Nonetheless, only two teachers (9.5%) showed disagreement. (80.1%) participant indicated that they take materials' complexity into account when designing instructions whereas one teacher said that he/she would not do that. Most teachers (71.4%) asserted that they introduce the elements of the material in a simple-to-complex order with (9.5%) claiming the opposite. Interestingly, last item results were almost similar, (28.5%) agreed, (33.3%) disagreed.

In “Worked Example”, only (42.8%) teachers showed interest in providing explicit details regarding the steps necessary to solve a problem, rather than having students discovering information by themselves, with (33.3%) claimed the reverse. In the same direction, half of the respondents (47.6%) stated that they use problems that have already been solved to design tests. In comparison, the other half (42.8%) said they do not. Nonetheless, most teachers (80.1%) declared that they use gradual integration of examples to gain expertise.
The following category is “Redundancy”; when teachers asked if they use redundant information, (42.8%) of the participants agreed, yet (28.5%) disagreed with the statement. Half of the teachers (47.6%) were neutral to give their viewpoint whether to provide an unneeded repetition of essential material, while (33.3%) showed interest and (19.1%) disagreed. Following the previous findings, (28.5%) reported that they instead eliminate interesting but extraneous material and the same percentage declared the opposite. (52.3%) claimed that they usually design instructions by reducing what is not directly relevant to learning.

As table 3. reveals, concerning “Split Attention”, only (14.3%) disagreed, yet (42.8%) agreed to present the same information in multiple forms. Nevertheless, (61.9%) claimed that they provide engaged processing pathways, yet, only (19.1%) disagreed with the claim. When asked if they require students to focus on multiple disparate objects at once, (14.3%) disagreed and (38.1%) agreed.

“Modality”, (33.3%) indicated that they avoid presenting identical streams of printed words and/or verbal words and graphics, whereas, (14.3%) had an opposing viewpoint. Most teachers (61.9%) claimed that they present printed words and/or verbal words and corresponding graphics simultaneously, while (14.3%) claimed the opposite.

Discussion

As discussed earlier, the capacity of the human working memory is quite limited and cannot process massive amount of information simultaneously (Sweller et al., 1998). Thus, teachers and instructional designers should take into consideration students’ cognitive capacities. Otherwise, students will be overwhelmed by a massive quantity of information presented and the learning outcomes would not comply with the teaching objectives. Consequently, the learning process would fail. According to Sweller, the ultimate aim of (CLT) is to build effective instructional materials based on learners’ cognitive processing abilities and generates useful instructional techniques (Sweller, 1994). The urge to conduct this article was to explore the awareness of university teachers of English to the theory as well as their experiences to the use of (CLT) as a framework for the design of instructions.

The literature calls for applying of cognitive load principles to instructional design, and illustrates how (CLT) offers a useful framework for effective instructional designs. Throughout the analysis of the article’s findings, Algerian university teachers of English were not aware of the theory and its principles to design instructions. Inevitably, they are not ignorant only of the theory but also of the human brain architecture, how the brain processes information, how to design instructions that do not overload students’ cognitive capacities, and how to design effective instructions generated by (CLT). As stressed throughout this article, (CLT) is of great value to instruction design (Paas et al., 2003). Thus, the ignorance of the theory, especially, the human cognitive architecture can lead to serious problems that would impair learning (Sweller, 1994), as the instructional design that does not emphasize cognitive load factors is likely to be deficient through imposing a heavy extraneous load interfering learning.

In this research, we detected that teachers’ lack of awareness might lead to a significant challenge for instruction design in which, as Sweller (2010) argued, meaningful learning can
require a massive amount of necessary cognitive processing, but the cognitive resources of the students’ information processing system are severely limited. Consequently, special attention must be devoted to eliminating all sources of unproductive processing of irrelevant information such as split elements of information that need to be integrated in order to achieve understanding, excessive information that introduces huge new elements into working memory quickly to be organized and comprehended, and excessive redundant knowledge (Sweller, 2010).

Notwithstanding the teachers’ ignorance of (CLT) and its procedures, results of the analysis of their responses revealed that they use some of its principles when designing instructions as part of their attitudes and experiences. For instance, they believe that unnecessary redundant support could be timely removed as students become more experienced with the task domain. Moreover, they think that information presentation could be dynamically tailored to changing levels of students’ proficiency in the field.

In accordance with the findings discussed previously, teachers have to simultaneously consider the structure of information and the cognitive architecture that allows students to process information (Chandler & Sweller, 1991). Cognitive theorists generated a unique variety of principles and procedures for the design of instructions. Thus, instructional designers, in particular, need to reduce extraneous load and manage essential load that would free cognitive capacity for deep processing (Sweller et al., 1998).

Conclusion

Foreign languages university students are taught more than they can learn; they are overwhelmed by the massive amount of knowledge and the set of activities. According to John Sweller, the capacity of the human working memory is very limited and cannot process a tremendous amount of information at the same time. Therefore, it is of paramount importance for teachers to build instructional materials based on the students' cognitive abilities. Otherwise, students will be overwhelmed by the vast quantity of information presented and the learning outcomes would not comply with the teaching objectives. Consequently, the learning process would fail.

The genesis of this research study began with the issue of the application of (CLT) in the Algerian context. The main findings of the study revealed that university teachers of English lack sufficient knowledge of the theory and its principles to instructional design. The effective instructional design depends on sensitivity to cognitive load which, in turn, relies on an understanding of the human cognitive architecture and how it processes information (Sweller et al., 1998). Hence, knowing how to introduce information to their students and the amount of data their students can process so that they do not overload their memories.

Based on (CLT), the study offers suggestions to teachers and instructional designers in order to reduce cognitive overload, thus, designing effective instructions. Worked examples, complexity, split-attention, redundancy, and modality effects are examples of the theory's fruits (Mayer & Moreno, 2010). Through these techniques, a reduction in extraneous load by using a more effective instructional design can free capacity for an increase in germane load (Van Merrienboer & Sweller, 2005). That is to say, if learning is enhanced by an instructional design that reduces extraneous
load, the development in learning may have occurred because the additional working memory capacity freed by the reduction in extraneous load has now been allocated to germane load.

Since there is no research in Algeria concerning (CLT), future further studies are needed to explore the theory more and experiment with other features of the theory in the Algerian context, such as how the level of complexity of the presented material can be measured, and how the amount of extraneous and essential processing required to can be adjusted. To sum up, the study concludes that instruction design could be improved by knowing (CLT) to better match the nature of the human cognitive architecture.

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Dr. Sarnou Dallel is an associate professor at the department of English, Mostaganem University and a poetess. She is involved in many areas including particularly Arab women writings and world literatures. She is currently involved in electronic discourse, digital humanities and educational technology.

References


Appendix
Questionnaire

Dear teachers,

This questionnaire is an attempt to gather information needed to explore tertiary English language teachers' perspectives on the concept of (CLT) and its connection to instructional design. This questionnaire aims to explore the experiences of teachers towards instructional design. It will be completed by a randomly selected sample of EFL teachers from different Algerian Universities. We would be very grateful if you could answer the following questions which will form the ground for this study. Your data is anonymous and will be used only for research purposes.

Part One: Background Information
1. Your gender.
   Male ☐   Female ☐
2. Your university.
   ........................................................................................................................................................................
3. Your academic level.
   ........................................................................................................................................................................
4. How long have you been teaching English at university?
   Less than 5 years ☐   5-10 years ☐   10-15 years ☐   more than 15 years ☐
5. How do you find the task of designing instructions?
   Easy ☐   Moderate ☐   Difficult ☐

Part Two:
You are kindly requested to respond to the following questions:
1. When designing instructions, which model(s) or theory do you rely on?

2. Are you familiar with Cognitive Load Theory (CLT)? If yes,
   • What do you know about it?
   • Could you identify cognitive load's types?

3. Do you think that (CLT) may impact effective teaching practice?

4. Do you think that it is essential to design instructions in a manner that reduces a particular load type?

5. To what extent instructional design, according to how human brains process information, can be effective?

6. Do you think that explicit instructions are more effective than partial guidance?

7. What do you know about the worked example effect?

8. When do you support the gradual incorporation of independent problem-solving tasks?

9. Does the redundancy effect produce a positive learning outcome?

10. How can you eliminate the split-attention effect when providing instructions?

11. Do you think that using more than one mode of communication facilitates effective learning?

Please share any comments on the content or format of the questionnaire.

---

**Part three:**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I can design effective learning instructions.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I make instructions transparent to students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I introduce the appropriate amount of information to explain the material.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I provide clues about how to process, select, and organize the material.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I demonstrate instructions by modeling.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I evaluate instructions by checking for understanding.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. I think that instructional techniques are most effective when they are designed to accord with how human brains learn.
8. I support explicit models of instruction because they accord with how human brains learn.
9. I think that if working memory is overfull, there is a risk that the content being taught will not be understood, and that learning will slowdown.
10. I take prior knowledge of the learner into account when designing instructions.
11. I take the complexity of the material into account when designing instructions.
12. I introduce the elements of the material in a simple-to-complex order.
13. I introduce the material in its full complexity from the beginning, and then I direct the learners' attention to the individual interacting elements.
14. I provide explicit details regarding the steps necessary to solve a problem, rather than having students construct information by themselves.
15. I use problems that have already been solved to design tests.
16. I use gradual integration of examples as students gain expertise.
17. I usually use redundant information in learning materials.
18. I do not provide an unneeded repetition of essential material.
19. I eliminate interesting but extraneous material.
20. I usually design instructions by reducing what is not directly relevant to learning.
21. I present the same information in multiple forms.
22. I provide engaged processing pathways; two separate sources of information simultaneously.
23. I require students to focus on multiple disparate objects at once.
24. I avoid presenting identical streams of printed words and/or verbal words and graphics.
25. I present printed words and/or verbal words and corresponding graphics simultaneously.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!
Representing Kingdom’s Makeover after Vision 2030: A Corpus-Driven Analysis of American Media Discourse

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Abstract:
Saudi Vision 2030 is a scheme; the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has formulated to realize its mainstream economic, social, and administrative goals. Accordingly, the Kingdom strategizes to implement this transformative Vision. The current research aims to analyze how American media has reported several events, actions, and policies in line with Saudi Vision 2030. Thus, the question posed is how an image of the transformative Saudi Kingdom has been presented by American media discourse, in line with Vision 2030. The study is substantial for the Kingdom to ascertain how the world has responded to its Vision. Moreover, in a world with media as a dominant directing agency, it is imperious for the Kingdom to keep an eye on its image in the global community. The research is primarily a quantitative study based on the corpus approach to study the designated media discourse. A specialized corpus of 150,000 words is compiled and analyzed through a variety of corpus tools. The results reveal that American newspapers have given limited representation of the Vision and related activities. Their media usually highlights the pre-existing features of the Kingdom. On the other hand, there are very occasional references to some new aspects like the transformation of the economy, promotion of tourism, revision of the society, etc., which are being implemented in the Kingdom. The study suggests that the Kingdom needs to brief the Western world for an enriched campaign of its contemporary image.

Keywords: American newspapers, corpus analysis, media representation, Saudi Vision 2030, transformation

Introduction:

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with its 2030 Vision, is on a new road to transformation and realization. In action since 2016, many of the government policies and activities have been framed in accordance with this Vision. As it is a design for a modern Arab country, international media has given it due importance. According to Mahmood and Alshahrani (2019), “Saudi Vision 2030 promises thorough transformations and the uplift of various indicators” (p. 17) within the society. Hameed, Jabeen, and Khan (2020) report that Vision 2030 plays the role of a game-changer for the country to revive its communal and fiscal structure. Thus, how the world views this transformation does matter for the Kingdom, to rebuild its image. Many news reports are published on various media platforms globally on how the Kingdom has implemented the Vision plan for a modern Arab society. Accordingly, it is imperative to know how the world views the contemporary progressive agenda of the Kingdom.

The media, including all its facets i.e., print, electronic and social, holds an undeniable power in the current times. It does not only transmit information and news but also shapes the minds of its viewers and readers in terms of social, cultural, and political identities of people, groups, and nations at large (McQuail, 1994; Wodak & Koller, 2008; Wimmer & Dominick, 2012). Given this voluminous and crucial impact media has, there is a whole paradigm of research that delves deep into the analysis of media discourses. The primary purpose of such studies is to expose the media strategies usually employed through language use to gain their commercial, political, and economic goals. Matheson (2005) points out that media mirrors a society not as it is but as it wants it to be. Thus, how media reports and constructs a story is a paramount concern. For the said purpose, various techniques are in use by the researchers, like stylistic analysis, discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis. The term discourse, which commonly refers to language use as a tool for communication, becomes a powerful widget for media to achieve their set goals, like convincing the audience, shaping realities, setting trends, etc. As stated above, such media discourse is not always detached and neutral. Nordlund (2003) writes, “news reports are not an exact representation of events” (p. 7). Accordingly, the representation of events, people, nations, etc. always matter.

What kind of Kingdom’s image is constructed through the news articles in Western media is a crucial concern of the present study? However, for the present study, Western media is delimited to American media because of the close relationships among these two nations. Cohen-Alamgor (2018) claims that “The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia plays a very important role in all aspects of the American strategy” (p. 7). Thus, the research carries out a corpus-driven analysis of the American media discourse specifically. For the said purpose, the concordance of the keyword “Vision” is studied along with collocation. Besides, a list of strategic themes is generated and discussed concerning emerging leitmotifs and their relevance to Vision. A critical discussion on emerging themes is added to have a precise outlook of the data.

Inline, the research question is:

Q. How do American e-newspapers represent the Saudi image, with particular reference to its transformative Vision 2030?

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To analyze American media discourse concerning Saudi Vision 2030
To study how the American media generates news reports on policies, actions, and events taken place in the Kingdom following Vision 2030

To explore the keyword and its related collocations in the selected media discourses.

To generate themes based on additional keywords and to critically study the ideological dimensions of the themes.

The research is significant in many ways. Firstly, in the contemporary world, media has the power to construct or deconstruct ideologies, not only regarding individuals but also nations. Thus, the Kingdom needs to evaluate and comprehend how the world perceives their actions and policies in the shades of their Saudi Vision 2030 for a modern developed Saudi Arabia. Secondly, the study has local significance in the Kingdom as it provides valuable suggestions. If it is a positive representation or response, how it can further be enhanced; and if there is some negative response, then how to counter respond. Thirdly, more importantly, the study has social significance as it brings to notice of common people in Kingdom as how the world perceives their image after the implementation of Vision 2030. Finally, the study contributes to the field of Linguistics in general and Corpus Linguistics in particular.

**Literature Review:**

A discourse, as explained by many researchers, concerns with any articulated or inscribed text contained by a social context and social practice(s) demonstrating social or power relationships (Fairclough & Woodak 1997; Gee, 1999; & Titscher, Meyer, Wodak & Vetter., 2000). The earlier views confined discourse to the structures limited at sentence level however, the contemporary linguists believe it to be something beyond the sentences (Schiffrin, 1994). According to her, discourse is “a particular unit of language (above the sentence), and a particular focus (on language use)” (ibid, p.20). The most prodigious feature of such language use is the way it builds up or helps to build the views and prospects presented, plainly, or secretly. Thus, it often can persuade the audience or at least touch the conscious at a minimal level. In this regard, political and media discourses are regarded as loaded with the most potent convincing tactics. Nordlund (2003) has explained that media discourses often communicate what they want to and hide truth efficaciously. Thus, often researchers (mentioned above) are interested in analyzing such discourses to expose the besieged benefits and mutual empatheies, from a personal level to the communal. Such a process is referred to as discourse analysis, which in turn denotes the process of “a discursive formation in which the structures of sayability prompt the language of critical intervention with a much greater probability than in mainstream scholarship” (Nonhoff, 2017, p. 6). Breeze (2011) has commented that discourse analysis is concerned with how ideologies function in a given context revealing the “real language phenomena and the workings of power in society” (p. 520). In simple words, discourse analysis explores how language is used as a vehicle to promote ideologies, beneficial to producers.

There are multiple methods to analyze the discourse, particularly media discourse. One of the recent and commonly applied approaches is the corpus-based analysis of media texts. Partington (2004) is of the view that discourse analysis and corpus analysis are complementary fields in the present times and can be used together effectively to explore the ideological strands of discourse. The word ‘corpus’ implies a “finite collection of machine-readable texts, sampled to
be maximally representative of a language or variety” (McEnery & Wilson, 2001, p. 197). In fact, it is a massive compilation of language samples, ranging from real-life situations using language to abstract theoretical compilations debating language. Interestingly, it can be sampled around both modes of communication, oral and written. O’Keeffe, McCarthy, and Carter (2007) have given remarks that these huge collations, as corpora, are not merely a random set of words but a directed and principled collection of texts. Thus, such collections are always reliable to analyze and investigate. However, the purpose and mode of investigation can differ depending upon the objectives and needs of researches. Kubler and Zinsmeister (2015) refer to it as a standardized approach to examine linguistic patterns.

Next, important dimensions of the corpus are its size and genre, as it can vary from thousands to million-word databases. It is often claimed in corpus linguistics that the bigger the corpora’s size, the better the results are (Alotaibi, 2017). However, a specialized corpus is usually smaller than standard corpora like BNC, COCA, etc. Such corpora are built and analyzed for specific purposes. According to Wynne (2005), it is “a much smaller corpus (…. ) needed for typical studies than is needed for a general view of the language” (p. 19). However, in this case, the size does not affect the quality of results because the researcher often has narrow scopes of the study (McEnery & Wilson, 2001). Similarly, a corpus can be built of various genres of language like newspapers, speeches, ads, editorials, novels, essays, poetry, etc.

The corpus using discourse studies aim to examine how language is used in real times by analyzing corpora and findings patterns and schemes via both quantitative and qualitative means. For such purposes, a variety of tools are used, like Antconc, Voyant, Lancbox, etc. (prepared by various researchers or institutions). These tools offer in-depth analysis of the texts like searching for keywords, plotting concordance, representing collocation, generating themes, calculating frequency, etc. Baker and Levon (2015) have presented an interesting insight into how masculinity is perceived and presented in the British press through corpus related techniques. Haider (2016) has discovered the variant representation of Qaddafi through a corpus-based study of Arab media. Such reviews establish that corpus-based studies can come up with valuable findings by examining unique linguistic patterns carried with the assistance of technology.

Concerning the usage of a corpus for linguistic analysis, two important dimensions are often highlighted in corpus linguistics: one as corpus-based and the other as corpus-driven approaches. The researchers can use extensive ‘corpus-based’ or ‘corpus-driven’ techniques for data collection and analysis. The corpus-based research refers to the endorsement of an already established linguistic theory, whereas, corpus-driven method refers to the setting of linguistic paradigms through the already conducted corpus analysis (Biber, Conard & Rippen, 2004). As far as theoretical bases are concerned, corpus analysis is debated both as a method and theory. Bashir, Younas, and Ibrahim (2018) have explained that the majority of the linguists agree that a corpus-driven or a corpus-based study is self-sufficient as both methodology and supportive theoretical framework.

From a theoretical perspective, it is an approach that has evolved “to support empirical investigations of language variation and use, resulting in research findings which have much greater generalizability and validity than would otherwise be feasible” (Biber, 2012, n.p.).
proponents of CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) also favor the use of corpora to explore hidden discourse’s agendas. Considering language as a social practice, CDA explores the relationship between language and ideology (Fairclough, 2005 & Van Dijk, 1993). This can be done best if one can get to analyze huge language samples, like corpora. During the past decade, there are a plethora of studies that employ CDA to analyze how language works within a given society and context for establishing power and ideological relationships, using the digitalized corpus. For example, Chen (2011), in his study has critically analyzed how the Libyan war is presented comparatively in two national media through corpus-based critical discourse analysis. Baker, Gabrielatos, and McEnery (2013) have conducted a corpus-based analysis of British media from 1998-2009 to critically evaluate the representation of the word “Muslim” and the related communities. With the help of a huge corpus, he was able to identify the negative connotations for the selected word. Hou (2016) explored the media representation of the Chinese dream through a corpus-driven approach. His findings have exposed that corpus can be a helpful tool in revealing discourse ideologies.

As far as the research around Saudi Vision 2030 is concerned, there have been few notable studies. For example, a study conducted by Mohammad and Alshahrani (2019) has explored the corpus of Arab media. The said study sightsees the functional linguistic items used to emphasize Vision-related prospects in the selected corpus. This study has used the Arab News corpus for the purpose. A study conducted by Hameed, Jabeen, and Khan (2020) has examined the actual document of Vision 2030 to identify the strategies related to the planning factor. There is not even a single study so far, which investigates how Western media and particularly American media perceives and represents Saudi Vision 2030. The present study intends to explore the way Saudi Vision 2030 is reflected in selected western media to fill the gap.

Methods:

The present research is primarily quantitative as per the methods of data collection and analysis are concerned. Further, some discussion is added to attain a comprehensive picture of the data. Moreover, the research is mainly a corpus-based analysis of the selected corpus. Corpus is a contemporary method of data collection and analysis that helps to study huge data. According to Baker (2012), Corpus analysis is one of the most effective tools to uncover meaningful linguistic patterns in a considerable amount of data.

The research aims to study American newspapers published both in print and online versions. These are highly rated newspapers (included in the top ten according to circulation). The online versions of the reports from the following four newspapers have been included:

- The Washington Post
- USA Today
- Wall Street Journal
- The New York Times

All types of news reports are included, from business to sports and opinion to articles. The period is from 25 April 2016 (the announcing date of Saudi Vision 2030) till 25 April 2020 (four years). The corpus is built of the selected data regarding news related to Saudi Vision 2030 and not any other political, economic, religious issue. The query items used to choose news reports are Vision
2030/ Saudi Vision 2030/ Saudi Vision. The built corpus comprised of 150 news reports. Other details are given below in table one.

Table 1 *Specialized Corpus built in the study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Texts</th>
<th>Tokens</th>
<th>Additional information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Newspapers Corpus</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>161,380</td>
<td>Types: 15,460 Lemmas: 13,589</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the present study, one corpus is used of the total size of 161,380 running words (tokens), complied as one text file. (See Appendix A for details) Such a corpus is considered as specialized corpora designed for specific purposes.

After compilation of the corpus, the next stage is cleaning. The whole corpus is cleaned manually and converted to a .txt file (suitable for the majority of corpus analysis tools). The next stage is the selection of corpus software for the data analysis purpose. The data analysis is carried out in various stages. Firstly, the concordance plot for the main term “Vision” is identified using Antconc 3.5.8 version. The prime purpose is to see how the word is used and distributed throughout the document. Kubler and Zinsmeister (2015) define concordance as “as lines of text taken from a corpus that show the occurrence of a search word in its text position (p. 251). In the second phase, the list of key terms (primarily lemma) is generated using the Voyant tool. Voyant is a platform with a variety of corpus related tools (from keyword to concordance and from graphcoll to inferential statistics) for an extensive analysis. The results are displayed for the first 25 frequently used terms in the form of Cirusu (a tool for graphical representation of data). This form is appropriate to see all major terms in a graphical format, according to the frequency selected by the researcher(s) from minimum to maximum.

Further, the collocate list of the key term “Vision/ Vision 2030” is generated (using Voyant) to see how this term is represented in the context of other words. Brezina, McEnery, and Wattam (2015) view collocation as adjacent words to the selected central node (keyword) or what we can call a company of words. These collocations can be represented in a variety of forms, including a graphical network, which is referred to as Graphcoll (Brezina, et al, 2015). They represent the collocations network in the context in a more visible format. The results of this study are also displayed in graphcoll form (using Voyant tool). The results are interpreted based on distance, color, and intensity (key features of graphcoll as described by Brezina, et al, 2015). Further, the high frequent collocates of the keyword are identified based on correlational values and presented in tabular form, to understand the central issues/ themes. In addition, attributive collocates (adjectives) of the key term “Vision” are also considered and presented in tabular format. This attributive representation can help to identify the attitude of the producers (in the immediate context: newspapers publishing houses).

To verify the results, thematic analysis is carried out using KWords software. This software identifies and categorizes the major themes dispersed in a corpus (based on lexical items
primarily). The tabular results are provided in figure format. The necessary discussion of the results is provided after the analysis stage to comprehend the depiction strategies of American newspapers regarding the Saudi Vision.

**Findings:**
This section presents the results of the study, whereas the next section presents a discussion.

The query items of the study are Vision /Vision 2030/ Saudi Vision 2030, as used to formulate the corpus for the present study. The first stage results divulge that the keyword “Vision” is rarely found with a total number of instances, 238 (including all three forms checked through the same tool). It is surprising to see that the present corpus, which contains almost 161,380 running words (tokens) in 50 news articles (selected on the basis of query terms), has a few instances to mention the keyword or even in other formats (combinations). The relative frequency is as low as 13.445 instances per 10K words. Figure one below represents the concordance plot for the key term.

![Figure 1 Concordance plot for key term “Vision”](image_url)

Moreover, the keyword is also not among the major terms (according to frequency) of the whole corpus, as represented by the following figure two below. This figure includes only lexical word frequency as per the need of the study. Arab media, for example, proclaims it as a transformative version of the Kingdom. Mohammad and Alshahrani (2019) analyzed a huge corpus of Arab newspapers in English to identify how Vision 2030 is presented as a strategic strand in Saudi media, towards the establishment of a new society. The results from American media, on the other hand, are quite unsatisfactory.
Representing Kingdom’s Makeover after Vision 2030  

In the next stage, the collocations of the keywords have been identified to understand how the concept of “Vision” has been employed in the selected corpus. The results are presented in figure three below graphically (using Graphcoll). The results, according to distance from the central node, indicate the main items that collocate with Vision 2030 are (the part of a key term, as often referred to as Vision 2030), plan, blueprint, program, project (the words referring to it as a scheme), reform, diversify (emphasizing it as a project for a change) new, ambitious (the attributive aspects of the project), future, diversification, economic, fund, woman, society, (the areas identified for a change in the Vision document) Mohammad bin Salman, crown, prince (as the admired founder of the Vision), and Kingdom, Saudi Arabia (locality). As per Brezina, et al. (2015), the short distance identifies the most relevant collocates of a node word and can be used to interpret the given message or highlighted issues. The color intensity that is used to reflect frequency does not reveal any different results. Again the more intense-colored words are Saudi (origin of Vision), 2030 (as Vision is referred to as Vision 2030), plan (referring to its an ambitious project), and some functional words (which are not the focus of the present study). On the left side collocates, the significant person involved in shaping the Vision is prominent (“crown”, “Prince”), along with few more words like describing it as a “project” for the uplift of “economy”. Whereas more key terms are visible near the left side of the central node (left side collocates of the keyword). They describe what Vision 2030 wants to achieve as a reformation plan, a blueprint for development, and a program for the economy (as per the dispersed nodes).

![Figure 2 Cirrus representation of key terms by the frequency](image1)

![Figure 3 Most frequent collocations graph of the keyword “Vision”](image2)
These results are further verified through correlation values of collocated words. All the words described above have a correlation value higher than five with the keyword “Vision”. The values are given in Table 2 below. These high correlation values indicate the strong connection between the keyword and its relevant collocates.

### Table 2 Statistical Values for Collocates with keyword “Vision”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Collocating Term</th>
<th>Correlational Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>0.786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>0.821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Aramco</td>
<td>0.726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Economy</td>
<td>0.786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Prince</td>
<td>0.712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Saudi</td>
<td>0.701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Arabiya</td>
<td>0.747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>oil</td>
<td>0.798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ambitious</td>
<td>0.652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>2030</td>
<td>0.792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>project</td>
<td>0.688</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The shortage of appraisal terms (categorically called adjectives) is again indicative of the fact that Vision 2030 holds no prominent place in the selected media. Table 3 below presents the list and frequency of adjectives used to describe the Vision 2030/Vision in the selected American media discourse. The list has been compiled manually using data from the list of all collocates collected through the Voyant tool (the lists attached in Appendix B). However, this list is different from the overall terms list, where there is an increased number of adjective terms. The reason is that the purpose of the current study is to focus on features associated with Vision, and not the appraisal terms used for different other purposes. The data indicates how scarcely attributive words have been used (in a corpus of around 150,000 words) by media to highlight the significance of Vision, which Mohammad and Alshahrani (2019) portray as the most significant documented strategy. The highest frequency adjective-term is *Saudi* mentioning the vicinity of the Vision. As the Vision’s primary purpose is to reform the economy, so “economic” is second high quoted collocate. Few protruding words are also used like ambitious, grand, and modernized but with very low frequency.

### Table 3 List of attributes for Vision/Vision 2030

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Collocate (Adjectives)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Saudi</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Interestingly, the results of thematic concentration (achieved through a secondary tool) also suggest the results similar to collocation results (see figure four below and compare with figure three).

Figure 4 Thematic concentration in the selected corpus

The majority of key items are similar to previous results, mentioning the head, oil, economy, society, government, country, etc. It is important to mention here that Vision is not included in the top listed themes of the corpus, which is considered as a blueprint of success by the Kingdom. The results from thematic analysis also signify a few more items that can be considered undesirable to
the Kingdom’s image. Such terms include Yemen, Iran, power, etc. The Yemen crisis and struggle with Iran are highlighted in several contexts to pursue the American audience for an undesirable image of Saudi Arabia. Such themes present an adverse image of the Saudi country to western world newspapers’ readers.

Discussion:

The findings reveal that American media has not given appropriate representation to Vision 2030 and its related activities and policies. Firstly, the low-frequency rate of the keyword in the media designates the American media’s strategic avoidance of mentioning a significant renovation plan in Saudi Arabia as a contradictory policy to what is said by Cohen-Alamagor (2018) that Riyadh is in the middle of US Foreign policy. According to Mohammad and Alshahrani (2019), this Vision is one of the important doctrines set by Saudi Arabia, and it should be considered important by World media; whereas, the findings here are just opposite to their findings. If we compare the findings of the keywords section (as presented in figures two and three above) with findings of the corpus-based study on Arab media by Mohammad and Alshahrani (2019), it is noticeable that Arab news-press highlighted a variety of positive features of this Vision. The distribution and frequency of key issues in Arab media mainly focus on reformation planned through Vision 2030, such as upgrading the economy, moving away from oil dependency, reforming the society, managing the security, improving tourism, etc. On the other hand, key issues as found in the present study are limited and, more importantly, not diverse in nature. The results again strengthen the idea that American media is not much concerned with Vision 2030, which has been announced and claimed by the Saudi government as a new phase of economically, administratively, industrially, and socially strong Kingdom.

Moreover, the findings in collocations and attributive terms (tables two and three above) for the keyword also represent the limited use. The data indicates how scarcely attributive words have been used by media to highlight the significance of Vision, which Mohammad and Alshahrani (2019) portray as the most significant documented strategy. This also negates the idea that Cohen-Alamagor (2018) highlights. According to him, there is a strong alliance between Saudi Arabia and America on almost all the platforms (ibid, 2018). Besides, the results of thematic concentration (as shown in figure four) also verify the findings revealed through the other tools. This also negates what Cohen-Alamagor (2018) refers to as a strong alliance between Saudi Arabia and America, on almost all the platforms. This is contrary to American foreign policy with Arab countries as well where they struggle to build good relationships, as mentioned by Bzostek and Robison (2008), that the relation between these two countries is always strategic. Thus, one can predict that this relationship is not effectually presented by American media, by evading Vision 2030 (a key reformation plan of the Kingdom as reported by Arab media; see Mohammad & Alshahrani, 2019).

Finally, it can be said that the overall results indicate that Vision 2030 that has been presented and implemented by the Saudi government to bring a dramatic change in its image to the world, is not effectively presented and highlighted by American Media.

Conclusion:

Every country has a desire to build and endorse an affirmative image towards the world community, in economic, social, political, and national interests. Thus, Saudi Arabia with its Arab World English Journal
www.awej.org
ISSN: 2229-9327
transformative blueprint of Vision 2030, has struggled to reconstruct its society from a traditional conservative to a modern progressive one. It is anticipated that world media would promote and welcome this new image of the Kingdom. The main concern of the present research is to understand how policies, actions, and events related to the Vision 2030 program in Saudi Arabia are presented to the Western world by American media. For the said purpose, a corpus-driven study is designed using a variety of tools to analyze American newspapers’ reports published from April 2016 to April 2020. A specialized corpus of 150,000 words from top-rated newspapers (according to circulation) was compiled and run through various needed corpus software (details mentioned in methodology). The results depict that Saudi Vision 2030 is not given much recognition in the selected media discourse. Contrary to American foreign policy towards Saudi Arabia, their media has portrayed a very constricted and limited image of the Kingdom to their people. Moreover, Vision 2030 is not promoted as a celebration of the new Kingdom; rather their focus remains on the already prevailing aspects of the Saudi economy like oil, Aramco, and country, etc. This is clearly visible in the findings as per thematic concentration and concordance graph. There are very sporadic mentions of some fresh facets like the renovation of the economy, modification of the society, upgradation of the tourism, etc. The results overall signify the need to improve the pronunciation of Saudi image to the Western world, in the selected media. The study suggests that the American media can be more briefed on Saudi’s remodeling Vision 2030 to pronounce a better public image to the West world. It is recommended that Saudi authorities can frame an improved strategy for the promotion of its contemporary image, particularly in a phase where international tourism, worldwide business ventures, and global communiqué are given a prioritized privilege.

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References


USA Today. http://www.usatoday.com


Appendices

**Appendix A**

**Corpora Link**

A full description of the corpora is available in data.tsv\corpora.

**Appendix B**

**Collocation list for Vision/ Vision 2030/ Saudi Vision 2030**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Collocate</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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### Corpus Analysis

#### Term Frequency

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#### Collocate Analysis

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<td>&quot;study vision 2030&quot;</td>
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<td>&quot;vision 2030&quot;</td>
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**Arab World English Journal**

Representing Kingdom’s Makeover after Vision 2030  
Hameed, Jabeen & Afzal

[www.awej.org](http://www.awej.org)

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English - Algerian Arabic Code-switching in EFL Classroom: Case of EFL Teachers and Students in the Department of English at Tlemcen University, Algeria

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University of Tlemcen
Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages
Department of English

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Abstract
The main aim of the present paper is to provide an in-depth look at the relationship between English and Algerian Arabic (L1) in an EFL classroom in the department of English at Tlemcen University, Algeria. In this regard, the researchers try to determine the reasons and functions behind the use of Code-Switching among EFL teachers and students of English to Algerian Arabic. To conduct this research work, the researchers collected data through an interview that was conducted with 16 teachers of Comprehension and Oral Expression, Literature, and Civilization in the Department of English at Tlemcen University in Algeria, and supported by a classroom observation of students with the same teachers. Findings revealed that the use of Algerian Arabic is inevitable. Teachers’ responses exhibit negative attitudes towards English-Algerian Arabic code-switching in class, but they do not deny its integration as a pedagogical necessity to explain difficult words and expressions that are hard to be grasped in the target language. The results also showed that teachers peacefully attempt to get their students accustomed to lectures delivered in English solely by avoiding translation and applying the direct method of TEFL. Furthermore, they declare that infrequent use of AA is beneficial to foster students’ academic achievements and language skills development.

Keywords: Algerian Arabic, attitudes, Code-switching, English, functions of code-switching, Tlemcen EFL classroom

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Introduction

Nowadays, the use of more than one code in one conversation has become a usual practice among bi/multilingual communities worldwide. People tend to use different linguistic varieties alternatively in their daily life conversations to transmit messages when interacting with others. Code-switching (henceforth CS) has then become a common linguistic phenomenon among interlocutors as it allows speakers to maintain the flow of their conversation comfortably. It became an integral part of the regular, informal face to face interactions, and in formal settings as well. CS nowadays takes place in classrooms such as EFL sessions where teachers are supposed to deliver their whole lectures in English only. Nowadays, teachers and students do not stick to the target language, but they often switch from English to Algerian Arabic and /or French. Therefore, their use of CS is either an intended, conscious linguistic behavior according to someone’s communicative reasons and functions or an unconscious linguistic habit. Algerian EFL classroom is an interesting area to explore this phenomenon since it is a multilingual setting where CS is noticeable among both teachers and students having a rich verbal repertoire, including Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Algerian Arabic (AA), French, and English, that lead them to switch between these codes in class.

The present paper is set out to determine the reasons and functions behind the use of CS among EFL teachers and students in the Department of English, at Tlemcen University, Algeria. Therefore, the focal point behind undertaking this investigation is to identify the languages used by teachers and students in CS during lectures besides English. It also endeavors to unveil the reasons and functions behind teachers’ and students’ CS. This study, thus, tries to diagnose whether students’ use of CS is an intended, conscious linguistic behavior according to their communicative reasons and functions in the EFL classroom, or it is rather an unconscious linguistic habit that they are accustomed to. At last, it attempts to uncover what attitudes teachers have towards this behavior in EFL classrooms. For these purposes, the following questions have been formulated:

1. To what code(s) do EFL teachers and students switch in the classroom?
2. Why do they switch to other codes in their class, where they are supposed to speak in English only?
3. What attitudes do teachers have towards CS in the classroom?

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

1. EFL teachers and students usually code-switch between L1 (AA) and English when interacting with each other.
2. Their switches are attributed to a lack of facility to fill a linguistic gap, and the function of their CS is pedagogical.
3. Teachers display negative attitudes towards their students’ CS.

To test the validity of the former hypotheses, data are collected using an interview conducted with teachers, and classroom observation of students’ linguistic behavior with teachers.

This paper is divided into three sections. Section one deals with the literature review of language contact and its outcomes including bilingualism and diglossia, with a focus on CS. It also sheds light on CS among Algerians providing an overview of the linguistic varieties used in
Algeria as well as the codes used by EFL teachers and students. The second one is the practical part which is mainly concerned with the research design and methodology. It depicts the sample population of this investigation and the research tools used for gathering data. Finally, the third section exposes the main results; analyzed and interpreted.

Literature Review

Language Contact

Language contact refers to the linguistic situation where two or more languages come into contact. When defining this phenomenon Weinreich (1953) has pointed out that “two or more languages are said to be in contact if they are used alternatively by the same persons” (p. 1). Language contact may arise out of social, political, and economic conditions as a result of the occupation, conquests, migration, globalization, urbanization, trade… etc, (Sorenson 1967, Sankoff 1980, as cited in Chambers, Trudgill, & Schilling-Estes, 2008). Due to their constant interaction, speakers of those languages in contact mutually influence each other in different ways. In Algeria, for instance, French and AA or French and Berber in some scattered Berberophone areas have come into contact due to the long occupation by the French (1832-1962) leading to several sociolinguistic phenomena which usually overlap, namely bi/multilingualism, diglossia, borrowing, CS, ...etc. These phenomena are the outcomes of language contact.

Outcomes of Language Contact

Bilingual speakers are those speakers that show an ability to use two languages in daily life communication whenever a social setting requires the alternate use of languages, (Weinreich, 1986, as cited in Jorda, 2005). Thus, being bilingual is equal to being capable of speaking, mastering, and having a “native-like control of two languages” (Bloomfield, 1935, p.56). For Bloomfield, a bilingual person must control and master two languages as native speakers do at one hand. On the other hand, other sociolinguists refuse the idea of a perfect mastery of the two languages and go to assert that a bilingual person can have just “a minimal competence in only one of the four languages skills, listening comprehension, speaking, reading and writing in a language other than his mother tongue”, (Macnamara, 1967a, as cited in Hamers & Blanc, 2000, p.6). Describing CS in multilingual societies, Mazur, Karolczak, Rzepka and Araki (2016) define it as a phenomenon “…where people use more than one language to communicate daily, such as Singapore, the Philippines, India, the USA, Spain, and China... [or] the alternation of two languages within a single discourse, sentence or constituent” (p. 55).

Diglossic communities, either having the features of Classical Fergusonian diglossia (1959a) or Fishman’s Extended diglossia (1967), are characterized by the functional distribution of both High (H) and Low (L) varieties which are used in distinct situations and for different purposes. For instance, the H is used in education, media, administration, and politics. The L variety, however, is used with family members and friends in informal settings. In this study, the EFL classroom is regarded as a diglossic community, where AA as a L variety, is used besides English as (H). Its use takes the form of CS; a phenomenon that has been described by Gumperz (1982) as “the juxtaposition of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems, within the same exchange” (p.59), or briefly as the “alternation between two linguistic systems in the course of speaking”, (Poplack, 2000, p. 264) as cited in Al-Rowais, 2012, p.13). In other words, CS refers to the ability to alternate effortlessly between two or more
languages in the same conversational episode. Milroy and Muysken (1995, p. 7) define CS as “the alternative use by bilinguals of two or more languages in the same conversation”.

From another angle, Auer (1995) regards CS as a discourse strategy where instances of CS among skilled bilinguals indicate a change of participant and topic, or parenthetical comments, in addition to other discourse features or functions. For him, access to L2 “provides specific resources not available to monolingual speakers for the constitution of socially meaningful verbal activities” (p. 115). In the same respect, Cook (2001) views the phenomenon of CS as the process in which bi-multilinguals keep flowing their speech "going from one language to the other in mid-speech when both speakers know the same two languages” (p. 174). Bullock & Toribio (2009), Blom & Gumperz (1972), Grosjean (1982 ), and other sociolinguists studied CS from a pragmatic viewpoint and regarded it as a discourse strategy or speech style. In this vein, Grosjean (1998) considers CS as “a complete shift from one language to the other, either from a word, a phrase or a whole sentence” (as cited in Contone, 2007, p. 55). That is, the shift is from one language to another, and it may take place between sentences, or even within the same sentence. From the above definitions, CS as a sociolinguistic phenomenon refers to the alternation between languages or dialects, and pragmatic and stylistic alterations at word boundaries, phrase, or sentence levels.

**Code-Switching in Algeria**

CS in Algeria mainly takes place between the country's first language; Arabic having two forms: MSA or AA, and French as the second language due to some historical factors such as colonization and the previous cultures that invaded the country throughout its long history. The coexistence of Arabic and French has led to the emergence of language phenomena such as bilingualism with its various outcomes (borrowing, CS, code-mixing).

In the Algerian context, CS tends to occur in all situations and can be found in all places; within sentences, clauses, or phrases. Algerian CS is mostly characterized by an Arabic-French mixture as the French language is spoken by the majority of educated, bilingual Algerians as a result of the long French colonization. Monolinguals who are normally uneducated also widely use a few French words in their day-to-day life. Here are some examples that the researchers have noted from their surroundings:

/sbañt ĝajaana w not retard ljuum/ (I felt tired, and I woke up late today).

/rani mafja l'hospital/ (I am going to the hospital).

/Climat raha mliiha ljuum/ (The weather is good today).

/rani naqra mel PC parceque l'imprimante b'ayatha la réparateur/(I am reading from the PC because I took the printing machine to the repairer).

/mazal rendez-vous taYak/ /hata le douze septembre w rû'n ând médecini/(your appointment will be on September 12th to go to the doctor).
From the above examples, it can be observed that CS in Algeria is found in all positions: at the beginning, middle, and the end of the sentence. AA is a mixture of Arabic and French words that coexist together with varying degrees as in many other bilingual societies. Among bilingual Algerians, CS is found with three types (Inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag switching).

**Types of Code-switching**

CS has three types. First, Blom and Gumperz (1972) divided CS into two types. The first is situational CS, and the second is metaphorical CS. Then, Gumperz (1982) introduced another type that is named conversational code-switching. Situational CS refers to the switch according to the situation. In this type of CS, the speakers switch when their interlocutors do not understand their linguistic variety. “the notion of situational switching assumes a direct relationship between language and social situation” as Blom and Gumperz (1972, p. 425) state, which means that an individual may switch from one code to another according to the setting, social situation, and even his/her interlocutor. The second is metaphorical CS, which implies that the speaker switches from one code to another to create an effect such as a joke, to put an emphasis on an idea or something when speaking. The third type is conversational CS; it has a communicative purpose and serves to quote a citation by using the same language of the author or to restate someone’s saying for emphasis, …etc.

Moreover, CS is also classified into three forms such as inter-sentential, intra-sentential, and tag switching or extra-sentential CS, (Poplack (1980). Most Algerians, if not all, even children and uneducated people switch back and forth from AA to French in their speech. It may be nearly impossible to hear a complete conversation without French items (wordsexpressions) where the three types of CS distinguished by Poplack (1980) can be heard as it is shown in the following examples (French words are italicized). In inter-sentential CS, the shift takes place within the sentence, i.e., a sentence is said in one language and another one in another language by the same speaker. For instance, one may hear:

*Je vais t’expliquer la façon comment ça marche. ṣādī ḏjīk saḥlā ḫadxān. (I will explain to you how it works. It will be easy to work with).*

Intra-sentential CS means that the switch occurs at the sentence and/or clause boundary. This switch seems to occur more by educated people in comparison with the extra-sentential one as it depends on the fluency in both languages. Consider the following example:

*ḥādī ṣāṭṭājān wāna ṭā la ṭerīṣān en ḍen jē n’āt ṭerīṣān ūn nṣīr. (It is more than two hours I am revising, and I have understood nothing only the title). (Bagui, 2014, p.90).*

In Poplack’s (1980) division, intra-sentential switching occurs within the same sentence or sentence fragment. It includes switching within the clause or sentence boundary as in:

*rān ṭā la ḫairī]*) nxarradʒ lespāpers bāch n inscri, meaning (I am going to the town hall to get some papers to enroll). (Bagui, 2014, p.90).*

Extra-sentential CS refers to the insertion of a tag or a ready-made expression like in the examples below:
In both examples, the French expressions can be inserted in any utterance without changing the syntactic rules of both languages. On the other hand, since Algeria is characterized by diglossic features, “internal CS”, which happens between two varieties of the same language (between H and L varieties), is also a common characteristic in Algerians’ speech. That is, many individuals, tend to switch from AA to MSA or vise versa, creating what is called the middle variety.

Language Contact in Algeria

The sociolinguistic situation in Algeria is intricate and diverse. Its diversity reveals the coexistence of different languages and varieties of languages that can be attributed to historical, socio-cultural, economic, and geographical factors. MSA, which is used in formal settings, is the official language of the country, whereas Dialectal Arabic is the mother tongue of almost all Algerians except for Berberophones who speak different Berber varieties. French is the offspring of the long French colonization (1830-1962) that has deeply affected the linguistic and cultural features of the whole country. The contact between Arabic, Berber, and French has engendered a complex multilingual situation. In Algeria, MSA is taught in schools and is used in formal contexts such as administration, media, education, etc. French, too, is the second official language and it is associated with prestige, modernity, and technological progress (Benrabah, 2014). In everyday conversations, most Algerians code-switch between Algerian Arabic (L1) and French (L2).

In present-day Algeria, and according to the results of a recent survey, it has been demonstrated that Algerians display positive attitudes towards French, and they do not favor such monolingualism that has been imposed through the Arabicization policy since “literary Arabic alone does not ensure social mobility, which is considered possible mainly through the mastery of Arabic-French bilingualism” (Benrabah, 2007a, p. 243). French has become the language of social mobility, and a medium of access to many modern fields of interest (domains of education, administration, and mass media). It is one of the most important foreign languages taught in Algeria besides English, Spanish, …etc. It is considered as the heritage of colonialism, yet it has gained high prestige and is regarded today as a language of modernity and advancement by most Algerians. Hence, people of different ages who have positive attitudes towards French show more motivation and willingness to learn and use it in day-to-day interactions. Nonetheless, the same survey (Benrabah 2007a) illustrated that its respondents favored the French language rather than English. These informants were offered English as an alternative to French, so they chose this
latter as they “seem to reject policies that seek to displace French in favor of English” (Benrabah, 2007a, p. 245). English is the second foreign language (L3) that is learned besides MSA and French at different levels through the Algerian educational system. Given the importance of a world language, and as technological progress requires an understanding of English, Algeria tends to adjust its language policies and governmental system to cope with the world’s speedy political, economic, and technological developments. In the educational system, the teaching of English begins with first-year Middle School pupils and is taught till the end of the Secondary School, then in universities, it is either taught as an ‘additional module’ in various peripheral institutes such as Medicine, Economics, faculties of Sciences, and faculties of Letters, Human and Social Sciences or as a “main subject” in the English departments.

**Code-Switching in an EFL Classroom**

The practice of CS in the EFL classroom is currently highly debatable among ELT educators and policymakers. Even though monolingual education policies still insist on the use of the target language solely in an EFL classroom (Cummins, 2007), and hence, L1 should not be used, CS among teachers and students is a common habit and they display a positive attitude towards its use. For example, in his journal articles concerning Code-Switching in the Teaching of English as a Second Language to Secondary School Students, Lee (2010) found that the majority of the Malaysian ESL teachers, in his study, exhibit positive attitudes towards CS use in classrooms, for they believe it aids students to learn English. Yet, they simultaneously view that it should only be employed when necessary, thus; those teachers suggest minimizing CS use.

Recently, in April 2016 in Malaysia, in their study on checking the opinions of 299 ESL students towards their teachers’ use of CS in classes, Ja’afar & Maarof (2016) found that in this study, Ja’afar & Maarof show that most participants asserted that teachers’ switches were purposive; “the findings show that code switching is mainly used to facilitate teaching and learning such as to explain difficult words and meaning, to guide in making interpretations, to illustrate grammar rules, in editing content and in organizing and managing the classroom. In general, the teachers believe that code switching is advantageous for second language learning, especially when both teachers and students share a common L1” (p.212). During this investigation, it was also observed that teachers’ CS influenced their students’ affective states. This was deduced from the responses of the students who indicated that their teachers’ switch helps them to feel more comfortable and less anxious during lessons as they were able to comprehend the L2 input (p.214).

Besides, Qing (2010) proposed that CS is beneficial as it serves functions that help students learn in a good language-learning environment. In Schweers’ (1999) study of Spanish students in EFL classes, the majority of teachers encouraged the use of CS. The participants also stated that CS is time-consuming, and thus, offers more time to practice English and do many activities.

Though it has been proved that CS plays a positive role in EFL classes, it harms the development of the teaching and learning processes. The switch back and forth to the mother tongue is a signal for the teacher’s inability to express himself. In this vein, Modupeola (2013) claims that “Other reasons may be the inability of a speaker to express himself/herself in one language so switches to the other to compensate for the deficiency” (p.93). That is to say, teachers'
switches to L1 reflect their incompetence in L2, therefore, they found themselves in a situation where CS is a necessity to carry on speech. Modupeola (2013) goes further asserting that when the learners get used to the teacher’s CS strategy of explaining in the mother tongue, they will not take seriously what is being taught leading to the slowing down of the rate of learning the target language (p. 94). So, he ends up saying that “in the English language learning environment, the application of the code switching strategy should be minimal to ensure that teaching and learning of the target language - English language is given the prominence it requires” (p.94). In the same line of thought, in the FL context where learners are constantly exposed to English, CS is thought to have a negative effect on their communication with native speakers. This claim was supported by Eldridge (1996) and Sert (2005), who state that teachers’ constant use of CS harms students’ autonomy. Although these researchers and others insist that English teachers should use English solely in teaching or less L1 in classes, teachers might code-switch to their L1 for various reasons and functions. Thus, the phenomenon CS in the present study refers to teachers’ alternative use of English and Arabic within English courses.

Functions of Code-Switching in an EFL Classroom

Various studies have identified several functions of CS [Suleiman, (2000), 45, 11, 6, 7, Abdel Tawwab, 2014). For instance, Abdel Tawwab (2014) opines that interlocutors may switch to discuss a topic, to persuade their audience, or to show solidarity with a certain social group. As Holmes (2000) mentioned in her book: *An introduction to sociolinguistics*, “A speaker may switch to another language as a signal of group membership and shared ethnicity within an addressee” (p.35). At the formal level in classrooms, CS can be utilized to introduce a new concept (Gumperz, 1982a; Karen, 2003; Tien & Liu, 2006), explain unclear meanings, comment on something, because students’ mother tongue is more accessible and easier to get instructions into. In his work, Ibrahim et al. (2013) found that the teachers in his sample switched the topic from English (target language) to Malay (students’ L1) to explain grammar rules. Furthermore, EFL teachers resort to CS for achieving affective functions, repetitive functions, topic shift, and presenting a new topic or clarifying instructions (Moodley, 2007); Mattson and Burenhults Mattson 1999). Teachers often tend to express a variety of emotions in their L1 (Al-Khatib, 2003). According to Gumperz (1982b), teachers use CS as a supportive tool to share emotions, to create a good atmosphere, or narrow the teacher-learner gap (Auebach, 1993; Cook, 2001; Hughes, et al., 2006). Other studies have revealed that code-switching may be employed to fill in a linguistic gap; lack of one word in the target language. In her study, Qing (2010) found that teachers translated many words while explaining new vocabulary.

Research Design and Methodology

**Sampling**

An appropriate sampling paradigm should be chosen since the present research aims at describing and explaining a sociolinguistic phenomenon (CS) in a particular speech community, which is an EFL classroom. Therefore, a purposive sample is employed in the sense that the sample is selected according to the researchers’ purpose. In the current study, the purpose is to show the reasons that lead both teachers and students of English to shift to their mother tongue, unveil the functions of CS, and exhibit both teachers’ and learners’ attitudes towards this linguistic behavior. The sample involves a total number of 16 teachers; some of them are teachers of Comprehension and Oral Expression, and others teach Civilization and Literature. They are teachers of these
selected content modules in which teachers and students are in daily contact with each other in an EFL classroom in the department of English at Tlemcen University, Algeria. This sample is composed of four males and 12 females. They are all permanent teachers in the Department of English. They are holders of a Magister degree or Ph.D. in English. Their teaching experience ranges between 2 and 38 years.

**Research Tools: Description and Aims**

The first research instrument was the classroom observation relying on teachers’ daily observation of their learners. It was intended to observe first-year students’ behavior to check to which code(s) students and teachers switch. The researchers selected teachers of Comprehension and Oral Expression, Literature, and Civilization. The three modules were purposively chosen as content and productive skill modules, where lectures are delivered with abundant teacher-student interaction and debates. This research tool can be described as a structured, uncontrolled observation with a non-participant researcher. The non-participant observation has been opted for because of the closure of the university due to the spread of COVID-19. This procedure also helps to avoid the influence of the researchers’ presence on the participants' speech. Teachers’ daily practices in the EFL classroom are thought to be a useful source to capture spontaneous linguistic behavior. The questions vary between multiple-choice questions following a Lickert scale, close-ended questions, and open-ended ones. They aim at measuring the frequency of using AA among students, and their performance level in English, determining when they code-switch between codes and for what functions, and checking whether learners need explanations in MSA or AA during lectures.

After checking the answers in the teachers’ classroom observation. This latter was supported by a structured interview involving both close-ended questions, open-ended question interview, and multiple-choice ones. It aims at identifying to what extent English and L1 are used in EFL teaching and learning processes with first-year students in the English department, and to uncover the reasons behind the use of AA in English classes where students and teachers are supposed to interact exclusively in the target language. The interview also seeks to identify teachers’ attitudes towards this behavior.

**Data Presentation and Analysis**

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

**Teachers’ Classroom Observation**

After the analysis of the teachers’ classroom observation, the following data have been obtained:

**Q1. To what code(s) do students switch?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSA</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All teachers answered that their learners usually code-switch to AA.
Q2. How often do your students answer in AA/MSA/FR?

This question seeks to measure the frequency of students’ answers in class using another code instead of English. The scores, in table 2, show that learners answer in their L1 instead of the target language:

Table 2. The percentages of the frequency of students’ answers using AA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Usually</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF</td>
<td>31.25</td>
<td>68.75</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These percentages are represented in the following bar-graph:

Figure 1. The percentages of the frequency of students’ answers using AA

Q3- When do students switch between codes more?

a. During the teachers’ explanation
b. When raising questions
c. When responding to teachers’ questions
d. When asking for clarifications at the end of the session.

The third question, which is multiple-choice in type, attempts to identify the context where EFL students code-switch between codes more. The results demonstrate that learners mostly code-switch when raising questions in class or when responding to their teachers’ questions, or sometimes when asking for clarification at the end of the course. (See table three)

Table 3. Contexts where students code-switch more between codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>During the teachers’ explanation</th>
<th>When raising questions</th>
<th>When responding to teachers’ questions</th>
<th>When asking for clarifications at the end of the session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF</td>
<td>6.25</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>18.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These scores are displayed in the following bar-graph:
Q4- How do you evaluate your learners’ performance in English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bad</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Good</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question attempts to measure the level of students’ performance in English. The percentages, in table 4, reveal that first-year learners have an average level in the target language:

Table 4. The scores of the students’ performance in English

These percentages are represented in the following pie-chart
Q5- Relying on your professional experience, do learners need explanations of ideas in MSA/AA?
   Yes       No       Sometimes

Question five is asked to know whether learners need further explanation in another language/code in addition to the target language in class or not. The researchers suggested both the H and L varieties of Arabic as the switch may take both forms English-MSA/English-AA regarding the multilingual situation of Algerian speakers. The data collected reveal that the majority of teachers answered that their students occasionally need further explanations in another code, be it MSA or AA. Few teachers (02) claim that students do not.

Q6- How often do students switch to AA/MSA/FR in class?
   Never       sometimes       always

This sixth question seeks to measure the frequency of students’ CS to AA in class. The scores obtained from this question show that all learners (100%) sometimes code-switch to their L1 instead of the target language.

Q7- Which functions of these students’ CS most fulfill?
   a. Referential   b. Expressive   c. Phatic
   b. Directive   e. Poetic   d. Metalinguistic

This question aims at finding out the functions of CS used by first-year EFL students. The majority of instructors, mainly those teaching Comprehension and Oral Expression, claim that students generally code-switch to L1 for referential, directive, and phatic functions. That is, their learners tend to code-switch whenever they do not find certain vocabulary words to fill in a linguistic gap when they want to include or exclude someone in communication during debates and classroom free talk, and to emphasize an important point or idea in conversation respectively. Then, the expressive function is also noticeable since they code-switch to AA to express feelings in communication and debates. Teachers of Literature witnessed during their lectures a tendency towards CS whenever the students want to entertain (for jokes) or add a sense of humour to their atmosphere; the aim of their switches is, then, poetic. However, the metalinguistic function, as all teachers claim, is the least noticed by teachers.

Interview: Reasons behind the Use of AA in English Classes

Q1-When do you feel the need to switch from English to your L1?

When teachers were asked whether they feel the need to switch from English to their mother tongue, the majority of them (68.75%) agree on the fact that L1 is only used to ease the burden of comprehension. Here are some instances of teachers’ answers:

- Generally, when I notice that students go blank and need support. I also switch sometimes when I come across a term, and give the equivalent in Arabic.
- In many situations, when feeling the subject is so difficult and students cannot grasp well different ideas. Hence, AA is used to enhance students’ assimilation, and due to their weak linguistic proficiency in English.
To facilitate comprehension, substitute long explanations in English, and for specific abstract concepts.

- When learners fail to understand or do a task, I usually provide them with examples and explanations. But, when there is no other way out, and to avoid the waste of time, I switch to AA, but it is very rare when I do this.

Four teachers (25%) claimed that they use AA to gain time and effort when explaining ideas or concepts that are difficult for the students to understand, and make ideas clear. Only one teacher (06.25%) stated that teaching oral skills requires no or limited code-switching especially at first-year level, and our ultimate goal is to help learners speak and express themselves in English avoiding L1 use. Therefore, she is against the use of L1 in class.

**Q2-Do you base your lessons more on cognitive or linguistic goals?**

All teachers base their lessons on both cognitive and linguistic goals claiming that:
- Both goals should be targeted because of their mutual link.
- Both goals because we are in a bilingual context.
- Both, depending on course objective

**Q3-When using L1, do you think that it helps students to grasp ideas/explanations?**

(81.25%) of teachers believe that using L1 helps students to grasp ideas or explanations and only three teachers (18.75%) answered ‘No’. The following pie-chart better exposes the results:

![Figure 4. Teachers' Opinion](image)

**Q4. How often do your students speak in L1 in class?**

Very often, often, sometimes, rarely, never

This question was raised to measure the frequency of learners’ L1 use in class. The scores obtained show that learners rarely speak in the mother tongue.
Table 5. Scores of Learners’ Frequency of English–AA CS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF (%)</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>68.75</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scores of table five are highlighted in the following bar-graph:

*Figure 5. Learners’ Frequency of English –AA CS*

Q5. How does the use of L1 affect students’ educational achievements?

40% of responses (six teachers) to this question demonstrate that teachers consider that the overuse of AA in class may have negative effects on the level of students in English or their academic achievements such as laziness, dependence on translation, leading, of course, to problems of vocabulary building. One teacher claimed that “I think if learners get used to using L1, they will never make effort because they feel at ease and more comfortable whereas if they challenge themselves, they can improve their speaking skills”. In the same line of thought, another teacher added “an overuse of AA makes it a handicap because they will learn to switch each time they find a difficulty instead of thinking in English which is their target language. Learners should know from their first-year that they must use the target language solely”. However, the other 60% of responses reveals that teachers confess that L1 may help EFL students to understand things that are difficult to be understood when using just English. L1 also helps to grasp some essential matters based on students’ previously acquired knowledge. Very rare use of AA is regarded as beneficial because learners will get the opportunity to compare the languages they have in their linguistic repertoire when interacting in the classroom as (seven teachers) asserted. Moreover, two teachers claimed that there will be no negative impact if well used without exaggeration and wisely.

Q6. Do you allow your students to speak in their mother tongue instead of English?

When teachers were asked if they permit their learners to use their L1 instead of English or not, the majority of them (nine teachers; i.e., (56.25%)) answered ‘no’, and 6 teachers (37.5%) answered ‘yes’. Besides, only one teacher did not answer this question. Table six exposes the scores obtained from question six:

Table 6. The percentages of allowing learners to use L1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AF</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RF</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>56.25</td>
<td>6.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure six highlights the percentages of table six:

![Figure 6. The percentages of allowing learners to use L1](image)

After question six, teachers were asked to say why to allow students to use L1 or not. One of the three teachers who claimed that they allow their students to use mother tongue justified that she rarely does as the last solution when her students find difficulties in understanding. The other one did not provide an answer to the question ‘why?’. The third one lets her students speak in L1 when the matter discussed is conceptual and technical, and if it helps them to express themselves for cognitive goals. Then, one teacher from those who answered ‘No’ justifies his refusal by saying: ‘because they are learning English’, but he confesses that “sometimes L1 may assure the flow of the conversation among students”. Another teacher also refused, answering: “No, simply because they are EFL students, they need to learn in the target language solely”. The other five teachers did not claim why they do not permit their learners to speak in AA during their lectures.

Q7- Why do students code-switch to AA in class?

This question is purposively asked to find out the reasons behind students ‘CS. Teachers of the sample noticed the following ones:

- **Lack of facility:** The results show that teachers think that the overwhelming majority of students code-switch due to the lack of facility and their moderate level in English. for instance, they switch to L1 when they are unable to find adequate, appropriate words for certain topics to continue the flow of the conversation.
- **Lack of register competence:** When they do not find the right concept or term, they shift to the code where the missing concept or term is available.
- **Habitual expressions and words:** Teachers observed that students utter words and expressions (unconsciously), which are part and parcel of their habitual dialectal expressions in class.
- **The mood of students:** for humor, jokes, or because of being nervous or upset
- **To attract attention:** Their switch is often to attract the attention of classmates or teachers to them or a certain idea.
- **Semantic significance:** Students sometimes switch to AA to convey important or particular meanings that are better conveyed in their mother tongue rather than English.
➢ To ask for clarification: At the end of the sessions, students tend to speak in L1 to ask for clarification about certain topics, exams, evaluation tests, projects,…etc.

Discussion of the Obtained Results

After analyzing the data collected from both research tools, the researchers have gathered a significant amount of the findings of EFL students’ English – AA CS. Regarding the first research question, which codes are used by EFL students and teachers, the results show that though they possess three languages (MSA, French, and English) in addition to AA in their speech repertoire, first-year students sometimes tend to switch between English and AA in classroom interaction. Teachers claim that they use AA occasionally to highlight the difficulties of words, concepts, or terms that students find difficult. Therefore, the first hypothesis, which suggests that EFL students and teachers code-switch between L1 and English, is confirmed.

Concerning the second hypothesis which stipulates that the reasons behind students’ CS are lack of facility to fill in linguistic gaps and the main function of CS is pedagogical, the obtained results from the classroom observation first and the structured interview second (see question seven) exhibit that the lack of facility is the major reason of almost all students’ CS to AA. Thus, this hypothesis has been validated. Furthermore, the findings show that students also code-switch due to the lack of register competence; when they do not find the right concept or term, they shift to the code where the missing concept or term is present. Teachers generally observed that students utter some AA words and expressions, which are part of their habitual dialectal expressions. The mood of students also leads to the phenomenon of CS. Additionally, their switch is often done purposively to attract the attention of classmates or teachers to them or certain ideas. The analysis of question seven in the interview also reveals that learners switch for semantic significance, or to ask for clarification about certain important topics such as exams, evaluation tests, projects,…etc at the end of lectures. Moreover, teachers claim that students sometimes some explanations in AA/MSA as a necessary pedagogical strategy to ease the burden of comprehension. Hence, these results all answer the researchers’ second research question.

Regarding the third hypothesis which suggests that teachers have negative attitudes towards CS, the data collected from the interview (see question five and six) demonstrate that teachers have negative attitudes since they believe that L1 may help sometimes in explaining lectures, yet its overuse would harm most of the time the progress of students and handicap the process of learning a foreign language with much reliance on mother tongue. Thus, teachers believe in teaching English through the direct method to promote students’ linguistic and knowledge building development. Hence, these results also validate the third hypothesis.

Interpretation of the Findings

Teachers’ or students’ use of CS has always been a theme of controversy. It is not always automatic and unconscious behavior. Indeed, in this study, findings have proved that CS performs many pedagogical functions. Teachers opt for such strategic CS as a means to provide their learners with an easy flow of classroom instruction and to enhance their understanding. It further aids to facilitate the explanation and clarification of difficult terms or concepts. To sum it up, referential, expressive, and phatic functions are important in the expression of emotion, building a strong relationship between the teacher and the student, and easing the comprehension burden.
Previous research also demonstrated that a massive number of EFL learners or bilinguals in general resort to CS for the aforementioned functions and studies show that participants exhibit positive attitudes towards CS use in classrooms, because they believe it helps students to learn English at one hand (Lee, 2010; Qing, 2010; Ja’afar & Maarof, 2016). On the other hand, teachers who participated in this research work exhibited negative attitudes towards this linguistic behaviour in their classrooms, a claim that is witnessed in previous case studies tackled by many researchers Eldridge (1996) and Sert (2005). At last, even though some researchers insist that English teachers must use the target language only, teachers and students might code-switch to their mother tongue for several reasons and functions.

Limitations of the Study

At the end of this investigation, it should be noted that the researchers encountered many difficulties and challenges during the realization of this work. The first and major difficulty was the closure of the university due to the pandemic of Corona (COVID-19) which prevented the researchers from meeting students and conducting a questionnaire with first-year EFL students at the Department of English, Tlemcen. The researchers could have even conducted a larger number of teachers’ interviews as only a few have been met during these specific conditions of confinement. In addition to this, it was difficult to determine the reasons and functions of students’ CS relying on classroom observation solely. More accurate data would be reached about what types of CS students make use of, using other adequate research tools with both teachers and students in future researches.

Conclusion

This paper tackled English-AA CS in EFL classrooms in an attempt to determine the reasons that lead both teachers and students of English to code-switch to AA, unveil the functions of shifting to L1 in class, and display both teachers’ and learners’ attitudes towards this phenomenon. The findings revealed that EFL first-year students sometimes code-switch in lectures where English should be the sole language. They also revealed that their shift to AA is mainly used to serve referential, expressive, and phatic functions and particularly due to their average level of proficiency in English, lack of facility, lack of register competence, and use of habitual expressions. 68.75% of teachers declared that they sometimes use AA to ease the comprehension burden. At last, most teachers displayed negative attitudes towards the use of the mother tongue, for it it may help sometimes and may harm most of the time. Consequently, the careful use of L1 can help EFL students highlight the difficulties they may encounter whereas, the overuse of L1 may harm and handicap the process of learning a foreign language with much reliance on L1. Therefore, teachers peacefully attempt to get their students accustomed to lectures delivered in English solely by applying the direct method in teaching English to foster students’ language skills development.

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References


Needs and Obstacles of Using the Internet in Language Teaching from Instructors’ Perspective; the case of the department of English at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University

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Abstract

This study investigated the instructors’ perceived obstacles and needs in using the Internet for teaching English. Eighty-one instructors in the Department of English at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) participated in the study. This study provides data related to the teachers' perceptions concerning Internet use, areas and barriers in language teaching. The study aimed to answer two research questions. Namely, what are the perceived obstacles to implementing Internet-based English as a foreign language teaching (EFL) teaching from the viewpoint of English Department instructors at IMSIU? And what are IMSIU English Department’s instructors’ perceived needs for training in using the Internet for language teaching? A survey and a semi-structured interview were used to collect the data. The survey involved three sections; the first section enquired about whether participants’ need training on using the Internet in language teaching, the second section investigated the areas of potential training, and the last section investigated participants’ barriers in incorporating the Internet in language instruction. The interviews involved three questions for further understanding. The findings showed that the perceived obstacles include cheating in online exams, lack of knowledge in using some applications, restricted time of some applications, and making online exams. The instructors demonstrated their eagerness to training. They also perceived presentation software, creating online exams, creating teaching materials, Videoconferencing, and teaching techniques, online classroom management, managing data sources, online assessment and evaluation, and basic knowledge of using technology as very necessary. The paper recommends designing a training course that considers the obstacles and needs suggested by the EFL instructors.

Keywords: EFL teaching, Internet language teaching, language needs analysis, language training needs and obstacles, instructors at Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University

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Introduction
The Internet has affected language teaching in many ways. Different Internet tools and application have been used in various aspects of the educational process to engage students in their learning. Many studies have tackled the influence of the Internet on the Saudi education systems. Al-Asmari (2005) points out that early investigations of Internet incorporation in higher education have shown that the instructors are in the early integration steps. Recent studies have revealed similar patterns and shown low adoption rates.

There has been a noticeable concern in the efficacy of the Internet on the economic and education systems. Various studies have investigated the use of Internet technologies in educational contexts. Early studies on Internet incorporation in Saudi higher education have reported that faculty members are in the initial stages of adoption. Recent studies have reported similar findings and low adoption rates.

The use of the Internet in the language classrooms has been increasingly the purpose of study in recent years. However, the use of the Internet is still in its beginnings in Saudi higher education. A variety of factors contribute to the hesitation in the use of the Internet in English learning in higher educational institutions, including time strains, individual computer skills and hardware issues, learner social-cultural backgrounds, previous knowledge, and learning experiences.

Saleh and Pretorius (2006) indicate that the past decade involved attention to the place of the Internet in language pedagogy. However, the use of the Internet in language teaching is a recent development. Because of the pervasive use of computers and the Internet in educational settings, language instructors should use to use this technology to facilitate language teaching and learning.

As teachers and instructors are the ones who transfer any innovation to the field, it is essential to recognize their role and to help them integrate technology effectively into their instruction (Pettenai, Giuli, & Khalid, 2001). It is also important to recognize the teachers’ attitudes toward the use of the Internet. Therefore, their opinions and needs are of crucial importance. The success of language learning with the Internet depends mainly on the appreciation of the teachers’ attitudes towards the Internet use (Teo, 2008).

It is essential to consider whether or not teachers are willing to incorporate the Internet into their classes. It still sounds entirely justifiable, then, to examine the perceptions and attitudes of EFL instructors towards the integration of the Internet in language classes before the actual application of any teaching program employing the Internet as teachers’ and instructors’ beliefs can profoundly affect and shape as well as direct their reactions to such a method of language teaching. Investigating EFL instructors’ beliefs about Internet use in EFL settings can provide researchers with insights into the barriers to utilizing the Internet and, as a result, overcoming them.

Many institutes and universities attempt to provide instructors opportunities to develop their computer skills for their instruction. However, most technology courses are not designed according to real teaching situations or instructors’ needs. Studies show that using the Internet in English language instruction in Saudi Arabia is still at its early stage. Very few studies have examined English language instructors’ Internet needs and barriers in Saudi Arabia. Hence, this
study attempts to investigate English language instructors’ needs and barriers to using the Internet as an instructional tool at IMSIU.

The limited use of the Internet in language pedagogy is mainly attributed to the lack of facilities, high price of Internet access, and teachers’ inability to use the Internet for educational targets. This study investigated the employment of the Internet by English Language instructors at Imam Mohammad ibn Saud Islamic University focusing the instructors’ barriers and needs. By conducting this study, EFL instructors and planners would facilitate the process of teaching and learning English as a foreign language with the use of the Internet as a source of teaching materials and professional progress. The findings of this study will help researchers and administrators to comprehend the needs of English teachers in terms of Internet use. As such, this study is significant to encourage teachers to help remote students learn the English language without having to afford high expenses.

The current study investigated the perceived obstacles and training needs of EFL instructors in the English Department at IMSIU in using the Internet for language teaching and teaching English online. More specifically, the study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceived obstacles to the implementation of Internet-based EFL teaching from the viewpoint of English Department instructors at IMSIU?
2. What are IMSIU English Department’s instructors’ perceived training needs for using the Internet for language teaching?

Related Literature
ICT in Saudi Educational System
Like all countries globally and the area specifically, ICT started to be used into the Saudi educational system in the 1980s. The introduction of ICT helped the MOE integrate it into the curriculum in 1991 (Oyaid, 2009). The MOE has taken several steps in utilizing ICT and computer applications to assist teachers and students in facilitating ICT literacy in society (MOE, 2005). ICT was fully integrated into the Saudi education system between the years 2000 and 2004 by the committee selected for the said programs to gradually train teachers to be knowledge sources and creators (Al-Omran, 2007).

The Ministry of Education (MOE) (2005) declared that “the objectives of educational policy in Saudi Arabia are to ensure that education becomes more efficient, to meet the religious, economic and social needs of the country and to eradicate illiteracy among Saudi adults” (MOE, 2005, pp. 26). On the contrary, these goals have not been practiced on the ground by teachers and principals.

Since 2007, several information and communication technology (ICT) uses and applications have been provided to students in the Kingdom despite the large size of the country and the growing population. These days, education in Saudi Arabia is witnessing a new phase, which focuses on quality of education, guaranteeing that students in the Kingdom’s education system are qualified to cope with future economic changes and globalization. As for the utilization...
of ICT in teaching and learning, Saudi Arabia did not leave this area behind. There has been well to progressing public education.

As for the higher education case in Saudi Arabia, universities were provided with the most current technologies. Most universities these days are equipped with computers, data-show devices, high-speed Internet connection, and smart boards at the classroom level and the language labs. In addition, the most recent learning management systems are used in all Saudi universities which has helped the universities to cope smoothly with the lockdown of the pandemic. However, the researcher has noticed that some students and instructors complain of the minimum use of technology in language teaching due to several reasons, including the lack of training and the relatively new mode of education.

Teachers’ Beliefs

literature shows that teachers' and students' attitudes are integral in technology implementation (Mumtaz, and that these perceptions often have an essential role in the fulfilling educational goals (Alshumaimeri, 2008). A strong relationship was found between teachers’ ICT use and their attitudes toward computers (Oyaid, 2009. However, Ageel (2011) indicated that most of the participants did not make use of ICT in their teaching, even though they were interested in learning about and undergoing ICT training. Almalki and Williams (2012) indicated that "teachers who were eager to improve their learning processes were more expected to employ technology into their teaching." (p. 44)

Literature indicated that successful employment of ICT in education requires identifying educational problems, what learners, teachers, and educational institutions desire to accomplish, and finally using ICT as knowledge construction tools. Alshumaimeri (2008) located a positive relationship between a teacher’s attendance during training and positive attitudes towards using ICT in the Saudi classroom, both for computers and CALL.

Oyaid (2009) found that confident teachers conveyed positive attitudes towards ICT, whereas less confident teachers showed negative attitudes. A possible explanation was the influence of teachers' computer competence on their perspectives.

Alharbi (2013) examined teachers’ attitudes and barriers towards integrating technology in Saudi Arabia and the United States. The study found that teachers from the two countries had optimistic attitudes toward technology integration in education. The study also showed some differences in teacher preparation for using technology.

Farooq and Soomro (2018) surveyed the opinions of EFL 100 teachers at the English language center in Taif University on technology-related competencies. The survey included four domains: planning and preparation, classroom management, classroom instruction, and professional duties. The results showed that many teachers were aware of the ICT and its uses in pedagogy. They showed that they use the available technological instruments in the classroom for only some activities. They use the university LMS for uploading certain activities and assessment; otherwise, they also hesitate to design technology-based activities for English language learners.
They indicated that they need training in integrating technology with the teaching and learning process.

Alswilem (2019) studied the attitudes of 76 English teachers in Al-Jouf district of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia towards the employment of ICT in secondary classes. The participants responded to a questionnaire. The study indicated that the participants held positive attitudes toward the employment of ICT in the classroom. However, the study demonstrated many barriers to use. These barriers included the lack of teacher training, the shortage of infrastructure, and the need for technology resources.

Saqlain, Qarni and Ghadi (2013) investigated English language teachers’ readiness to integrate technology in Saudi Arabia. The researchers employed structured and semi-structured interviews to collect data from twelve Saudi teachers. The study concluded with five main themes, (a) Understanding of technology, (b) Use of technology for learning and motivation, (c) Types of technology, (d) Teachers’ main concerns, and (e) Teachers’ unawareness of Intel program. However, the participants complained about the lack of funding, shortage of technology in schools, and lack of proper training to use technology.

Barriers of ICT Use in Language Teaching

Much of the research related to ICT integration focused on the barriers of using technology in teaching and language teaching specifically. Knowing these barriers is an essential stage in improving the equality of education and the quality of the educational institutions. Alshummaimri (2019) indicated that Barriers that deter information and communication technology utilization differ based on context, environment, and location.

Gamlo (2014, 30) divided barriers of ICT use at Saudi universities into several sections, including, lack of access, lack of technical support, lack of time, lack of fit to the curriculum, and, lack of effective training. This proceed a section on second-order or teacher-level barriers: lack of teacher confidence, lack of teacher competence, resistance to change, age and gender differences, between teachers and, teachers’ ”perceptions of the value of ICT." Gamlo found that the most commonly perceived barriers to ICT use were related to lack of access, lack of confidence when using ICT, lack of belief in the value of ICT, unwillingness to make time to use ICT, and inadequate training.

Alkahtani employed an interview and an open-ended questionnaire to investigate the challenges of integrating ICT in teaching. This study presents two significant challenges: A shortage of training and a shortage of devices. The findings also indicate

"a lack of a basic understanding among both students and teachers of how the equipment functions; a lack of mastery of ICT teaching techniques—and a lack of teacher training to bridge the gap; a lack of mastery of electronic equipment; and problems with repairs — or the timeliness of them." (2017, 36).
The integration of ICT in the educational process has bright implications for Saudi schools. This implementation, however, is deterred by several constraints. Without first addressing these constraints, ICT employment in Saudi Arabian schools and universities will not be successful.

**Utilizing the Internet for language teaching**

The use of the Internet in language teaching has recently gained many researchers' attention (Al-Asmari, 2005; Chen, 2007; Baniabderrahman, 2013; Shin & Son, 2007; Wu, Yen & Marek, 2011, to name but a few). In this regard, researchers have dealt with different aspects of the Internet, including the use of the Internet in language teaching and its effect on EFL learners’ achievement, the use of the resources available online such as podcasts (Fox, 2008), teaching the language skills such as listening utilizing of online resources (Malteza, 2008) and writing, the use of such commonly visited websites as YouTube in EFL classes, use of online dictionaries in learning English (Dashtestani, 2013), among others. This section provides an account of the most recent and related research to incorporating the Internet in language teaching. Some recent studies focused on teachers’ concerns about using the Internet in language teaching and their potential use for training. For instance, Yutdhana (2004) revealed teachers’ use and the Internet needs in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). The results of the study showed that most teachers use Internet applications for their instruction for the purposes of teaching preparation and teaching in this classroom. Furthermore, the study showed that EFL teachers who use Internet applications have good opinions about using them for teaching EFL. The study also found that the teachers have some concerns about using the Internet for their instruction, including professional, infrastructure, and administrative problems. Therefore, they perceive that they need a training course in using Internet applications for EFL teaching. The current study is more concerned with the school level, whereas the current study is related to higher education and discusses more advanced Internet applications.

Other studies concentrated on the level of Internet adoption by Saudi Universities. Al-Asmari (2005) examined EFL teachers' Internet use at the colleges of technology in four Saudi Arabia cities. The findings of this study showed a low level of Internet integration by the instructors. The study also found some barriers to Internet including, limited access to the Internet and computer skills. In addition to the time gap between AL-Asmari’s study and the present study, the present research tackled higher education and was more concerned with the barriers and needs of language instructors.

Another study was conducted by Chen (2007) to examine the factors affecting teachers in incorporating the Internet into their instruction. This study showed that teacher training is decisive for embracing the Internet by the EFL instructors and teachers in higher education. Furthermore, continuous training focusing on technology use in language instruction is essential. The current study instead focuses on specific needs related to Internet applications.

Similarly, Shin and Son (2007) studied the attitudes of Korean secondary school EFL teachers’ towards the use of the Internet for teaching purposes. A total of 101 teachers took part in a survey. The study found that the factors affecting the use of the Internet in the classroom include, teachers’ interest in Internet use, teachers’ abilities to employ the Internet in classroom activities, and computer facilities and technical support in schools.
Not surprisingly, researchers have also displayed a great interest in teachers’ needs of the Internet in language teaching. Külekçi (2009) explored pre-service English teachers’ use and needs of the Internet. The researcher administered a questionnaire to 195 third- and fourth-year students from DEU Buca, the Faculty of Education, Department of English Language and Teaching constitute the sample of the study. The results indicate that most of the pre-service teachers are eager to use Internet applications, and they mostly have good opinions about using it. The study also points out that pre-service teachers have some concerns about using the Internet. They also need training in using Internet applications for EFL teaching.

Some studies have shed light on the level of incorporation of the Internet in language teaching institutions. For example, Kalibalan and Rajab (2010) examined the internet integration by 274 EFL teachers in Gaza, concentrating on uses, practices, and barriers. The researcher gathered the data with a questionnaire. The findings showed that 130 teachers utilized the Internet for teaching English in classrooms as well as for boosting professional development, such as searching for information and sharing ideas with other teachers. Nevertheless, the study found that English language teachers in Gaza have not wholly used the Internet because of some constraints related to time, accessibility, and facilities.

Likewise, Al-Shawi and Al-Wabil (2013) examined Internet use by instructors from various majors in four Saudi higher education institutions: King Saud University, Imam Muhammad bin Saud University, Prince Sultan University, and Al-Yamamah College. Results showed that the Internet technologies were mainly used by the instructors for teaching purposes, communication, and research. In addition, the instructors’ computer skills were strong indicators of their Internet use. Furthermore, Zhang (2013) explored Internet use in EFL teaching and learning in universities in Northwest China. The result showed that both teachers and students are not ready for employing the Internet in EFL pedagogy.

In the same regard, Sa'd (2014) studied the perceptions of 86 EFL learners towards the advantages of using the Internet for language learning. The results revealed that 66 participants (77.7%) believed that the Internet has no disadvantages. The significant disadvantages were enumerated to be: the possibility of language learners’ misuse of the Internet, and its being time-consuming and tedious. The participants also maintained that it is possible to take advantage of the Internet with language skills, and age groups. They also mentioned the following as the major obstacles to Internet-based teaching a) the Internet filtering, b) its low speed, and d) lack of facilities as well as e) the profound sense of the authorities’ mistrust toward the Internet.

Similarly, Javad and Leila (2015) compared the attitudes of 100 Iranian English teachers and 100 learners toward using the Internet for language learning. The findings demonstrated that most participants had positive attitudes towards using the Internet for language learning. Moreover, there was no difference between learners' and teachers’ attitudes toward using the Internet for language learning.

Recently, Allehaibi (2019) studied Internet use by faculty members in Saudi Arabian universities. He examined qualities associated with the Internet usage in Saudi Arabian universities. The study administered a questionnaire to 500 faculty members randomly selected in
two Saudi universities. The findings demonstrated that the five innovation attributes are significant factors in explaining Internet adoption by Saudi Arabian faculty. The overall results indicate that the Internet technology diffusion among faculty members in Saudi universities is at the early proliferation stages.

As shown in this brief review of related research, various studies have been conducted regarding Internet usage by institutions, language teachers, and instructors. Some of these studies involved concerns and barriers to Internet utilization in language teaching (Al-Asmari, 2005; Kaliban & Rajab, 2010; Külekçi, 2009; Yutdhana, 2004; Zhang, 2013). These studies have reported several concerns and barriers: professional, infrastructure, administrative considerations, limited access to the Internet, the time factor, and lack of computer skills. Other studies have demonstrated the teachers’ need for training and on-going development (Chen, 2007; Külekçi, 2009; Shin & Son, 2007; Yutdhana, 2004). Another group of studies reported a low level of Internet utilization among the teachers and institutions they studied (Al-Asmari, 2005; Allehaibi, 2019; Al-Shawi & Al-Wabil, 2013; Kaliban and Rajab, 2010). Moreover, another group of studies has shown the positive attitudes of teachers and instructors and their eagerness towards employing Internet use in language teaching (Javad & Leila, 2015; Külekçi, 2009).

As the literature shows, incorporating the Internet in English language teaching in Saudi Arabia is still at its beginning stages. No previous study has investigated EFL teachers’ Internet obstacles and needs in Saudi Universities. Hence, this study investigates English language teachers’ barriers and needs of using the Internet as an instructional tool in Saudi educational institutions. The findings of this study will assist language pedagogues in understanding the needs and barriers of English teachers in terms of Internet incorporation.

Methodology
The current study is a descriptive, mixed-method one; it involved qualitative and qualitative data collection tools and procedures. This section presents the participants of the study, research design, and the instruments, validity and reliability of the instruments, and analysis procedures.

Participants
A total of 81 faculty members in the English Department at Imam Mohammad ibn Saud Islamic University (67 males and 14 females) successfully completed the online survey. While the majority of the participants had more than 18 years of experience in English language education, 18 members had 12-17 years of experience, and the rest of the sample had less than 11 years of experience. The positions of the participants were teaching assistants, lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors and a professor. Figure one shows the study sample according to their academic ranks. The participants of the study were all working in the English Department at IMSIU during the second semester of the academic year 2019-2020. The figure shows that most participants were lecturers (64%) followed by teaching assistants (26%), then assistant professors (5%), associate professors (4%), and professors (1%).
Research Design
This study adopted a mixed-method approach to research because the blend between the quantitative and qualitative research approaches enables induction and deep understanding of the phenomenon under study and the use of the deductive method, which can lead to generalizations about the characteristics of the population after testing the hypotheses.

Instruments
The data were of this study collected by an online survey and a semi-structured interview. This section provides a description of the two instruments.

Survey
The online survey consisted of three parts. The first part inquired about whether the participants need training in the use of the Internet in language teaching. The second part investigated the areas where the participants felt they need training. Finally, the third part investigated participants’ perceived barriers in incorporating the Internet in language instruction.

Interview
Following the administration of the survey, four participants were randomly selected for the interviews. The interviewees were then interviewed individually. The interview was a simple one. During each session, which usually lasted for fifteen minutes and was conducted in a private room, the researcher would record on the smart phone and a pen and paper just in case the cassette ever malfunctioned, which did occur once. Although they posed the same questions each session, each interview was different. Faculty members’ interviews in many times led to valuable, new information. The interview format was not very formal, but usually turned into casual conversations, and the researcher firmly believes that it is an excellent way to gather qualitative information because it helps in reaching honest responses.

Data Analysis
The current study is a descriptive one involving qualitative and quantitative data. The data were gathered from the participants in the English department at IMSIU by using a survey and an interview. The survey was devised based on the researcher’s own experience and the objectives of the study. Consequently, the interview questions were developed according to the participants’
responses to the survey items and were, therefore, aimed at delving further insight into the participants’ responses. After the survey and the interview data were collected, the researcher coded the data according to the most recurrent theme(s) of the responses. The answers of each participant were examined to see the central theme of each response. This way, specific themes were found to be prevalent and emerged from the participants’ responses. Besides, where appropriate, some interview transcripts have also been provided to shed further light on the participants’ perceptions and attitudes. The interview consisted only of one single question, which aimed at a further understanding of the participants’ perceived needs in using the Internet for language teaching. The participants answered the question: What do you think are the most needed skills for EFL instructors in using the Internet for language teaching?

**Instrument Validity**

The final version of the survey and the interview were validated by two experts in the field for their content; two EFL university professors in the English Language Department at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University checked the instruments. The instruments’ items were reviewed and modified in response to their feedback and recommendations, and only small changes have been made.

**Instrument Reliability**

To estimate reliability, the researcher piloted the study instruments on 10 EFL instructors whose variables were similar to those of the original study sample. However, the researcher excluded this sample from the present study. The results of the test and the survey’s reliability analysis showed that Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the survey was 0.81, which indicates acceptable reliability results, while Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the interview was 0.86, which is a highly satisfactory result for scientific research.

**Findings**

The current study investigated the perceived obstacles and training needs of EFL instructors in the English Department at IMSIU in using the Internet for language teaching and teaching English online. This section presents the findings of the study; the findings are presented according to the questions of the study. The results are shown under two titles, namely: “perceived obstacles to the implementation of Internet-based EFL teaching” and “instructors’ perceived needs for training in using the Internet for language teaching.” The first title presents the findings related to the first research question, whereas the second title presents the findings of the second research question.

**First: perceived obstacles to the implementation of Internet-based EFL teaching:**

This section provides the result related to the first research question, which sought to find out the participants’ perceived obstacles in the incorporation of Internet tools and applications in language teaching. As this study was conducted during the lockdown of COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia, the survey was administered online. The participants were requested to indicate the most common obstacles they faced while using the Internet online instruction. The responses of the participants were categorized into nine obstacles. Figure two below presents the frequencies of the participants’ responses regarding the obstacles they encounter in integrating the Internet in language classes as perceived by the participants.
Figure 2. Obstacles of using the Internet as perceived by IMSIU’s EFL instructors

It is interesting to see the number of concerns raised by the instructors. The participants’ concerns reflect the current situation of Internet use in Saudi Arabia and in the related literature about Internet use in other parts of the world. Even though every obstacle matters, only four major obstacles including (1) cheating in online exams, (2) lack of knowledge in using some applications (3) restricted time of some applications and (4) making online exams are discussed in-depth due to their dramatically high number of frequencies. Figure 2 also shows that students’ interaction is among the obstacles that were indicated by 26 participants. Other obstacles include network problems (F17), students’ attendance (F13), students’ access to the applications (F11), and sound clarity (F 7). The major four obstacles are intertwined. Cheating in online exams can be a result of the lack of knowledge in the proper way of using online testing applications. Moreover, the restricted time of some applications like Zoom, for instance, can result in the learners cheat in their exams. This cannot be split from the idea that many participants indicated their suffering in making online exams.

The four most frequent obstacles raised by the instructors are, in a way or another, related to training issues. Because many Saudi institutions, like other parts of the world, were bewildered by the efficacy of the Pandemic and the quick resort to online teaching, they did not have enough time for training their teachers on online teaching. In addition, some applications were more complicated than others and demanded extensive training, especially for those instructors with limited experience. In the context of the study, IMSIU uses Blackboard, which, as any instructors complain, entails sufficient training prior to the use. Since the university did not have the time for such training, the training was conducted in a hurry, making the instructors resort to more user-friendly applications. These applications are either paid and expensive or give restricted time access. For example, Zoom has a 40-minute meeting limit, then the meeting has to start all over. The interruption would certainly affect the quality of teaching and assessment.

In addition, another perceived obstacle is making online exams, which is also a trainable issue and intertwined with the other three major obstacles. The instructors considered themselves...
lacking knowledge and training in the use of Internet applications, making online exams and managing these exams. These four obstacles reflect the current situation of education technology in Saudi Arabia. Although there have been rules, determination, and policies, the actual implementation on the ground is not sufficient according to the study’s results.

**Second: perceived needs for training in using the Internet for language teaching:**
In addition to teachers’ opinions about the obstacles they encountered in using Internet applications for EFL teaching, this study also examined instructors’ perceptions of their training needs in using Internet applications for language instruction. To get this information, a closed-ended question and open-ended question were used. In the open-ended question, the participants were asked to indicate any topics they needed to train in using the Internet for their instruction. Figure three shows the content topics that the instructors feel they need training on.

![Figure 3. Instructors’ determinations of their needs for training in using the Internet for language teaching](image)

As Figure three shows, the participants reported their need to learn multiple skills and to use several types of applications. Not surprisingly, the results show that the participants reported that their most immediate needs are learning to use presentation software (F43), Creating online exams (F39), creating teaching materials (F37), Videoconferencing (F36), and teaching techniques (F32). A less frequent, perceived need is course management (F17). Another group of less frequent needs includes email (14), online translators (F13), online writing assistance, and designing audiovisual materials both (F11), chat and messaging (F9), web folios/portfolios, and browsers (F8), and website evaluation (F7). The least reported group of needs include blogs (F4) and online dictionaries (F3).

In addition to the survey, some participants volunteered to be interviewed. The interview aimed to achieve an in-depth understanding of the instructors’ needs concerning the implementation of the Internet in language teaching. The interviewees responded to the three questions below:
What courses have you taught, and for how many semesters?
Do you think that you need training in using the Internet for language teaching?
What do you think are the most needed skills for EFL instructors in using the Internet for language teaching?

The first question was utilized as an ice breaker and for the researcher’s notes. Instructors who agreed to participate in the interview include four members of the English department faculty, all of whom had a Ph.D. The second question was used to measure the instructors’ willingness to the training. A range of individual responses was provided to each question, but a pattern of similar types of answers emerged according to each group.

Every participant’s first response to the item of the interview was to praise the express the need and show eagerness for training. According to most of the participants, the primary need is creating the teaching material. The classes are equipped with smart boards, PCs, Projectors, and an internet connection. However, some instructors reported that they have never used these facilities, “But at this stage, we are in need to know how to create meaningful & engaging Internet activities, create teaching materials through the use of Internet, and develop Interactive content,” said an instructor. She explained that this process was too easy for her to use the traditional way of designing and creating the martial. However, things turned out very demanding and time consuming all of a sudden.

Another training need that was raised by the majority of the instructors is classroom management. They all indicated that the online class is entirely different from the traditional one in terms of classroom management and students’ engagement, “You need to know how to plan and organize your online classes. You also should be taught how manage the time of class between using the internet and doing the other needs. Instructors also need to learn how to control and manage the classroom,” pointed out an associate professor.

According to the subjects, one of the needs they all expressed is to know how to search and manage data sources. They all said that the sources needed at this level are entirely different and, therefore, require additional training, “The instructors need to be trained in the skill of searching educational engines to supplement EFL courses and finding online teaching materials especially for pre-service teachers.” Reported an assistant professor. Participants also indicated that the process is also linked to the professional development of the instructor, “They need to be trained on how to search either for research purposes or teaching purposes,” added the same assistant professor.

According to the research, the faculty members reported their dire need for training in online assessment tools, “I think instructors are very badly in need to be instructed how to use online assessment and evaluation tools. I believe a challenging need for me is evaluating students reading and vocabulary level.” Mentioned another assistant professor. She reported that assessing students’ achievement makes a challenge for her and for her colleagues and that they are apprehensive of concerns like designing exams, exam-taking time, and students’ cheating.
In addition to the mentioned needs raised by the majority of the participants, other needs were reported by some of the instructors. Some instructors indicated the need for training on basic knowledge of using technology and familiarity with common problems with plug-ins, connections, the Internet browsers, firewalls, etc. One of the instructors stated, “I think the Saudi universities should pay more attention to preparing future language teachers for the new learning system, I mean the online learning system and using technological skills in the classroom.”

Discussion
The findings of this study show the positive attitudes of the English language instructors towards the use of the Internet for professional development. This issue has been pointed out by previous studies. These results provide clear evidence that IMSIU EFL instructors are not lagging in terms of Internet–related knowledge and professional development. With such use of the Internet, instructors and teachers have the chance to learn and get valuable competencies amongst which is the internet implementation (Kabilan 2005). It is evident then that the Saudi instructors in this study are aware of the Internet's potentials in language pedagogy.

The findings of the part of the study related to the obstacles of using the Internet in language teaching support other previous studies (Yutdhana, 2004; Al-Asmari, 2005; Külekçi, 2009; Zhang, 2013; Kaliban & Rajab, 2010) which have reported several concerns and barriers including, professional, infrastructure, administrative matters, limited access to the Internet, the time factor and lack of computer skills. This study found that the major obstacles in using the Internet for language instruction are professional ones and are, therefore, trainable. This finding goes with the findings of Yutdhana (2004), who found that the teachers’ problems about using the Internet for their instruction included professional, infrastructure, and administrative concerns. However, the significant problems of this study’s participants are the professional ones. Furthermore, although Al-Asmari (2005) found that the teachers encountered some obstacles which agrees with the findings of this study, the barriers he found included limited access to the Internet and lack of computer skills, which were not part of the findings of this study. The conclusions of this section also support Kaliban and Rajab (2010), whose study reported barriers related to time factor, which is a significant obstacle as reported in the current study. In contrast, the findings of this study are against those of Sa'd (2014), who indicated the following as the major obstacles to implementing Internet-based teaching a) the Internet filtering, b) its low speed and d) lack of facilities as well as e) the profound sense of the authorities’ mistrust toward the Internet. Fortunately, these obstacles are not among the ones encountered at IMSIU.

Even though every training need of the instructors is critical, only five content topics including (1) learning to use online presentation software, (2) Creating online exams, (3) creating online teaching materials, (4) Videoconferencing, and (5) online teaching techniques are discussed in-depth due to the dramatically higher numbers of their frequencies as indicated above. One thing about the most frequent perceived needs is that they all are related to imminent practice, teaching skills, presentation, and testing. The lockdown of COVID-19 was sudden, and several instructors have not tried their online teaching skills earlier. That’s why these skills have been reported by the majority of the participants. On the contrary, the least frequently reported skills are the ones used even before the pandemic including the use of the emails, browsers, chat, and messaging; or ones that are rarely used and needed by the instructors in their classes like blogs, website evaluation and
designing audiovisual materials. The findings of this section support the findings of previous studies which have demonstrated the teachers’ and instructors need for training and on-going development and their eagerness to using the Internet applications and they mostly have good opinions about using it (Yutdhana, 2004; Chen, 2007; Shin & Son, 2007; Külekçi, 2009).

As for the interview questions, the common thing among all instructors is that they all expressed their need for training to use the internet for language teaching. The most common needs reported by the majority of the instructors fall in creating teaching material, classroom management, managing data sources, assessment and evaluation, and basic knowledge of using technology. This finding supports the findings of the survey where the participants reported the need for training on presentation software, creating online exams, creating teaching materials, Videoconferencing, and teaching techniques. The findings of this part also support the findings of other recent studies (Yutdhana, 2004; Chen, 2007; Shin & Son, 2007; Külekçi, 2009).

Limitations of the study
Limitations are usually particular areas over which the researcher cannot control (Roberts, 2010). The limitations of this study are methodology constraints and sample size. First, the data were gathered by only using a survey and an interview. The survey employed in this study predisposes a range of responses. Some questions were predetermined with a range of answers, so the participants might not answer freely. Second, the findings are relatively not generalizable to other populations due to specific research focus. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies invite more participants to take part in the project before the beginning of the data collection phase.

Conclusion
For a long time, researchers have studied the positive impact of technology utilization in language teaching, showing a sophisticated process. Unfortunately, many language instructors have lacked success in utilizing technology into their teaching. This study examines the limited use of the internet by EFL instructors in the English department at Imam Mohammad ibn Saud Islamic University. This study investigated the employment of the Internet by English Language instructors at IMSIU focusing on the instructors’ barriers and needs. The main objective of this study was to examine IMSIU English Department’s instructors’ perceived obstacles and needs of incorporating the internet in language teaching. The instructors perceived that they encounter significant obstacles and concerns, including (1) cheating in online exams, (2) lack of knowledge in using some applications, (3) restricted time of some applications and (4), and making online exams. The instructors perceive that they need training in utilizing the Internet for EFL teaching. They all demonstrated their openness and eagerness to such kind of training. At the same time, they see presentation software, developing online exams, creating teaching materials, Videoconferencing, and teaching techniques, classroom management, managing data sources, assessment and evaluation, and basic knowledge of using technology as very necessary. This indicates that basic knowledge of using the Internet is not their only primary concern. They feel that they need training in utilizing the Internet for language teaching.

Implications
The results related to the training needs obtained provide a guideline of what the EFL instructors in the study require to know. A right training course should be designed to meet the instructors’
As this study already examined the instructors’ needs, the next step can be creating a trainer course depending on the study's results. Additionally, this study informs leaders of Saudi universities of the instructors’ openness and willingness to training in technology use and specifically the use of the Internet in language pedagogy. Furthermore, some of the concerns raised by the participants of the study should somehow be treated and taken into consideration. Finally, for leaders in English language departments, the study's finding are likely to open up prospects for cross-border cooperative teaching, making the best use of online and human resources.

**Recommendations for further research**

The results of this study indicate that some issues on which further research is needed. There is a need to study Internet skills of EFL instructors and students in a more individual manner so that individualized training plans can be prepared for different groups. In other words, a training needs analysis for students and instructors should be conducted for more precise results and better training conditions. Furthermore, undertaking a “training needs analysis” may show potential gaps in Internet use skills among the instructors and the students. Also, the current study only employed a survey and an interview for data collection. Other data collection techniques of data collection can make triangulation of a study and may, therefore, result in more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Classroom observation or online observation may provide authentic picture of how the teachers employ the Internet in their teaching. Similarly, a journal all through a semester or an academic year presents teachers’ reflections on their own teaching. In addition, a portfolio will show what the achievement of the instructors in a year with regards to the phenomenon under study. Another area that needs further empirical study is how the educational institutions react to the rapid growth of online teaching resources and how they responded to the rapid change to online learning and teaching over a concise period of the tie due to the pandemic conditions. An investigation like this may pave the way for immediate training in emergency ties.

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Developing Medical Learning Materials to Promote Learners’ Creativity: A Corpus-based Case Study

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Abstract
For a long time in Mainland China, there exists a need for authentic supplementary materials and an extensive native speaker environment in courses like English as a Foreign Language and English for Specific Purposes. Yet, how to promote learners’ creativity in the process of developing medical learning materials practice? This study aims to develop certain medical learning materials as an Enriched Corpus-Based English Supplement. Developing those proper medical learning materials for medical learners can help them to develop relevant strategies of corpus-based learning creatively. It had been conducted from December 2016 to November 2019 with four teachers and 180 third-year medical students at Xinxiang Medical University in the Medical English course. Mixed methods were chosen to observe and investigate the use of ECBES among third-year medical students. Both quantitative and qualitative data in the learning process and the outcome had been collected and analyzed. The practice showed that more than 60% of the learners thought they were language learners; their needs were the starting point of enriching creative supplementary materials. Quantitative data of learners’ production after the practice were displayed, which implied that the ECBES practice of four skills was practical and useful. Then it discussed several aspects of qualitative indexes for the learners’ creative production, such as their choosing autonomy opportunities, practice opportunities from the learners’ views. The findings suggested that certain corpus-based materials could be developed to promote learners’ creativity in ESP learning.

Keywords: Corpus-based study, creativity, learners, materials development, medical learning materials, Xinxiang Medical University

Introduction

Nowadays, more and more learning materials have been enriched for learners according to certain corpus-based principles. In some way, corpus linguistics is the path to gather, organize, and analyze language. As one of the most important key terms, concordance is the “collected word-forms” (Flowerdew, 2015; Lamy & Mortensen, 2017; Sinclair, 1991) that existed in their surroundings. There is a consensus of academic and specialized processes in learning or teaching Medical English (ME) such as information summary, perspectives estimation, and conclusions’ drawing is required. Are third-year medical students (in other word, ‘learners’ in this study) in medical college or university need a healthy repertoire of ME skills or just concentrate on significant conflict (the traditional pedagogy of emphasizing medical terminology)? There are few authentic large-scale native speaker contexts in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) school setting in mainland China. Professional and academic expressions are usually challenging for those learners who are beginning to acquire much medical knowledge, as well as ME tasks that require medical terminology, professional usage, and related lexical chunks, which is quite different from an informal conversation. It approved that corpus-based context is one of the most critical factors in understanding the ME curriculum.

This study depicts a perspective of many supplementary materials, and corpus-based products, for example, frequency tokens, concordance (Özbay & Kayaoglu, 2015). It should be deliberated before any English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses are arranged. However, if they do not consider those corpora use skills and additional facts, such prepared courses may lack pedagogical attention to corpus-based materials and data with affluent language items. “Why do we need supplementary materials to use?” This question is the real research gap in materials use, which has vital implications in materials development (Graves, 2019, p. 337). Many studies (Bale, 2013; Bunting, 2013; Chai, Wannaruk, & Lian, 2015; Cheung, 2014; Edwin Ko, 2016; Flowerdew, 2015; Storjohann, 2005; Yang, 2014) have concerned about the investigation of corpus-based pedagogy in Second Language (L2) acquisition and ESP context. However, there are less investigation of EFL and ESP teaching of Corpus-Based Approach (CBA). From pedagogy and Corpus Linguistics (CL) aspects, suitable medical learning materials have gradually become an active study focus. Thus, developing proper medical learning materials in practice can help teachers to develop relevant strategies of corpus-based teaching creatively. It was mainly distinct from the traditional exam-oriented curriculum. The medical learning materials are especially crucial for medical learners to enhance ME meaning, clarification of confusing concepts, and lesson-learning relevance.

This study aims to develop certain medical learning materials as an Enriched Corpus-Based English Supplement (ECBES) comprising a selected unit from a textbook in current use as the contents for third-year medical students in their fifth semester Xinxiang Medical University (XXMU) China. Hence, the research question is: How to promote the learners’ creativity in the process of medical learning materials practice that based on the case at XXMU?

Literature Review

Materials

Krashen thought that materials facilitated “acquisition” rather than “learning” (Krashen, 1981, p. 114). Numan (2004) indicated that six elements such as “content, materials, activities,
goals, students, and social community” should be considered in the process of task design, among which materials are developed for learners to “observe/manipulate” (Nunan, 2004, p. 40). In developing such materials, “grammatical variants” (Conrad, 2004, p. 67) should also be considered for the auxiliary functions.

Due to the development in teaching and by using reference Medical English (ME) materials, learners’ learning difficulties can be solved by using supplementary materials such as “monolingual learners’ dictionaries, grammars or textbooks” (Cock, 2010, p. 129). If the adapted text has been diluted too much, then the concepts and facts in the content would easily be ignored by the educator or the learners. Moreover, it is impractical to expect third-year medical students to grab all detailed information through classroom lectures. Echevarría, Vogt, Short (2010) had stated that texts and supplementary materials should and could be integrated, adapting them with principles of keeping intact content concepts for suitable graded learners. As an ESP subject, Medical English (ME) has many reasons for focusing on medical terminology. For example, medical texts (both the related textbook and ECBES) contain very complicated professional vocabulary.

Enriched Corpus-Based English Supplement (ECBES)

One of the most significant benefits of Enriched Corpus-Based English Supplement (ECBES) is the large-scale, authentic verbal data. Just like Christoph Rühlemann (2008) commented, textual materials traditionally used are so strictly controlled that they would limit the learners’ activities, particularly in hugely populated Medical English (ME) classrooms in China. It would lead to the difficulty of improving the learners’ abilities in real language complexity, focusing on the “understanding of developmental patterns” (Yoo & Shin, 2020, p. 93).

The nature of ECBES development focuses on comprehensible input. Corpus-based “supplementary teaching materials” are the pedagogy-based process of materials development (Coxhead, 2010, p. 466; Kawaguchi, 2006, p. 17). As to the materials development, some researchers (Lin & Lee, 2015) reflected that the teachers compiled their corpus-based supplementary materials for the grammar units scheduled for teaching. To teach the target rules, teachers drew on sample sentences from the British National Corpus (corpus.byu.edu/bnc), which is a free-to-access online database containing 10 million English words collected from the late twentieth century. When developing Enriched Corpus-Based English Supplement (ECBES) for teaching, experienced teachers had focused on comprehensible input, which may have “a sense of what to use and what not to use, what to adapt and where to supplement” (McGrath, 2016, p. 4). In many cases, less adaptation and supplementation would be necessary if the ECBES has been selected more carefully as the comprehensible input. However, there is no such supplementary material that suits everyone at all times.

Medical learners and Medical English (ME) curriculum

There is an apt description of the overburdening curriculum in the medical school: “Middle school is like a lawn sprinkler. College is like a garden hose, while medical school is like a fire hose of information,” says Bennett (Smith-Barrow, 2014, para. 2). He completed medical school at Ohio State University’s College of Medicine. It is the plight of the medical learners in Mainland China too. For the third-year medical school curriculum (XXMU, 2017), it usually begins with the
study of processes at the molecular and cellular levels in the normal human body. Biochemistry, genetics, anatomy, and embryology are taught concurrently for the third-year medical students, building together with the concepts of macromolecular and cellular interactions within tissues. The curriculum comprises interdisciplinary courses in physiology and neuroscience, as well as courses in cell biology and human behavior and psychopathology. Furthermore, Medical English (ME) course has a close relation with clinical linguistics, which focuses on “clinical treatment problems of language disorders” (D. Li & Li, 2020, p.402).

From the feedback, one can find that there are several basic types of ECBES activities which can facilitate the learners’ academic achievements in ME despite the lack of linguistic experience and resources (Leshchenko, Lavrysh, & Halatsyn, 2018).

**Corpus-based learning and Critical Thinking (CT)**

According to Tomlinson’s view of ‘informative base’, the prerequisite for acquisition could be learners are “exposed to a rich, meaningful and comprehensible input of language in use” (Tomlinson, 2011, p. 7); in other words, exposure stimulus is a critical factor for them to learn in an immersion context and promote their creativity in “a meticulous and deep-going way” (Xu, 2004, p. 59) in ESP learning. Learners should maximize their exposure to more native speaker contexts. They could “engaged both affectively and cognitively in the language experience” (Mishan & Timmis, 2015, p. 26). Learners’ corpus-based learning process is the nature of pursuing Data Mining Teaching (DMT) in exploring creative medical learning materials. It can represent one’s teaching cognition. In other words, corpus-driving teaching beliefs, corpus-based material base, and corpus-informed context practices are all useful to promote ESP learners’ creativity (Bunting, 2013). As to the literary gap, despite the constant use of corpus-driven materials in the field of research, few studies have focused on how to develop a corpus-based supplement for non-native English learners and English for Medical Purposes (EMP) courses.

From a view of Critical Thinking (CT), corpus-based learning materials and activities have more than 15 aspects of practical features for the learners’ creativity promotion, such as helping learners to develop confidence, providing opportunities for outcome feedback. (Tomlinson, 2011) It is the way that learners use such supplementary knowledge for more successful language development. It is useful for ESP teachers and learners, reflecting in practicing corporate communication, knowing effective strategies of teaching and learning would improve discursive ability and systematic way of deciphering and deploying language (Rajandran, 2016).

**Methods**

This study had been conducted from December 2016 to November 2019 with four teachers, who had taught for third-year medical students at XXMU in the ME course. The research methodology in this study was a mixed-method, whereby both quantitative and qualitative data were collected.

**Population**

A total of six standard classes (180 third-year medical students) were selected randomly from a group class of ME course at Xinxiang Medical University (XXMU). Meanwhile, four teachers were involved in the corpus-based supplement enrichment and semi-structured interview.
A pilot study was also conducted to enhance the validity and reliability of the questionnaires, observation checklist, and interview guidelines. A panel of experts (materials reviewers) helped to validate the supplement for content validation.

Every big class was divided into eight small classes consisting of about 30 students in the Medical English (ME) course of Xinxiang Medical University (XXMU). Three steps were adapted in the process of selecting the student participants. The first step was to explain the research background of the participant teacher. The second step was to let the learners in the eight small classes to decide if they wanted to participate in this program voluntarily. The third step was to let the teachers choose three small classes according to the student participants’ willingness. Considering the setting of the ME course at XXMU, each small class (a cluster) is heterogeneous internally, while homogeneity exists between the small classes in a big class (Karpusenko, 2015).

**Instruments**

Several instruments have been used for collecting data, such as questionnaire, focus group interviews, pre- and post-test, and so on.

In the concrete process of collecting the Enriched Corpus-Based English Supplement (ECBES) practice data, the instrument used was the semi-structured interview. One-to-one interviews were used to collect details of the teachers’ practice experience and views. Focus group interviews were used to collect the data of learners’ participation experience, opinions, and thoughts. There were several advantages in using the semi-structured interview. They were flexible, providing insights and a degree of understanding of the topical issues in the form of face-to-face, oral, open-ended questions. Uniform or similar items had been put forward in a friendly atmosphere during each interview, ensuring validity and reliability. Meanwhile, the length of the answers to the questions in the interview was appropriately controlled for a convenient transcription. Workshops were extracurricular activities to train the participant teachers and the 180 participant learners to enrich or evaluate the hands-on ECBES.

A WeChat Subscription Account called CBA4ME (Corpus-Based Approach 4 (for) Medical English) also be used as a training and delivery platform to deliver the supplementary materials outside the classroom. In the classroom, the ECBES, including both supplementary materials and activities) had been implemented through additional classes and workshops such as lectures and hands-on activities (Creswell, 2014).

**Findings**

**Learners’ status of language using in practice**

The learners’ status of language using in practice is one of the main factors in the selected unit’s enriching process. The learners’ status of language using were listed in five aspects: Six learners thought they were language learners, which accounted for 42.86% of all the 14 students of the 1st focus group interview. Two learners thought they were language learners now and might be language users in the future when they were more practical, which accounted for 14.20%. Three students thought they were both language learners and users, which accounted for 21.43%. Only one student felt that he was both a language learner and co-worker of the language practice teachers. One student thought she was a language user, learner, and co-worker of the language
practice teachers. There was only one student who thought he was a co-worker of the participant teachers.

![Learners’ Status of Language Using in Practice](image)

**Figure 1.** The learners’ view of their status in the ECBES practice

**Learners’ Needs**

Learners’ needs were the starting point of enriching creative supplementary materials for the selected unit of the textbook in current use used by the third-year medical students in XXMU. Their needs fell into the following 11 aspects based on their feedback:

1) Meeting practical needs in three parts:

   1) Meeting needs of improving ME ability. 1P1 felt unfamiliar but very interested in the ECBES initially. It can meet his needs and improve ME ability through learning corpus-based words and sentences.

   2) Meeting needs of systematically summarizing and applying word cluster. 1P10 thought the ECBES meets her needs much. It reflected in better learning and application languages as the systematically translating and using of word cluster.

   3) Meeting current learning needs of fast searching. 1P11 felt the searching speed ran fast, and many ECBES words meet her current learning needs.

2) Meeting specific needs. 1P3 indicated her particular needs were ME discipline, medicine work such as foreign medical literature reading materials, and her interest and purpose in using the ME in the study and work environment.

3) Meeting current demand. 1P4 felt the current need of the ECBES is ME or language learning, all aspects of which are helpful for ME learning.

4) Meeting word meaning understanding needs. 1P5 thinks the word meaning understanding is the key when she was first accessing ME and the ECBES exactly meets her needs.

5) Facilitating further learning. 1P6 did not know much about the ECBES initially as he had not used it himself, but he was interested and felt it facilitating learning later in the ECBES practice.
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(6) Meeting user-friendly needs. 1P7 indicated the practice of using corpus was exciting and felt good when searched and compared the corpus-based materials, then found corresponding needs such as summarized his associations and references.

(7) Meeting more affluent ECBES needs. 1P8 thought the ECBES was more affluent and could meet her needs. She was more interested in it and wished to learn ME better.

(8) Meeting attractive and comfortable needs. 1P9 was interested in using the ECBES and worked harder to explore after class. She indicated the all-English ECBES materials are slightly more difficult for learners.

(9) Satisfying the needs of ME and related English learning. It reflected in the professional explanations and answers. 1P12 felt the ECBES satisfied her ME and connected English learning because of the more professional explanations and answers than search engines such as Baidu.

(10) Providing large vocabulary. But it was not suitable for beginners. 1P13 indicated the ECBES provided a large productive vocabulary but not ideal for beginners as the all-English.

(11) Satisfying deepening understanding needs. 1P14 thought the ECBES could satisfy his needs better than the dictionary but should get with it. He was interested in it and needed to deepen his understanding of the ECBES.

The Improvement and Creativity in Learners’ Production after the Implementation

The first part of the quantitative data of the improvement in learners’ production focused on the participant learners’ feedback based on the questionnaire. From the collected data, the reliability statistics results, one-sample statistics scores, and one-sample test results are analyzed. The learners’ opinions about the 21 closed questions and two open-ended questions in the questionnaire are explicit. The mean scores of their feedback about the 21 closed questions were from 3.29 to 3.98. All of the items had a significant difference as the $p < .05$.

The following two tables (from Table 1 to Table 2) reflected the T-test group statistics scores and independent samples test results for the learners’ pre- and post-test in the ECBES practice, showing the improvement in their production after the ECBES implementation. As a list in the tables, the treatments of the experimental and control groups were different. The performance of the experimental group is reflected in the test scores of each week.

| Table 1. T-Test Group statistics scores of the learners’ Pre- and Post-Test in the ECBES Practice |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Group                                         | Mean           | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
| Pre-test One                                   | Experimental Group | 28.3111        | 11.49855        | 1.21205 |
|                                               | Control Group   | 24.4889        | 10.32205        | 1.08804 |
| Post-test One                                  | Experimental Group | 39.0222        | 12.72084        | 1.34089 |
|                                               | Control Group   | 34.0000        | 14.11669        | 1.48803 |
| Pre-test Two                                   | Experimental Group | 39.8000        | 10.51505        | 1.10838 |
|                                               | Control Group   | 39.5222        | 11.04966        | 1.16474 |
| Post-test Two                                  | Experimental Group | 47.2333        | 11.46666        | 1.20869 |
|                                               | Control Group   | 42.8444        | 12.45027        | 1.31237 |
| Pre-test Three                                 | Experimental Group | 6.9333         | 3.54996         | .37420  |
|                                               | Control Group   | 6.6667         | 3.75664         | .39598  |
| Post-test Three                                | Experimental Group | 8.8000         | 3.25404         | .34301  |

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From the mean scores of Pre- and Post-tests in Table 1, the improvement of the experimental group’s mean in the 1st stage is 39.0222 – 28.3111 = 10.7111, while the control group is 9.5111; the progress of the experimental group’s mean in the 2nd stage is 7.4333, while the control group is 3.3222; the advancement of the experimental group’s mean in the 3rd stage is 1.8667; while the control group is 1.0000. There was a general advancement after the ECBES implementation while the experimental group was more outstanding. It shows a useful practice of developing corpus-based medical learning materials.

The results of Pre-test One and Post-test One (This part focus on the content of ‘medical terminology’) had the value of p < 0.05 (Pre-test One was p.020, and Post-test One was p.013), which indicates that both of them had significant differences. There was an improvement (p.020 – p.013 = p.007) in the ECBES medical terminology learning after the additional class for the first week. As to the second and third test, both of the Post-test Two and Post-test Three had significant differences (p < 0.05, Post-test Two was p.015, and post-test 3 was p.034), while the Pre-test Two (This part focus on the contents of ME reading and speaking skills) and Pre-test Three (This part focus on the contents of ME listening and writing skills) did not have significant differences (p > 0.05, Pre-test Two was p.863, Pre-test Three was p.625), which implied that to some extent the ECBES practice of four skills was practical and useful.

Learners’ Choosing Autonomy Opportunities

As to the learners’ views of choosing autonomy opportunities, at least 57% of student interviewees thought they had autonomy opportunities to choose in the ECBES practice. It was useful for their creativity promotion in the process of developing corpus-based medical learning materials. However, some of them thought there was less chance for them to choose, which might be caused by the all-English materials or less teaching time.
(1) Most of the learners thought they had opportunities to choose suitable supplementary materials. The arranged time was convenient and more comfortable to learn ME. 3P2 thought as to the ‘convenient time’, it was agreed by everyone, which should arrange when everyone was convenient. It might be less to set the three lectures. As to the ‘learning style’, she was quite fond of Mr. Yong’s class style in ME class, who articulated the word’s etymology in medical terminology, associated with other words. She felt Mr. Yong’s method was similar to how she watches American TV series to learn English, which was easier to learn medical English. It is reflected in many aspects, such as Ms. Liu’s gentle teaching style, abundant retrieved cases, and most learners’ language competence enhancement. 3P4 felt good of ‘convenient time’, the arrangement was right. She indicated that the ECBES had an improving room. 3P4 thought Ms. Liu’s teaching style was gentle. It was manifested in the abundant retrieved cases, such as gastric ulcer and pictures, and the well-designed objectives that complement most learners’ level. As for the ‘textual participation’ and ‘convenient time’, she felt the arrangement was right but still had plenty of room for improvement. 3P2 preferred different teachers’ different lecture styles. She was very interested in Mr. Yong’s divergent or CT word teaching manner but felt a little unfit if they were relatively weak in learning. She suggested adding more teaching time or expanding the ECBES additional classes to a formal course.

Meanwhile, their choosing autonomy is reflected in many aspects, such as suitable bilingual teaching, vivid teaching styles, convenient time, appropriate bilingualism, proper language level, selectable teachers’ styles, and efficient and ideological learning. 3P6 thought the teachers had used bilingual teaching, which was suitable for their language level. Meanwhile, she felt the teachers’ teaching styles were vivid; time was convenient. But she wondered the meaning of ‘textual participation’. 3P7 thought the time was suitable for everyone. The lectures were chosen the appropriate language level of bilingualism. She indicated their participation reflected in the use of medical terminology that teachers to query in the relevant online corpus and learn from it. 3P8 thought the time was convenient to use because the teacher had repeatedly confirmed with them in class. 3P9 thought the teachers had given many opportunities in the choosing language level, suitable time, related articles, and tests of learning contents delivered in and out of class. 3P11 thought the time was appropriate, the language level was suitable, and teachers’ styles were different and selectable. She illustrated Mr. Zhang’s pros and cons examples as the preferred idealistic learning, which was more efficient for her.

(2) It was difficult in all-English materials. There were some reasons as pure text materials, all-English materials. As for the learning style, 3P8 preferred the class learning style with pictures as PPT (the image and its accompanying essay are both excellent) such as audio, video but didn’t like the PPT materials of pure text, which could not attract her attention. As for the language level of the ECBES, it was better for teachers to choose bilingual teaching in class but could not understand the relevant articles delivered by the CBA4ME. 3P9 felt a little hard to read all-English articles and earlier to take the additional courses for the ECBES practice because of their passive learning in the classroom.
Learners’ practice opportunities

The learners need opportunities to use the ME language to “try to achieve communicative purposes” (Tomlinson, 2011, p. 7) in their medical or academic life. So, the researcher observed the learners’ practice opportunities in the ECBES activities; most of the learners thought that the four teachers had given enough opportunities to allow them to choose the appropriate language level, favorite learning style, text participation, everyone’s convenient time. They had expressed their opinions. But some of them wondered about ‘textual participation’. ‘Text participation’ meant that in the process of the ECBES, had learners participated in to enrich these materials? The teacher had given them some of the selected materials. The learners were also involved in the enrichment process, which could promote their creativity of developing proper supplementary materials.

(1) There were many practice opportunities. It reflected in the disadvantages of other common APPs and the corpus’s benefit, not require mastering and learning all examples, thoroughly analyzing calls for higher analysis abilities. 2P11 thought there were many opportunities to practice the ECBES. For example, the meanings of new medical terms searched by YoDao or other APPs has some disadvantages, such as polysemy, the connection between the word meaning and its use in a specific context is not very clear. Based on the fact of known the word meaning, learners can retrieve proper supplementary materials in the corpus and verify the word meaning. Many examples in the corpus can provide them with a context for its full use. These examples or paragraphs can give them sufficient context and give them a better understanding of what it means. Their knowledge is more profound. They have a firmer grasp of the corpus-based medical learning materials. Meanwhile, she indicated that as the ECBES was a supplementary material, it did not require them to master and learn from all of these examples. Thoroughly analyzing them calls for higher abilities of analysis and summary judgment, which makes them good at understanding the culture of native speakers.

(2) There were more opportunities in the future. 2P13 thought the practice of developing their own corpus-based medical learning materials was beneficial for their academic exchanges, professional paper writing. It needs learners to take the initiative to learn it.

(3) It promoted active learning. It is reflected in learning desires. Meanwhile, the focus was the critical factor. 2P7 appreciated 2P5’s opinion. She indicated that the ECBES promoted active learning, and learners’ learning desires and stress were the keys to add opportunities for the ECBES practice.

(Original interview text)
I think what 2P5 of Class Six said is very good. The main thing in the ECBES practice is promoting active learning. If you want to learn more and know more, there are many opportunities. But if you don’t focus on it, there will be not many chances.

(4) It was practical and conducive. The process of developing materials was consistent with current Chinese learners’ English learning habits. The practice was in line with the British learning environment. 2P8 was keen on using phone APPs. She indicated that the ECBES was consistent with current Chinese learners’ English learning habits, and the British learning environment. It
was more practical for preparing CET now and more conducive to their Postgraduate Entrance Examination (PEE), ME learning, and research in the long-term.

Discussion
When we focus on the improvement and creativity in learners’ production after the implementation in this study, it is concerned of whether there were improvement and creativity in participant learners’ output after implementing the ECBES for the selected unit. Quantitative data of the improvement in learners’ output after the implementation are detailed displayed. Several aspects of qualitative indexes were shown for learners’ creative output as their choosing autonomy opportunities, practice opportunities from learners’ views.

From the Table 1 and Table 2, there were substantial differences in all of the three stages tests, which indicate significant differences after the practice of the ECBES. The results attest to the effectiveness and usefulness of the ECBES as the creative medical materials. Through the ECBES activities and tasks, the learners’ skills and creativity of using Medical English (ME) had improved. Meanwhile, their abilities of thinking, observation, retrieval, trade-offs, arrangement, the collaboration had improved their habit of thought. It had trained in such a way that their abilities of evaluation and judgments had been enhanced.

In the part of learners’ practice opportunities, some learners had mentioned ‘language intuition’, which could be proved or disproved by the corpus-based data or evidence. For example, ‘I say’ may not mean the same thing in discourse and may not be the better choice in conversation than ‘I says’. All of the feedback above had reflected the learners’ creativity in developing corpus-based medical learning materials in the ME course teaching and learning, which had enhanced their creativity in developing proper supplementary materials of the ME course.

Conclusion
In this study, we focus on promoting the learners’ creativity in the process of medical learning materials practice. It is a corpus-based case at XXMU, which aims to understand the learners’ feedback or reflection on the ECBES after initial contact and understanding. The learners’ feedback focused on whether the ECBES as the supplementary medical learning materials allow learners to develop their creativity by developing the ECBES based on local conditions. The researcher had explained to them the local situation here. Some of the learners had already asked this question. The local case means that when they were going to use the ECBES in class today, they might have some common problems. The common problem might be that they did not know a word. In terms of this question, they would use some online corpora, such as the COCA. After the inquiry, the query results are based on their choice; for example, they can choose some examples to discuss together. After studying and discussing, certain corpus-based medical learning materials can be developed to promote those learners’ creativity in ESP learning. They can develop it according to this situation and use it, which helps encourage their creativity in developing suitable learning materials.

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Higher Education Languages of Instruction in Morocco and their impact on the Receptive Vocabulary Size of Moroccan EFL Master Students

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Abstract
Having a clear vocabulary profile of Moroccan master students might reveal where these participants stand compared to other countries. Therefore, the study aims to investigate the effect of languages of instruction in Morocco (e.g., Arabic vs. French) on the receptive vocabulary size of EFL Moroccan master students (e.g., departments of letters, science, and law). To this end, Meara’s (2010) Yes/No test was used as an instrument to measure the overall vocabulary size of these participants. A total of 325 EFL master students took the aforementioned test. The main research question is: Does the medium of instruction have any effects on the receptive vocabulary size of these students? Descriptive statistics were employed to calculate the overall receptive vocabulary size of test-takers. It was found that Moroccan EFL master students have a total of (M= 2293) lemmas. An independent samples t-test was run to check for any statistical significance. The t-test statistic reveals that the significance level is less than the p-value (t= -4.068, p< .05, df= 323). Thus, it was concluded that there was a statistically significant difference between the French group and the Arabic group. The results of this study confirm that students who were instructed in French (M= 2417, sd= 903, N=185) outperformed the other students who were taught in Arabic (M= 2058, sd= 903, N= 140). In the current study, among various suggestions, it is proposed that the volume of 30 hours in the English module is not sufficient and should be complemented with vocabulary-based activities.

Keywords: EFL Master Students, higher education instruction in Morocco, receptive vocabulary size, the medium of instruction and vocabulary size, vocabulary breadth studies

Introduction

The status of studying vocabulary as a subject of language teaching and learning has been sidelined for a very long time. Studies on vocabulary did not receive much attention in the past neither in books that relate to curriculum design nor in books that relate to theories of language teaching (O’dell, 1997). This lack of attention probably stemmed from the influence and emphasis on structural and accuracy-based approaches to linguistics on the field of teaching and learning. However, with the recognition of communicative language teaching as an effective paradigm in teaching, vocabulary slightly gained more firm grounds in that field (Brown, 1994). Studies on vocabulary size have been conducted to estimate how many lexical items learners know.

Vocabulary breadth studies do not only aim to provide rough estimates of the total number of lexical items that learners know, either receptively or productively, they also serve to contrast them against pre-established thresholds that are needed for language skills. A case in point is reading. In order to be able to read with a fair degree of comprehension, learners need to meet the threshold of the most frequent 3000-word families in English (Laufer, 1998). As a matter of fact, it is only natural to assume that learners who have big vocabularies are much more proficient in all the four skills than those who have smaller vocabularies (Meara, 1996). A great deal of vocabulary research involves counting lexical items to discover how many vocabulary items are learned at the end of a program, or how many items a learner needs to be able to speak or read (Schmitt, 2010).

For the sake of clarity, research in vocabulary size relies on different counting units. Before delving into how many lexical items are needed, it would be best to decide on the best and suitable counting measure. In the literature, researchers use many counting units such as tokens, types, word families, and lemmas. For practical purposes, lemmas and word families are the basic counting units that are easy to interpret (Schmitt, 2010). On the one hand, Milton (2009) defines lemma as a unit of measurement that includes a headword and its frequent inflections. That is, a lemma does not involve changing the part of speech of the headword. On the other hand, unlike lemma, a word family goes beyond using the base form and its frequent inflections; it involves derivation as well. Simply put, a word family is a lemma+ derivation (Bauer & Nation, 1993). It is worth noting that lemma is the unit of measurement that was adopted in the current research.

The primary purpose of the study is to investigate the overall receptive vocabulary size of Moroccan EFL master students. Furthermore, the study also aims to examine the effect of the languages of instruction (Arabic vs. French) on the students’ overall receptive vocabulary size. It is worth mentioning that in the Moroccan context, after learners pursue their higher studies, they either study in Arabic or in French, in case they do not choose the English department.

The findings of this research provide stakeholders and decision-makers with insights about the current level of English at the tertiary level (i.e., in departments other than the English major). Moreover, the results may also indicate that introducing an English module at the master’s level is not sufficient. That is, more time and attention need to be paid to learning English. Besides that, the findings might also show that studying course content in French might prove beneficial for learners because there is some positive transfer between English and French words.
The study involved 325 participants from different Moroccan universities (e.g., Mohammedia, Casablanca, Rabat, and Fes) who studied English for 30 hours in the whole program. Unfortunately, a one-shot design was followed to collect data from the informants. In other words, the participants took Meara’s (2010) Yes/No test just once, without taking a pre-test prior to instruction and a post-test after instruction.

This study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the receptive vocabulary size of Moroccan EFL master students?
2. Does the medium of instruction have any effects on the receptive vocabulary size of Moroccan master students?

By dealing with the aforementioned research questions, this study will either accept or reject the following hypothesis:

1. H0: There is no effect of the language of instruction on Moroccan EFL master students.

Literature Review

Sampling vocabulary items in tests

Traditionally, in vocabulary breadth studies, researchers had the habit of choosing very large dictionaries as a source of vocabulary items to include in their tests. The words that they chose have been selected by utilizing what is referred to in the literature as: spaced sampling procedures. That is to say, researchers worked through a dictionary from a randomly assigned point, and they chose lexical items at a specified interval, say, the first word on every fifth page of that dictionary (Goulden, Nation, & Read, 1990). Moreover, Lorge and Chall (1963) demonstrated how spaced sampling methods work in estimating the vocabulary size of a person or a group of people. They stated that vocabulary size is “estimated by multiplying the number of sample words known by the ratio that the sample of words bears to the total number of words in the dictionary.” (Lorge & Chall, 1963, p.147). Plainly put, in a dictionary of 20,000 words from which a sample of 100 words is selected, if a person knows 20 vocabulary items from the 100 sampled ones, then he/she knows about (10* 20,000/100), which equals 2000 words.

As opposed to the dictionary method of sampling, there is a different paradigm, which is frequency-based. In this paradigm, researchers rely on frequency lists to estimate a person’s vocabulary size. One of the most influential lists is: The teachers word book of 30,000 words (Thorndike & Lorge, 1944). It is worth noting that these lists were limited in number of words, which made them limited and not very accurate. Yet nowadays, researchers do not have to use those frequency lists, but rather they resort to more accurate frequency corpora (e.g., BNC, COCA…etc.). These corpora are made up of 400+ million words that belong to different jargons (e.g., general English, technical, academic…etc.). Corpora include a very large number of words that can be classified in terms of the highest-frequency words as well as the lowest-frequency words. Moreover, these corpora are used as input in many vocabulary breadth tests. For instance, the vocabulary items that are included in the Vocabulary Size Test (Nation & Belgar, 2007) come from the British National Corpus. To this end, one of the advantages of sampling from corpora is that they contribute to language acquisition in the sense that they provide researchers with reliable counts of the most frequent items that could be easily acquired by learners. This goes in accordance with the pedagogical claim that suggests that teachers need to teach the first 2,000 words explicitly.
and, to some extent, disregard the low-frequency items (Nation, 1990). Therefore, corpora bridge the gap between the highest-frequency words and the amount of vocabulary that is required for language use (Schmitt, 2010).

**The components of knowing a word**

Testing knowledge of words is not as simple as it may seem. There are many variables that are involved in knowing a word. Nation (2001) designed a list of the different aspects of word knowledge. These are summarized in Table one:

Table 1. *Nation’s list of word knowledge*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word parts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Form &amp; Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concepts &amp; referents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Grammatical functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collocations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constraints on use</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| R: What does the word sound like? |
| P: How is the word pronounced? |
| R: What does the word look like? |
| P: How is the word written and spelled? |
| R: What parts are recognizable in this word? |
| P: What word parts are needed to express this meaning? |
| R: What meaning does this word form signal? |
| P: What word form can be used to express this meaning? |
| R: What is included in the concept? |
| P: What items can the concept refer to? |
| R: What other words does this make us think of? |
| P: What other words could we use instead of this one? |
| R: In what patterns does the word occur? |
| P: In what patterns must we use this word? |
| R: What words or types of words occur with this one? |
| P: What words or types of words must we use with this one? |
| R: Where, when, and how often would we expect to meet this word? |
| P: Where, when, and how often can we use this word? |

In column 2, R= Receptive knowledge, P= productive knowledge. (Nation, 2001, p.40)

Table one divides word knowledge into three main components that involve form, meaning, and use. The first component deals with the issue of oral language that requires learners to know what a word sounds like phonologically. As far as the written mode is concerned, in order for learners to claim that they know a word receptively, they should know how a word is spelled (recognizing the target element). Another advanced aspect of knowledge has to do with word parts; that is, a learner has to be able to differentiate between the different parts of a word (suffixes and prefixes). For example, Nation (2001) gives the example of ‘underdeveloped’ as being composed of word
parts like under+/develop/+ed. With that being said, learners are required to know these parts if they are to claim that they know the meaning of the word ‘underdeveloped’. The second component of meaning tackles the issue of form and meaning correspondence. This simply means that learners are expected to know what a word means in the context in which it occurs. Moreover, concepts and referents refer to learners’ ability to know the concept behind the word, which will allow for understanding the word. The last element in the second component is more or less advanced in the sense that making associations with words that relate to a concept is somewhat challenging. For example, part of knowing the word door is making an association with the concept of a knob. The last component in the Table is use. This aspect of knowledge requires learners to know about the grammatical function of a word; this means that learners are supposed to know that a word has been used correctly in the sentence in which it has been employed. Furthermore, collocations are also part of what learners need to know about words. That is, learners are supposed to know what words go together with others. The last element in the list is intricate in the sense that learners are expected to know constraints on use of certain words. For example, part of fully knowing a word is being able to judge that a word is not used pejoratively in context. In this brief account of Nation’s (2001) list, the author only focused on the R (receptive) part since the aim of the current study is to investigate receptive knowledge.

This indicates that it is very challenging to capture all the aspects of word knowledge by means of a single test, be it a receptive test or a productive one. Moreover, knowing a word does not only involve knowing the written and spoken aspects of the word but also knowledge of affixation, knowledge of the way extra parts can be added…etc. In addition to this, even knowledge of meaning is not that straightforward. That is, Knowing the core meaning of a word is not enough; what is also needed is knowing foreign counterparts, concepts, and associations that the word carries with it (Milton & Treffers-Daller, 2013).

The receptive vocabulary size of non-native speakers
To begin with, Milton and Meara (1998) estimated the receptive vocabulary size of 197 learners of foreign languages, including English, Greek, and German learners. The aim of the study was to primarily compare the vocabulary sizes of these participants as a response to one of the commonly held stereotypes about the English as bad learners of foreign languages (as the authors claimed about the English learners). The researchers used a test which is similar to Meara and Jones’ 1989 vocabulary size test. The name of the test that they used is the LLEX lingua vocabulary test. This test was developed by Meara. The results revealed that the young German learners of English had a vocabulary size of 1680 lemmas, and the Greek learners had a total of 1200 lemmas. Before starting to interpret the results and making hasty claims, one had better shed light on a very important piece of information that might have an effect on these two vocabulary sizes. It is true that all participants indeed have the same age (14-15 years), but there was some difference in the amount of formal instruction they had. To illustrate, the German foreign language learners of English had about 400 hours of instruction in English distributed as follows: four classes per week (45 minutes) for four years. As for the Greek informants, they received approximately 600 hours in sum. This volume of hours was distributed as: two hours a week for four years, and they also benefited from private classes so as to prepare them for the Cambridge First Certificate Exam. Thus, one can safely conclude that the amount of formal instruction had an effect on the sizes of
the Greek and German foreign learners of English. Nonetheless, the effect was more or less slim because the Greek students had two extra years of instruction, but their vocabulary sizes did not differ noticeably.

Furthermore, Nurweni and Read’s (1999) study on Indonesian first-year university students revealed that, on average, these participants had a small vocabulary size. Their overall receptive vocabulary size did not exceed the 2000-word range. The sample of this study was somewhat large; it included 324 students that were randomly selected from a sample of 1224 university students. The receptive vocabulary size that these informants had was 1226 words. This result revealed that Indonesian students were not able to read texts with that amount of words. It is worth noting that the primary aim of the study was to investigate if the participants’ vocabulary size will enable them to read English materials at the university. That is why the authors, in their literature review, mentioned many studies that set thresholds for reading comprehension. For example, Nation (1990) stated that university students must have a vocabulary size of about 3000 words to be able to read university materials in English. Besides, Laufer (1992) also determined a threshold of 5000 words that was higher than the 3000 that the previous researcher mentioned. Simply put, the Indonesian students’ level was not very satisfactory for the authors because they did not even reach the bare minimum that is needed in most of the references. Therefore, the authors invited other researchers to take the initiative and support or reject the claim that the students’ level was insufficient.

In the same vein, Laufer (1998) investigated the vocabulary size of Israeli students and the gains they ended up with after one year of tuition. This study reported that these high school students ended up with an overall size of 1900-word families after six years of learning English. What is surprising was the fact that Laufer reported that after one year of instruction, these students’ receptive vocabulary size increased by 1600-word families. This indicated that the gains could have been very beneficial if the students had received a large amount of instruction in the first year. But she also reported that this gain kept getting smaller after the first year of instruction. This sets the ground for further research, as the author suggested.

Tang (2007) conducted another pertinent study of the receptive vocabulary size of non-native speakers of English. Tang, in an exploratory study, tried to measure the overall receptive vocabulary size of Chinese primary school students by using the VLT test (Nation, 1990) and the L-Lex (Meara, Milton, & Lorenzo-Dus, 2001). The participants included two groups, primary school group and secondary school group who differ in the years of instruction. The results pointed out that for the primary school students, the informants only achieved 18.49% of the essential 5000 words that are needed. As regards the second group, they managed to get 57.83% of the basic 5000 words. In other words, the primary school students had a receptive vocabulary size of 925 words; whereas, the secondary school students had a receptive vocabulary size of 2891 words. It is clear that the second group outperformed the group of primary school students. This was primarily due to the years of tuition. It is notable that these results were empirically supported by a One-way ANOVA that was conducted by the author to investigate the effect of years of instruction on vocabulary size. The outcome of the One-way ANOVA positively confirmed some statistical significance (F= 66.572, p <.001). That is, the years of instruction had an impact on students’ receptive vocabulary size by increasing it.
Receptive vocabulary size and coverage

Staehr (2008) investigated the correlation that is thought to exist among reading, listening, and writing. He found that vocabulary size can be a determinant predictor of the skills mentioned above. To be more specific, there was a robust correlation between vocabulary size and reading ($r = .83$) at an alpha level of ($p< .01$). Besides that, Adolphs and Scmitt (2003) reported that there was a correlation between vocabulary size and listening. Their conclusion was that 6000-word families were needed in order to cope with listening to authentic spoken discourse. Schmitt (2008) also confirmed that there was a relationship between vocabulary size and coverage, but he proposed daunting figures that range from 8000-word families to 9000-word families. Plainly put, if one is to compare the figures of Schmitt and those of Staehr, the differences become evident. Staehr (2008) proposed 2000-word families as a threshold for coverage in listening, writing, and reading.

In summary, based on the studies tackled in the literature review, it is evident that there is a niche in relation to the medium of instruction. In other words, there are not many studies that deal with the medium of instruction and its effect on the receptive vocabulary size of learners. Nevertheless, Belhiah and Abdelatif (2016) reported that Ph.D students, who are taught in French, have very positive attitudes towards English as the medium of instruction. That is why they might have bigger vocabulary sizes. Therefore, these positive attitudes might have an effect on the learners’ vocabulary breadth. The present study intended to explore the effects of the language of instruction in universities on the overall receptive vocabulary size of participants. This is mainly in the context of Moroccan universities where students are taught in (Arabic or French). It is worth noting that there are other languages of instruction in different departments (Italian, Spanish, Russian…etc), but the researcher limited the scope to French and Arabic.

Methodology

Research design

The current study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the research questions and hypotheses. By using this design, the data analysis will mainly be carried out by means of inferential and descriptive statistics. This design will help in finding out how the independent variable of the study interacts with the dependent variable. To be more precise, the research design that was adopted in the current paper is the Ex post facto— after the fact design. This design starts investigation after the fact has occurred without interference from the researcher (Kerlinger & Rint, 1986).

Participants

The number of participants in this paper is 325 EFL master students who come from 17 departments. These departments could be clustered into two groups. The first group has French as the primary medium of instruction, and the second group has Modern Standard Arabic as the primary medium of instruction. These students studied English as a complementary module for roughly 30 hours, as indicated by the students and their professors.
Sampling

A non-probability sampling method was used to collect data due to the difficulty of finding master programmes that study English as a foreign language. To be more specific, a convenience sampling method- also known as availability sampling- was used in this procedure. It is a type of sampling that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in the study. This sampling, in this study, targeted participants with certain predefined criteria (i.e., Master students who study English as a foreign language). Throughout the procedure, the participants’ selection involved the Master programs’ coordinators connecting the researcher with other coordinators to arrange for a time to distribute the receptive vocabulary test. The 17 groups who took part in the study were all from intact groups.

The instrument

This paper employed one of the standard tests of receptive vocabulary knowledge that could be used with beginners. This test goes by more than one name. Some researchers call it Meara’s checklist test (2010), while others refer to it as the YES/No test. It is highly appreciated because of its simplicity in the sense that testees only have to tick the words they know. Moreover, it measures a large number of items in a short period of time (Beeckmans, Eyckmans, Jansens, Dufranne & van de Velde, 2001).

It is worth noting that the Yes/No test has five levels. Each level represents the 1000 most frequent words in real life. Basically, the checklist test is based on two different source lists. The first two levels come from Meara (1992a), and the third, fourth, and fifth levels come from Hindmarsh (1980). In each level there are 40 real words and 20 nonsense words that are morphophonologically similar to real English words.

Findings

In order to get the exact score of a participant, one needs to subtract the number of hits (real words) from the number of false alarms (nonwords ticked) and then multiply this score by 25. This is done because each level in the test is composed of the 1000 frequent words in its corresponding band. The five levels of the test sample 40 real words from each band, and there are also 20 nonwords at each level. In simple terms, if we divide 1000 by 40, we get 25— that is why we multiply by this number. Thus, when we multiply the (hits- false alarms) by 25, we get the final score of the participants. To illustrate, if a test-taker has a true score of 30, we multiply it by 25 to get the final score of that band (e.g., 30*25= 750). Thus, we can safely conclude that this participant knows around 750 lemmas in that band. The final step is to add the scores of all 5 levels to get the final score of the receptive vocabulary size of the test-taker (i.e. Level 1: 750+ Level 2: 500+ Level 3: 600+ Level 4: 250+ Level 5: 200= 2070) as the final score of the receptive vocabulary size.

Research question one

To address the first research question that is related to the overall receptive vocabulary size, the checklist test was administered to all the participants and scored by means of SPSS. The descriptive statistics of the population gave us a clear idea about the mean of all the test-takers clustered together. The results of the descriptive statistics of the participants are shown in Table two.
Table 2. The overall receptive vocabulary size of EFL MA Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>325</td>
<td>2293.6154</td>
<td>2275.0000</td>
<td>929.67807</td>
<td>375.00</td>
<td>4650.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results reveal that the overall receptive vocabulary size of EFL Master Students is (M = 2293 lemmas), as can be observed from Table two. It appears that there is a great deal of dispersion in the participants’ results. This is indicated by the high value of the standard deviation (929). Moreover, the variability of test scores is also evident when one examines minimum and maximum test scores. Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of scores do not cluster around the mean.

Research question two

Descriptive statistics

As regards the medium of instruction as an independent variable, the first group was taught in Arabic, and the second group was taught in French. The descriptive statistics of this variable that has two levels (French group and Arabic group) are shown in Table three.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for the medium of instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages of instruction</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>2058.035</td>
<td>2025.000</td>
<td>903.755</td>
<td>375.00</td>
<td>4175.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>2471.891</td>
<td>2550.000</td>
<td>911.438</td>
<td>500.00</td>
<td>4650.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>2293.615</td>
<td>2275.000</td>
<td>929.67807</td>
<td>375.00</td>
<td>4650.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first group that was taught with Arabic has a mean score of (M = 2058 lemmas), and the second group has a mean of (M = 2471 lemmas). It appears that the language of instruction plays an essential role in increasing receptive vocabulary size. This is manifested by the fact that these numbers show that the French group outperformed the Arabic group by a total of 413 lemmas. This difference is expected since the students from the departments that rely on French (or any Indo-European language) are more likely to encounter cognates that may help them in answering the test (Meara, 2010). Thus, the group that studies in French may have the upper hand if they are compared to speakers of other languages, especially Arabic.

As for standard deviations, the data seems dispersed since the standard deviation of the Arabic group is (SD = 903.75), and the standard deviation of the French group is (SD = 911.43). This dispersion is caused by the variability in test scores regarding the medium of instruction. This heterogeneity of test scores has an impact on the high values of standard deviations for the two groups (SD = 903, SD = 911). According to conventional wisdom, when the value of standard deviation is large, the distribution seems more scattered and not clustered around the mean.

Inferential statistics

To see whether the difference between the means of the two groups is significant, an independent-samples t-test was run to check for any statistical significance. Table four shows the output of the SPSS package regarding the test statistic and Levene’s equality of variances.
Table 4. Independent-samples t-test for the difference in receptive vocabulary size between the Arabic and French groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Levene’s test for equality of variances</th>
<th>t-test for Equality of Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that the F statistics for Levene’s test is greater than the p-value (p> .05). Therefore, our groups’ variances can be treated as equal. Moreover, for the results of the test (French group: M= 2417, sd= 903, N=185; Arabic group: M= 2058, sd= 903, N= 140), the 95% confidence interval for the difference in means is -613.99, -213.72. The t-test statistic points out that the significance level is less than the p-value (t= -4.068, p< .05, df= 323). Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the null hypothesis that states that there is no difference between the two groups’ mean scores is rejected.

Discussion

Concerning the first research question on the overall receptive vocabulary size, the results show that Moroccan Master students have an overall of 2293 lemmas. In comparison with previous, these results indicate that our participants performed just slightly better than other non-native speakers of English. This is because it is often reported that non-native speakers of English have a receptive vocabulary size that does not exceed 2000 words (Laufer, 1998; Milton & Meara, 1998; Nurweni & Read, 1999). Moreover, since the EFL M.A Students exceeded the 2000 lemmas’ ceiling, this would enable them to communicate without having a problem conveying basic ideas. This conclusion goes hand in hand with what Meara (2010) states in his description of the first and second vocabulary levels; he states that if test-takers are familiar with the most frequent 2000 words they will be able to understand and communicate basic ideas.

However, if one is to consider coverage, then it would be possible to claim that the overall receptive vocabulary size of the participants does not allow them to perform well in relation to the four skills. In other words, for reading, it appears that the 2293 lemmas will not enable the subjects to read academic texts because it is less than the threshold that is set by researchers (Laufer, 1992; Nation, 2006; Schmitt, 2008). Nevertheless, the participants’ performance seems to go hand in
hand with the threshold that was set by (Staehr, 2008) for reading. Therefore, it is probable to conclude that the participants might be able to read some texts which are not academic. Regarding writing, the overall receptive vocabulary size of our participants will enable them to write adequately (Staehr, 2008). In addition to this, for the ability to listen, research confirms that the respondents’ score will not allow them to listen and understand adequately (Adolphs & Schmitt, 2003; Nation, 2006). Moreover, when it comes to speaking, it appears that the participants’ receptive vocabulary size would enable them to speak and communicate to a fair extent (Meara, 2010; Milton, 2009).

As regards the second research question, Meara (2010) claims that the test-takers who are native speakers of Indo-European languages, in our case French, are believed to outperform the other test-takers who are not native speakers of Indo-European languages. This claim stems from the fact that the Yes/No test contains many cognates that may facilitate the participants’ recognition of the words. Moreover, in the Moroccan context, the participants who major in French in particular or study by means of French are more proficient in English than those who study in Arabic. There is not any single study that confirms this speculation, but as the test results indicate, the French participants outperformed the other participants by an overall of 413 lemmas.

Furthermore, the participants who use French as the medium of instruction believe that English is the world’s lingua franca of science, which is why they seek to develop their English skills. This claim has been explored by Belhiah and Abdelatif (2016) who reported that Ph.D students who use French as the sole medium of instruction have very strong positive attitudes towards English as the language of instruction. This might relate in some way to the results concluded in this part of the study. Now, one can safely conclude that the medium of instruction does have an effect on the overall receptive vocabulary size of EFL Master Students.

**Conclusion**

Vocabulary breadth studies involve counting the number of lexical items that people know, either receptively or productively. Nonetheless, very little research has been conducted to investigate the effect of language of instruction on receptive vocabulary breadth. The current study came up with some suggestions for the betterment of learning English vocabulary in the Moroccan context. Moreover, the present study also attempted to provide some rough estimates about the overall receptive vocabulary size of Moroccan EFL master students of the letters, science, and law departments.

The present study aimed to explore the overall receptive vocabulary size of Moroccan EFL Master students. The results showed that the participants scored slightly better than other non-native speakers around the world. Moreover, the findings also demonstrate that the participants can deal with basic communicative skills and reading non-academic texts.

In addition to this, the study also aimed to explore the effects of languages of instruction on vocabulary breadth. The results indicated that the group that was instructed in French outperformed the other group that was taught in Arabic. This claim was confirmed by means of inferential statistics (independent-samples t-test).
Pedagogical implications

The study seems to yield interesting pedagogical implications. Given the positive role of vocabulary in teaching suggested by this study and as well by previous research, it follows that teachers of English should rely on strategies that promote vocabulary learning. Since students only receive 30 hours of English, the focus of the activities should not target accuracy, as is the case in the Moroccan system. Vocabulary has to occupy a better position in the teaching of English because it is the skeleton of proficiency in the four skills, as was concluded.

As for decision-makers, we would like to raise their awareness of the importance of including a module of English (complementary module) in all the four semesters of the M.A program. That is, it is not consistent to introduce English in one semester for 30 hours, and then students stop studying it. This sounds meaningless and has very little impact, if not zero impact, on students’ proficiency in English.

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References


Perception of the English Phonotactics by Saudi English Majors: A Comparative Study

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Abstract
This paper investigates the perception of phonotactics by Saudi English majors, beginners and advanced. Due to the significance of pronunciation of consonant clusters, which are almost absent from Arabic, this work attempts to find the extent to which beginner and advanced English majors accept or reject permissible and impermissible sounds combinations in the onset position. It also attempts to find whether there are any intervening factors that could influence students’ perception of English phonotactics. The focus was on the consonant clusters occurring in onset position. These clusters included two-sound and three-sound clusters starting the word. Most of the words were pseudowords, and the focus was on whether the students would accept or reject these sounds, and whether there was a significant difference between beginner and advanced students, male and female. The paper also considered some intervening factors that could have influenced students' performance. To this end, the researcher conducted a survey to test the perception and rejection of certain sounds in some carefully selected pseudowords. The findings showed that most advanced students scored better in permissible sounds while the results were close in the impermissible sounds. There were some factors that could have had some impact on the results, such as living in an English-speaking community, watching English TV, and listening to the news in English. Suggestions for further research would include sounds in the coda position.

Keywords: English phonotactics, impermissible combinations, onset, permissible combinations, Saudi English majors.

Introduction

This study aims to analyze the perception of English phonotactics by two groups of students, majored in English. The first group is from a beginner level, and the second is from an advanced or graduating level. Language learners, in general, be it first or second, learn the correct and accepted arrangement of phonemes. They can gradually realize what order of sounds is accepted or unaccepted in the language they are learning. Although this can be relatively simple for first language learners, Saudi students learning English as a second language may present some discrepancy in their perception of the correct and accepted arrangement of sounds. Saudi Arabic has its own and distinctive phonotactics which can help or hinder the resetting of the new arrangement of sounds. More specifically, Saudi Arabic consonant clusters within a syllable are permissible in only rare cases at the end of a phonological unit. No more than two consonants may occur in the initial or final positions in a word (AlFeneekh, 1983).

Researchers have realized the importance of phonotactics for the pronunciation of EFL students, for whom what might be called proper pronunciation is an ultimate goal. Pronunciation could be a source of difficulty and could hinder communication in the target language. Therefore, some researchers have conducted studies on the possible combinations of sound in English compared to other languages. Al-Saidat (2010), for example, made a case study of Jordanian Arab learners of English, where he analyzed their English pronunciation in relation to the phonotactics of English. He investigated the types of declusterization process found in Jordanian learners of English and the sources of difficulties. He also suggested a new approach for teaching and learning syllable structures.

Study Rationale

Pronunciation is vital for the EFL learner in terms of intelligibility of pronunciation and understanding of oral material. It is noted that students, who can perceive and use the English phonotactics appropriately, will be able to develop their pronunciation, communicate easily and understand spoken material on TV, Podcast, etc. Saudi learners of English do, in fact, make mistakes in the production and perception of a series of phonemes that are not found in their native language, causing some potential difficulties in speaking and understanding. Therefore, current language programs need to be tested to find out to what degree students develop in their perception of the English phonotactics.

The aim of this study, as mentioned earlier, is to study the perception of some aspects of phonotactics by two groups of college students majored in English. Acceptance or rejection of some sound combinations was left to their intuitive judgments. The study included a beginner group in their first or second levels and a graduating group in their seventh or eighth. The comparison is expected to reveal some information about the teaching and learning of sounds in the English language. The study is vital for Saudi teachers and learners of English as a second language. It can help them recognize the importance of English phonotactics and apply new ways to teach and learn the set of all possible arrangements of phonemes in English. It can guide and help teachers of English to enhance their students’ pronunciation and develop their perception of spoken material uttered by native speakers, which they would usually listen to on TV, Podcast, direct interaction, or any other source.
Questions of the Study
The study attempted to answer the following questions:
1- To what extent do beginner English majors accept or reject permissible and impermissible sounds combinations in the onset position?
2- To what extent do advanced English majors accept or reject permissible and impermissible sounds combinations in the onset position?
3- Is there a significant difference between beginner and advanced English majors in terms of the perception of permissible and impermissible sounds combinations in the onset position?
4- Are there intervening factors that could influence acceptance or rejection of sounds combinations in the onset position?

Literature Review
Phonotactics
Phonotactics is a branch of phonology that discusses the restrictions in a language on the permissible combinations of phonemes (Celata & Basilio, 2015). A close description is also given by Crystal (2004): phonotactics is a branch of phonology that is related to the restrictions on the permissible combination of phonemes in a language. Therefore, phonotactics gives a description for the permissible syllable structure, consonant clusters and vowel sequences and explains what role phonotactic constraints play in defining the legality of the sounds sequence. Each language has its own constraints on permissible sequences which may interact with other languages (Smolensky & Prince, 1993). Bernard (2017) says that human brain is able to track and learn phonotactics and can generalize at different levels that include word boundaries and syllable positions, stating that “phonotactic knowledge leads to enhanced speech processing enables us to use phonotactic learning and generalization as a means to better understand how humans represent speech sounds and sound sequences” (p. 138).

Languages are subject to phonotactic constraints, which are restrictions on sound sequences (Goldrick, 2004). According to Goldrick, these constraints could be acquired through exposure to a set of syllables which he described as an implicit learning paradigm. These constraints can apply to nonsense words, too. In his work, Hammond (2004) mentioned that experimental work suggests the frequency of the phonological elements of the form and by the number of actual words could help subjects judge the phonological well-formedness of nonsense forms, particularly if nonsense forms are similar to actual words. In other words, subjects would accept sounds combinations that comply with their phonotactic knowledge, and would reject those that do not.

However, there are other notions such as accidental and systematic gaps. Simply put, accidental gaps are words that do not exist in a language and are not part of its lexicon, but its sounds sequence is legal and does not violate its phonotactic. Systematics gaps, on the other hand, refer to segments that cannot exist because the sound system does not allow it (Iverson & Salmons, 2005). An example of this systematic gap is the sequence ‘bn’. English does not allow this sequence, and native speakers of English would notice that immediately. To explain this, the sequence /fl/ in the
word ‘flip’ is permissible, and it exists in the English lexicon, while the same sequence in the pseudoword ‘fleep’, for example, does not exist in English, at least at the time of writing this paper. The sequence /fiːp/ constitutes an accidental gap in English because it is allowed but does not currently exist. It may exist someday because it complies with naturalness and well-formedness of the sequence.

Another related issue is the presence of natural and unnatural constraints, which were discussed by Hayes, Siptár, Zuraw, and Londe (2009) who classified them as being natural or unnatural. Natural constraints are founded in the Universal Grammar principles while unnatural constraints are arbitrary and can be learned inductively using the language data. In addition, Hayes and White (2013) believed that phonological constraints can be either typological or phonetic. Satisfying any of these two constraints makes them natural while any violation renders them as unnatural. For them, if a constraint holds true of a language’s lexicon, but it is not part of the phonotactic knowledge of native speakers, it can be referred to as natural and is accidentally true. On the other hand, a constraint is unnatural if it is suspected of being accidentally true.

Onishi, Chambers, and Fisher (2002) assert that listening can contribute largely to acquisition of phonotactics and phonotactic constraints. Sometimes knowledge of one aspect of phonotactics can transfer to another (Pater & Tessier, 2006). For example, the last consonant of the words influences the plural morpheme. The consonant /g/ in the word dog is voiced and thus takes a voiced morpheme /z/. This influence transfers to the past tense morpheme where the voiced consonant /b/ requires a voiced past tense morpheme /d/. (Souza, 2017) stated that L2 phonotactics can also be learned “through initial conscious noticing” of the input learners are exposed to, which shows how frequent sounds distributions are (p. 187). Another task that can serve the teaching and learning of L2 phonotactics is the use of a judgment task together with word transformations, which Halicki (2010) described as “a powerful tool to probe L2 knowledge of target language phonotactics” (p. 178).

Factors Affecting Pronunciation

There are several factors which promote or impede the acquisition of proper pronunciation of a second language. Among these factors are age, mother tongue and the learner's personality.

**The Age Factor.**

Age can play a significant role in language learning since children between the age of two and thirteen appear to be better language learners than adults. In this regard, the Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) was introduced in 1959 by Penfield and Roberts. This theory, which was refined eight years later by Lenneberg (1967), suggests that there is a period in one's life in which language learning is more successful, and in which the native accent and fluency are acquired. CPH is explained by Chiswick and Miller (2007) as the sharp decline in the outcome of language learning, and that the language should be learned before the end of that period. However, and in response to this view, Johnson and Newport (1989) argued that they do not find a strong relationship between performance and age of learning throughout childhood with a sharp decline in performance.
marking the end of the critical period. They say that the performance of the language learner's starts to decline only after the critical period. This idea is emphasized by DeKeyser (2013) who stated “It is often assumed that as long as immigrant children arrive before the age of approximately 15, they will acquire the L2 perfectly from natural exposure” (p. 54). Accordingly, pronunciation is affected by the age of the learner and becomes, in most cases, impossible to acquire a native accent. However, there will still be some gaps in learners’ linguistics competence, as explained by Abrahamsson and Hyltenstam (2009).

**Mother Tongue Influence.**

The syntactic system of the learner's first language has a powerful effect on the system of the second language, especially when learned after the age of puberty. Odlin (1989) thought that the phonetics and phonology of one's native language had a strong influence on the second language pronunciation. This may require some comparison between the two languages to find the similarities and differences and also to predict potential difficulties. In this regard, the Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH), which was first proposed Lado (1957), claims that learning elements in L2 which are similar to those in L1 is simpler for the learner than learning new, different elements. In other words, learning new elements which are not found in L1 will prompt the learner to transfer the features of L1 into L2. In support of this claim, Ehrlich (1992) proposed that learners of a foreign language tend to transfer phonological patterns from their first language into their second language, producing pronunciation errors which distinguish non-native accent. She says that the sound system of L1 does influence the pronunciation of the target language. The learner may not be able to produce sounds that are not present in the sound inventory of their native language. In relation to this, considering the sounds combination rules called phonotactics, which can be different from one language to another, so pronunciation errors or even misperception are inevitable, too. Ehrlich adds that the rhyme and melody between the two languages can be different, which can lead to the transfer of the rhymes of the learner's native language, resulting in different stress patterns and intonations, which at the end can interfere with, and probably, communication of ideas. The types of pronunciation difficulties and errors that can happen in language learning can be connected to the extent to which the sounds are marked or unmarked.

Eckman (1985) proposed the Markedness Differential Hypothesis (MDH) in which he explained the areas of difficulty in second language acquisition. MDH says that common sounds are unmarked, while less common ones are marked, and the latter type represents an area of difficulty for EFL learners. In this regard, (Rahuman, 2017) emphasizes that the mother tongue influence is inevitable but can be minimized with the proper guidance. He adds that identifying the areas where interference occurred could improve the quality of teaching and learning strategies.

**Personality.**

Personality is one of the non-linguistic factors that include the learner's own objectives, attitude, culture, motivation, etc. which can all contribute to language learning in general and acquisition of good pronunciation in particular. They can either support or impede pronunciation development. Ehrlich (1992) argues that an outgoing, confident learner who is self-motivated to interact with
native speakers is more likely to acquire good pronunciation than that who refrains from using the language orally because he or she is too self-conscious and too careful not to get 'caught up' committing mistakes in pronunciation. Kaufman et al. (2010) found that there was a strong relationship between personality implicit learning ability, and they suggested that personality could interact considerably with the learning and production of L2. In this respect, many studies have been conducted to analyze and account for pronunciation errors made by EFL learners. Barros (2003) analyzed the difficulties encountered by Arabic speakers when pronouncing the English consonants. The samples of his study represented students from different backgrounds; they spoke different colloquial Arabic and learned the English language after the age of puberty. The result showed that there were eight English consonants which could be the main cause for pronunciation problems for Arabic speakers of English. These consonants are /ŋ/, /p/, /v/, /d/, /l/, /dʒ/, /ð/, and /r/. Another study was conducted by Al-Shuaibi (2009) who studied English initial and final sound cluster made by 30 Yemeni students and found that the pronunciation process of these initial and final sound clusters involved deletion, insertion, substitution, or reduction.

**Other Factors.**

There are certain factors that can influence language learning. One of which is living in an English community where there is sufficient and direct interaction with native speakers verbally and audibly. This can justify why most children from immigrant families can speak the language of their new community with native or native-like accent and fluency (Candlin & Mercer, 2001). In an English speaking community, students would hear the target language more than their native language, and this could make the difference. Lightbown and Spada (2013) say that “if one language is heard much more often than the other or is more highly valued in the community, that language may eventually be used better than, or in preference to, the other” (p. 79). They also believed that larger communities have a bigger and stronger impact on second language learning and have the ability to shape “opportunities for education, employment, mobility, and other societal benefits” (p. 79).

Watching English material on TV is another factor that can impact language learning. Language teachers and language learners will find both TV and computer-based activities as highly rewarding, motivating and successful learning experiences (Underwood, 2002). Underwood emphasizes, however, that watching television is divided into interactive and non-interactive practice, and there is a difference between watching and doing. He explains that teachers can turn TV material into a more active learning experience than just watching, which he considered a passive experience. However, passive learning does exist, and while learning is generally considered as active and purposive behavior, passive learning depends on what is taught instead of what is taught (Krugman & Hartley, 1970). They explain that passive learning is usually effortless and responsive to what they described as animated stimuli. These can provide relaxation and facilitate casual learning; thus, they can potentially be a good source of knowledge that can be freely welcomed or criticized.

Listening to the news in English is a third factor that can influence language learning in terms of vocabulary, pronunciation and even grammar. The news comes into two types; audio news on the radio, and audiovisual on TV. Language-wise, both can improve pronunciation and perception of spoken material. The second one, however, can help in the crystallization of meaning since
visual events accompanied by audio comments from different perspectives can play a big role in making sounds and meaning impressed upon the listeners’ minds. Murphy (1991) says that pronunciation is a subset of listening and speaking skills, which are often dealt with as integrated skills. This integration will make more sense if pronunciation is thought of as directly related to speaking, while the perception of sounds is directly related to listening. Speaking does not usually exist in an isolated vacuum (without listening). However, both skills need vocabulary and grammar as infrastructure, so to speak.

Methods
This section explains the procedures followed in an attempt to answer the questions of the study and test its hypotheses. It includes the design, participants, instruments and procedures for data collection and analysis.

Design
This study is descriptive-analytic in design since the researcher is especially interested in describing English majors’ situation in terms of the perception of the English phonotactics. It is a design intended to gather, analyze, and present collected data in a way that gives room for providing insights into phonotactics. This descriptive design helped in guiding the researcher to deal with the problem of the study and answer its questions.

Participants
Due to the nature of the work and class circumstances, the number of subjects could not be decided upon before the test. The researcher tested male and female students from two different groups; all were English majors. The first group included sophomore students from levels one and two. The second group included graduating students from levels seven and eight. The level of the second group was expected to be quite high since they were graduating students who had taken many English courses including listening and speaking, phonetics and phonology, where the language of instruction was English. Both groups were Saudi students who came from different regions and universities in Saudi Arabia and had Arabic as their mother tongue, although they had slightly different accents.

Instruments
The main instrument used in this study was an online test that included a 66-word list with two consonants (blue, sky, etc.) and three consonants (strong, screw, etc.), all occurring in the onset position. The list included 66 pseudowords, some of which conformed with the sounds of real words and some of which included sounds combinations that were not acceptable. This test aimed to make sure whether the students accepted or rejected the sounds combinations, and whether sophomore and graduating students would show noticeable differences, taking into account some other variables such living in an English-speaking community, watching English stuff on TV, and listening to the news in English. For the sake of easier analysis, the male students were divided into two groups, which were labelled M1 and M2, whereas the female students were labelled F1 and F2. M1 and F1 represented beginner students from levels one and two, while M2 and F2 represented graduating students from levels seven and eight.
Procedures
The test was electronic, and it included 66 words, as mentioned earlier. The respondents had the choice of whether or not to write their names. It was optional. They indicated their universities, gender, and level. They answered the multiple-choice and Yes/No questions and then submitted their answers electronically. The data collected was exported to Excel sheets for analysis and description. The data was classified into male and male, beginner (M1, F1) and advanced (M2, F2). The results were also classified into permissible and impermissible sounds combinations.

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Impermissible</th>
<th>Permissible</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>50.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>65.81%</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**M1 Group**
The figures in Table one above show that male students in M1 group from levels one and two had an overall score of 50.9%. A detailed description of the most noticeable results revealed the highest scores included the impermissible sequences /bk/, /ps/, /vr/ and /stp/ which had 100% rejection by male participants from levels one and two. Other impermissible sequences such as /dh/, /gb/, and /kb/ scored 83% rejection. The least rejected sound sequence was /ʃw/ and /θm/ which, for some reason, was accepted by 87% and rejected by only 13% of the male participants from levels one and two. The students in this group scored only 35% % in the permissible combinations, with 65% rejection of the suggested pseudowords given in the test.

**M2 group**
The figures in Table one above reveals that male students in M2 group from levels seven and eight had an overall score of 67.8%. They gave 38 correct responses out to the 56 given in the test. Closer examination of the most noticeable results revealed the highest and lowest scores. The highest scores included the permissible sequences /pl/, /sp/, and /tr/ which were accepted by 94% of male participants from levels seven and eight. Other impermissible sequences such as /bk/ and /gb/ were rejected by 88% of the M2 Group. The least rejected sound sequence /sb/ was, for some reason, accepted by 65% and rejected by only 35% of the male participants from levels seven and eight. The students in this group scored 69.8% in the permissible combinations, with 30.2% rejection of the suggested pseudowords given in the test.

**M1 and M2 Intervening Variables**
There are some variables that could have affected students’ perception of sounds combinations. These variables are: having studied in an English-speaking community, watching English material on TV, and listening to the news in English. Examining these variables in line with the results of each group indicated that these variables had some influence on the students’ performance and perception of some aspects of phonotactics.

Looking at the first variable, attending a school in an English-speaking community, one can find that there is some difference in the overall results. The M1 group who attended a school in an...
English-speaking community scored 59.6% of the pseudowords, while the ones who did not score 46.4%.

Table 1. *M1 studying in an English community*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>46.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second variable is the watching of English material on TV. The ones who did this scored 67.0% versus 41.3% for the ones who did not.

Table 2. *M1 watching TV (English)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 hours</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 hours</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>61.5%</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third variable considered in this study is listening to the news in English. The results also showed some difference between those who listened to the news in English for more than three hours a week (score = 59.7%), and those who listened for less than three hours a week (score = 50.3%). The one who did not listen to the news in English scored 35.1%.

Table 3. *M1 listening to the news*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 hours</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>50.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 hours</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for the advanced group M2, examining the first variable, attending a school in an English-speaking community, there is some difference in the overall results. The ones who attended a school in an English-speaking community scored 71.4% of the pseudowords, while the ones who did not score 65.9%.

Table 5. *M2 studying in an English community*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>65.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another variable is watching English material on TV. The ones who did this scored 72.4% versus 55.1% for the ones who did not.
The last variable is listening to the news in English. The results also showed some difference between those who listened to the news in English for more than three hours a week (score = 76.6%), those who listened less than three hours (score = 64.0%), and those who did not (score = 59.7%).

Table 5. M2 listening to the news

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 hours</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>64.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 hours</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>59.0%</td>
<td>59.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**M1 and M2 Compared**

Table one above demonstrates that comparison between M1 and M2 reveals that after a period of about two years, which is the time difference between levels 1-2 and 7-8, students’ perception of acceptable sounds combinations has generally improved by 16.9% with an overall score of 67.8% for the M2 Group versus 50.9% for the M1 Group. Acceptance of allowed combination appears to have improved by 34.8%, which tipped the scale towards the M2 Group. Both groups, however, tended to show similar rejection of impermissible sounds combinations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Impermissible</th>
<th>Permissible</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F1</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>67.66%</td>
<td>67.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2</td>
<td>68.69%</td>
<td>75.52%</td>
<td>72.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1.8.5 F1 Group**

The results show that female students from levels one and two had an overall score of 67.17%. They gave 37 correct responses out of the 56 given in the test. A detailed description of the most noticeable results revealed the highest scores included the impermissible sequences /bk/ and /ps/, which were rejected 94% of the female participants from levels one and two. Other impermissible sequences such as /gb/, /mk/ and /θm/ had a rejection of 83%, 89% and 89% respectively by the same group. The least rejected sound sequences were /nb/ and /sb/ which, for some reason, were accepted by 6% and rejected by 44% of the female participants from levels one. The students in
this group scored 67.66% in the permissible combinations, with 62.34% rejection of the suggested acceptable pseudowords given in the test.

1.8.6 F2 Group

The results also revealed that female students from levels seven and eight had an overall score of 72.10%. They gave 40 correct responses out to the 56 given in the test. Closer examination of the most noticeable results revealed the highest scores included the impermissible sequences /bk/, /gb/, and /kb/ which were rejected by more than 90% of female participants from levels seven and eight. Other impermissible sequences such as /mk/, /nb/, and /stp/ were rejected by 83%, 83%, and 81% respectively by the F2 Group. The least rejected sound sequences were /hl/, /sb/ and /vr/ which, for some reason, were accepted by 61% and rejected by only 39% of the female participants from levels seven and eight. The students in this group scored 75.52% in the permissible combinations, with only 24.48% rejection of the suggested acceptable pseudowords given in the test.

F1 and F2 Intervening Variables

Same as for the male students’ groups, there are some variables that could have affected students’ perception of sounds combinations. These variables, as mentioned above, are: having studied in an English-speaking community, watching English material on TV, and listening to the news in English.

Looking at other the first variable, attending a school in an English-speaking community, Table nine below shows that there is some difference in the overall results. The ones who attended a school in an English-speaking community scored 70.3% in the pseudowords survey, while the ones who did not score 62.2%.

Table 7. F1 studying in an English community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>57.3%</td>
<td>67.1%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>71.4%</td>
<td>69.2%</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another variable is the watching of English material on TV. The ones who did this scored 80.4% versus 56.0% for the ones who did not.

Table 8. F1 watching TV (English)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Acceptable</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 3 hours</td>
<td>49.2%</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
<td>56.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 3 hours</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The last variable considered in this study is listening to the news in English. The results also showed some difference between those who listened to the news in English for more than three hours a week (score = 92.8%), and those who listened for less than three hours a week (score = 65.7%).
As for the advanced group (F2), examining the first variable, attending a school in an English-speaking community, Table 12 shows that there is a minor difference in the overall results. The ones who attended a school in an English-speaking community scored 72% in the survey, while the ones who did not scored 73%. Very close results.

The other variable is the watching of English material on TV. The ones who did this for more than three hours a week scored 70.9% versus 57.9% for the ones who did not do it at all. The ones who watched English stuff on TV for less than three hours a week scored 66.7%.

The last variable considered in this study is listening to the news in English. The results also showed some difference between those who listened to the news in English for more than 3 hours a week (score = 92%), and those who listened for less than 3 hours a week (score = 67.3%). The one who did not listen to the news in English at all scored 64.6%.

**F1 and F2 Compared**

Table 8 above shows that comparison between F1 and F2 reveals that after a period of about two years, which is the time difference between levels 1-2 and 7-8, female students’ perception of acceptable sounds generally improved by 8% with an overall score of 75.52% for the M2 Group versus 67.66% for the M1 Group. Rejection of impermissible combinations also turns out to be similar for both groups with a minor difference.
Discussion

The questions of the study were related to the extent to which CLT students accept or reject permissible and impermissible sounds combinations. The results revealed that beginner and advanced students had a similar-scale rejection of impermissible combinations such as /bk/ and /bg/ and the difference was minor. However, advanced students appeared to accept permissible pseudo sound combinations more than beginner students. Rejection of impermissible pseudo sounds seems logical and could be justified by the presence of two elements: lack of knowledge and weird-sounding words. However, the rejection of permissible combinations requires some investigation. Beginner students rejected a big number of the permissible combinations in the pseudowords while advanced students rejected only a smaller number of the same permissible combinations. The assumption is that advanced students do have more ability to perceive permissible sounds combinations, whether they know the words or not. They can judge better if the combination sounds English or not, be it real or not. For instance, they know that the sounds /ʃ/ and /r/ can cluster at the onset to form the English word ‘shrink’. At the same time, they would accept the same cluster in the pseudoword ‘shindow’, which sounds right to the English ear and by no means violates the English phonotactics. Another interesting example is the acceptance of the combination of /θ/ and /r/ in the word ‘throap’. It was intended to look and sound as a pseudoword, which was accepted by a big number of the students. However, they accepted it simply because it sounded English to them, not because it is an English word, which was coined for a specific and limited purpose. Although the pseudowords used in this study had no meaning, they required some phonological knowledge, and that knowledge increased as the students went further in their study, and it helped them use what Miellet and Sparrow (2004) phonological codes. The study conducted by Hernández, Costa, and Arnon (2016) indicated that language users could develop a type of sensitivity to distributional properties of language units at a level that approaches that of a native speaker. The assumption now is that it is that sensitivity to distributional properties that contributed to the advanced students’ acceptance of the pseudowords in this study. This leads to the inference that beginner student assembled phonology is still weak, which justifies their low score on this part of the test.

Although considered relatively minor (male 17%, female 4.94%), the overall difference between beginner and advanced students did exist. Male students from the advanced levels seven and eight performed better, and their perception of permissible combinations in pseudowords was evident (34.8%). In contrast, female students from the advanced levels seven and eight performed slightly better than female students from beginner level, and their perception of permissible combinations in pseudowords was (7.85%). However, there might be some intervening variables that could have impacted the results in general and caused the results to be close when it came to the rejection of impermissible combinations. Those variables may have also caused their acceptance of permissible combinations in pseudowords not show that big difference.

The first variable to be considered is ‘studying in an English-speaking community’. This item was to be answered Yes/No but did not request how long the study continued. It could be a short-term language program or regular schooling. Advanced students had more chances to study in an English-speaking community. For the male student, the difference was 18% since 52% from the beginner level (M1) versus 70% from the advanced level (M2) had the chance to study in an English speaking community. For female students, the difference was 10.1% since 62.2% (F1)
versus 70.3% (F2) had the chance to study in an English speaking community. This small difference between F1 and F2 in this aspect could justify the slight variation in the overall female results. In other words, since F1 and F2 had close chances in studying in an English-speaking community, they consequently had close results.

Let us consider another factor that could have affected our results, watching English material on TV. Again, advanced students seemed to have dedicated more time than beginner students to watching English material on TV; 57% (M1) versus 71% (M2), and 56% (F1) versus 80.4% (F2) were in the habit of watching English material on TV. The last factor that could have impacted the results, listening to English news. Similarly, advanced students seemed to have dedicated more time than beginner students to listening to English news. 52% (M1) versus 72% (M2), and 65.7% (F1) versus 92.8% (F2) were in the habit of watching English material on TV. Those students, beginners and advanced dedicated more than 3 hours a week for watching English material on TV and listening to English news, and despite the fact that the time dedicated for these practices could have largely varied from one student to another, the influence on the results was noticeable. The results appeared to respond to the question raised above as to the potential influence of intervening factors.

Conclusion

Saudi EFLs have difficulty pronouncing and perceiving consonant clusters due to the absence of these clusters from Arabic. They show slightly weak ability to perceive and differentiate permissible and impermissible sounds combinations. However, EFLs’ perception of permissible and impermissible sounds combinations, which relate to the English phonotactics, can be affected and improve by several factors. The first factor is concerned with the length of time students study the language. The longer they study the language, the better their perception of permissible combinations becomes. Advanced students, both male and female, showed better perception of permissible sounds combinations than beginner students. Other factors had variant impacts on students’ perception. The most important factor which contributed largely to the improvement of students’ performance in this study was ‘studying in an English-speaking community’. That factor had the biggest impact, which was verified by F1 and F2 results. They had close chances to study in an English-speaking community, and they scored close results in the perception of permissible sounds combinations, although they were from beginner and advanced levels. The length of study time caused that minor difference between the two groups.

Other factors such as watching TV and listening to English news also had some influence on the results and positively, though slightly, contributed to the students’ perception of what pseudowords were acceptable or not acceptable. The permissible sounds combinations can create what was referred to earlier in the study as accidental gaps by Iverson and Salmons (2005). Those pseudowords could become real words someday simple because the sound sequence is legal, and the sound is acceptable to the ear. Therefore, the permissible combination /pl/ exists in the real words ‘play, plow, plumb, etc.’ and in the pseudowords ‘plac’ and ‘ploka’. Those pseudowords could find their way into existence someday because they are acceptable to the ear and, most importantly, they do not violate the English phonotactics.
This study focused on the perception of sounds combinations that occurred in the onset position, so it is highly recommended to do more investigation with sounds combinations that occurred in the coda position. The study may also be reduplicated and done in another environment which could give more insight into EFLs’ perception of the English phonotactics.

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Underwood, J. (2002). Language learning and interactive TV.
A Cognitive Linguistics Study of the Conceptual Derivation of Word Meaning

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University of Baghdad
Baghdad, Iraq

Abstract
To maintain understanding, usage, and interrelations of English vocabularies by Iraqi second language learners (L2) is a challenging mission. In the current study, the cognitive linguistic theory of domains by Langacker (1987) is adopted to provide new horizons in learning vocabulary and qualify Iraqi students with a deep knowledge analysis of the meanings of lexical concepts. This paper aims to test the validity of expanding the English language vocabulary for second language learners from Iraq through domains theory. It also attempts to find how the domains theory supports L2 learners in identifying meanings related to lexical concepts. Accordingly, an experimental study is conducted on fifty-eight university students of the second year level from the University of Baghdad, Iraq. The pre and post-tests are analyzed by using the Editor for the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The results show the following: First, a progression of more than (0.05≤) is discovered in terms of students' understanding of the interrelationships between lexical concepts. Second, a new vision is dealt with to connect lexical concepts with their meanings according to the focus of the speakers using Langacker's theory. Third, domains theory (profile/base organization, active zone, and the perceptual basis for knowledge representation) has proven effective in expanding Iraqi students' treatment and perception of semantic domains of English lexical concepts precisely.

Keywords: Cognitive semantics, domains, Iraqi Learners, encyclopedic view of meaning, active zone, knowledge representation.

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Introduction
Relying on the supposition that lexical concept cannot be understood autonomously of greater knowledge constructions, that meaning is encyclopedic, Langacker (1987) sets his theory of Domains in order to shed light on the interrelations among a lexical concepts and their meanings. Aajami (2019) uses this theory in order to expand the vocabulary for Iraqi students. Thus, she finds that the theory of domains can offer a considerable benefit in vocabulary learning. The second part of this theory (profile/ base organization and active zone) increases learners’ awareness in analyzing the contextual meanings of lexical concepts.

In Iraq, English learners as a second language (ESL) amplify their vocabularies incidentally throughout the four skills of language teaching (Aajami, 2019). They face the same difficulties experienced by the other L2 learners in comprehending the polysemy of the English preposition (Aajami, 2018). Increasing the volume and value of word knowledge is a significant objective of learning a second or foreign language (L2). For mature learners at Level 2, reading provides a chance to learn the meanings of words and broaden the linguistic inventory of the reader. Actually, how reading processes help in developing the memory effects that represent knowledge of new words is not entirely clear, nor is the nature of the lexical content of this knowledge. (Elgort, et al., 2014). They (also find that acquiring words from context includes language practices that can create recalls for unacquainted words and the situation in which they are spoken. These processes are labelled in the instance-based context of vocabulary learning (Bolger, Balass, Landen, & Perfetti, 2008), according to Reichle and Perfetti's (2003) adjustment of Hintzman's (1986) retention archetypal.

Acquiring L2 seems to be causing a lot of problems for learners as well as their surroundings. Nasser (2020) asserts that semantic difficulties can cause confusion for Iraqi EFL students during their search for word meaning. Does this mean that one should not learn more than one language? Absolutely not! There are a number of solutions that could tackle the issue of learning vocabulary in a foreign language or analyzing deep meanings and connecting between a word and its related domains and polysemy. One of these solutions is the theory of domains that proves its effectiveness in increasing the Iraqi L2 learners’ vocabulary (Aajami 2019). This study is going to use Langacker's cognitive linguistic theory of domains (1987) in order to enhance the way Iraqi L2 learners grasp the encyclopedic view of meaning, which proves that word meaning cannot be understood independently of the vast system of encyclopedic knowledge to which it is linked. This research tries to detect the reasonability of using the Domains theory 'the encyclopedic view of meaning's in order to get a deep understanding of the semantic connectivity among words, identify the base, profile, active zone, and the perceptual basis of knowledge representation.

Literature Review
Theory of Domains
The concept of the domain was first used in (1987) by Langacker, who was influenced by the theory of Frame Semantics by Fillmore (Clausner & Croft, 1999). Both Fillmore's and Langacker's theories are depending on the presupposition that meaning is encyclopedic and that lexical concepts cannot be implicit only by depending on larger knowledge structures, which are called “domains” by Langacker (Evans & Green, 2006, p.230).
"Domains are essentially cognitive units: mental experiences, representative spaces, notions, or conceptual multiplexes" (Langacker, 1987, p. 147). Langacker defines domains by depending on humans' mind analysis of language. If an element of knowledge structure represents background information against which a lexical concept can be understood and used in language, then this knowledge structure can be considered as a domain. For example, the domain of love has three different expressions: sex, feelings, and human affairs. These expressions cannot be understood without understanding human psychology (Evans & Green, 2006, p.230).

The theory of domain is vastly insightful and helps in acquiring the meaning in both the source and target languages. It certainly enhances the value of language usage (Lowe, 2008, P.1).

Langacker (1987) focuses on four essential aspects of the theory of domains. These aspects are considered additions in comparison to Fillmore's theory of Frame Semantics. First, the typical arrangements of fields that construct a set of lexical concepts are entitled the “matrix domain” of that concept. For instance, the commonsense knowledge of the lexical concept car includes its shape, activities, physical material, and usage. These aspects of the word cow are identified in diverse subtexts (Clausner & Croft, 1999, p.6). Second, most of the lexical items can be described in terms of domain matrix while very few of them can be described in terms of a single domain. Third, Langacker (1987) addresses both the basic and abstract domains. He develops the level of conceptual organization that is not explicit enough in the theory of Frame Semantics. Fourth, some domains are organized to one or more dimensions. Domains such as time and temperature are arranged along one dimension and therefore are entitled one-dimensional domain. (Aajami 2019).

In this study, the concentration is on the different meanings of lexical concepts in the context. Langacker (1987) mentions and explains the scope, profile, and base. This organization analyzes the speaker's intentions and meanings interrelations. For example; the lexical concept behind the word diameter is that the line that cuts the circle into two points and passes through its center. Diameter here provides the essential knowledge, so it is named the scope of the lexical concept. The scope is sub-divided into two items: the profile and the base, which are important to understand the meaning of the lexical concept. The base is the essential part which is the circle in this example, and the profile is the diameter that has its relation to the base. One base can generate many profiles. The profiles can be a diameter, radius, arc, center, or chord. Profiles change when the main concept is changed; in other words when one talks about the circle, the profiles will be as mentioned above. If one mentions the circle to describe the wheel of a car, then the profiles that emerge from this base are different from that of the circle. Although they both have the same basic profiles, the wheel has more profiles according to its usage.

Figure 1. The base/profile organization
This Figure is set by the researcher
Langacker (1987) also discusses the active zone. He finds that "the meaning associated with a lexical item undergoes ‘modulation’ as a result of the context in which it is used". The active zone is one active part of the profile that is repeated in particular utterances. The active zone helps in clarifying the meanings and intentions for both the speaker and the hearer.

For example: the goal keeper protects his goal by his **hands**.  
The goal keeper protects his goal by his **head**.  
The goal keeper protects his goal by his **legs**.  
The goal keeper protects his goal by his **knees**.  
The goal keeper protects his goal by his **back**.  
The goal keeper protects his goal by his **abdomen**.  
The goal keeper protects his goal by his **bottom**.

![Figure 2. The active zone of the goal keeper](Goalkeeper Cartoon, 2020)

The active zones are represented through the body parts of the goal keepers that prevent football from entering his goal. The active zone can play another important role which is that of clarifying the contradiction in sentences like the following:

"This green pen is not green" This sentence can be interpreted into two assumptions; the first is that the green pen, which has a green color from outside, does not have a green ink. Or the pen that has green ink is colored blue, red, or any color from outside except the green one.

Langacker (1987) talks about the perceptual basis of knowledge representation. Barsalou (1999) further discusses this point that there is a mutual figurative structure that causes both **perception. These include first** our ability to treat a sensory input from the internal body or the external world proclaims such as consciousness or experience of pain. Second, our **cognition**, which is our aptitude to get this experience available to the theoretical system by representing it as thoughts, along with processing the information that acts on those concepts. For example: *Hani was walking under the rain*.

When the hearer hears this example, he imagines the picture in his mind and if he has a good imagination, he maybe portray the cold feeling that Hani suffered from. Another example is: *the warning siren is on*.

When some people are walking in the street, no one will respond to the warning siren except those who know the meaning of this sound.
Previous Works:
A great part of word meanings analysis has been accumulated to serve the semantic purposes in identifying words meaning in both perceptual and cognitive aspects. Haiman (1980) defines the encyclopedic meaning as the "indirect", non-referential, additive meaning of a sign pertaining to an encyclopedic knowledge of the world. Often encyclopedic meaning is central to the understanding of that sign even though it is not traditionally considered to be a linguistic type factor. Encyclopedic meaning overlaps with the notions of connotation, semantic frame, and several concepts relating to the scope of predication.

Taylor (2018) declares that the meaning of the dictionary differs from encyclopedic meaning. He identifies the relationship between dictionary and word meanings. Both of them, the dictionary and the encyclopedia, are of different types of books. The meaning of the dictionary gives one word and its meanings. The encyclopedic meaning gives all kinds of scientific, cultural, and historical information about things.

The encyclopedic view of meaning needs the encyclopedic knowledge that is used to mention that the information of the world is distinctive from language system knowledge. The encyclopedic view is a model for the system of conceptual knowledge on which linguistic meaning is based. This system shows an insightful part in the way humans make sensations during communications (Kecskes, 2013).

Vyvyan (2006) addresses the role of words in constructing meaning. He starts from the fact that “meanings” related to words are mastered in nature, and that semantic standards related to words are flexible, open-ended and greatly reliant on the context of speech in which they are contained. In an attempt to deliver an explanation of meaning formation that conforms to this observation, he developed a realistic epistemology for lexical representation and a programming theory for the lexical concept combination. His main assumption is a basis to distinguish among lexical concepts.
and meanings. Whereas lexical concepts constitute semantic units traditionally related to linguistic forms and are an essential part of the individual user's mental grammar, meaning is an attribute of positional use events, not words. Thus, meaning is not a function of language by itself, but rather it emerges from the language usage. Meaning provides an explanation of the lexical concepts, conceptual knowledge structures, and cognitive models related to them. It also puts this theory inside a use-based account. It then develops the lexical concept integration theory that assists to afford an interpretation of how lexical concepts can be incorporated into the service of the current meaning construction.

The results of the study of the cognitive and motivational meanings of words indicate that a person who speaks more than one language has much better cognitive capabilities compared to what was anticipated from his logical level in childhood. The sturdiest influences were in general cleverness and reading dexterity. This phenomenon is originated in both those who acquire a foreign language before the age of 18 and those who get it at farther age. Meaning can transport both emotional and cognitive language like these phrases "Before the New Deal, the Great Society, Obamacare, and other socialist garbage, the patients had just rewarded their health center." (Kazemifard et al., 2012, p 24).

Manerko (2014) concluded that cognitive linguistics offered a new approach to understanding different concepts. The interdisciplinary, expansion of the methodological view and knowledge methods for describing resulted in a process of continuous interaction. It influenced the science of terminology, which made it possible to obtain the status of a scientific discipline and to include vocabulary as a specific subject. Cognitive linguistics theory is now definitely able to find its way on the basis of cognitive terms. It became possible to concentrate on the basic features of the vocabulary, allowing to show its nature and relationship from a cognitive and communicative point of view.

Hagoort (2019) found that meanings have multiple sides; However, one needs to make a separation between the meanings of a single word (the lexical meaning) and the meanings of a multi-word pronunciation. Polyphonic words cannot be retrieved from memory but must be constructed quickly. The automatic computation of the mind that makes sense requires analysis at the functional and neurological levels because these levels are causally interconnected.

Most of the words that have multiple meanings are confusing. This applies to both homonym words (words that have several dissimilar meanings) and polysemic words (words that have many associated meanings). Existing suggestion shows that the choice of meaning is an essential chunk of understanding homonym. Nevertheless, it has not been established whether meaning choice coversn words with multiple meanings, or what neural systems sustenance meaning selection during comprehension. Both the meanings of polysemy words and the meanings of homonyms are similar as they are chosen based on contexts. However, homogeneous and polysemic words varied with respect to the way the meaning influences the meaning of choice. They came to the conclusion that context-dependent meaning assortment is an basic portion of understanding words for both homonyms and polymorphic words. (Bendy, et al., 2006).
Hendriks (2019) conducts a study of how children create meaning from a series of patterns or sounds. Due to the concept of luminous formation, the meaning of a statement is a function of its parts meanings and their grammatical combination. On the contrary, it appears that children often ignore the grammatical structure in the interpretations of their sentences, signifying that grammar is simply one of the bases of information restricting meaning that does not have a distinct position. According to the principle of composition, utterers and hearers generally agree on the meanings of sentences. Remarkably, children as hearers do not often comprehend what they can produce as utterers, and vice versa. For instance, it seems that children’s construction of word order established before they understood word order in acquiring languages such as English and Dutch. This inconsistency in construction and understanding is common in children's language. It also stimulates the formation of point of view as a principle related to the outcome of the adoption of perspective, the formation of meaning as a method of coordination between the speaker and the listener.

All these studies treat the cognitive semantic of words meaning and how humans vary in acquiring their cognitive language proficiency.

The Experiment

This study targets at developing Iraqi students' consciousness of Langacker's theory of domains and developing their comprehension in gaining the semantics of English words throughout contexts. It also aims at showing the possible meanings of different utterances; revealing specific difficulties in using English expressions; examining the Iraqi students' ability to differentiate and produce correct expressions in English and identify their parts, and investigating how cognitive linguistics help EFL students' understand the English expressions in their writings and speech contexts.

The present study is an experimental which is premeditated in the pre-test and the post-test. Fifty-eight students contributed in this study. The researcher checks students' information about the theory of domains. Such a step was achieved by refreshing the participants’ memory of the related meanings of some English words throughout the multiple frequencies of occurrence of each word in different forms within the same domain. She used the blended learning method in order to help all of the participants to easily participate in this experiment. To complete the aim in question, the researcher plans an experiment of three phases:

- The first phase: it is a refreshment phase because there are students who had participated in the previous study of the theory of domains. The researcher revitalized the participants' memory of the domains theory via giving a brain storming task. She posted, for example, words, such as: uncle, peace, nutrition, temperature, home, feelings. Then, she divided the participants into groups, each group should have at least one student who had participated in the previous study of the theory of domains, had to analyze and draw diagrams for these lexical items to show their related meanings;
- After the refreshment phase comes the introductory phase. This phase is a good choice for the students to be introduced to the main points in this study (profile/base organization, active zone, and perceptual basis of knowledge representation).
The third phase, the pre-test, is designed to analyze the meanings and frequencies of the same words in different sentences. The participants were requested to test the polysemous meanings for the matrix domain, as shown below:

"In kick boxing, the player can use different parts of his body to protect himself and defeat his rival".

The base here is the “kick boxing game”; everything related to this game is a profile. Accordingly, this relation is very similar to domain and domain matrix relation. The active zone is any part that the player used in the game as:

"The player pushed his rival"
"the player kicked his rival",
"the player boxed his rival".

The perceptual basis of knowledge representation can be explained as the following: all the sentences in the example of “the kick boxing game” create a series of imagination in the speaker and the addressee’s minds depending on their real knowledge and experience about this game.

The fourth phase, the post-test, is designed to test the lexical concepts in terms of profile/ base organization, active zone, and perceptual basis of knowledge representation.

**Participants and Procedures**

The contributors were fifty-eight second year students who were generally of intermediate level in English language. Some of the participants did not know anything about the theory of domains before participating in this experiment while others had the chance to participate in the previous experiment. They were about 28 students who have the chance to participate in the study. The procedures were done as shown below:

- The researcher displayed PowerPoint slides in the classroom to explain the aspects of the domains Model and its characteristics as a kind of refreshment;
- Then, a handout was distributed to the participants; it contained a detailed explanation of the theory;
- Students were asked to work in groups during class time to identify the profile/ base organization, active zone, and perceptual basis of knowledge representation. In order to achieve a high level of participation, WhatsApp groups are held. The researcher sent two or more sentences about a lexical concept, for students to practice analyzing the main meaning and identifying its domains in addition to elucidating the profile/ base organization, active zone, and perceptual basis of knowledge representation. They could also clarify the related domains throughout diagrams. They were also required to locate the dimensions and configurations of these domains;
- The researcher asked the students to identify the base/ profile, and active zone for any given lexical concept in different sentences and elicit their related domains. Then, they conducted the posttest in accordance with the steps set in the procedures.

**Target Words**

Five panelists selected the examples to be applied when explaining the theory of domain. Each example had a clear hint to the base/profile organization, active zone, and perception and cognition. Starting with simple clear practices during applying the theory of domains helped the students to understand the basis of this domain. Then, they had to freely think in other examples
to elicit and explain the principles. The lexical concepts were chosen to test the effect of the theory of domains in explaining and analyzing meaning.

Results of the Pre-test

Fifty-eight marks were composed by the researcher in the initial investigation of students' capacities to interpret and analyze the meanings of 1. The blue pen is not blue. 2. Each angle is 90 degree in the square. 3. What is football? It was noticed that the participants had limited aptitude in analyzing the meaning of the above mentioned utterances. Their limitations were drastic when identifying the semantic relations among these phrases. Besides, they neither could identify the base/profile organization, nor were able to explain the contradictory in sentence number (2) by depending on the active zone assessment in the theory of domains. Their analysis of the number (3) example did not cover the whole meaning of this game according to what is called “perceptual basis of knowledge representation” in the theory of domains.

The outcome of the pre-test exposed that all students had a developing, but not developed clues about the domains theory and its insights. It is clear that students relied on their information in both the first and introductory phases when representing the ideas or roles that were related to the meaning interrelation of the lexical concepts.

Treatment

The treatment stage began soon after the results of the pre-test. The target codes of theory were embedded in some different sentences. Theses codes appeared in different utterances to present different interrelated maps of meaning.

The participants were asked to analyze the different meanings of each lexical concept and identify each code, profile/base organization, active zone, and perceptual basis of knowledge representation. They had to get the meaning interrelations of the lexical concept in each sentence, and classify the direct related code. Sinking deep into the semantics of the lexical concepts helps gain more control in the usage of new words and avoiding contradictory. Eliciting a lexical concept from a given image and identifying the surrounded domains enhance the learners' ability to analyze the domains of any lexical concept in addition to the. Thus, knowing the kind of code is an important second step in the semantic analysis of this approach, if one assumes treating the domains skillfully as a first step. During the class time, the participants worked individually and in groups. Each group prepared representations about a chosen lexical concept with a clear explained example to represent one of the three codes of the theory that help in identifying the code and its characteristics. After being able to identify profile/base organization, active zone, and perceptual basis of knowledge representation, they were asked to analyze the meaning of each code in a diagram. They also classified the meaning intricacy or the interrelated meanings of each lexical concept.

The participants involved in activities were asked to complete some drawings depending on the given sentences. Then, they had to explore the meaning of the lexical concept of the given drawing; e.g. students were given worksheets that contain incomplete drawing of an eagle. They had to complete it in a most suitable way according to their understanding. The base is the eagle that gives many profiles. In an additional step, they had to answer comprehensive questions or write a
short summary to explain the meanings in details. Students were asked to prepare a complete project about a given lexical concept. The activities were designed just for the participant to be more motivated and exposed to the target codes of the theory of domains. This study was projected to evaluate the influence of domains theory in identifying the meanings of lexical concepts with respect to domains and vocabulary learning. After twenty-four sessions of treatment, the students were allowed to sit for the post-test.

Post-Test
After two months of working on the domains theory; three meetings each week, the participants sat for the post-test. They were asked to analyze the lexical concepts through contexts. They had to identify the semantic relations of lexical concept in the light of profile/ base organization, active zone, and perceptual basis of knowledge representation two.

Lowe model analysis is used to represent the domains of the lexical concepts in diagrams. Through the results of the post-test, the partakers displayed a extraordinary advance in identifying base, profile, active zone, perception and cognition. They accomplished a distinguished alertness in determining the kinds and merits of domains. They were able to grip the superficial and deep meanings of the semantic interrelations of the lexical concepts. Their ability appeared in avoiding the contradictory utterances by analyzing their meanings in details. They were also capable of eliciting and differentiating between perception and cognition and how motor or somatosensory experience affected their mental treatment of meanings. In other words, it was possible to admit as Langacker (1987) says, "conceptual representation is perceptual in nature".

Data Analysis
The obtained results from both the pre-test and post-test were examined to two SPSS statistical editor tests. Each quiz compared the presentation of all students when treating the codes of the domains theory. Table 1 displays the elementary expressive statistics of the pre-test scores of the participants. In this table, the number of students and their average score are described, along with other statistical variables.

T-Test
Table 1. Paired Samples Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>13.1667</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>5.35037</td>
<td>.97684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>17.4333</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>3.99727</td>
<td>.72980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Paired Samples Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest &amp; posttest</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>.825</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 shows the number of participants, which is 58, and their average in the pre-test is 13.1667 and the post-test is 17.4333. Participants showed a score of 4.2666. Since the difference between the two scores in both tests showed greater progression than (0, 05) *, this study is valid. This means that the domain theory can bring about a noticeable positive change in participants' understanding and use of English lexical concepts.

**Discussion**

The results of the study show that Iraqi learners boost their ability in acquiring new words by using the theory of domains. This is because the theory depends on finding the closest words in meaning and analyzing meaning to avoid elusiveness. This process of research and analysis can certainly expand learners' vocabulary and fortify the intricacy of meaning interrelations in their minds. Occasionally, much more effort and analysis is needed to cement the basics of the theory and its codes, profile/ base organization, active zone, and perceptual basis of knowledge presentation. Unsurprisingly, the participants fascinate a new strategy and flexible perspective in reaching L2 surface and deep meanings relations. Consequently, they can open more and more windows for vocabulary learning during their analysis or search about vocabularies. They can enrich their background information. It is really that the learners get in-depth understanding of the semantic complexes of the lexical concepts throughout their work on the domains theory.

**Limitation of the Study**

This study is limited to second-year students at the department of English at the University of Baghdad in the academic year 2019/2020. The participants were 58 second-year students in the Department of English, College of Education for Women, University of Baghdad. The study was conducted during the academic year 2019-2020. The study was limited to enhancing vocabulary multiple meanings and related meanings.

**Conclusion**

Domains theory can offer a considerable benefit in learning vocabulary. This study highlights the importance of active zone, profile/ base organization and perceptual base of knowledge presentation. It highlights both practical and intellectual aspects of cognitive linguistics. Unlike other studies which concentrate on either practical methodological aspect or theoretical abstract ones. Showing the possible meanings of different utterances help in revealing specific difficulties in using English expressions for Iraqi L2 learners. Meanings can be represented in drawn figures, images, and signs consequently these variety of meanings representation enlarge the medium of communication and create deep level of comprehension. Examining the Iraqi students' ability to differentiate and produce correct expressions in English and identify their parts by substituting the parts of a sentence with other words from the same lexical field. The experiment investigates how cognitive linguistics help EFL students' understand the English expressions in their writings and speech contexts. Based on the results the understanding, usage, and interrelation of English language can be outreached in a more comprehensible way throughout adopting cognitive linguistic theories.

Concerning the number of contributors and the number of discussed examples, this study is very limited. The aspiring results of the participants can inspire further research studies, and to apply the theory of domains with other groups of learners in different places.
Recommendation
According to the results of this study, the following points are recommended:

- Using the domains theory in comprehension class can better up the students' performance and expand their views in treating meanings' relationships.
- Training sessions for both teachers and researchers can improve the English acquisition process.

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References


**Appendix A**

1. Draw a diagram for the lexical concept "plane" to identify its base and profiles.

2. Identify the active zones in completing the following sentence:

   I went to England .................

3. Identify the following shape, its base and profiles, related domains and dimensions.

   ![Diagram](image_url)

3. Think of the following sentences and analyze them in terms of perception and cognition?

   1. I used to ride my bike and tour near the river.
   2. A smith needs an oven.
   3. Do you think that the shape of our country will change after the American Iranian conflict started.
   4. Children can understand words or sentences before they can utter utterances.
Reading Assessment: A Case Study of Teachers’ Beliefs and Classroom Evaluative Practices

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Abstract
Research has revealed that teachers’ thinking processes highly influence their instructional and evaluative behaviors. Understanding teachers’ beliefs and theoretical orientations about reading are more than necessary to rethink reading instruction and assessment. The present paper reviews a case study conducted at the Department of English, Tlemcen University, Algeria. The study looked at teachers’ beliefs and theoretical orientations regarding reading assessment and its effect on EFL learners’ comprehension ability. It examines the correspondence between reading teachers’ theoretical orientations and classroom reading assessment. This study included 20 teachers and 120 students. Data collection procedures included questionnaires and classroom observations. Data analysis exposed the congruence between teachers’ beliefs about reading and classroom reading assessment. Moreover, standardized classroom reading assessment negatively impacted learners’ comprehension ability and reading motivation. The discussions underscored the importance of alternative reading assessment methods such as portfolios, which represent genuine and effective language learning strategies according to modern research.

Keywords: alternative assessment, evaluative practices, reading assessment, reading models, teachers’ beliefs, Tlemcen University

Introduction

The necessity to understand the beliefs and thinking processes, which are at the root of teachers’ classroom practices, has resulted from all the constructivist investigations attempting to explain how teachers cope with the teaching process. Beliefs are often mistakenly considered as judgments, attitudes, values, opinions, and ideologies. Accordingly, Pajares (1992) and Kunt (1997) see that the term “belief” encompasses all these commonly used designations. Teachers’ beliefs about the content and process of teaching are deeply embedded in teachers constituting a solid background for their instructional behaviors (Fang, 1996; Faour; 2003; Pajares, 1992; Richards, 1994; Yook, 2010). Teachers’ set of general knowledge and context-sensitive beliefs direct their thinking and ground their problem-solving and decision-making processes, enabling them to make instructional choices and manifest personalized behavior (Borg, 2003; Carlsen, 1999).

Research in the field of reading has greatly helped in the disambiguation of the relationships between teachers’ beliefs and instructional behaviors (Fang, 1996). Studies in the field of reading reported that teachers’ beliefs toward reading instruction are theory-based (Asselin, 2000; Chou, 2008; Kuzborska, 2011; Longberger, 1992; Olson & Singer, 1994; Powers, Zippay, & Butler, 2006; Richardson et al., 1991). Teachers’ orientations and approaches to reading instruction come from their theoretical conceptions about how learners process reading and how to check their comprehension.

Existing research on teachers’ belief systems and their relationship to their instructional behaviors has treated assessment somewhat superficially (Chang, 2014; Rueda & Garcia, 1996). Regardless of its nature and its context, assessment has often been descriptively studied as a practice, with little consideration for the psychological aspects wherefrom it emerges. Therefore, a constructivist approach attempting to highlight the correspondence degree between teachers’ conceptions of reading assessment and their evaluative practices has been adopted. Despite the scarcity of research that has addressed teachers’ beliefs about reading assessment, it stands to reason that their classroom evaluative practices are likewise influenced by their understanding of what constitutes genuine and appropriate reading assessment. In this sense, it is crucial to consider these beliefs, mainly with the increasing need for some changes, or reform, to guarantee an intelligible expression of learners’ reading proficiency and raise their reading motivation. Beliefs held by teachers usually reflect the strengths and weaknesses of a given teaching context, mainly because the teaching strategies, teaching material, and evaluative practices are determined by these beliefs (Pajares, 1992; Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

This study emphasizes teachers’ beliefs about reading by exploring their consistency with classroom evaluative practices. These different beliefs highly influence teachers’ theoretical orientations and approaches to teaching and assessing reading. It is, thus, important to identify teachers’ theoretical propensities and to define the extent to which these influence reading assessment, concentrating attention on its nature, function, and impact on learner’s comprehension ability. The heart of the issue is that some teachers still draw on traditional and conventional reading assessment, despite its measurable ineffectiveness. These belief systems particularly influence teachers’ understandings of the reading process, which, in turn, form and typify the nature and function of reading assessments designed afterward. Defining the impact of these
evaluative behaviors on learners’ reading comprehension ability is crucial to conclude whether or not a shift from traditional assessment to alternative assessment is necessary.

Despite all the educational reforms that were adopted, the Algerian educational system is still based on traditional assessment approaches. These practices also take place at the level of the Algerian universities, where it was observed that some reading comprehension teachers focus closely on the assessment of the quality of the language sample carried out during the instruction. A lack in assessment literacy may result in assessments that are not authentic and do not demonstrate an actual level of proficiency. Teachers’ beliefs about reading may be at the origin of these sustained evaluative practices, particularly when beliefs and reasoning are not formally or informally questioned. Traditional assessment has a very unconstructive impact on learners’ reading skills development in general and learners’ reading comprehension ability in particular. To constructively discuss a shift from traditional to alternative assessment in the Algerian universities, reflective practices should be promoted, including the development of teachers’ awareness about their teaching beliefs. The strengthening of teachers’ assessment literacy is also crucial to yield improvement.

According to the previously expressed problem, the following questions were raised:

1- What beliefs about the reading process underlie teachers’ evaluative practices?
2- What kind of impact does formative reading assessment have on learners’ comprehension ability?

This study contributes to the body of knowledge about teachers’ beliefs. It particularly adds up to the different studies upon which the consistency and inconsistency theses are debated. Its general aim is to look at the manifestation and correspondence of beliefs and practices. It also aims at the development of the local teaching context by raising awareness about beliefs and promoting reading assessment theory.

**Literature Review**

**Teachers’ beliefs**

Teachers’ beliefs have been defined as teachers’ subjective and experience-based knowledge, forming their views and arguments concerning teaching and learning (Ford, 1994; Khader, 2012; Pehkonen & Pietilä, 2003; Raymond, 1997). Despite the productivity of research in the field of teacher education no standard definition for what the term belief means (Pedersen & Liu, 2003; Skott, 2015). The term belief subsumes all the commonly used designations, such as attitudes, judgments, opinions, and values (Burns, 1992; Kunt, 1997; Pajares, 1992; Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Wang, 1996).

Teachers make instructional decisions based on their theoretical beliefs about teaching and learning (Attardo & Brown, 2005; Fang, 1996; Faour; 2003; Jones & Fong, 2007; Pajares, 1992; Palak & Walls, 2009; Richards, 1994; Richards & Lockhart, 1994; Yook, 2010). According to Hapsari and Kusumawardani (2017), these beliefs lay the foundation for teachers’ “goals, procedures, materials, classroom interactions patterns” as well as “their roles, their students, and the schools they work in” (p. 3). Teachers have personalized conceptions of learning which provide a framework for their approach to language instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Teachers’
actions are framed by what they know and believe. Usual tasks, such as selecting learning activities and checking students’ understanding, can reveal the consciously or unconsciously held assumptions.

Extensive research in the field of reading indicated that teachers, consciously or unconsciously, adhere to a set of theoretical principles and that such principles will manifest in their teaching (Asselin, 2000; Chou, 2008; Kuzborska, 2011; Longberger, 1992; Olson & Singer, 1994; Powers et al., 2006; Richardson et al., 1991). Reading theories have impacted significantly on the teaching approaches, textbooks, and reading assessment. Teachers’ orientations and approaches to the teaching of reading are mostly characterized in their theoretical beliefs about how learners process reading and its corollary comprehension (Fang, 1996; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017; Harste & Burke, 1977; Kuzborska, 2011; Paris et al., 1991; Powers et al., 2006).

Attempts to investigate teachers' beliefs in connection to reading instruction have mostly relied on reading models – theories that systematically explicate the reading process in terms of what it is, how it takes place, and how it interfaces with memory and other cognitive abilities (Kuzborska, 2011; Powers et al., 2006; Wilson et al., 1991). Research on teachers’ beliefs in the field of reading, and other fields of literacy instruction, have shown that teachers possess definable beliefs which consistently reflect one dominant methodological approach. In other words, teachers perceive teaching through the filter of their theoretical beliefs, shaping instruction, classroom interactions, and affecting students' perceptions of literacy learning. Teachers’ observable approaches to reading instruction were found to be consistent with the theoretical beliefs that they were revealed to possess. Moreover, research has brought evidence about classroom interactions and how they diverge according to teachers' belief systems (Bisland et al., 2009; Faour, 2003; Khader, 2012; Saengboon, 2012; Wang, 2006).

Conversely, the close relationship between the beliefs upheld by teachers and their instructional practices is sometimes unconvincing, varying from consistent to inconsistent, and indicating low positive correspondence. The main cause of inconsistency in research on teachers' beliefs is methodological. Research has shown that findings of low positive correspondence, in some cases, may have been due to teachers’ unfamiliarity with terms, their difficulty to articulate their beliefs, in addition to the methodology of investigation and comparison (Fang, 1996; Richardson, 1996; Skott, 2015). Studies that revealed inconsistencies relied on written research instruments, limited to teaching reflections (what teachers said they do) instead of concrete teaching (what teachers do). Teachers' beliefs and practices need to be examined in classroom contexts. In this sense, researchers have overcome the limitation mentioned above by using classroom observations, stimulated recalls, think-aloud protocols, and focused interviews. Several studies have supported the inconsistency thesis between teachers' beliefs and practices (Basturkmen, 2014; Breen et al., 2001; Harcarik, 2009; Judson, 2006).

The methodological issues in research on teachers’ beliefs had emerged when researchers attempted to employ the concept of beliefs in educational research. The crux of the problem is that the very nature of beliefs, being tacit (Johnson, 1994), complex (Richards & Lockhart, 1996), and mostly unconscious (Pajares, 1992), has led to many methodological difficulties. Construct validity, for instance, appears to be a recurrent issue, as Fang (1996), Richardson (1996), and Skott
(2015) argued. Besides, contextual factors, social or institutional, may also have significant influences on teachers' beliefs and/or instruction; thus, they need to be carefully considered during the collection and analysis of data (Borg, 2003; Jamalzadeh & Shahsavari, 2014; Lee, 2008; Phillips, 2009; Putnam & Borko, 2000).

Research has reached a consensus on the many factors that shape teachers’ beliefs (Abdi & Asadi, 2011; Bean & Zulich, 1991; Guotao & Xiaoming, 1997; Johnson, 1994; Li, 2012; Richards & Lockhart, 1994). Teachers’ general knowledge about teaching is at the core of their beliefs (Carlsen, 1999; Cherniak et al., 1983; Shulman, 1987). Teachers’ belief systems are made slowly over time, involving subjective and objective sources (Knowles, 1992; Richards & Lockhart, 1994). Not always observable in the classroom, they begin to take shape in teachers’ minds initially due to their education and experience as learners (Johnson, 1994; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Richards, 1991; Richards & Lockhart, 1994). The range of beliefs embodied in the teaching of literacy is solidly supported by the different existing language approaches (Froese, 1990; Johnson, 1992). In this sense, “teachers must learn to question why they are using specific instructional practices and how these practices relate to current theories of literacy development” (Shapiro & Kilbey, 1990, p. 63). Classroom instructional and evaluative practices can be improved by teacher educators whose central objective is to help teachers develop a theoretical orientation that is reflective of current and pertinent research in the field (Burgess et al., 2000; Busch, 2010; Cummins et al., 2004), mainly because beliefs are sometimes incompatible with educational perspectives. It is important to address teachers’ beliefs in connection to assessment since their relationship has not been fully elucidated. Such investigations can contribute to the consistency versus inconsistency debate. Moreover, they have the potential to bring about positive changes, especially in contexts where such investigations have never been conducted.

**Reading Models**

Reading is a complex and multifaceted skill that could be defined as the ability to process a text through decoding, interpreting, and understanding it (Douglas, 2003). Reading comprehension is universally considered as the level of understanding of written texts. Anderson (1985) defined reading as the process of constructing meaning from texts. In this sense, he considers that a skilled reading activity should be:

- Fluent: the automaticity of basic processes—cognitive and psychomotor capacities.
- Strategic: considering the purpose, use of the appropriate strategies.
- Constructive: using prior knowledge and schemata to build new knowledge.
- Motivating: maintaining attention and interest.

Comprehension process consists of two essentially imperative items: the reader and the text. For a reader to build meaning from a given text, he must be equipped with a certain range of capacities. Attention, memory, and inferring are all instances of the cognitive capacities a reader should possess. Moreover, a reader should have an objective underlying his reading activity, a concern, or an interest in the text being read. In other words, a reader must be motivated. Finally, a reader needs linguistic capacities and various types of knowledge to achieve understanding after his reading activity.
On the other hand, texts also have an outsized impact on comprehension. Comprehension does not depend on the reader only; the surface code of a written text and its content also play a major role in achieving meaning. Both reader and text are interrelated in a dynamic way that influences the reading experience and comprehension. Hence, fluency in reading could be considered as a prerequisite and, at the same time, a consequence of reading and understanding. Two primary barriers must be cleared to become skilled readers:

- Being able to master bottom-up strategies for processing separate sounds, letters, words, phrases, and symbols.
- As part of the top-down approach, second/foreign language readers must develop appropriate format schemata—background information and socio-cultural experience—to carry out the inferences and interpretations effectively.

Reading models represent a systematic and operative way of explaining certain aspects of reading: what it is, how it is taught, how reading relates to other cognitive and perceptual abilities, how it interfaces with memory. “A reading model is the theory of what is going on in the reader’s eyes and mind during reading and comprehending (or miscomprehending) a text” (Davies, 1995, p. 159). Reading theories have significantly impacted on the teaching approaches, textbooks as well as reading assessment (Alderson, 2000). Therefore, these models are of a capital importance in exploring of teachers’ theoretical beliefs about reading. Generally, teachers’ theoretical beliefs about reading correspond to one of the four principal models. Given the chronology of the most significant contributions in the field of reading, reading models can be classified as being: (1) Top-down / Goodman’s Psycholinguistic model (1970); (2) Bottom-up / Laberge & Samuel’s Serial model (1977); (3) Interactive / Rumelhart & McClelland’s model (1977); (4) Interactive-Compensatory / Stanovich’s model (1984).

**Reading Assessment**

Assessment is the process of observing, analyzing, gathering, and measuring data about learners’ abilities, needs, difficulties, and achievements. Moreover, it provides insights and evidence about the teaching and learning experience. The evidence formative assessments produce could be used reflectively to make informed and consistent judgments to improve the teaching-learning experience.

Reading is a skill of dominant significance, especially when assessments of general language ability are to be designed. Traditionally, information about the development of students’ reading comprehension ability and reading skills was only gathered through testing during the course or after. Testing is one form of assessment; it determines a student's aptitude to perform certain tasks or display mastery of a skill or knowledge of content. Formative reading assessment includes a several reading activities that can be tackled before, during, and after reading.

On the other hand, recent research on students’ achievements underscored “over-reliance on standardized tests” (Navarrete et al., 1990, p. 1). The standardization process of summative reading assessments has also been influenced by the abundant research findings in reading and reading theories. Summative assessments usually take the form of tests, including a set of activities meant
to develop a picture of what students know and how they can apply their knowledge to conclude their educational experiences (Huba & Freed, 2000).

All reading assessment is normally carried out by inference. Strategic pathways to full understanding are often important factors to include in assessing learners, particularly in the case of formative reading comprehension assessments which take place in the classroom. In other words, the assessment of reading ability does not end with the measurement of comprehension. Reading tests are meant to measure a reader’s comprehension ability, knowledge, and/or performance through a set of structured explicit techniques or procedures. These techniques must specify a form of reporting measurement. Otherwise, they cannot be considered as tests. Depending on the type of reading and the reading model at its core, standardized reading tests generally include the following tasks: (1) reading aloud; (2) non-contextualized multiple-choice vocabulary/grammar questions; (3) contextualized multiple-choice vocabulary/grammar questions; (4) multiple-choice cloze vocabulary/grammar; (5) vocabulary matching; (6) selected-response fill-in vocabulary; (7) multiple-choice vocabulary/grammar editing; (8) sentence completion; (9) open-ended comprehension questions; (10) true/false statements; (11) summarizing. The majority, if not all, of the previously described tasks are very standard, conventional and predictable, since they have been overly used by teachers. Moreover, they are summative in nature, norm-referenced and product-oriented. Assessments based only on these tasks are usually used to nuance learners.

Research has defended the idea that alternative assessment methods focus on developing skills that will lead learners to observe, think, question, and eventually test their ideas in real life. For a comprehensive description of students’ abilities, reading assessment should fall in between traditional and alternative assessment techniques, combining the best of both. Standard reading assessments are less time-consuming, very practical, and easier to score than alternative assessment. However, alternative assessment provides useful feedback to students, develops the potential for intrinsic motivation, and ultimately grants a more comprehensive description of a learners’ ability.

Formative and summative reading assessments share the same tools; therefore, they may have the same impact on learners’ comprehension abilities and reading motivation (Valencia, 1990). Alternative approaches to formative assessment provably offer more effective solutions to reading problems concerning motivation. Portfolio assessment is a type of alternative assessment consisting of systematically and purposefully collecting learners’ work that shows their progress and achievements as well as the efforts they had put into them. Portfolio reading assessment approaches permit to evaluate learners’ products and to collect evidence of their progress and the achievement of their learning targets. Valencia (1990) defends that a portfolio approach to assessment assumes that developing readers deserve no less. In addition to providing an alternative to conventional and very common formative reading assessments, portfolios stand as an authentic, systematic, and purposeful approach to assessment (Porter & Cleland, 1995). Table one shows the main differences between traditional reading assessment and alternative reading assessment:
Table 1. *Comparison of traditional v. alternative reading assessment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional assessment</th>
<th>Alternative assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standardized and scheduled tests</td>
<td>Nonstandard and continuous assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timed</td>
<td>Untimed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple-choice format</td>
<td>Free response format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decontextualized test items</td>
<td>Contextualized communicative items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scored feedback</td>
<td>Individualized feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm-referenced scores</td>
<td>Criterion-referenced scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focuses on the correct answers</td>
<td>Focuses on creative answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Based on recall/recognition</td>
<td>Based on construction/application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product-oriented</td>
<td>Process-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-interactive</td>
<td>Interactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fosters extrinsic motivation</td>
<td>Fosters intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summative</td>
<td>Formative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research Design**

**Methods**

According to Morrow, Strickland, and Woo (1998), learning to read and write is arguably the most complex task a learner can face. Despite the complexity of the reading process, existing theoretical understandings provided teachers with approaches to shape their reading instruction and reading assessment practices. It is somewhat difficult to investigate these abstract theoretical beliefs since they are likely to be unnoticed, while they are at the source of the decisions made by teachers (Fang, 1996; Kostopoulou, 2005; Pajares, 1992; Paris et al., 1991; Skott, 2015). It is in this sense necessary to employ a variety of appropriate research instruments which will make available both the qualitative and quantitative data needed to answer the research questions (Chang, 2014; Palak & Walls, 2014; Skott, 2015). A mixed-methods exploratory case study was designed to answer the research questions.

**Population**

Probability sampling techniques would have been much favorable to the full objectivity of this research. However, the researcher could not adopt these techniques because of the encountered difficulties, which were in sum inconvenience issues, such as teachers’ schedules and availability. To surmount this limitation, the researcher has opted for a different sampling approach: convenience sampling. The study population comprised 20 teachers and 120 First (LMD1) and Second (LMD2) Year students: Department of English, Tlemcen University, Algeria. Based on convenience sampling methods, three participant teachers were selected for observation during Discourse Comprehension sessions.

**Instruments**

Inconveniences also limited the researcher in the choice of research instruments. Consequently, stimulated recalls, thinking-aloud protocols, and focused interviews, could not be employed for a more contextual examination of the beliefs upheld by teachers. Data collection procedure involved three research instruments: two questionnaires and classroom observations. The first questionnaire and classroom observations provided the researcher with relevant data, so that the link between teachers’ beliefs about reading and its impact on the instructive and evaluative behaviors could be
examined. Finally, the role of the second questionnaire was to help the researcher answer the last research question.

Both questionnaires were anonymous, comprising cloze and open-ended questions, in addition to Likert scale items. The questionnaires were anonymous, comprising cloze an open-ended questions, in addition to Likert scale items. The first questionnaire addressed the novice and experienced reading teachers of the department. To answer the research questions, another questionnaire was given to the LMD1 and LMD2 EFL students. Teachers’ questionnaire sought to explore teachers’ beliefs and theoretical orientations in connection to reading. Learners’ questionnaire looked at the impact of reading assessment on learners’ comprehension ability and reading motivation. Structured, uncontrolled, and non-participant classroom observations aimed at providing the researcher with more observable evidence to verify the results of the questionnaires.

An undisguised, non-participant, and structured approach to classroom observation was adopted. The observed teachers were informed about the observation procedures and solicited for consent. Each of the sampled teachers was observed accordingly with his availability, accessibility, and willingness to participate in the research by authorizing the observer to take place inside his classroom to witness and record data. Teachers were observed two times each. Observations aimed at gathering data about teachers’ instructive and evaluative classroom practices in connection to reading. Data-keeping forms included an observational-checklist and note-taking. The checklist exclusively targeted teachers’ instructional and evaluative practices.

Findings

Teachers’ questionnaires comprised Likert scale items of 1-4. Figure one exposes the six items responded by teachers. The feedback collected on scales (4=strongly agree) and (3=agree) were considered positive. Responses received on scales (1= strongly disagree) and (2=disagree) were considered negative.
The observational-checklists focused on the teaching material and reading instruction stages. Moreover, they particularly targeted classroom reading assessment procedures. It had been noted that participants used standardized reading material, authentic with similar surface structure. The pre-reading section showed that teachers used the same instructional activities: semantic mapping, questioning and predicting. It is noteworthy to mention that students were asked to read the text silently, which is a while-reading instructional activity and never asked to scan or skim. The pre-reading stage was somewhat short, and most of the students were engaged in the while-reading stage prematurely.

Each of the sampled teachers implemented both reading-aloud and silent-reading to his reading instruction. It is also noteworthy to mention that these were the two only while-reading tasks that had been observed, at the expense of other interesting while-reading instructional activities such as jigsaw reading. Post-reading activities included the use of vocabulary tasks, which did not take the aspect of a task, but more of a mere explanation, which at its best required the students to use their dictionary. The participants emphasized spelling and pronunciation. Participants preferred to ask learners to write the general and sub-ideas of the reading material as a post-reading activity.

Writing summaries was used as a reading comprehension assessment technique and not as an instructional practice. The post-reading stage did not include the three-level guide activity. It had been noticed that teachers implement almost the same tasks to assess their students’ comprehension. Indeed, all of the observed teachers used: true-or-false tasks, vocabulary matching tasks, and open-ended comprehension questions, in addition to exact-cloze tasks and selected-response fill-in tasks which did not only emphasize vocabulary but grammar too.

Discussions
To order to interpret the findings and answer the research questions, the discussions below took place.

*Teachers’ Beliefs in Connection to Reading Comprehension*

Evidence about teachers’ bottom-up orientation was recorded through the process of data collection. The use of reading-aloud tasks during the instruction and assessment of reading is one major indicator. 75% of the respondent teachers had admitted to employing this task in their instructional and evaluative practices. To that, the strong emphasis on phonological and morphological aspects of new vocabulary can be added. On the other hand, the collected data also revealed that none of the observed teachers had omitted to instruct students to read silently. 90% of the teachers agreed on the necessity of activating prior knowledge and schemata.

An overwhelming majority of the teachers who, on the one hand, were presumed to be bottom-up oriented were revealed to hold an observable top-down orientation too. The juxtaposed use of these two opposed models suggests that the teachers have an interactive theoretical conception of the reading process, which is at the root of their interactive approach to reading instruction and assessment.

Reading models were of paramount importance in the exploration of teachers’ theoretical beliefs about reading. Tlemcen University EFL teachers conceive reading as an interactive process.

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They believe that it is good to mix both bottom-up processing and top-down processing to develop reading skills and achieve comprehension. These interactive representations of reading were all observed in the reading instruction. The evaluative processes were principally aimed at measuring students’ comprehension. Data analysis and strict comparison of the results showed that teachers’ evaluative practices are influenced by their reading beliefs. The length of cloze tasks that students were administered is, in fact, a characteristic of an assessment that is founded on a top-down conception of reading, in addition to the true-or-false tasks and open-ended comprehension questions as well.

Furthermore, the fact that students were asked to perform reading-aloud tasks at the end of each session point out their parallel bottom-up theoretical conception of reading. The findings show that teachers’ evaluative practices are influenced by their beliefs about reading, which indicates a high positive correspondence that aligns with other research findings (Asselin, 2000; Bisland et al., 2009; Chou, 2008; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017; Kuzborska, 2011; Longberger, 1992; Olson & Singer, 1994; Powers et al., 2006; Richardson et al., 1991; Saengboon, 2012; Lau, 2008; Wang, 2006). In effect, Tlemcen University EFL teachers have an interactive conception of the reading process, which influences their classroom instructional and evaluative practices.

The Impact on Learners’ Comprehension Ability

Teachers who responded to the questionnaire, as well as those who were observed, showed their orientation toward an interactive model of the reading-comprehending process. Experienced teachers seemed to rely more on top-down processes, contrary to novice teachers, who appeared to draw more emphasis on bottom-up processes. Novice teachers’ observation revealed that the written stimuli, used during the instruction and reading assessment, are somewhat short, focusing on the surface structure and literal meaning. Experienced teachers were revealed to be more top-down oriented when it comes to reading assessment, emphasizing the interpretative and inferential skills of students.

Moreover, the investigation of teachers’ classroom evaluative practices connected to reading showed that these practices are conventional and exam-oriented. 55% of LMD1 students admitted to finding these exam-oriented evaluative practices challenging, whereas 45% of them agreed on the opposite, underscoring their lack of reading motivation. Over and above, 75% of them confirmed their disinterest in reading long texts. Besides, only 33% of them reported engaging in extra-reading activities regularly. It is also a fact that 25% of the LMD1 students estimated that their comprehension ability is clearly under the average.

These statistics highlight the impact of exam-oriented classroom assessment on students’ reading motivation and comprehension ability. Classroom reading assessment was very similar to training that focuses on the skills that students need to pass their biannual examinations. These classroom evaluative practices were influenced by teachers’ theoretical orientations, sometimes emphasizing the bottom-up processes at the expense of top-down inferential processes. Moreover, 40% of responding teachers had agreed on the incorrect assumption that reading-aloud tasks are beneficial to learners’ comprehension ability. It is also important to call attention to students’ unfamiliarity with the scanning and skimming strategies.
This research brought evidence that information about the development of students’ reading skills and reading comprehension ability was only gathered through testing, focusing on student's ability to complete certain tasks or to display mastery of a skill or knowledge of content. Exam-oriented classroom evaluative practices certainly impact students positively, given their participation in developing reading skills and comprehension to a certain extent. However, it is logical to think about the inadequacies that the present investigation revealed. Thus, it would be practical to reconsider teachers’ reading classroom evaluative practices. This does not mean that it is indispensable to change, since data had shown a certain positive impact on students’ reading skills and inferential abilities.

However, data analysis also exposed a negative side to these exam-oriented evaluative behaviors. Quite a consequent number of respondents affirmed lack of reading motivation and their habituation to a particular type of written stimulus. Eventually, students are simply taught how to score in the exam because no information would eventually be grasped or memorized. During the exam, students will probably be given a different text and asked to perform the same tasks to demonstrate their skills, preferably the critical, interpretive and inferential ones. Classroom reading comprehension assessment is supposed of a formative nature, focusing mainly on the learning process, and the learners. Ideally, it should reflect on learners’ needs to adapt the instruction consequently. This type of assessment should put forward opportunities to improve for all the learners, providing them with challenging and motivational tasks to properly and effectively track their achievements.

Nonetheless, the findings revealed inconsistencies between teachers’ classroom reading evaluation and the nature of formative assessment. Classroom evaluative practices were found to be extremely exam-oriented, impacting negatively on students’ reading motivation by strongly emphasizing the very same skills they have been training since secondary school. The instruments used for checking learners’ comprehension are conventional, undermining their critical thinking and decreasing their reading motivation. Furthermore, the standardization of the reading material, in terms of length and type, and the comprehension tasks constitute a real issue. The exam-oriented classroom assessment has formative intentions and aims. Still, it is designed as summative, often presented to students as a post-reading test-like series of tasks, focusing on the product and the outcome rather than the process and the motivation. Moreover, this standardization was revealed to limit learners’ comprehension ability and hinder their interpretive and inferential abilities, especially when students are presented with different written stimuli in terms of length and type or when the tasks aim at inferential and implied comprehension levels.

It is, nevertheless, possible to improve the situation by focusing on the development of students’ comprehension ability and the revival of their reading motivation through the enrichment of their reading experiences. The initiative of improvement should be taken by teachers who will need to document and learn about reading theory. Expectedly, these teachers would not exhibit instructional or evaluative behaviors founded on dysfunctional beliefs (Wilson, 1990), such as the commonly received idea that reading-aloud tasks raise learners’ inferential abilities. Well-informed reading comprehension teachers would put a strong focus on the teaching of inference instead of fluency. Teachers would proceed to the activation of learners’ prior knowledge and schemata by creating familiarity with the basic structure and content of the text, which can raise
learners’ motivation in reading and identifying the text either through scanning or skimming. Ultimately, the purpose is to equip learners’ with reading strategies and to train them to infer, predict, verify, extrapolate, synthesize, and apply ideas based on information contained in the text.

Theoretical awareness of teachers is supposed to help them select or design tasks that are adequate to their students’ needs and the objectives already set. The three-level guide is a post-reading task that engages students in a focused-reading by providing clear purposes and directions. This task supports the learners to use their bottom-up and top-down strategies to test some given sentences. It is called the three-level guide because it draws attention to the three levels of comprehension: the literal level, the inferential level, and the applied level. Motivating and challenging, it could embody a real asset, particularly because it does not belong to the list of conventional reading tasks.

The assessment process should be carried out to make available information about students’ thinking, achievements, and progress. Reading assessment should also be a process that leads up to better learning conditions, focusing on learners and their motivation. Charvade, Jahandar, and Khodabandehlou (2012) affirm that there are innovations in reading assessment procedures. Unconventional views on assessment have generated novel approaches like portfolios: a self-assessment approach that serves as an effective learning strategy to promote motivation and autonomous language learning, encouraging language learners to assess their learning progress (Chen, 2005; O’Malley & Pierce, 1996). According to Oscarson (1997), engaging in self-assessment can help students become skilled judges of their strengths and weaknesses and establish significant and manageable goals for themselves, thus developing their self-directed language learning ability. By systematically collecting works and monitoring development over time, portfolios enable learners to make reflections, confirmations, and adjustments of their learning (O’Malley & Pierce, 1996). Portfolio assessment develops learners’ creativity, gives them more independence, and helps them develop higher-order thinking skills and metacognitive strategies (Charvade et al., 2012).

Conclusion

Despite the scarcity of research that addressed teachers’ beliefs about reading in relation to reading assessment, it is maintained that their evaluative practices are likewise influenced by their conceptions of what constitutes effective classroom assessment. The present study looked at the correspondence between teachers’ beliefs about reading and their classroom-evaluative practices. The research aimed at providing insights on teachers’ theoretical orientations and approaches to the evaluation of reading. The study has shown that teachers’ interactive conception of reading influenced their evaluative practices. Some of their dysfunctional beliefs were also observed during reading instruction and assessment. Theoretical propensities directly impact the teaching context, resulting in strengths or weaknesses in students’ comprehension ability and reading motivation.

This work outlines the literature related to teachers’ beliefs and puts up a theoretical background for both reading and reading assessment to establish the environment of the study. The research design and methodology present the tools that permitted the researcher to conduct this investigation, including the sampling procedures and data collection instruments. Future research...
in teachers’ beliefs and literacy instruction has to anticipate the methodological issues and contextual limitations, for even more close investigations, by adopting mixed-methods approaches and using appropriate and context-adapted research instruments. Theories, such as Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, can also provide the researcher with systematic approaches to the investigation of beliefs and their structure (Bullock, 2010; Haney et al., 1996; Smarkola, 2008; Underwood, 2012).

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Reimagining the Ever-Changing Construct of Saudi Writerly Identity: A Heuristic Approach

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Abstract
This paper takes on a heuristic approach (Crowley & Debra, 2004) to the study of Saudi writerly identity. In this critical review paper, the author argues that little work has been carried out to study Saudi English as a second language (ESL) writers' identity, for most of the empirical studies approach their writing as substandard writers. Therefore, this paper adds critical insights to the exciting literature about L2 Saudi writers and invite second language (L2) researchers to deconstruct the essentialized view towards peripheral writers. The paper also was guided by the question: how are ESL Saudi writers perceived in the Western educational system? Throughout the paper, the researcher problematizes that most studies about L2 Saudi writers are rife with references to phenomena in these student writings as negative transfers and linguistic errors. Other empirical studies were blinded from Saudi L2 discourse by the minuita of mechanism and look at students' writings as illegitimate. However, studies like Canagarajah’s (2013) and Saba’s (2013) can forward the conversation into a deeper understanding of these students’ writing identities and how they perceive themselves as writers and knowledge constructors. The article briefly explores the current definition of identity and how it is related to second language writing, followed by an explanation of Ivanić’s framework of writer identity. Then, the paper reviews previous research on how ESL Arab students negotiate and construct their written identities in Western educational settings. Finally, the author proposes directions for future empirical research and promising windows for studying the identity of Saudi ESL writers.

Keywords: Arabic writing style, heuristic approach, identity, contrastive rhetoric

Introduction
Not only have disciplines such as composition and L2 writing (e.g., Matsuda, 2001; Ivanić, 1998) and linguistic anthropology (e.g., Hymes, 1971) been hothouses for identity research, but also a myriad of writers in the field of identity and second-language acquisition have invested extensively in the topic. Significant examples including Block (2007) and Norton (2013), and in 2015, The Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, a preeminent applied linguistic journal, dedicated a whole volume to the review of topics related to identity and language learning. These efforts reflect that the current awareness, in applied linguistics and other related fields such as L2 writing, of the growing need to harbor healthy diverse classroom environments in developed/ing countries.

This study aims at unpacking the mainstream views toward peripheral L2 writers as deficit and urges L2 researchers to appreciate the linguistic diversity of L2 writers in their meaning-making processes in academic writing. Moreover, this study investigates critically previous empirical studies that were conducted on Saudi ESL writers and deconstructs the essentialist views towards L2 Saudi writers; furthermore, the author expands the conversation towards L2 writers and invite researchers to explore uncharted areas of L2 writing from a poststructuralist perspective such as writerly identities, writing and investment, and writing in an unequal power dynamic environments.

The social turn in education and humanities—that knowledge is socially constructed—shifts the research paradigm to situate the individual subjectivity within a broader social context, which makes identity study in writing a key term to understand the composing process (Trimbur, 1994). Indeed, identity and language learning are inseparable; they are two sides of the same coin, for cognition, as well as socio-cultural aspects, play a major role in foregrounding the linguistic choice/voice for any language user. Norton's research (2000, 2019) on identity reinforces that identity has been an important part of the social sciences too, for it assures plurality of language learning; any social contribution through the medium of language can convey the learners’ background: language competency, beliefs, and a sense of belonging that deserves reverence. The weight of student identities lies also in that they can boost the educational milieu in the classroom: as Ritchie (1989) has argued, “the personal, educational, and linguistic histories students bring to our classes contribute to the rich texture of possibilities for writing, thinking, and for negotiating personal identity” (p.157).

In this paper, the researcher explores the notion of writer identity as expressed through different discourses and textual features. Then the paper moves on to argue that little work has been explored to study Saudi ESL writers’ identity, for most of the empirical studies approach L2 Saudi writers writing style from a deficit perspective. For instance, such studies are rife with references to phenomena in these student writings as negative transfers and linguistic errors. Others are blinded from the discourse of these students (Saudi writers) by the minutia of mechanism and looked at student’s writings as substandard. However, studies like Canagarajah’s (2013) and Saba (2013) can forward the conversation into a deeper understanding of these students’ writing identities and how they perceive themselves as writers and knowledge constructors/negotiators. In the following sections, I begin with a brief definition of identity and how it is related to second language writing, followed by a brief explanation of Ivanić’s (1998) framework of writer identity and the difficulties it can present for students. Then, the article
presents previous research on how ESL Saudi students negotiate and construct their written identities in Western educational settings. Finally, the author proposes directions for future empirical and promising windows for studying the identity of Saudi ESL writers.

**Literature Review**

*Defining Identity in SLA and L2 Writing*

Many researchers in the field of composition and L2 writing have defined and treated identity in different ways; some researchers look at it in terms of voice (Elbow 1994; Matsuda & Tardy 2007; Matsuda & Jeffrey, 2012; Norton, 2019), persona, self-representation, and writer’s ethos (Cherry, 1988, Alharbi, 2019), and writers’ visibility and stance (Hyland 1999, 2012). Traditionally, identity was defined as a static mental representation of one’s self. However, more researchers are looking at it as an evolving construct. Williams (2006) proposed that identity “as opposed to an internal somewhat stable sense of ‘self,’ has been recognized as a construction, influenced by culture and ideology and changeable depending on the social context” (p.4). This take on identity as a construct goes along with Park’s (2007) definition of identity as “an inherently social product that is jointly created by communicators, rather than as a pre-determined, psychological construct that is lodged within each individual’s mind” (p. 341).

Moreover, scholars from various disciplines proffered other definitions of identity. To provide a more lucid understanding of identity as an evolving topic in ESL research, Norton (2000) reaffirmed that identity deals with “how people understand their relationship to the outside world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future” (p.12). From the psychosocial perspective, however, identity is an individual’s self-concept deriving from their awareness of membership in a particular social group (Milville, Koonce, Darlington, & Whitlock, 2000).

Concerning the social definition of identity, Ivanicˇ (1998) elaborated on writers’ identity and asserts that identity is constructed through struggles with the powerful ideological and discoursal dominations in society as members construct their identities as a result of social interaction with and affiliation to a certain community. For Ivanič, “Writing is an act of identity in which people align themselves with socio-culturally shaped possibilities for selfhood, playing their part in reproducing or challenging dominant practices and discourses, and the values, beliefs, and interests which they embody” (p. 32). Also, Hyland (2012) referred to writers’ identity as a matter of what we are and do, and ultimately of how we, as writers, express such thoughts in written discourse and how these identities are a pre-established discourse of one’s repertoire, academic discourse, social values, and personal experiences.

Furthermore, the writer’s discourse and identity are intertwined; Gee (1989) provided a comprehensive perspective: identity and discourse are co-constitutive that aid educational research to provide a means for the expression of those written identities. Gee (1989) has described discourse as an “identity kit” (p. 7) or as “ways of being certain kinds of people” (Gee, 2000, p. 110). Informed by the above-mentioned perspectives, I define identity in L2 academic writing as (1) ESL writers’ perceptions of their personal and social relationships with their new academic discourse community, (2) the factors and processes that construct these relationships within power dynamics, (3) dynamics adopted by these students to legitimize their members in L2 academic
writing in a Western environment, and (4) ways in which students position themselves or are positioned by in a new academic discourse community where linguistic and cultural diversity prevails.

Identity in Second Language Writing: A Brief Background

Ortega (2009) proposed that the study of identity and L2 learning is one of the most thought-provoking research areas in the field of applied linguistics, for its importance is worth consideration. Moreover, Schmitt (2010) asserted that identity, especially in applied linguistics, is an important social factor because of linguistic patterns signal not only social and individual identity but also people's awareness of their identities in language use.

In the U.S., the heterogeneous population of students throughout the twentieth century was manifested in the college classroom with the entrance of students from multi-geographical and racial levels including non-traditional students as well as first-generation (Young, 2014). In 1974, the Conference on College Composition and Communication issued a policy statement in response to the linguistic diversity of the U.S composition classroom. This statement empowers L2 students and encourages teachers to understand the students’ identities. The statement titled Students' Right to their Language and reads as follows: "We affirm the students' right to their patterns and varieties of language—the dialects of their nurture or whatever dialects in which they find their own identity and style " (p. 2). After that, several compositionists started to explore the possibilities of different identities students might bring to the classroom. Scholars such as Smitherman (1977), Heath (1983), Shaughnessy (1977), and Bartholomae (1986) shed light on the language use from a social lens, which may help ease students into formal educational settings (Young, 2014).

Interestingly, researchers in second-language writing have been giving more attention to L2 writers to understand the nature of their written identities and appreciate the Englishes that international students bring to the class (see Matsuda. 2001). For instance, Cox, Jordan, and Ortmeier-Hooper (2010) have described that the field of L2 writing has tried “to reconcile the identities students bring with the identities their instructors expect them to occupy—or at least perform—as they develop into academic and professional writers” (p. xvii).

While the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) statement of Students' Right to their Language in 1974 covered native English varieties, Horner, Lu, Royster and Trimbur (2011) went beyond that and included nonnative users of English. They called for a new translingual approach in teaching writing to “develop alternatives to conventional treatments of language difference” (p.304). Horner et al.'s article “Language Difference in Writing: Toward a Translingual Approach” reinforced that viewing language differences should help teachers to “honor and build on, rather than attempt to eradicate, those realities of difference” (p.313). A translingual pedagogy approach indeed allows teachers to discover the heterogeneous, fluid, and negotiable identities within a writer.

Ivanič Framework to Study Writer’s Identity

To understand how Saudi ESL writers position their identities to Western literacy practices and discourse convention, Ivanič (1998) framework is helpful in this conversation; it is a comprehensive tool for studying the nuances of ESL Saudi written texts, understanding how their
cultural values are represented in the text, looking at how they negotiate and construct their identities with the socially available resources, and analyzing how Saudi practice writing literacy as a novel tool for possible identities. Indeed, this framework can foster our understanding of any type of writer’s identity “of any age undertaking any type of writing in any cultural context” (p.159).

Ivanić (1998) instrumental book provides a useful, overarching framework for understanding identity in writing of different levels. She postulates four aspects of writer identity: “autobiographical self,” “discoursal self,” “self as author,” and “possibilities for self-hood” (p. 23). Clark and Ivanić (1997) commented on these types of writer identity and assert that “there is little research to these aspects of writer identity, and we recommend further studies (…) in a language other than their first” (pp. 159-160).

The autobiographical self simply means the writer’s sense of self: Ivanić (1998) explained it as “a writer’s sense of their roots, of where they are coming from” (p. 24). This type of identity, which is socially constructed, is drawn from Goffman’s notion of a performer (in this case, the writer) who summons previous life experiences and social positions to perform a written identity in discourse. To put it in practice, a writer’s autobiographical self in writing may include his/her L1 cultural and social literacy, the previous readings about the topic of L2 learning and identity, professional background, and previous academic trajectories including conferences and informal discussions in the classroom.

The discursive features used by the writers can also imply some aspects of his/her identity; that is, the discoursal-self can give an impression of identity through the varied usage of the lexicon in a certain genre and sometimes is termed as the writer’s voice (Ivanić, 1998; Matsuda, 2001). For instance, a writer can take on an academic voice in any given area by using certain discoursal features that are associated with the field they are studying. These features can include “nominalization, use of hedges and boosters, reporting verbs, APA style citations, self-mention, and so on” (Matsuda, 2105, p. 144). These features can also encompass a broader range of non-discursive features, such as “the choice of topic, the points of emphasis in the discussion, and the attention to historical details” (Matsuda, 2015, p.144). It should also be noted that this category is inseparable from the first one—the autobiographical self. These discoursal choices are influenced by one’s autobiographical self, but they are also a conscious decision to reflect oneself in the eyes of the readers.

Perhaps, the most powerful category is the self as the author; a writer can perform and treat writing with a sense of being the author. The writer as an author is similar to what Foucault calls “author-function” (as cited in Matsuda, 2015, p. 125) since this type of identity is associated with gender, class, and the ethnicity of the writer. The writer’s self as author projects him/her in the discourse as an authority in the field. Readers in the discipline can also construct the writer’s self as an author. The continuum of the writer’s authority varies among different authors and readers. In this sense, the writer may “create more room for negotiating discourse conventions, as readers are more willing to give the benefit of the doubt to the author if they believe that the author is an accomplished writer” (Matsuda, 2015, p.144).
All of the above-stated possibilities of writers’ identities can be enabled or constrained by one’s possibilities of selfhood—i.e., through the socially available identity options and discursive resources. Writing is not just a set of textual features, but it can also carry socially shared assumptions and practices that allow people to construct their identities or ways of being in society. Those resources may include various discoursal features and argumentative strategies from various genres, which either enable or constrain the writer’s construction of a sense of identity appropriate for the situation.

**Why Saudi Arabian ESL Writers**

In recent years, the number of Saudi students joining American universities has dramatically increased. *Inside Higher Education* announced that the number of Saudi students in the United States has increased by 11%, and this bring Saudi students to nearly 70,000. The journal also reported that these populations represent the fourth largest group of international students by country of origin in U.S. universities, after students from China, India, and South Korea. In 2015, the Institute of International Education reported that the Saudi government is sending tens of thousands of Saudi students to the United States to develop a globally competent workforce. This exchange is part of a promising program that King Abdullah launched in 2005 and that is scheduled to continue through 2020.

An examination of these students’ identities raises questions of othering, marginalization, and empowerment, which—in turn—might affect their literacy development, including writing. For example, Giroir (2014) explained critically in his narrative inquiry that post-9/11 discourses shaped how Saudi students saw themselves concerning the larger L2 community. They had expectations of being treated unequally and positioned based on their religious and ethnic identity.

When they arrive in the U.S., most often, ESL writers are being pushed to adapt to common Western writing practices and conventions, which can include objectivity, challenging the author, and deconstructing social myths. These practices, which can allow them to transform their perspective towards life, can pose some challenges since these literacy practices are not the types of literacy practices taught in their first language (L1) home education (Barnawi, 2011). Influenced by the teacher-dominant environment, their perception of writing can simply mean how to produce an error-free text. Another important factor is the absence of English composition as well as L1 composition practice in the high school curriculum, which even makes it more challenging for Saudi ESL writers to master L2 writing.

Additionally, Saudi students in the U.S are among the underrepresented groups in identity research (Song, 2016). Unfortunately, most of the previous studies that have been conducted on Saudi writing learners overlooked how these populations can see themselves as writers, and how the different practices that are not promoted back home can help crystalize their possible L2 identities. Instead, many of these studies analyze students’ texts from a traditional lens of contrastive rhetoric that “tends to ignore the multiple factors that contribute to the process and product of L2 writing, such as L1 writing expertise, developmental aspects of L2 proficiency, and individual writers’ agency reflected in their intentions and preferences” (Kubota & Lehner 2004, p.12). Indeed, most of the research, specifically in the ESL context, conducted on the nature of...
Saudi L2 writing mainly ‘other’ their linguistic practices, label them as substandard writers of English and analyze their texts as a product, rather than vessels for ever-growing identities.

**Writing in Saudi Arabia**

To understand any phenomenon, it is significant to examine its ontogenesis, for we “need to concentrate not on the product of development but on the very process by which higher forms are established” (Vygotsky, 1978, p.64). In this sense, situating the Saudi context of teaching English and writing, can be a cornerstone for identity analysis. Hence, in Saudi Arabia, educators do not give much attention to composition class. For example, in high school, only one hour a week is allocated for writing, and no other writing assignments are required to pass any other classes. Therefore, the writing-intensive curricula in the U.S. might be quite a shock for many of these students.

Besides, the perception of English writing in the Saudi context is focused on the prescriptive level: heavily focused on vocabulary and grammar rules. Students in English classes are encouraged to parrot vocabulary and mimic grammar rules to supposedly be effective users of English (Al-Semari, 1993; Aljamhoor, 1996). For instance, Liebman-Kleine (1986) investigated forty-six essays by Arabic-speakers to better understand their writing style and ability. She concluded that Arabs were taught a great deal of grammar but few process techniques, such as planning, organization, and support. This can create a challenge when they study abroad.

Critical enough, Saudi students are influenced by the rhetorical styles of the Arabic language, their mother tongue. The Arabic rhetorical style is strongly influenced by a poetic oral tradition (Abu Rass, 2011). Historically, oral poetry in the Arabian Peninsula has played a major role in Arab culture, and its effectiveness is still alive today: the rhetorical style in Arabic writing tends to be repetitive, narrative-oriented, and flowery, for oral poetry was the primary means of telling stories in the tribal nomadic societies of the Middle East.

In the same vein, the nature of communal relationships typically impacts Saudi students’ writing style. In societies with often collective values (e.g., Saudi society), communication tends to be more emotionally interdependent and less direct (Fox, 1994), whereas in individual societies (e.g., American society) written communication tend to be more direct and emotionally independent (Triandis, Bontempo, & Villareal, 1988). These norms of communication influence the writers’ voice, identity, and rhetorical style. According to Al-Zahrani and Kaplowitz (1993), “Western cultures assign priority to the goals and identity of the individual, whereas non-Western cultures place a higher value on loyalty to the ... ethnic ... group” (p. 224). Since Arab ESL students generally belong to collectivist cultures, the value of collective voice might seem obvious in their writing styles as the desire to maintain social harmony influences how students write, learn, and think (Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999).

As a result of these students’ tendency to hold on to the tradition of the group, some scholars such as Cummings (1995) suggested that writing teachers might look at Arab student writers as knowledge tellers, who report information, but not as knowledge transformers, who synthesize information into personal and critically meaningful concepts. This is because they
“perceive writing in the traditional style where it abides by rules, and a certain structure” (Shukri, 2014, p.191).

However, some scholars look askance at such comparisons between the rhetorical style of Saudi students and the Western convention. In his seminal, yet criticized, work, Kaplan (1966) claimed that Arabic, as a Semitic language, “is based on a complex series of parallel constructions, both positive and negative” (p. 6) as opposed to English linear style. Although Kaplan's work was only on structural elements of the text, some writing scholars such as Matsuda (1997) called for a more multidimensional view of rhetoric, among which are the “textual features [that reflect] the personal background of the ESL writer” (p. 51). Similarly, Kubota and Lehner (2004) challenged essentialism: they problematize the differences of rhetoric in writing, for such established differences have “perpetuated static binaries between English and other languages” and promoted viewing students “as culturally lacking.” (p. 7). They further pointed out that cultural differences in writing should be critical and should “reject ahistorical, fixed, and simplistic definitions of cultural rhetoric, calling attention to multiple factors that may affect the structures and interpretations of L2 texts or texts in various languages” (p.12). In the next section, I review previous studies to showcase how researchers have investigated L2 Saudi writers from a deficit model and essentialized L2 Saudi writing as a substandard discourse.

A Heuristic Analysis of the Current Literature

Saudi L2 Writers: A Substandard Lens

The following studies (the one stated below) have focused on how ESL Saudi students are not legitimate ESL writers and are the illogical other. This assumption legitimizes unequal power relations and reinforces cultural essentialism that draws a binary distinction between the logical superior self and the other (Kubota & Lehner, 2004). Hence, this paper argues that most of the studies treated Saudi/Arab students’ writing as a product (i.e., using a textual interpretation approach); they do not explore the process to identify the growth of the writers’ unique identity. As argued above, writing, especially in the Western way, is an almost novel literacy practice for Saudi students; therefore, the researchers in the coming sections were blinded by the extent of how the students should adopt the western convention. They thus overlooked how these writers were able (or unable) to construct and negotiate their meaning in the new writing environment and how they utilized the new tool of writing practice to develop their possible selves.

Thompson-Panos’ and Thomas-Ružić’s (1983) article depicted Arab writers as non-compatible users of English as they transfer their L1 rhetorical moves into English. The purpose of their study was to understand the background of Arab students, which can help in understanding their struggles and providing the appropriate materials for teaching them. The results of the study show that the Arabic stylistic tradition of over-exaggeration and the use of superlatives is transferred into English text, which students should learn to abandon. They justify this stance by referring to Shouby (1951) that,

Arabs stand a good chance of being misunderstood, in Arabic, unless they over assert and exaggerate… if Arabs say exactly what they mean without the expected exaggeration, other Arabs may not only miss the point but may interpret the message to mean just the opposite (as cited in Thompson-Panos & Thomas-Ružić, 1983, p. 619).
These repetitions in Arabic style “can be ineffective or at least distracting when transferred to English, especially in written discourse” (Thompson Panos & Thomas-Ružić, 1983, pp. 545-546). In another study that virtually echoes the previous one, Fakhri (1994) analyzed a collection of 60 English essays, 30 of which are written by native Arabic speakers. He finds that Arabic writers employ a cyclical rhetorical style, overuse coordinating words such as “and”, and lack meta-linguistic skills. These rhetorical features, as Fakhri suggests, are not acceptable rhetorical features in the Western convention.

Aiming to understand Saudi ESL writers’ rhetorical style, Wege (2013) conducted a qualitative study to demonstrate “how features of Arabic rhetoric are reflected in essays written by native Arabic-speaking from Saudi Arabia at the college level” (p.10). The spurring moment of her research begins when she notices, as a writing teacher, that these writers manifest unique written styles relevant to their L1 cultural and social linguistic values. Wege (2013) focused on four rhetorical elements of Saudi students’ persuasive essays. These elements are the main idea, development in the body paragraphs, parallelism, and word repetition. In her findings, the students repeated the keyword “happiness” and “happy” for about 32 times, and other words such as “inside” were repeated for about 13 times to emphasize the importance of the message. The students also developed their writing styles by utilizing a combination of features of the Western as well as Arabic rhetoric.

In their initial paragraphs, the Saudi writers tended to be direct and inform their readers of what they are going to write about. On the other hand, they rephrased the premise in the paragraph three times: at the beginning, body, and the end of the paragraph, which reflects a unique rhetorical style that is extensively influenced by their mother tongue. Wege concluded that the influence of the L1 Arabic rhetoric is visible, and the students’ writing style can be summarized in the following points: “indirect, uses lengthy description, metaphors, and verses from the Qur’an in its development; utilizes parallelism to create a balance to the message; and employs word repetition to emphasize the importance of a message” (p.65). Although these discourses were meaningful to Wage, she does not acknowledge how these students draw from their linguistics resources to construct their unique discoursal-self; instead, she urges teachers to apply implicit instruction to help them write according to the Western convention.

In another mixed-method study, Barry (2014) focused again more on the structural, grammatical features of these writers. She investigates five ESL Saudi students in basic and freshman writing courses. She looks at Saudi students’ writing in terms of linguistic errors. She analyzes several writing samples from the Saudi ESL writers based on several factors, including: “use of conjunctions, use of the conventions of English expression, use of articles, word order, spelling issues, punctuation, and the cultural tendency for Arabic writers to employ over-exaggeration in their writing” (pp. 5-6). Results of the study resonate well with other literature: “errors in the use of punctuation, conjunctions, capitalization.” These types of micro syntactical elements seem to be the alluring space for writing teachers to focus on and overlooked how these writers develop their sense of writing ability through time. Barry seems to support the standardization movement and looks at non-native writers as deficit writers, who cannot express themselves as legitimate writers of English. She confirms that “L1 Arabic ESL learners need
instruction that focuses specifically on the Standard English conventions associated with punctuation, conjunctions, capitalization, and articles” (p.47). She overlooked how were they able to express themselves differently. Although she asserts that students must maintain their culture in writing, she seems to contradict herself by promoting the standardization of Western writing conventions.

In sum, research on the composing process of Saudi ESL writers has focused primarily on students’ writing from a structural lens and underestimated the role of the students’ different and evolving selves. These studies also do not investigate the ecology of these students’ writers: how students practice writing in their mother tongue/ L1, the identities associated with that, and how they transpire in L2 writing. While the perfect re-reproduction of the language is the primal goal in such studies, the humans—i.e., the unique individual selves of each student—are underrated in the process.

**Beyond Structuralism: A Point of Departure**

Undoubtedly, one’s writing is a portal to a treasury of one’s most complicated thoughts. Writing is an utterly invaluable tool, and it is essential for the understanding of human individual thoughts as well as social phenomena. The ultimate goal of researching identity in written discourse is to find with reverence the souls and worlds behind the words, and to empower writing students to unabashedly bring their voice into L2 discourse in ways that are meaningful to them. Claiming that the writer has only one voice or identity is contradictory to the nature of identity, which is dynamic in different rhetorical situations and genres. Instead, researchers should look, as Hirvela and Belcher (2001) suggested, for the “the plural rather than singular nature of voice” (p.45). From this stance, researchers should sort through L1 as well as L2 discourses and acknowledge their interactions and how they transfer or affect L2 writers’ voices.

That being said, in a qualitative study, Saba (2013), a female Saudi ESL writing teacher at Virginia Tech, sought to understand the obstacles faced by Saudi ESL writing students throughout their process of writing, especially when the writing course is integrated with critical thinking and reflection. The number of Saudi participants in this case study was ten—six female and four male Saudi Arabian ESL students. The researcher uses a variety of tools to capture their written identities: classroom observation, interviews with ESL students and teachers, and student writing samples. In this study, Saba (2013) looked at identity as a form of a written voice in general; she does not break voice down to look at the role of autobiographical self, discoursal and authorial selves in the students’ process of making these choices. Saba found out that,

the female students were able to progress and assert their voices, moving from silence to perceived knowledge.” On the other hand, the male students, while starting with a stronger voice when orally participating in class, were less able to demonstrate their critical thinking in writing (p.3).

Saba emphasizes that “their cultural and literacy practices, however, influence the type of topics and how they chose to express their critical thinking [orally], which differ from what is expected in US universities” (p.3).
In another case, Canagarajah’s (2013) ethnographic study on ESL Saudi Arabian students studying in the US is another pertinent contribution. The main purpose of Canagarajah’s article was to suggest translilingual pedagogies inspired by students’ creative strategies; he does not focus as much on the role of identity in these creative productions, yet he still does not deem them erroneous as long as they serve the rhetorical purpose, which many previous studies do not take into account.

The two participants are Buthainah and Fawzia. Buthaina treats writing as a metonymic of difference as the case: she starts her essay with “an epigraph,” composed of an Arabic proverb which is translated into: “Who fears climbing the mountains—Lives forever between the holes” (Canagarajah, 2013, p.51). Canagarajah observed other peculiar linguistic features of Buthainah’s essay and finds some creative, non-native language use. For instance, she used “storms of thoughts stampede” and “my literacy development shunts me” although “stampede” and “shunt” do not collocate with the rest of the words. Buthainah also employs a variety of rhetorical strategies to manifest her identity as a second language writer through non-discursive features, such as the type of the font and the section divider. She uses Islamic emoticons in her essay to express herself when words cannot. She also further explains that these drawings reflect her previous literacy practices and heritage.

The other Saudi participants, Fawzia, emphasized how proud one should be of her/his identities, she stated:

ESL students should never isolate their writing in English from their cultural beliefs… [they] should [not] use English cultural background to develop their ideas, they should stick to their identities and be proud to express themselves freely (p.52).

Though it seems that she is very committed to her identity, it is obvious, as Canagarajah (2013) contended, in her written discourse that she constructs a hybrid identity that merges her “culture resources with English” (p.52).

Although the main purpose of Canagarajah’s article was to understand the creative strategies that international students employ in their writing class and how these strategies can inform ESL writing teacher—dialogical pedagogy—he does not focus as much as on the role of identity in these creative productions beyond aligning oneself with the Western convention or finding a hybrid in between. Empirical research is needed to explore the intricacies within identity itself: the role of autobiographical self, discoursal, and authorial selves in the student’s’ process of making these creative choices.

Considering the critical aspects of students’ writers—other than looking at these writers as deficit ones—in the aforementioned studies, it is indispensable to expand our research on Saudi ESL identity: In fact, identity and writers function epistemologically to create and express knowledge that is not necessarily located in or limited by local practices, but ones can rather forward our understanding about how our student write and why they write through an awareness of who they are. Examining these students’ lived experiences (auto-biographical-self), discoursal features and voice (discoursal-self), and their power (authorial-self) should direct researchers as
well writing teachers in the field of L2 writing “to engage with issues surrounding language differences more critically” (Matsuda, 2014, p.483). In their analysis of Saudi L2 writing, English composition professionals and L2 writing specialists should move beyond surface issues, “errorization,” generality in understanding voice, or dualism in comprehending identity (looking at identity merely in terms of meshing Eastern/Western styles as in Canagarajah’s article, without considering Ivanič’s four layers of identity).

**Discussion and Further Directions**

Poststructuralism and heuristic approach, the systematic analysis of texts in the teaching of a foreign/second language, has been increasingly embraced by researchers in the field of foreign language teaching. Treating language differences as a distinct process enacted by L2 writers, researchers can explore nuanced meanings and identities that have been overlooked by the dominant White standardized discourse. Interestingly, Canagarajah (2002) encouraged educators to go beyond the level of one-size-fits-all pedagogy, and urged them to interpret the composing of their students not from the perspectives of English writers, but the ESL students’ perspectives:

Students cannot be expected to leave behind their identities and interests as they engage in the learning process. What I call the negotiation model requires that students wrestle with the divergent discourses they face in writing to creatively work out alternate discourses and illiteracies that represent better their values and interest. In some cases, this means appropriating the academic discourse and conventions in terms of the students’ backgrounds. It can sometimes mean a creative merging of conflicting discourses (p. 219).

Kubota & Lehner’s article (2004) unpacked the situated scholarly discourse on L2 writing and deconstructs the taken-for-granted differences between cultures in writing that reinforce linguistic racism. Some of the previous studies (e.g., Thompson-Panos’ & Thomas-Ružić’s, 1983; Fakhri, 1994; Wage 2013; Barry, 2014) have negatively created a deterministic view of L2 writing as they “inevitably transfer rhetorical patterns of their L1 in L2 writing” (p.9). Simultaneously, they have also perpetuated the ideology of superiority toward English rhetoric in their final thoughts/comments to conform to the standardized English style. These stigmatizations of students’ writings are similar to the “colonial dichotomies between the colonizer and the colonized” (Pennycook, 1998, as cited in Kubota & Lehner, 2004). Such rhetoric of differences might inevitably perpetuate the ‘Othering’ of student's L2 writing. Instated, taking on a critical approach can help researchers in L2 writing as well as students to see how L2 writing students subjectivities are formed and transformed across time and space through their writing practices.

L2 writers should be perceived as unique writers culturally and linguistically—as long as they achieve the rhetorical purposes of their writings (Canagarajah, 2013). They can be a living example of how language evolves, and they can also introduce new beautiful expressions into the language: intercultural rhetoric can bring many strengths to our writing classrooms that mainstream writers may not (Connor, 2004). Scholars, including L2 writing researchers, need to reconstruct a healthy, more egalitarian stance for writers other than mainstream ones and familiarize themselves with other versions of Englishes that may take place in today’s diverse classrooms (see Matsuda & Matsuda, 2010).
Instead of investigating how these L2 writers can write in standardized English, future research should address the following questions in American-oriented classroom communities: How do these students perceive writing in their L1? How can L2 writing help them mold new possible selves? Why do L2 writers write the ways they do? How do they grapple with the problems and challenges they face when writing in new environments? How do they develop voices as writers of Englishes? How do they negotiate their power and access as they develop their linguistic as well as cultural capital?

Since identity can be effective as an analytic tool for understanding writers’ development, the Ivanic framework can aid researchers in these inquiries. It can provide us with promising insights into how L2 writing ESL students think, what they know, what they do, how they learn to write, and how they—thus—develop their possible discoursal, auto-biographical, and authorial selves. It also makes us more aware enough to avoid attributing any writing style that is “foreign” to the mainstream teachers to merely cultural differences of the other.

In relation to the above discussion, Valdés (1992) wondered “how traditions governing appropriate expression of feelings or beliefs have an impact on students when they write?” (p.125). While it is easy to attribute writing differences to cultural norms as Valdés advocated here, a step forward in studying the nuances of these discourses is to rather consider the individual: how these writings are affected by the writers’ stance and identity evolution. Indeed, aspects pertinent to writers’ identity—such as social class—are crucial variables that affect how students perceive writing as a tool to develop their literacy.

Valdés also suggested other windows of exploration that are worthwhile here: how ESL writers—Saudi ones for this paper—position themselves in relation to the classroom authority, such as their teachers? Valdés asked “Do students limit how they argue, what they recount, what they explain because the teacher is the sole audience? Do they consider certain kinds of writing to be inappropriate for addressing an instructor”? (p.135). How a student position in relationship to power is an essential aspect of figuring out membership and thus shaping one’s writing.

The researcher position might also affect how L2 writing students are researched. For example, etic researchers (those who lack the knowledge of these student’s subtle cultural practices) might be easily lured to construct the binary of us vs. the other. Future research on L2 writing must take into account the social and psychological intricacies of L2 students as an important variable that affect students’ writing and stance. Thus, to push the field forward, we should ensure that researcher have enough emic knowledge that helps them stay “[cautious] in attributing [phenomena] to cultural background” (Valdés, 1992, p.135) where they might be a result of other factors that might play a vital role in student’s writing.

While some of the above-cited research point out clearly that Arab students are influenced by their poetic and Islamic tradition, they do not look at the relationship between L1 speech and L2 writing. Researchers need to look at how students can argue orally in their L1 and how that is reflected in their L2 writing. L1 speech, which is generally more emphasized in Arabic, can subsume a repertoire of identities that Saudi L2 writers might carry out in L2 writing. This identity
translation might shift the way we view some phenomena in their writing from sheer flaws to reverence-worthy identity reincarnations (Alharbi, 2019).

Along with these directions, the poststructuralist construct of investment (Bourdieu, 1986; Norton, 2013) can help researchers also to depict how L2 writing students acquire a wider range of symbolic resources (language, education, friendship), which eventually increases the value of their cultural capital and social power. The construct of investment provides insightful questions for understanding the writer’s’ identity from a broader scope: to what extent is the learner motivated to write in the target language? Are L2 writing students invested in the language practices of their classroom or community? To what extent investment can affect writer identity? A writer may be highly motivated but may nevertheless have little access to L2 discourses. Moreover, the prompts that are given to students may not be appropriate in their culture or religion (e.g., taboo topics) or some students have a little schematic background about the topic; thus, students are unfairly labeled as substandard writers. Such questions can also be eye-openers for future research on L2 students’ writings.

Indeed, with a thorough dissection of previous studies, we can delineate future itineraries of ESL writing research: future studies should move from a traditional epistemology of differences to challenges deficit, assimilationist, and essentialist orientations in looking at L2 discourses. In this pursuit, critical inquiry into student minorities’ texts give educators more insight about linguistic diversity and empower L2 writers to develop their writing identities “as [they] resist assimilation and appropriate the rhetoric of power to enable oppositional voices” (Kubota & Lehner, 2004, p.15). Enthusiasts in the field look forward to future development in L2 writing practices that deconstruct the taken-for-granted compartment of L2 and L1 discourse and should investigate how L2 writing practices can answer the demands of the increasingly complex power relationships in our world today. Matsuda (2015) heralded an upcoming point of departure: “The development of [identity], then, may also involve … an awareness of how the self is situated in complex relations of power” (p. 154).

All in all, L2 writing in general and Saudi ESL writing in specific must entail a deeper analysis of how L2 writing students develop their selves as writers in the process of gaining L2 literacy. Research on the writing of the identities of diverse students can bring up a healthy conversation about the rhetoric of difference and its controversial repercussions in today’s globalized world.

Conclusion

ESL students’ written discourses carry valuable meanings that are worth investigating to better inform L2 writing teachers and the scholarship in general. When pursuing a degree in the U.S., Saudi students—whether graduate, undergraduate, or ESL—bring their cultural, ideological, social, and educational practices into the classroom, which might seem odd to some non-Arabic professors. The purpose of this critical paper was to delineate how L2 Saudi writers were perceived as deficit leaners in the literature; therefore, this paper adds critical insights to the exciting literature about L2 Saudi writers and invite L2 researchers to deconstruct the essentialized view towards peripheral writers. Throughout the paper, the researcher problematized that most studies about L2 Saudi writers were rife with references to phenomena in these student writings as negative transfers...
and linguistic errors. Thus, future studies should consider L2 writing from not only a mere structural perspective but also, they should consider the wider macro effect of student-writers and investigate contesting issues such as writer’s identities and the unique process in writing for nonmainstream L2 writers.

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References


Reimagining the Ever-Changing Construct of Saudi Writerly Identity

Alharbi


Unpacking Reflective Practice in the Praxis of English Language Teaching in Indonesia

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Abstract
This paper portrays the ways Indonesian English Language Teaching (ELT) practitioners review and reflect on their practice, seek to expand new ideas and techniques they can apply in their classrooms. This study aims to enhance our understanding of what it is actually that Indonesian ELT practitioners are doing, understanding, and what they are trying to achieve in their classroom activities. This study investigates explanatory answers to a single research question: In what ways are Indonesian ELT practitioners reflective in their classroom practice? This study conducted at secondary schools and universities uses a qualitative approach, utilizing observation, interviews, and documents as data collection methods, and content analysis as a means of data analysis. This research involved four participants selected purposively and voluntarily. Its findings, analysis, and interpretation are presented descriptively. The major finding of this study suggests that Indonesian ELT practitioners are reflective in three ways: being reflective within the process of their teaching, known as “reflection-in-action,” being reflective in their post-teaching referred to as “reflection-on-action,” and being reflective in their future improvement planning known as “reflection-for-action.” The practitioners’ reflexivity aims to improve the quality of their teaching, which can potentially affect the quality of their students’ learning. Thus, arguably Indonesian ELT practitioners have performed the praxis in their language teaching through reflective practice.

Keywords: English Language Teaching, Indonesia, praxis, reflective practice

Introduction

Success in the classroom depends mostly on the personal investment of the teacher, how this investment is enacted interpersonally and socially, and how it establishes the classroom as a safe and engaging zone for language learning (Kiely, Davis, Carter, & Nye 2008). This investment is then called RP. By reflecting on what was happening in the classroom, ELT practitioners authorize themselves to do self-appraisal, analyzing the spots they have satisfactorily performed (to be developed and upgraded) and the critical areas where further attention and improvement need to be harbored. A kind of self-empowering through which a pedagogical change in the form of an informed practice can take place. This line of thought is based on the belief that the reflective practitioner is continuously changing, both in terms of their understanding of the factors which shape classroom learning, their planning for lessons and learning activities, and their classroom teaching (Kiely, 2013). Reflective teaching (RT), therefore, can be postulated as an activity that informs practice yet helps teachers develop their theories of practice. Being able to learn from what happen in the classroom allows teachers to reconstruct and redesign their future teaching, which leads to a more informed practice. Based on these evolving and self-developed theories of practice, the practitioners create the praxis of their ELT. Such praxis, we assumed, has been a part of ELT practice in Indonesia, which is worth unpacking via this research.

This research is an activity with a specified aim, purported to bring about a significant contribution to the field of ELT, articulated based on a down-to-earth research problem. This study aims to contribute to the renewed understanding and awareness of the vital role of teaching practitioners’ reflexivity in shaping classroom-based practices. This study highlights explicitly how Indonesian teaching practitioners develop their professional teaching practice by performing reflection in-action, reflection on-action, and reflection for-action. Precisely, this study aims to unpack the praxis of reflective practice (RP) of ELT practitioners within the Indonesian context. Farrell (2013) espouses that the interest in reflective teaching is principally intended for the empowerment of teachers. This research is projected to investigate the extent to which Indonesian ELT practitioners have engaged in the empowering idea of RP. In this research, we assume that such RP does exist in ELT practice in Indonesia. We also believed that the RP in Indonesian ELT practice is distinctive in its contexts. This distinctiveness is unpacked through a single explorative question: In what ways do Indonesian ELT practitioners engage in the idea of RP in their classroom practice?

Theoretical Framework

The platform of the theoretical framework used in this paper serves as the foundation for building up the conceptualization of RP as a pattern of praxis and an analytical tool for analyzing, discussing, and interpreting the findings of the research. Starting this reflective discourse with the ideas of teaching and learning, RP and praxis within ELT is a coherent trajectory.

Teaching and Learning

Conventionally, teaching cannot be defined apart from learning. Brown considers teaching as ‘guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the conditions
for learning. Your understanding of how the learner learns will determine your philosophy of education, your teaching style, your approach, methods, and classroom techniques” (Brown, 2007, p. 8). This signifies that teachers have a crucial role in the success of students’ learning. Following Brown’s stance, the very first thing a teacher needs to do to make a meaningful learning is to grasp how the learner learns. For that reason, teachers should be able to elicit students’ interest in the classroom since it involves the challenge of sustaining learners’ efforts over time until their goals are achieved (Hall, 2018). Accordingly, teachers should not be viewed as technicians whose primary duty is to realize a fixed set of teaching procedures (Tudor, 2001, cited in Hall, 2018), but as active participants in the creation of classroom realities, and they act in the light of their own beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the relevant teaching situation (Williams & Burden, 1997, in Hall, 2018). In Hall’s (2018) view, teachers should contribute to the supporting conditions for useful foreign language learning to take place, which includes such aspects as organizing, motivating, and guiding learners. Undisputably, there is more than one ‘right’ way to teach, and that language teaching can be considered as a principled problem-solving activity for its local issues (Widdowson, 1990, in Hall, 2018). Hence, teachers need to equip themselves with reflective aptitude. Teachers can adapt Kumaravadivelu’s reflective model of teaching in the form of observational-reflective techniques (Kumaravadivelu, 2003), which involves “a cognitive dimension that links thought with activity, centering on the context-embedded, interpretive process of knowing what to do” (Freeman, 1998, p. 99).

**Ideas of Reflective Practice**

Education is about learning, and learning is a function of reflection. RP offers one powerful way for educators—individually and collectively—to stay challenged, effective, and alive in their work (York-Barr, et al. 2006). The idea of reflective practice (RP) was spearheaded and made famous by John Dewey, who recommended teachers to take reflective action that involves “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads” (Dewey, 1933: 9). In this view, Dewey sees reflective action as a sort of teacher-self-initiated activity involving willingness to engage systematically in constant self-appraisal and professional development. Donald Schon introduced a more practical and intuitive RP. Schon’s RP seems to be more experience-based practice underlining the importance of framing and reframing practice to make more sense of it (1983, 1987). It is a model much more based on what practitioners perform in the field. In this light, Schon developed the ideas of reflection into two major types: 1) reflection-in-action and 2) Reflection-on-action (see types of RP). According to Abednia (2012), Schon’s (1983) reflective practitioner model provides teachers with “the ability to theorize about their practices and practice their personal theories” (p. 706). Through constant reflection on learning and experiences, teachers can potentially embrace the capacity for being theorists of their practice.

Reflection includes reasoning, the creative production of ideas, problem-solving, and the awareness of all these mental activities in metacognition (Watson, 1996). The practitioners engage in order to improve teachers’ professional practice (Sellars, 2014). A more operational idea of RP was postulated by Zeichner and Liston (1996) who consider it as deliberate thinking about actions that has already taken place and deliberate examination of classroom
procedures, attitudes, and interactions. Logically, a teacher should question the goals and the values that guide his or her work in the context in which he or she teaches. In the domain of ELT, the stance of RP has been intensively promoted by Farrell (2007, 2008, 2011, 2015). Engaging in RP implicatesthat teachers are articulating their underlying beliefs about teaching and learning and comparing these to classroom practices to see if there is convergence or divergence (Farrell, 2015). By engaging in RP, teachers can “construct and reconstruct their own beliefs and practices...so that they can provide optimum learning conditions for their students” (Farrell & Mom, 2015, p. 863). This reflective involvement gives a sense that RP provides working space for teachers to understand deeper the learners’ needs and abilities. Hence, RP can be one of the leading means of enhancing not only a teacher’s professional development but also their educational practices (Ting, 2013). Practically, RP pushes teachers from their knowledge base of distinct skills to modify their skills to suit specific contexts and situations, and eventually invent new strategies (Larrivee, 2000). In this way, RP can facilitate professional development since it helps teachers think about what happened, why it happened, and what else could have been done to reach their goals (Cruickshank & Applegate, 1981). Sensibly, RP can potentially derive a better-informed decision of practice.

Reflexivity is an indispensable aspect of language teaching, without which teachers just practice their routines and habit. Reflective teachers reflect in their teaching practice (i.e., self-observation) and then modify their practice (i.e., self-evaluation) to make sure the outcome will be satisfactory (Nodoushan, 2011). The stance of evaluation within the frame of RP seems to refer much to the formative evaluation, which is enacted “as part of the process of program development in order to find out what is working well, and what is not, and what problems need to be addressed” (Richards, 2001, p. 288). Reflective evaluation is aimed for the development and improvement of the delivery of the program by solving the problems that have been identified during the program (Richards, 2001). Doing reflective teaching (RT) can heighten self-awareness. Farrell notes that teachers who undergo RT become more conscious about their work in the classroom and beyond (Farrell, 2007). In his research of RP in Higher Education in Cyprus, Christodoulou (2013) found that ELT practitioners had a felt sense of change in their practice, by reframing aspects of their practice. The practitioners were inclined to see things from different perspectives and change aspects of practice, which served as a powerful mechanism for enacting and sustaining reflective development.

Types of RP

In this article, the idea of RP is based on the combination of Dewey’s (1933) idea of RT, Schon’s (1983) intuitive, artistic reflection, and Farrell’s proactive reflection (Farrell, 2007). Dewey (1933) recommended teachers to take reflective action that involves ”active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in light of the grounds that support it and the further consequences to which it leads” (p. 9). For Dewey, reflection is a practice that will result in the professionalization of the field and is a means of controlling “action that is merely repetitive, blind, and impulsive” (Dewey, 1933, p. 17). Schon’s RP is more intuitive and practical. Schon (1983, 1987) divided RP into two types: reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. Schon referred to reflection-in-action as the process of observing our thinking and action as they are occurring, to make adjustments in the moment, and reflection-on-action as the process of looking back on and learning from experience or action to
affect future action. Ghaye (2011) added an additional meaning for both types. Reflection-in-action can mean a reflection in a particular context or workplace, for example, in a classroom. Reflection-on-action can also mean focusing on something significant.

The expansion of the previous two sorts of reflection into the third kind of reflection, reflection-for-action, was initiated by Farrell (2011). This third reflection, in Farrell’s view, can mean two things. First, we do reflection because we want to understand what we have done better, know more about it, change, or improve it. Second, this reflection is about planning to take some positive steps to do something with what we have learned (Farrell, 2011). In this manner, teachers can prepare for the future by using knowledge from what happened during class and what they reflected on after class (Farrell, 2007). Hence, RP can be viewed as an action or performance: it is teaching which is shaped and informed by the outcomes of reflection (Kiely, 2013), of which the goal is to derive improvement in the practice of teaching for the students’ learning.

**The Conception of Praxis**

Praxis is not just a practice, but it is a reflective practice (RP). When teachers do RP, they actually perform their praxis. This standpoint is based on Freire’s (1972) view considering praxis as reflection and action directed at the structures to be transformed. This gives a sense that praxis is about penetrating thought in action and action in thought. Similarly, van Manen (1991) contends that a theory of practice is conceived when there is a union of action and thought or, more precisely, when there is action in thought and thought in action. In terms of deriving a theory of practice, pedagogical thoughtfulness simultaneously feeds and is fed by reflective capabilities of teachers that enable them to understand and identify problems, analyze and assess information, consider and evaluate alternatives and then choose the best available alternative, which is then subjected to further critical appraisal (Kumaravadivelu, 2001: 541). Kumaravadivelu (2001) further postulates that “theory and practice mutually inform, and together constitute a dialectical praxis, an affirmation that has recently influenced L2 teaching and teacher education as well” (p. 540). Praxis as the second key concept here can be conceptualized as “reflection combined with action in an ongoing process that leads to understanding and transforming social practices” (Burns, 2015, p. 100). Hence, praxis can be understood as what teachers do or realize in their classroom based on what they have critically thought of. It is about thoughts in action.

**Previous Studies**

There has been a myriad of researches on RP, especially on ELT. Yet, there were not many typers of research oriented to explore the practice of the ideas of RP in its three classical divisions: reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection-for-action. There were only two articles identified to specifically addressing these sorts of RP. The first was done by Farrell (2014), who tried to cultivate the disposition of reflection within the lens of Schonian RP, in which he divided it into three kinds mentioned earlier. Farrell sought to analyze these three components of RP in the light of Deweyan RT, characterized by three aspects: open-mindedness, whole-heartedness, and responsibility. Farrell adhered to the idea of Dewey (1933), who mentioned that all three of these attitudes are not only crucial in “order that the habit of thinking in a reflective way may be developed…they are traits of personal character
that have to cultivated” (p. 139). Although Farrell tried to spell out the ideas of Deweyan and Schonian RP through his experiences as both a secondary teacher and a workshop facilitator, the concepts of RP were still very theoretical. Despite its clarity and quality of RP analysis, the article remains theory-led, not data-led.

The second study indicating more data-led orientation was conducted by Azizah, Nurkamto, and Indrajati (2018), who are coincidently Indonesian ELT researchers and practitioners. In their research, they found out that (1) in doing their reflection-in-action the pre-service teachers gave a simple question and analyzed the class condition at the teaching time; (2) in their reflection-on-action the pre-service teachers did reflection by remembering what things appeared and discussed it with the teacher and peer; (3) in their reflection-for-action the pre-service teachers used the discussion to predict and prepare the future teaching. These findings are interesting, but not entirely clear what changes were made or done as the results of their RP. Besides, the research subjects were pre-service teachers who were believed to have insufficient knowledge of the conduct of RP. Farrell (2014) underlines that “experienced teachers can use their repertoire of teaching routines to experiment in order to solve the dilemma, but novice teachers may have a problem reflecting-in-action because they have not built-up such an advanced schema of teaching routines” (p. 8). Since there has not been any research particularly addressing how in-service teachers practice their RP (reflection-in-action, reflection-on-action, and reflection-for-action) within the Indonesian context, this research has the potential to address this gap. This research was designed to give more realities than an assumption on how RP was materialized by ELT practitioners in locally context-specific areas. Fundamentally, this research aims to add our understanding of how Indonesian ELT practitioners perform their RP in their day-to-day teaching activities.

Methodology
This section deals with the type of subjects used as a sample, the basis for its selection, and how it was selected. Besides, it addresses how the data collected, analyzed, and interpreted.

Context and Participants
The participants for this research were four ELT practitioners of Secondary High Schools and Universities in Purwokerto, Banyumas Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. Both purposive sampling and the voluntary systems were used in selecting the participants. As the name suggests, the purposive sample has been chosen for a specific purpose (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011). The criteria set for the selection underpinned that the samples had to be ELT practitioners who have been teaching at least for five years and teaching at either universities or secondary high schools in the sub-district area of Purwokerto, Central Java, Indonesia. Their participation was fully voluntary-based, and they had the full right to withdraw from the research at any time they consider appropriate to do so.

Data Collection
The data used and analyzed in this paper were collected in three data collection techniques: observation, interview, and documents.

Observation

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An observation is a way for a researcher to document everyday practices of participants and to understand better their experiences (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Since this is a classroom observation, in which we observed 4 ELT teachers twice, we served as an unobtrusive observer who aimed at documenting, describing complex classroom actions and interactions (Marshall & Rossman, 1999), or a complete observer (Cohen et al. 2011) who only observed and was detached from the group, or a passive observer (Springer, 2010) or passive participant (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). We did not interact with the participants we observed to avoid potentially biasing the observation and just watched teaching-learning activities without engaging in them directly (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991).

Interview

In this research, we used a semi-structured interview, where the questions were predetermined but the order was modified based on the perception of what seemed most appropriate (Robson 2002). Additional questions were in response to participants’ comments and reactions. In this interview, we explore their perspectives on the realization of RP. Although we prepared a list of questions, the interviewees were set free to express their ideas related to the given topic (Boyce & Neale, 2006). Two-times interview with 4 participants was aimed at capturing descriptive data about the interviewees’ ideas, attitudes, and perceptions about RP in their respective classroom teaching.

Documents

To complement the data collected through observation and interview, the researchers added documents to study. Savin-Baden and Major (2013) define documents as any written, printed, visual or electronic matter that provides information or evidence that serves as an official record. For this research, the documents to be investigated and studied comprise of 1) teacher’s text-books, manuals, 2) students’ records, work, and daily performance appraisal, 3) school and university syllabuses, and students’ register.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the observation and interview data, I just employed content analysis (CA) to get a compact data set so that I was able to generate codes, categories and themes, and an overarching theme. Four pivotal abbreviations are used in this analysis. P1 stands for participant one, and the same thing applies to P2, P3, and P4. C1C1U1 means category one, code one, and unit of analysis one. The same principle applies to C2C2U2 and so forth.

Content Analysis

In general, the CA we conducted was based on the processes and procedures shown in Table one.
Table 1. *Processes of data analysis in content analysis*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis phases</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparation</td>
<td>Being immersed in the data and obtaining the sense of whole, selecting the unit of analysis, deciding on the analysis of manifest content or latent content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing</td>
<td>Open coding and creating categories, grouping codes under higher order headings, formulating a general description of the research topic through generating categories and subcategories as abstracting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting</td>
<td>Reporting the analyzing process and the results through models, conceptual systems, conceptual map or categories, and a story line.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note 1.* Adapted from Elo and Kygas (2008, p. 110)

Since the defining feature of CA is the process of data summarizing and reporting, this CA focused on summarizing and reporting the contents and messages of the data (Cohen et al., 2011). CA is also known for its strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination, and verification of the contents of written data (Flick, 2014; Mayring, 2004). It should result in replicability and transferability of the inferences from texts (data) to the contexts of their use (Krippendorff, 2004), implying that texts cannot be detached from its contexts. Hence, the qualitative meanings of the data should be described and contextualized (Schreier, 2012). The researchers did this by assigning successive parts of the material to the codes, Categories, and themes, which contained all those aspects of RP. The main goal in this CA has been to seek to arrive at an understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspectives of those (ELT practitioners) experiencing it (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013).

**Findings and Discussion**

All the findings in the research were purported to provide sufficient answers to the explorative question of the following: “In what ways are the Indonesian ELT practitioners reflective in their teaching praxis?” The analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the findings are based on the CA results as indicated in Table two..

Table 2. *Results of CA of RP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching theme</th>
<th>RP as the praxis of ELT in Indonesian context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td>Reflection-in-action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Teaching adjustment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Codes</td>
<td>Adjusting lesson plan and changing teaching approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units of analysis</td>
<td>Excerpts 1 up to 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table two displays the CA results, indicating the components of the praxis of ELT in Indonesia entailing three types of reflection as the themes of the analysis. These are used as the basis for the following data analysis and discussion.

**Reflection-in-action**

Teaching itself is a reflective activity as it is hard to imagine a teacher who does think when designing, planning, and acting his teaching. Evaluation is usually conducted through self-reflection. This implies a reflective teaching (RT) whereby teachers engage in a successive series of reflection and modification. Reflective teachers, as Nodoushan (2011) suggested, reflect on their teaching practice (i.e., self-observation) and then modify their practice (i.e., self-evaluation) to make sure the outcome will be satisfactory. For reflection-in-action, the analysis is based on three main guiding queries: what was planned, what was done, and why was it considered reflection-in-action?

**What was planned?**

The activities specified in the lesson plan to be performed by the teacher include four main points: to explain, to do question and answer sessions, to guide games, and to assign tasks to the students. The lesson plan also mentioned the activities that the students are supposed to do, which cover four equivalent activities, namely to listen, to perform question-and-answer, to play the games (role-plays), and to do any given assignment, as shown in Excerpt one.

Excerpt 1:

R: Ooh, actually in the beginning, you wanted an individual work?
P4: Yea..yea..I wanted each student to show his or her ability to make sentences, but I saw their responses were relatively slow. Besides, there were some students who were late, so the information given beforehand was not had by the late students.

Interview with P4: C1C1U1

From the excerpt, we learn that P4 had a pre-planned activity for the students, namely, the students were required to do an individual activity to make sentences using compound verbs and later compound subjects. This activity, however, was not explicitly stated in the lesson plan. Very likely, this pre-planned activity belonged to the fourth list of student activity in the lesson plan, i.e., to do any assignment given by the lecturer in the classroom. Due to a particular reason, this pre-planned activity was not performed well by students; therefore, P4 decided to change that activity with a group-activity as explained in the next section.

**What was done?**

What P4 has done in her teaching activity indicates that she has a sense of practicality, having the ability to evaluate what seems to work effectively and what does not. This resonates with the idea of RP that can be a powerful way for teachers to stay challenged, effective, and alive in their work, as RP can lead teaching practitioners to grow and expand their repertoire of effective instructional practices individually and collectively (York-Barr, et al. 2006). At the outset of her teaching, she tried to implement what she has already put into her lesson plan, positing a general statement “asking students to do tasks.” However, in her real practice, P4 asked her students to make sentences using the compound verbs (and compound subjects) and helping verbs where necessary based on the pictures she provided, as shown in Excerpt two.
Excerpt 2:
P4: Maybe it's a...new story for you. Okay, I want you to make sentences from the image that I am showing you. Okay, what do you see here? Maybe you can think about sentences to describe the picture here. Okay ya... What does he do? Pull ya... Pull out... pardon? Pulling out something. eerr... So, can you say something by using compound verbs? Describing what is a... the grandfather here doing. Come on anybody... Okay, please make sentences by using compound verbs describing the picture here. Can you think of something from the image? Ya, please.

Observation with P4: C1C1U2

Excerpt two shows that P4 tried to engage her students in the activity of sentence elicitation. It also indicates that P4 tried to construct and reconstruct her own beliefs and practices to provide optimum learning conditions for her students (Farrell & Mom, 2015). P4 also showed other pictures based on which the students had to make different sentences. At this stage, the students made some trials but again still failed to create correct sentences. P4 seemed to realize that probably working individually seemed not to work effectively. This, therefore, was not a good option for this activity since the students remained confused and unable to produce the expected sentences. P4 therefore did reflection-in-action by weighing her thinking and observing her action as they are occurring to make adjustments in the moment of her teaching process (Schon 1983, 1987). Then, P4 made a quick reflection on what strategy to use to ease the students’ understanding of the compound verbs to make correct sentences. P4’s advocacy of RP has stimulated her from her knowledge base of specific skills to modify her skills to suit specific contexts and situations, and eventually invent new strategies (Larrivee, 2000). Based on her swift reflection on the individual activity efficacy in making sentences, she decided to change it into a group work activity, as seen in Excerpt three.

Excerpt 3:
P4: Now, think about making sentences by using compound verbs and compound subjects according to this slide. Ok, please think about it. Now you'll work in a group, how many students are there? One two three four five six seven eight nine ten. Okay, we can make it into five groups, so that you can work in four, so you... two students come here, and please work together with them. So, it's a group that consists of four students and for each group, please make as many sentences as possible. Please, discuss it. You will make sentences using compound subjects and compound verbs. Errr... You can write down as many sentences as possible. I will give you ten minutes to create sentences as many sentences as possible.

Observation with P4: C1C1U3

As shown in Excerpt 3, P4, therefore, had the initiative to change that individual approach into a group work approach, dividing students into five groups with four members in each group. At this stage, the students looked more enthusiastic because they could share their “burden” with their friends and answers together. So as a teacher, she appeared to be more assertive in asking the students to compete to make as many sentences as possible and to prove which group could make the most and correct sentences. P4’s evaluative reflection has enabled her to translate feedback into modification, adjustment, directional changes, and redefinitions as necessary (Richards, 2001).

Why is the difference a reflection-in-action?

The foregrounded situation P4’s classroom activity, its moment of thought (though not explicitly seen and identified as it was in the mind of the teacher, P4), its immediate action is taken to deal with the situation, and its intention, which was for the improvement of the practice were all identified. Such modification of practice culminates in a theory of practice.
Conceptually, such pedagogical thoughtfulness, in Kumaravadivelu’s (2001) stance, “simultaneously feeds and is fed by reflective capabilities of teachers that enable them to understand and identify problems, analyze and assess information, consider and evaluate alternatives and then choose the best available option, which is then subjected to further critical appraisal” (p. 541). All these reflective features were valid as they were justified by P4, as indicated in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 4:
R: Do you think in one session you can change your teaching technique?
P4: Yes. Yes. For example, like what I had just now. At rst, it was an individual task; I asked each student to make sentences. But seemingly, it was relatively slow and made me impatient since it was not like my expectation. I have been waiting as I really wanted to see each student have a quick thought bla…bla…bla…but their response was quite slow. So, I asked them to work in a group instead.
R: Ooh, actually in the beginning, you wanted an individual work?
P4: Yes. Yes. I wanted each student to show their ability to make sentences, but I saw their response was quite slow. So, I directly changed the mode of learning and asked them to do group work. In group work, they feel that if making mistakes, they will not be recognized. If there is something wrong, they will take ownership or responsibility altogether. So, they usually become more confident when working in a group.

Interview with P4: C1C1U4

Excerpt four shows another reason for the change, namely students’ slow response. The word slow here refers to students’ inability to grasp the idea of compound verbs and compound subjects and to create sentences based on the pictures provided. P4 also mentioned the positive sides of working in groups: the students can feel safe when making mistakes as they will not be boldly recognized by other students. Besides, if they are making wrong sentences, they will take shared responsibility altogether. It is not an individual mistake. Therefore, P4 added, when working in a group, the students usually become more confident. Based on these considerations, P4 initiated such a change in her teaching approach or technique. This initiative relates to “a cognitive dimension that links thought with activity, centering on the context-embedded, interpretive process of knowing what to do” (Freeman, 1998, p. 99). On brief, P4 has all the critical situations and requirements to take that thought in action by assessing what seemed to work well and what did not. When there is a union of action and thought or when there is action in thought and thought in action, according to van Manen (1991), there is a huge possibility for a practitioner to create and develop his or her theory of practice, resulted from pedagogical thoughtfulness, strongly suggesting the subsistence of the praxis of ELT in the Indonesian context.

Reflection-on-action

Reflection-on-action tends to be undertaken explicitly after the event, problem, or situation that initiates the process (Sellers, 2014). This concept is widely accepted among teaching practitioners. Slightly different from the stance of reflection-in-action, this reflection-on-action means looking back at the teaching-learning process to identify aspects of teaching and learning that need improvement in the next instruction. It is a kind of “a deliberate, conscious, and public activity principally designed to improve future action” (Ghaye, 2011, p. 25). The examples of this looking back action are taken from the second part of the CA results, as depicted in Table two.
Unpacking Reflective Practice in the Praxis of English  Ahsanu, Tuti Purwati & Wardani

Improving teaching certainly needs a critical evaluation, especially by the teachers who directly experience the teaching process and understand it better. It suggests that the stand of “improving teaching and teacher development begins from a reflection on what we do, on our own teaching and experience” (Ghaye, 2011, p. 24). Such reflection-on-action voiced by P2 serves to make what was implicit explicit and enhance the level of awareness and consciousness of how teachers frame teaching situations (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2011). The message is that when teachers are evaluating their lesson, they are also reflecting on it, that is, carefully considering their personal beliefs, theories, and experiences that affect their action.

The idea of evaluation within reflection-on-action can be categorized as the formative evaluation, which is carried out as an indispensable part of the process of program enhancement, aimed to spot what works well, and what does not, and how to deal with the emerging problems (Richards, 2001). This evaluation potentially enables teachers to translate feedback into modification, adjustment, directional changes, and redefinitions as necessary. This systematic and continual reframing of teaching activities potentially enhances the quality of pedagogical practice. This reshaping was also done by P2, as shown in Excerpt five below.

Excerpt 5:
R: When your students find it hard to understand your teaching material, what would you do?
P2: Ooh, I would just do an evaluation to find out what was difficult to understand in that material. For example, there was a problematic theme, then if I wanted to use that. For that I needed to explain it, but if I didn’t want to, I just could skip it or simply changed it with an easier one, sometimes like that. Maybe the theme was not relevant. Why bothering? Simply eliminate it and change it. Of course, I need to evaluate the way I presented the material as well.

Interview with P2: C2C1U1

Two main points were identified in Excerpt ve. First, if the material was not well grasped by her students, P2 checked her lesson materials and matched them with her lesson plan. She then reviewed what was not working well. If the material was not relevant, then she could just eliminate it and change it with a more relevant one. Second, P2 understood that the problems might not stem from the material but likely from the method used in teaching the material. Therefore, P2 aimed to do an evaluation and, when deemed necessary, could make a change in the teaching technique. Such an evaluative activity can pave the way for ELT practitioners to adwquately theorize their practice and practice their personal theories (Schön, 1983; Abednia, 2012). This reflective mode of practice where theory and practice mutually inform can construct “a dialectical praxis” (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 540). To make a change in her teaching technique through reflection-on-action, P2 undertook the process of reviewing and learning from her experience or action in order to affect her future action (Schon, 1983; 1987).

Creating Interesting Materials
A teacher is bound to evaluate his or her practice if he or she wishes to keep his or her teaching or lesson more interesting. Such a teaching perspective was also upheld by P1. He paid a particular concern for teaching materials. He always wanted to provide an exciting teaching material for his students. Therefore, he even tried to update it regularly, at least every semester. In his view, an exciting material means the one that is appropriate for students’ level of language proficiency, matches students’ needs, and able to arouse students’ enthusiasm to learn the
material. P1 seemed to realize that all these features can be actualized through critical self-evaluation based on self-observation leading to a modification of practice (Nodoushan, 2011; Zwozdiak-Myers, 2011), although he did this not regularly, as depicted in Excerpt six that follows.

Excerpt 6:
R: When you finished teaching, do you do self-evaluation or some kind of reflection on what you have taught?
P1: What I was thinking when I was thinking was how to make the teaching rather more appealing, just like that. So, what often happened was that why the teaching didn’t make the students enthusiastic about learning. Not quite interesting for them. For example, just now I was teaching....ererr occupational conversation or occupational speaking yea...
R: He’emm.
P1: I recognized that the students likely seemed to be interested but not that much. Maybe the material that I gave was not entirely appropriate for them. Therefore, every semester like what I did in the past and this semester, I certainly had to change the material because it didn’t fit them well.

Interview with P1: C2C1U2

From Excerpt six, it is evident that P1 is a reflective teacher as he always observed his own teaching and students’ learning. Based on his observation, he often found that his students were not quite intrigued by his by his teaching and assumed that it was probably due to non-captivating material. This state led him to think how to make his material enchanting to lure his students’ interest to learn. Diagnosing and evaluating is the trademark of his teaching practice. Therefore, the solution should be searched. This reflection-on-action provides an essential process in learning about the professional activity of teaching (Zwozdiak-Myers, 2011). Thus, for P1, when he identified his students’ psychological state was not stable, he would do an instant evaluation. In this case, he found a weak aspect of his teaching material. P1’s aptitude for reading such circumstances is a lucid mark of his reflective sensitivity. His action to change his teaching material legitimizes his RP. Excerpt six also shows how P1’s thought and action were merged, which resulted in improved practice. That suggests that RP becomes one of the leading means of enhancing teachers’ educational practices (Ting, 2013). In the long run, this becomes catalyzed professional development in ELT. The reflective action P1 has done feasibly facilitates his professional development since it helps him think of what happened, why it happened, and what else could be done to reach his goals (Cruickshank & Applegate, 1981).

**Reflection-for-action**

Reflection-for-action, which is the desired outcome of both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, enables teachers to prepare for the future by using knowledge from what happened during class and what they reflected on after class (Farrell, 2007). The impact of reflection-for-action for Indonesian ELT practitioners is that they become more informed on their way and can have a better plan for future action.

**Improving Students’ Speaking Ability**

The reflection-for-action in this discussion entails three phases: observing, Planning, and acting. It is a critical framing and reframing of ideas with the intent of developing an action. As ELT practitioner, P1 seemed to have distilled the gist of reflection-for-action, not only because he is aware of the significant impact the action brings about, but
also because the subject he teaches (speaking class) naturally requires more practice than theory. In this course, P1 develops his own theory of teaching based on his practice of teaching. The success of his teaching can be measured on the surface by the frequency of the practice of the lesson demonstrated by his students. Therefore, his students’ activeness in speaking practice becomes his primary trajectory. As a result, the approach he takes in his lesson is changing a speaking partner as frequently as possible, allowing the students to have more language exposure. It is the most practical way he believes in improving the speaking ability of the students. These points are indicated in Excerpt seven.

Excerpt 7:
R: When you did a self-evaluation or reflection on your teaching practice, what plan did you have in your mind for the next teaching practice?
P3: Usually, I thought about the kind of action I should take. For instance, in the Speaking class, I found one or two students who could not speak English fluently. I just thought about how to make them happy to talk. Therefore, in speaking I told the students to keep in mind that next week they have to speak, and they cannot just sit with the same partner.
R: I see.
P3: Hence, in the next classes, I checked the students’ previous speaking partner as I didn’t memorize who was partnering with whom. I asked them, “Did you sit with her last week? I had to know that they have changed their partner.

Interview with P3: C3C3U1

Based on Excerpt seven, P3 is very concerned with the active participation of all students in conversational practices. From our class observation, when P3 was handling his speaking class, we noted that he was also very active in going around the class to ensure that every individual was involved in intensified dialogues. Sometimes he interrupted his students’ talk and got involved in the Conversation, or some other times, his students asked him about vocab, and he was ready to partake in the hectic discussion. He strongly insisted on asking his students to speak up, to question, to respond, to argue, and to keep changing their partners so that the class was lived up and dynamic. This teaching practice mode conforms to the actualization of what was thought of, what was evaluated, and what was planned by P3. This sort of teaching practice connects with Farrell’s Stance, where we do reflection because we want to understand what we have done better, know more about it, plan it and change or improve it (Farrell, 2007, 2011).

Interpretation

The aforementioned data analysis highlighted three themes: 1) Reflection-in-action (adjusting lesson plan and changing teaching approach), 2) Reflection-on-action (evaluating teaching materials), and 3) Reflection-for-action (planning for improving students’ speaking ability). The first theme (reflection-in-action), which is being reflective within teachers’ teaching, was done by Indonesian ELT practitioners by adapting their lesson plan and switching their teaching approach. Such reflection emphasizes the process of observing our thinking and action as they are occurring, to make adjustments at the moment (Schon, 1987). Based on the realization of the reflection-in-action (Excerpts 1 to 4), it suggests that Indonesian ELT practitioners’ actions were not “merely repetitive, blind, and impulsive” (Dewey, 1933, p. 17), but a thoughtful and analytic reflection. The Indonesian ELT practitioners’ reflection-in-action seems to have the elements of open-mindedness, whole-heartedness, and responsibility (Dewey, 1933). Their RP involves active, persistent, and careful consideration (Dewey, 1933).
in their principled pragmatism (Kumaravadively, 2001) as they put thought in their action. This Indonesian RP is self-initiated activity involving willingness to engage in constant self-appraisal and professional development. Such engagement in self-appraisal is directed to improve teachers’ professional practice (Sellers, 2014).

The second theme, reflection-on-action, deals with teaching evaluation, evaluating teaching materials, and creating interesting materials (Excerpts five & six). The outcomes of the reflective evaluation are the creation of exciting teaching materials and stimulation for students’ eagerness to learn. When looking at the reflection-on-action done by Indonesian ELT practitioners (see Excerpts seven & eight), we can exert that, following the idea of Dewey (1933) and Farrell (2014), they have already had or developed the habit of thinking in a reflective way and characterized their personality of teaching, which need to be further nurtured and developed. When one of the Indonesian practitioners encountered the fact that many of his students lacked motivation to learn English, he reflected on the situation (after the class was over) and came out with a solution, inviting a native speaker. The self-subjectification the Indonesian practitioners have done (see Excerpts five & six) by engaging in their own teaching practice (self-observing) and modifying their practice (self-evaluating) to ensure more satisfactory learning outcomes (Nodoushan, 2011) holds an essential dimension of RT. The post-teaching reflective evaluation Indonesian ELT practitioners did (see Excerpt seven) is a sort of “a deliberate, conscious and public activity principally designed to improve future action” (Ghaye, 2011, p. 25), class learning improvement. The circumstances faced by their students in the classroom stimulated Indonesian teachers to question their own teaching materials, teaching approach, and philosophy of teaching (see Excerpt eight), aimed at, in Schon’s stance, affecting their future action (Schon, 1983, 1987). This retrospective evaluation, as suggested by Zwozdiak-Myers (2011), becomes an essential process in learning about the professional activity of teaching. Such self-evaluation and self-development based on the appraisal of their own teaching process can strengthen Indonesian teachers’ possibility to theorize their practice and practice their theory through the cycle of framing and reframing, which mutually forms “a dialectical praxis” (Kumaravadivelu, 2001, p. 540).

The last theme, reflection-for-action, spots the planning of teaching improvement, planning for improving students’ speaking ability (see Table two). This reflection-for-action was manifested via the combination of the previous two kinds of reflection (see Excerpt seven), reflecting on what was occurring and how students expressed their English in the class and reflecting retrospectively after the course. This kind of reflection confirms the point of Farrell (2007) mentioning that reflection-for-action is the desired outcome of both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, enabling teachers to prepare for the future by using knowledge from what happened during class and what they reflected on after class. The practitioner realized this reflection-for-action by asking students to keep changing their speaking partner to have varied speaking experiences (see Excerpt 9). What Indonesian ELT practitioners have done in their teaching-learning activities seems to have had reasoning, creative production of ideas, and problem-solving (Watson, 1996). Intuitively, they wanted to understand what we have done better, know more about it, change or improve it, and plan to take some positive steps to improve their students’ learning (Farrell, 2011).
The findings of the current research correlate with Christodoulou’s (2013) doctorate research findings, which suggest that ELT practitioners in Cyprus tended to ‘reframe practice’. This tendency refers to decisions and the willingness of ELT practitioners to reframe their way of thinking, their beliefs, and their teaching as a result of engaging in RP and incorporating these changes in their everyday practices. The thread of these findings with the current research is on the realization of the practical idea of RP for sustainable and continuing professional development from within through making a necessary change in their teaching practice and shaping and reshaping ways of thinking and ways of acting in everyday classroom practices.

Conclusion

Indonesian ELT practitioners indicate that they did perform RP. The RP is in the form of the adjustment and modification of their teaching materials, their teaching approach, and the search for ways to stimulate their students to practice their English frequently. All these aspects are critical to improve and develop classroom teaching and learning quality. When classroom actions or activities are packed with reflection, the practice turns out to be a praxis, conceived as reflection and action directed at the structures (pedagogical aspects) to be transformed (Freire, 1972). Notably, Indonesian ELT practitioners have orchestrated the ideas of RP manifested in three forms of reflection: Reflection-in-action, Reflection-on-action, and Reflection-for-action. Obviously, they have made an adjustment in their lesson, changed their teaching approach, evaluated their teaching materials, sought ways to motivate their students and improve their students’ speaking skills.

Functionally, the Indonesian ELT practitioners have been active participants in creating empowering classroom realities and, following the notion of Williams & Burden, acting in the light of their own beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions of the relevant teaching situation (Williams & Burden, 1997, in Hall, 2018). Conclusively, Indonesian ELT practitioners’ understanding of how their learners learn has determined their teaching philosophy, teaching style, approach, methods, and techniques. Their RT resonates with Brown’s stance of teaching as “guiding and facilitating learning, enabling the learner to learn, setting the conditions for learning.” (Brown 2007, p. 8). Indonesian ELT practitioners’ teaching is intuitively RP-based. They combined their reflection (thought) with action that leads to understanding and transforming social (classroom) practices (Burns, 2015). Indonesian teachers of English, as suggested by Kiely (2013), are also continually changing professionally, both in terms of their understanding of the factors which shape classroom learning, their planning for lessons and learning activities, and their classroom teaching. Thus, their RP functionally resonates with the praxis of ELT.

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References


Revisiting Grammar Teaching in a Saudi EFL Context: Teachers’ Perceptions and Practices

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Abstract
In language, meaning is conveyed and received through words and grammar. A phrase or a sentence is not a random collection of words. In the absence of grammar, words hang together without any real meaning. Thus, grammar plays an essential role in language teaching. With adequate grammar explanations in meaningful contexts and practice, some serious errors in learners' language can be avoided. This study aimed at examining the relationship between teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching and their actual practices in a Saudi EFL context. Questionnaires and classroom observation checklists were used to gather information about teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching and to compare that with their practices. The paper sought to find answers to these questions: 1) What are teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching? 2) Do teachers’ perceptions of grammar correlate with their actual teaching in EFL classes? 3) What are teachers’ perceptions of problems, if any, hindering their practice of grammar teaching? The sample consisted of 23 teachers who completed a questionnaire discussing their perceptions of grammar teaching and practice. Six of these teachers were observed teaching grammar in classes. The findings revealed that there was a negative correlation between teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching and their perceptions of their grammar classes. Also, there was a negative correlation between teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching and the observed classes. However, teachers' perceptions of their classes were mostly reflected in observation cards, and they were positively correlated. Further, the study revealed teachers' tendency towards traditional methods of teaching where the meaningful practice was overlooked.

Keywords: belief, grammar teaching, perception, practices, Saudi EFL Context

Introduction
This study is an empirical endeavor to expand understanding of EFL teachers’ perceptions about grammar teaching in a Saudi EFL context. It intends to investigate the extent to which the EFL teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching match their practices in an EFL class. Although there have been several research works about teachers’ views of grammar teaching and their contribution to classroom practices, there is no much information about the Saudi EFL context. Pajares (1992) emphasizes that investigating teachers’ beliefs “should be a focus of educational research and can inform educational practice in ways that prevailing research agendas have not and cannot” (p. 307). Teachers’ beliefs usually reflect the actual nature of the instructions the teacher provides to students (Kagen, 1992). Consequently, this may or may not help students to understand and apply grammar structures effectively. Examining the relationship between language teachers' beliefs and their actions can improve teaching practices in the EFL setting. According to Borg (2003), teachers' beliefs is a term that has been usually used to refer to teachers' pedagogic beliefs or those beliefs that are related to an individual's teaching, such as views of language learning and teaching beliefs, curriculum perspective, etc. Numerous studies have reported EFL teachers' traditional teaching methods and students' low level of language proficiency and grammar (Grami, 2010; Javid, Farooq, & Gulzar, 2012; Chowdhury, 2014; Khan, 2011). This requires an investigation of EFL teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching to pinpoint the sources of weaknesses in the teaching process. It is important to understand teachers’ perceptions, which may affect their practices in classrooms (Borg, 2003). According to Borg (2009), teachers’ beliefs and their classrooms practice do not only act as a filter through which teachers realize new information and experience, but they also develop a long-term effect on teachers’ instructional practices. Besides, grammar plays avital role in students’ positive performance in language production (Borg, 2013).

According to the results of final exams in the last few years, the level of students in grammar in the English department at Najran University is unsatisfactory. This poses an urgent need to investigate the process of grammar teaching to shed light on the sources of the problem and suggest some recommendations. Since teachers’ decision-making and practice are affected by their prior beliefs about teaching methods. Therefore, the present study will investigate the relationship between teachers’ beliefs concerning grammar teaching and their actual classroom practices.

This study intends to answer the following questions:

1) What are teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching regarding the introduction of grammar items, the methods of teaching, practice, and the material used?

2) Do teachers’ perceptions of grammar correlate with their actual teaching in EFL classes?

3) What are teachers’ perceptions of problems, if any, hindering their practice of grammar teaching?

Literature Review
The idea of grammar teaching has always been controversial. Many scholars have discussed whether the knowledge gained from explicit grammar teaching would become implicit. For instance, Loewer and Sato (2017) classified SLA scholars’ views regarding explicit and implicit types of knowledge. They stated:

| There are three perspectives: (1) the noninterface position maintains that the two |  |  |
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types of knowledge are distinct and it is not possible for explicit knowledge to become implicit, (2) the weak interface argues that under the right circumstances explicit knowledge may become implicit, but such conversion is not easy, and (3) the strong interface position claims that explicit knowledge can become implicit (p. 5).

There have been numerous empirical studies investigating teachers’ views of grammar teaching and the relationship between grammar teachers’ perceptions and their classroom practices. Several studies indicated that teachers’ beliefs had an impact on their teaching decisions and, subsequently, their practices in EFL classes (Andrews (2003); Burgess and Etherington (2002); Eisenstein-Ebsworth and Schweers (1997); Pajares (1992)). Li Yan (as cited in Deng & Lin, 2016) studied teachers' beliefs regarding the integration of grammar instruction with communicative teaching. He investigated the relationship between senior English teachers' grammar teaching beliefs and their teaching practices. The results indicated that senior English teachers' grammar teaching beliefs had a significant effect on their grammar teaching practice. Besides, numerous empirical studies have proved that teachers' classroom practices were determined by their beliefs (Borg, 2003). The relation between teachers' views and their practice is like a filter through which teachers interpret new information and experience and utilize a long-term influence on their instructional practices (Borg, 2009). Also, Hassan (2013) claimed that there was a parallel between teachers' belief about grammar teaching, which was shaped by their learning experiences, and their practices in classes. Moreover, Alghanmi and Shukri, (2016) conducted a study in the English Language Institute at the University of Jeddah investigating the relationship between teachers’ beliefs of grammar instructions and classroom practices in the Saudi context. The study revealed that teachers’ beliefs were reflected in their classroom practices.

Nevertheless, recent empirical evidence revealed contradictory results. Several researches reported that teachers’ cognition concerning teaching grammar was not always reflected in their practices (Salimi, Safarzade & Monfared, 2016). The findings of many recent research works reflected complex relationships (Mohamed, 2006). Teachers' preferences for grammar teaching approaches vary from one to another. Furthermore, teachers' experiences might have an impact on teachers' practices. Woods stated that language learning experiences, early teaching experiences and education courses potentially influenced teachers' views about grammar teaching (as cited in Öztürk & Yıldırım, 2019).

Concerning the method of teaching, several studies revealed that teachers were in favor of teaching grammar items inductively by eliciting the rules indirectly from the language in meaningful contexts. For example, Aljohani (2012) found that teachers believed that form and meaning should be taught in a meaningful context. Furthermore, in another study investigating teachers' views about grammar teaching, the results showed teachers' strong beliefs in avoiding the teaching of grammar in isolation, and that it should be integrated into meaningful contexts. Although teachers believed that grammar knowledge leads to accuracy in the language, they thought that an inductive approach to grammar teaching was better than a deductive one (Borg & Burns, 2008).

On the contrary, the findings of several other types of research indicated teachers’ inclination towards a deductive method. For example, Kalsoom and Akhtar (2013) reported that
teachers were much preferring explicit grammar teaching and preferred a deductive grammar teaching approach. Similarly, Al-Naeem (2007) observed that teachers were inclined to teach grammar deductively. Hence, selecting the type of grammar teaching method was likely to be affected by the teachers’ background knowledge about the teaching methods and the way teachers were taught. Moreover, teachers’ beliefs were, sometimes, influenced by their early education. The results of a survey in a study administered to secondary school teachers of English in Hong, Andrews (2003) claimed that teachers who were most in favor of teaching grammar inductively had a relatively high level of detailed knowledge of grammar, while those who had a relatively low level of explicit knowledge of grammar advocated a deductive approach. Regarding practice, many researchers reported that teachers’ classroom practices did not necessarily reflect their beliefs about grammar teaching and showed mismatches between teachers’ beliefs and practices in grammar teaching (Hos & Kekec, 2014). There was a range of mismatches in views related to error correction, place of grammar in language teaching, teaching methods and inductive or deductive teaching (Farrell & Lim, 2005; Ferreira, 2014; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

Several findings showed that teachers appeared to be flexible in selecting the grammar approach they followed. Many teachers were extremely devoted to either a deductive or an inductive approach depending on the types of grammar structures to be taught. However, such a belief might easily be reasonable as there seemed to be no universal specific way to teach language in general and grammar in particular. Jeram (2017) stated that the knowledge of teachers' practice was developed as a result of their experience and it was linked to what could be applicable in their teaching context, and not on any formal educational theory. This indicated that some teachers' choice of the method of teaching was due to the extent they found it appropriate when tried in class.

Additionally, several studies reported that teachers were in favor of a blended approach in which elements from inductive and deductive approaches are incorporated together in classes. For example, Sadat (2017) suggested in a review on teaching grammar that language instructors should blend grammar teaching with Communicative Language Teaching to achieve both linguistics and communicative competence in their classes. Pishghadam and Ebrahimi (2019) advocated implementing a dynamic method beyond theoretical teaching, which they referred to as ‘applicative teaching’. This method, as they claimed, was a mixture of application and reflection, which included elements from practical teaching and thinking skills teaching. Thus, teachers’ beliefs differed from one to another; therefore, their teaching styles would be different accordingly (Kalsoom & Akhtar, 2013).

Methods

Instruments

To examine teaching grammar in EFL classes, and to be able to answer the study’s questions, a mixture of qualitative and quantitative data was collected to investigate the problem under study. Questionnaires and classroom observation checklists were used. The questionnaire consisted of 22 statements and questions on teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching and their perceptions of their grammar classes. The observation cards included 11 items related to teachers’ applications of their perceptions in actual classes. The questionnaire was developed using Likert’s four-point scale
items ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree for items related to teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching. Also, it used four-point scale- items ranging from always to never for items related to teachers’ perceptions of their grammar classes. Besides, the questionnaire included open-ended and close-ended questions.

The data obtained by the teachers’ questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS software version 22.0. They were analyzed by calculating the frequencies and percentages that were listed in tables respectively. Also, the correlation coefficient was carried out to find the relation between teachers’ perception of grammar teaching, their perceptions of their grammar classes and their actual teaching of grammar as observed in classroom observation cards.

Participants
The sample of this study consisted of 23 staff members chosen randomly from the English department at Najran University in Saudi Arabia. Six of these teachers were observed teaching grammar in classes in order to explore the relationship between their perceptions and practices.

Results
Questionnaire Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers' background information</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>experience</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30.43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching have been analysed and shown in the following tables:

Table 2. Teachers’ Perceptions of the importance of teaching grammar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you think grammar is important in teaching English?</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Not important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table two shows that most teachers (52.2%) think that grammar is very important in EFL classes and (39.1%) feel that it is important, which reflects the fact that most of the teachers consider grammar teaching highly.

Table 3. Teachers’ Perceptions about the method of teaching grammar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the best way to teach grammar?</th>
<th>Inductively</th>
<th>Deductively</th>
<th>mixture both</th>
<th>Don’t know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table three, there is no agreement about the best way to teach grammar. Some teachers (39.1%) feel that the best way is to use a deductive approach. Some of them (30.4%)
think that the best method is to use an inductive one. Similarly, (30.4%) think that the best way is to use both ways. The teachers were asked to answer the following question: What kind of material do you often use in teaching grammar? Their answers are analysed in Table four.

Table 4. Teachers' Perceptions about materials used to teach grammar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Materials Used to Teach Grammar</th>
<th>Prescribed Textbooks in Addition to Supplementary Books/Handouts on Grammar</th>
<th>Prescribed Textbooks, Flashcards, Pictures, and Wall Chart, Videos</th>
<th>Prescribed Textbooks Only</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table four reveals that most teachers (39.1%) claim that they use supplementary books or hand-outs on grammar in addition to these textbooks and (34.8%) claim that they use the prescribed textbooks, flashcards, pictures, and wall chart, videos in grammar teaching. However, (13.0%) of them claim that they use prescribed textbooks only.

The teachers were asked to answer the following question: Is the grammar book you are teaching satisfying? Their answers are analysed in Table five.

Table 5. Teachers' satisfaction with the material used in teaching grammar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Satisfying</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfying</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Satisfying</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Satisfying</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most teachers (65.2%) think that the prescribed textbooks are slightly satisfying, but it is highly satisfying to (26.1%) and (8.7%) think it is satisfying. This might explain why most teachers need to use supplementary books/handouts on grammar besides the prescribed textbook.

The teachers were asked to answer the following question: If you face problems in grammar teaching, specify the issue, please? Their answers are analysed in Table six.

Table 6. Teachers' Perceptions about the problems they face in teaching grammar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem Description</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Some grammar points are unsuitable for the levels of the students</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The explanations in the course book are not enough</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students do not understand explanations in English</td>
<td>65.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other problems</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the respondents who face problems in teaching grammar (65.2%) claim that students do not understand explanations in English and (26.1%) of them think that the illustrations in the course book are not enough and only (4.3%) think that some grammar points are unsuitable for the levels of the students. This might explain the unsatisfactory level of students in grammar.

The teachers were asked to answer the following question: What should teachers do when a student makes a mistake? The answers are analysed in table seven.

Table 7. Teachers' Perceptions of students' error correction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>No Need for Correction</th>
<th>Correct It Directly</th>
<th>Correct It Indirectly</th>
<th>Depends on Context: Written or Spoken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most of the respondents (43.47%) claim that they correct their students' mistakes directly, whereas (26.08%) of them believe in indirect correction. However, (21.73%) of the teachers think that it depends on the context, whether spoken or written. According to them, in a written context, it should be corrected, but in a spoken context, mistakes should not be corrected to avoid disturbing students, and (8.69%) of them think correction is not needed.

Table 8. Teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar teaching helps improve students' language skills.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>30.43</td>
<td>65.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar teaching facilitates teaching English.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>47.82</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The teaching of grammar items should be followed by a lot of contextual practice to acquire the language.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>69.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching grammar items should include both form and use.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>39.13</td>
<td>60.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English coursebooks in use do not include enough exercises on grammar.</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>30.43</td>
<td>52.17</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The English coursebooks are unsuitable to the level of the students.</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>39.13</td>
<td>52.17</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the teachers (65.21%) strongly agree that grammar teaching helps improve students' language skills. Most of them (47.82%) agree that grammar teaching facilitates teaching English. Most of them (69.6%) strongly agree that grammar instructions should be followed by a lot of contextual practice to acquire the language. Most of them (60.86%) strongly agree that teaching grammar items should include both form and use.

Concerning grammar textbooks in use, most of the teachers (52.17%) agree that the English coursebooks in service do not include enough exercises on grammar and that the English coursebooks are unsuitable to students’ level.

Table 9. Teachers’ perception of their grammar classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>always</th>
<th>sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you often focus on giving your students extensive explanations of the forms of grammar rules for examinations?</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you often focus on giving your students extensive practice of grammar items in a meaningful context for communication?</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you ever use pair/group work activities in teaching grammar?</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>17.39</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do your students participate in a grammar class?</td>
<td>13.94</td>
<td>69.6</td>
<td>17.39</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How often do your students use English in discussion in class?</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How often do you face problems in grammar teaching classrooms?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you often focus on giving your students extensive practice on using grammar items in meaningful contexts?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How often do you give the students extra activities in grammar other than those in the textbooks?  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>39.1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table nine shows that most teachers (52.2%) claim that they always focus on giving students extensive explanations of the forms of grammar rules for examinations. A similar percentage of the teachers, also, state that they give their students extensive practice on using grammar items in meaningful contexts. Most teachers (56.5%) say they sometimes use pair/group work activities in teaching grammar, but most of them (52.2%) claim that they sometimes face problems in grammar classes.

Regarding students' participation, most teachers (69.6%) claim their students sometimes participate in grammar classes and most of them (52.2%) say that their students sometimes use English in discussions in class. The majority (43.5%) claim that they sometimes give the students extra activities in grammar other than those in the textbooks.

**Classroom Observation Checklist**

Table 10. Teachers' actual practice of grammar teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The instructor introduced the structures correctly.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instructor explained the form of grammar items clearly</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instructor explained clearly the meaning and use of grammar items.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The grammar items were introduced in meaningful contexts.</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was good practice of the grammar points.</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many students practised new grammar points successfully.</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There were communicative activities to practice the grammar items (e.g. pair/group work, role play.., etc.).</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The instructor spoke English in explanations and instructions in class.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The students used English in communication in class.</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Every student was involved in activities in class at some point.</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many students had used books in which all answers were written.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table above related to the introduction of grammar structures, in (50.0%) of the classes observed, the researchers disagree that teachers introduced the grammar structure
correctly. In (50.0%) of these classes the grammar items were not introduced in a meaningful context. However, most of them (66.7%) agree that the instructors explained the form of the grammar items clearly. The instructors also explained clearly the meaning and use of the grammar items in (50.0%) of these classes.

The researchers disagree that teachers gave a good practice of grammar items in (50.0%) of the classes observed, and most of them (66.7%) also disagree about the grammar items being practised successfully by many students. Coming to practice, the researchers strongly disagree about using communicative activities to practice the grammar items (e.g. pair/group work, role play,..., etc.) in most of these classes (66.7 %). Concerning the use of English for communication in class, in most classes observed (83.3%), the researchers agree that the instructors spoke English in explanations and instructions, but most of them (66.7%) disagree about students' use of English in communication, also most of them (66.7%) disagree about involving every student in activities in class at some point. As for the textbook used, in most practical classes, (50.0%) the researchers either agree or strongly agree that many students had used books in which all exercises were answered prior to class.

Table 11. The correlation between teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching, their classes, and their actual teaching.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>teachers’ perceptions</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Observation Card</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>of grammar teaching in general</td>
<td>-0.202</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>-0.280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of grammar teaching</td>
<td>-0.202</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>.591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their perception of their grammar classes</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.617</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table eleven reveals a negative correlation between teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching in general and their perceptions of their grammar classes (-0.202). It also shows a negative correlation between teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching in general and the observation card (-0.280). However, there is a positive correlation between teachers’ perception of their own classes and the observation cards (.617).

Discussion

The findings reveal that there is a negative correlation between teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching in general and their perceptions of practices in their grammar classes (-0.202). Also, there is a negative correlation between teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching in general and the observation cards (-0.280). This indicates that there are significant differences between the teachers' general perceptions of grammar teaching, their perceptions of practices, and their actual practices in the observed classes. On the other hand, there is a positive correlation between teachers' perceptions of practices and the observation cards (.617). The positive correlation indicates that observation cards support teachers' perceptions of practice. The negative correlation between teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching in general and their practices and also with
observation cards may be attributed to the fact that teachers may believe in new and more effective techniques of teaching grammar. Still, in real classroom practice, these techniques seem to be inapplicable to the students for some reasons that need to be investigated in a further study such as big numbers of students, limited period of time... etc.

The majority of the participants have either a Ph.D. degree (30.4%) or an MA degree (39.13%). Also, most of them (65.21%) have between 1 to 10 years of teaching experience, and (30.43%) of them have between 11 and 20 years of teaching experience. This indicates that most of them are well qualified and experienced. Nevertheless, teachers' methods still traditional, and the new teaching trends are not applied in their classes, which needs to be further investigated. The results confirm the findings of recent research works that are carried out on in the same Saudi EFL context. Almuhammadi (2020) claims that although teachers have the theoretical knowledge of various grammar teaching methods, they need to develop grammar instruction skills. Although Alghanmi and Shukri (2016) state that most teachers in their study (60%) are aware of the inconsistency between their beliefs and actual practices. They point out that this mismatch between teachers’ beliefs and their actual classroom practices is related to factors like students' levels, their attitudes, needs, learning styles and classroom environment.

**Teachers’ Perceptions of the Importance of Grammar Teaching**

The majority of the teachers regard grammar teaching highly. Most of them think that grammar is essential in EFL classes, and they strongly agree that it facilitates teaching English and helps improve the students’ language skills (see tables one and eight). This is in alignment with prior studies related to grammar teaching. For instance, the results of a survey conducted recently by Almuhammadi, (2020) reports that EFL teachers consider grammar a foundational framework for teaching English as a foreign language and a significant factor in improving the accuracy and proper use of EFL. He claims that the teachers in his study believe their students need to develop conscious knowledge of grammar since grammar helps achieve accuracy in a language.

**Teachers’ Perceptions of Methods of Introducing Grammar Items**

There is no agreement about the best way to teach grammar. The majority of teachers think that grammar should be taught deductively (39.1%). Some of them (30.4%) feel that the best way to teach it inductively. Similarly, (30.4%) feel that the best method is to use both ways. However, teachers' actual practices reflect a tendency towards a traditional deductive approach which is observed in their classes. However, the grammar items are not appropriately introduced in meaningful contexts (see table three and ten). Teachers are class-centred, reading instructions and illustrations from the prescribed books and writing the rules with examples on the board while their students listen inactively. Most of them always focus on giving students extensive explanations of the forms of grammar rules for examinations without meaningful contexts (see tables nine and ten). This is compatible with other prior researches that report teachers' inclination towards GTM in teaching grammar. For example, Kalsoom and Akhtar's (2013) reports in a study examining the relationships between grammar teachers' beliefs and classroom practices that teachers, who are significantly in favor of explicit grammar teaching, teach grammar deductively. Furthermore, most teachers think that they should focus on both form and meaning, yet, their actual teaching methods concentrate only on giving extensive explanations of grammatical structures through different examples without meaningful contexts (see table ten). Ferreira (2014) claims that
the results of his study reveal a mismatch between teachers' beliefs and their practices. Alghanmi and Shukri, (2016, p. 80-81) report an inconsistency between teachers’ beliefs and their practices. They state that “teachers apply traditional techniques for grammar instruction, which are generally used in GTM and ALM, such as drilling and memorizing grammatical rules”. They mention that teachers favor direct grammar instruction in isolation rather than exposing their student to language in meaningful contexts. Similarly, Sofi (2015) points out that EFL classrooms are more teacher-centred in Saudi Arabia and the language context is overlooked.

**Teachers’ Perception of Practicing Grammar Items and Students’ Participation**

Most teachers believe in the effectiveness of communicative activities, and think that practising grammar in a meaningful context is essential for students (see Table eight). However, their grammar classes are teacher-centred, lacking such activities. Also, most teachers say they sometimes use pair/group work activities in teaching grammar, but in most classes observed, teachers do not use such communicative activities to practice the grammar items. Practising the new grammar items will turn to be useless since the activities used to practice the new grammar items are taken only from used textbooks or new ones in which all exercises are answered before class (see tables seven and ten). This is in line with the previous studies, which claim that teachers' perception about grammar teaching is not always reflected in their practices. Teachers’ classroom practices may not necessarily manifest their beliefs about grammar teaching, but it can be influenced by many contextual factors. Nishimuro and Borg (2013) mention in their experimental study that teachers follow explicit grammar instruction, thinking that this approach is crucial to the EFL model.

Related to the method followed in correcting students' mistakes, most teachers state that their students' mistakes should be corrected directly which is, surprisingly, reflected in their classes where most of them are observed getting students correct and evaluate their own mistakes. New trends of grammar teaching indicate that students' grammar mistakes must be corrected more carefully using different techniques in both explicit and implicit instruction. Also, teachers should draw learners' attention to grammar rules, whether simple or complex structures in-class activities, and through an effective use of correction such as playing games, encouraging a growth mind-set, applying self-correction, and giving individual feedback (Bitchener, 2018; Ferlazzo & Sypnieski, 2020; McCormick & Vercellotti, 2013).

In an open-ended question, teachers are asked about the role of practice in grammar classes and the problems they face in applying it. Most teachers claim that practice is crucial and improves language skills. They also think that it leads to a better performance in the rest of the language skills, as somehow all are interlinked to each other. However, most of them experience real difficulty to get students involved in communicative activities due to factors related to big number of students, and their students’ motivations and needs to turn the focus on achievement exams rather than communication. The responses of another open-ended question about the role of L1 in grammar teaching practice, reveal that teachers think L1 has a negative influence on teaching grammar because forms that are present in L1, yet are not used in L2 or vice versa could cause a challenge for many students and impede L2 acquisition. Nevertheless, others think L1 can have a positive effect because some kind of comparison or association between L1 and L2 could be helpful for both teachers and students in terms of better explaining and understanding a specific
grammatical form. However, most teachers claim that they always focus on giving their students extensive practice using grammar items in meaningful contexts for communication. It is observed, surprisingly, that grammar items are neither introduced nor practiced in meaningful contexts. Most students are observed reading written answers in their textbooks or seen copying from others (see table ten). Therefore, most students are not engaged in real communicative activities to practice grammar items in meaningful contexts. This contradiction between teachers' perceptions and their practices needs to be investigated in a further study. Regarding students' participation, most teachers claim their students sometimes participate and use English in discussion in class. Such participation will be ineffective since teachers claim that they face problems in their grammar classes due to the students' inability to understand explanations in English (see table seven). The findings from this study are in line with findings from previous studies, which state that teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching do not, necessarily, reflect their practices in EFL classes (Farrell & Lim, 2005; Ferreira, 2014; Phipps & Borg, 2009). Farrell and Lim (2005) explain that this contradiction can be attributable to time constraints and abiding by the traditional methods of grammar teaching. Likewise, Shatat (2011) claims that the results of his study reveal that teachers' beliefs are inconsistent with their classroom practices due to factors such as time constraints, textbooks, students’ needs and proficiency level. Similarly, Phipps and Borg (2009) report that teachers’ beliefs are not always compatible with their actual practices when teaching grammar.

**Teachers’ Perceptions of the Material Used for Teaching Grammar**

Concerning grammar textbooks, most of the teachers claim that these textbooks are slightly satisfying and unsuitable to the level of the students. Also, most of them claim that they use supplementary books and hand-outs on grammar in addition to the prescribed books as these books do not include enough exercises on grammar. Nevertheless, in most of the classes observed, teachers use the prescribed textbooks only. There might be other factors affecting teachers' inability to apply their thoughts, such as big number of students, limited time of class and students' motivations.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The present study exposes the gap between the teachers’ perceptions of grammar teaching and their actual practices. As revealed from the results, there is a negative correlation between teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching and their perceptions of their grammar classes. Also, there is a negative correlation between teachers' perceptions of grammar teaching and the observed classes. However, teachers' perceptions of their classes are mostly reflected in observation cards, and they are positively correlated. Further, the study reveals teachers' tendency towards traditional methods of teaching where the meaningful practice is overlooked. Most teachers of English are less aware of many emerging trends in ELT concerning grammar teaching. The main obstacle impeding proper teaching of grammar is the absence of meaningful practice in EFL classes. Most students are not engaged in communicative activities to practice grammar items. Also, the results reveal the ineffectiveness of teaching students who are using textbooks in which all exercises are done before class. Thus, teachers should make sure that students use either new textbooks or erase the answers from their textbooks before class.

In conclusion, the findings of this research illustrate the need for rethinking practice in EFL contexts. Teachers at the university level should be mindful of the significance of meaningful
practice. They should use new methods for teaching English, and apply additional activities of grammar other than those included in the prescribed textbooks. Students should be engaged in meaningful activities using structures in real-life contexts. They should be motivated to apply grammar structures learned in class to improve other language skills, and to practice English by incorporating more learner-centered practices. Also, educational institutions should design need-based Professional development programs to equip EFL teachers with modern teaching practices in grammar teaching. Assalahi (2013) mentions that there should be educational programs for teachers to address any predictable incompatibility between teachers' beliefs and the desired practices by providing teachers with the chances to reflect on their beliefs and classroom practices. This highlights the need for professional development programs for EFL instructors. There should be seminars, workshops and training programs to improve teachers’ skills and enhance declarative knowledge about language.

Suggestions for Further Studies
The current study highlights the necessity of conducting further studies investigating the mismatch between Saudi teachers’ perceptions and their actual practices in EFL contexts. Learners’ perceptions of grammar teaching and the problems they face in studying grammar should be investigated. It is, therefore, necessary to carry out a detailed study about such difficulties facing teachers and learners in EFL contexts and take appropriate actions to solve them.

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Conversation Analysis Tool as an Effective Means for Teaching the University Courses of English and World Literature

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Abstract
This paper aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Conversation Analysis Tool in the context of teaching world literature to senior students majoring in English philology. The authors present their experience of undertaking a three-month online course “Constructive Classroom Conversations: Mastering Language for College and Career Readiness,” hosted by Stanford University, and discuss the benefits of applying this tool at universities. The study describes the basic mechanisms of the Conversation Analysis Tool aimed at developing specific communication skills in students of English for Speakers of Other Languages. The central research question is whether this method is as feasible for teaching literature as it is for language classrooms. The authors demonstrate their takeaways from applying this technique in teaching world literature, namely, analyzing literary dialogues in different classroom activities. The research findings indicate that the Conversation Analysis Tool is an efficient method for the formative assessment of senior students in the world literature classroom. This technique helps students reveal the pragmatic features of fiction dialogues, the writer’s narrative intentions, and the reader’s expected reception. The suggested method also demonstrates students’ progress in the studied topics and identifies possible gaps in mastering the educational content. The significance of the study extends beyond the specified context, as the search for novel instruction techniques targeted at improving communication skills in the 21st-century globalized world is relevant for any educational sphere. Consequently, the research findings of this paper can be applied in different teaching settings.

Keywords: communication skills, Conversation Analysis Tool, formative assessment, literary dialogues, pragmatic features, senior students majoring in English philology, the University courses of English and World Literature

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Introduction

Conversation Analysis (CA) helps researchers to reveal and comprehend the structure of human communication. For this purpose, CA largely relies on the concepts of “turn-taking,” “turn organization,” “sequencing,” “word/usage selection and the overall organization of the occasion of interaction” (Schegloff, Koshik, Jacoby, & Olsher, 2002, pp. 4-5). The research problem addressed in this study is searching for novel instruction techniques targeted at improving communication skills in the 21st-century globalized world. The central research question of the article is whether this method is as feasible for teaching literature as it is for ESOL classrooms. Therefore, the research objectives of the paper are to apply CA in a new teaching context and provide methodological guidelines for its further use in other settings. The article is the first research endeavor to apply CA for revealing the pragmatic features of communication in fiction, to disclose the writer’s narrative intentions and the reader’s expected reception in teaching the university course of world literature, which justifies the significance and novelty of the study. It is anticipated that CA can be a useful tool of the formative assessment in literature classrooms, capable of improving learning outcomes, increasing students’ ESOL communicative competence and skills in literary analysis. This research will be of interest to ESOL and world literature teachers seeking new lesson planning insights and organizing classroom activities. Furthermore, the obtained results can be adjusted and incorporated in other teaching settings, including but not limited to Humanities and Social Sciences, and thereby this study is relevant.

Literature Review

At present, teachers actively apply CA in the ESOL instructional settings (Hakuta, Zwiers, & Rutherford-Quach, 2016; Havrylieva & Lysanets, 2017; Protoven & Lysanets, 2017). It has become “widely accepted as a research methodology into L2 use and acquisition” (Barraja-Rohan, 2011, p. 479). Indeed, this technique “enables researchers, teachers, and their educators to see the minutia of classroom practices and how they are done in situ at all points of instruction” (Fagan, 2012, p. 37). In other words, CA is an appropriate tool for the formative assessment of students’ progress, immediately identifying possible gaps in their knowledge. Hence, this methodology’s efficiency in language teaching is a well-established fact (Fagan, 2012; Koole, 2013; McCarthy, 1991; Seedhouse, 2005; Wu, 2013). Recent studies continue applying CA in a foreign language instructional setting (Hall, 2019; Hidayat, 2019; Nanni, Hooper, & Hale, 2018).

The abovementioned technique has found an effective methodological implementation in the Conversation Analysis Tool (CAT), developed by Hakuta et al. (2016) in the online course for ESOL teachers “Constructive Classroom Conversations: Mastering Language for College and Career Readiness” (Stanford University Graduate School of Education). In particular, The CAT allows researchers to assess conversations according to three communicative Dimensions, “each scoring from four to one, where ‘four’ is ‘Strong Evidence,’ ‘three’ is ‘Inconsistent Evidence,’ ‘two’ is ‘Attempting Interaction,’ and ‘one’ is ‘No Evidence’” (Hakuta et al., 2016, p. 3). Each score must rely on appropriate rationale and takeaways. Dimension 0 focuses on the turn-taking process, registering the implementation of conversational turns as such. In ESOL teaching, Dimension 0 is “optional, since it applies only to elementary learners” (Havrylieva & Lysanets, 2017, p. 37). In terms of Dimension 0, the CAT relies on the following criteria: ‘Strong Evidence’ – all conversational turns are present; ‘Inconsistent Evidence’ – interlocutors produce half of the conversational turns (Hakuta et al., 2016). Meanwhile, ‘Attempting Interaction’ implies that few
conversational turns are present, and ‘No Attempt’ means that interlocutors failed to produce conversational turns” (Hakuta et al., 2016, p. 4). Thus, Dimension 0 explores whether all interlocutors contributed to communication and checks their ability and/or willingness to keep up a conversation.

Meanwhile, Dimension one explores “whether conversational turns “build on” and “build up” to develop an idea or ideas” (Hakuta et al., 2016). In this regard, the idea of “building on” involves the interlocutors’ ability to connect to their partners’ turns. In contrast, the concept of “building up” implies that “speakers should form or strengthen ideas” based on the previous turns in conversation (Havrylieva & Lysanets, 2017, p. 38). Hence, in terms of Dimension one, the CAT applies the following criteria: “‘Strong Evidence’ – half or more of conversational turns build on previous turns to effectively build up a clear and complete idea” (Hakuta et al., 2016, p. 5). Moreover, “‘Inconsistent Evidence’ means that half or more of conversational turns build on previous turns to adequately build up an idea, which may be incomplete or lack clarity” (Hakuta et al., 2016, p. 5). In addition, “‘Attempting Interaction’ implies that few conversational turns build on previous turns to build up an idea, and ‘No Attempt’ means that conversational turns are not used to build up an idea” (Hakuta et al., 2016, p. 5). As one can easily observe, Dimension one examines to what extent communication is cohesive.

In ESOL teaching, Dimension two demonstrates “how well the conversation fosters learning by focusing on the lesson’s objective” (Havrylieva & Lysanets, 2017, p. 38). Dimension two relies on the following criteria: “‘Strong Evidence’ – half or more of turns effectively focus on the communicative objective and intended results of the conversation” (Hakuta et al., 2016, p. 5). Meanwhile, “‘Inconsistent Evidence’ means that half or more of conversational turns sufficiently focus on the intended results of the conversation, but this focus may be superficial, or lack clarity” (Hakuta et al., 2016, p. 5). Further, “‘Attempting Interaction’ implies that few conversational turns focus on the intended outcomes of the conversation, and ‘No Attempt’ means that conversational turns do not focus on the intended results of the conversation” (Hakuta et al., 2016, p. 6).

The CAT by Hakuta et al. (2016) aims to develop several conversation skills in ESOL learners, which are also highly important for students in literature classrooms. These include: (1) the skill of clarifying, which “implies elaboration, explanation, and paraphrasing ideas” (Protoven & Lysanets, 2017, p. 150); (2) the skill of negotiating, which represents the abilities to evaluate and compare ideas; (3) the skill of fortifying, which “involves supporting ideas with evidence” (Protoven & Lysanets, 2017, p. 150). Developing these conversation competencies in analyzing literary dialogues in classrooms can significantly improve students’ speaking skills. Moreover, the CAT can serve as a useful formative assessment tool for a teacher.

Teachers can promote the development of these communication skills in different ways. These include prompts (i.e., open-ended and close-ended questions) and discourse moves, which are “specific conversational turns aimed at fostering and encouraging the development of specific ideas in the classroom” (Protoven & Lysanets, 2017, p. 150). In particular, the discourse moves involve such techniques as probing (e.g., “What do you mean by that?”; “Can you tell more about that?,” etc.), and pressing (e.g., “Can you give an example?”; “What evidence do you have?”
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etc.)” (Protoven & Lysanets, 2017, p. 151). Other useful methods include *re-voicing* a student’s idea (e.g., “I understand your explanation, but did you mean to say that...?”), and *prompting peer-to-peer talk*, that is, stimulating other students to participate (e.g., “Can anyone add to *Student’s name*’s idea?”) (Protoven & Lysanets, 2017, p. 151).

Apart from ESOL teaching, this method is also beneficial for cinematic analysis (Chepinchikj, & Thompson, 2016), and studies on psychology and social interaction (Meredith, 2019; Meredith, 2020). Furthermore, scientists have focused on the feasibility of CA in the development of doctor-patient interaction and facilitation of medical communication (Drew, Chatwin, & Collins, 2001; Maynard & Heritage, 2005; Ong, Barnes, & Buus, 2020; O’Reilly, Kiyimba, Nina Lester, & Muskett, 2020; Wu, 2020). Indeed, future physicians need to develop communicative skills and acquire the so-called “narrative literacy” to elicit relevant details from encounters with patients (Lysanets, Bieliaieva, Znamenska, Nikolaieva, Efendieva, & Hutsol, 2018, p. 182). Moreover, CA proved to be effective in teaching specialized medical subjects to international English-speaking students (Hryshko, 2017). Hence, CA is a highly productive method with a strong potential for successful implementation in various spheres of research.

Having studied the present context of this technique, the authors of this study revealed that CA has not yet found a detailed application in world literature classrooms. At the same time, Hugo Bowles has defined applying CA to literary dialogues as “a new avenue of research” (Bowles, 2011, p. 166). However, no substantial studies followed upon the publication of this remark in 2011. Therefore, the researchers decided to apply this method in their instructional setting, namely, in teaching literary analysis to senior students majoring in English philology, and thus to fill this research gap.

**Methods**

The underlying method of this research is the CAT, developed by Hakuta et al. (2016), and further elaborated by the authors of this study. The researchers adopted the CAT to their teaching context by selecting literary dialogues from different prose writings and testing them via the CAT in the classroom activities. The authors conducted their research with the fifth year students majoring in English philology, who had already mastered the literary analysis techniques, including such modern methods as narratology and reception theory, and the major literary trends and styles in the history of world literature. Therefore, the target learners were well-prepared for an in-depth pragmatic analysis of communication in fiction. The researchers applied the flipped classroom instructional strategy, according to which students examined the training material at home and thus were supposed to grasp the basic principles of the CAT before their literature lesson. In the classroom, students were given several literary dialogues and evaluated them using the CAT. The material for classroom discussion was selected according to excerpts’ conversational capacity and the learning objectives of the lesson. The dialogues also corresponded to students’ syllabi and extra-curricular readings in world literature.

In this research, the authors used Dimension 0 to evaluate interlocutors’ readiness to communicate in literary dialogues. Meanwhile, Dimension one reflects how interlocutors cooperate in their interaction. Further, the researchers applied Dimension two to evaluate the coherence of literary conversations. It demonstrates whether interlocutors manage to achieve
consensus. Thus, this study used Dimensions 0, one, and two to determine the pragmatic features of literary dialogues, i.e., the writer’s narrative intentions and the reader’s expected reception. In addition to applying the abovementioned Dimensions, the researchers scaffolded students’ communication skills using strategic grouping, the fishbowl model, and class discussion.

Results

At first, the authors divided students into groups, and each team was allocated a literary dialogue from the selected reading material. The analyzed pieces of world literature included excerpts, exemplifying different types of conversations between characters: (1) Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865) by Lewis Carroll, (2) The Little Prince (1943) by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, (3) Nothing Lasts Forever (1994) by Sidney Sheldon, and (4) Verbal Transcription – 6 a.m. (1932) by William Carlos Williams. During the class, the researchers used visual means to scaffold students' learning. These included graphic organizers and charts representing the Dimensions and scores in the CAT. After reading an excerpt, each group of students evaluated Dimensions 0, one, and two. After assigning a particular score in Dimensions 0, one, and two for each excerpt, students supported their findings with evidence and explanations.

The excerpts under consideration are given below. The researchers divided the literary dialogues into conversational turns to facilitate the process of students’ analysis. The first excerpt was taken from Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865) by Lewis Carroll: Turn 1: “Have some wine”<…> Turn 2: “I don’t see any wine,” she remarked. Turn 3: “There isn’t any,” said the March Hare. Turn 4: “Then it wasn’t very civil of you to offer it,” said Alice angrily. Turn 5: “It wasn’t very civil of you to sit down without being invited,” said the March Hare. Turn 6: “I didn’t know it was your table,” said Alice; “it’s laid for a great many more than three.” Turn 7: “Your hair wants cutting,” said the Hatter<…> Turn 8: “You should learn not to make personal remarks,” Alice said with some severity; “it’s very rude.” Turn 9: “Why is a raven like a writing-desk?” (Carroll, 1866, pp. 96-97).

After the in-group evaluation and the fishbowl discussion, students assessed this excerpt as follows: in terms of Dimension 0, the score is “Strong Evidence” (4) – all conversational turns are present. For Dimension one, the score is “Attempting Interaction” (2) – few conversational turns build on previous turns to build up an idea. In terms of Dimension two, the score is “Attempting Interaction” (2) – few conversational turns focus on the intended results of the conversation. For each score, students provided evidence according to the CAT method, thus scaffolding their fortifying skills. For instance, students explained which turns in the dialogue demonstrated “Attempting Interaction” in Dimensions one and two, which parts were off-topic and irrelevant. Students reported that turns from Alice (turns 2, 4, 6, 8) always build on and build up her partner’s ideas, whereas turns from the March Hare and the Hatter (turns 1, 3, 5, 7, 9) are self-contradictory and inconsistent. Indeed, turns 1, 5, 7, 9 each time suggest an entirely new topic for discussion, dismissing the interlocutor’s answers.

The second excerpt was taken from The Little Prince (1943) by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry:

Turn 1: “Good morning<…> Your cigarette has gone out.” Turn 2: “Three and two make five. Five and seven make twelve. Twelve and three make fifteen. Good morning. Fifteen and seven make twenty-two. Twenty-two and six make twenty-eight. I haven't time to light it again. Twenty-
six and five make thirty-one. Phew! Then that makes five-hundred-and-one million, six-hundred-twenty-two-thousand, seven-hundred-thirty-one.” Turn 3: “Five hundred million what?” Turn 4: “Eh? Are you still there? Five-hundred-and-one million – I can't stop... I have so much to do! I am concerned with matters of consequence. I don't amuse myself with balderdash. Two and five make seven...” Turn 5: “Five-hundred-and-one million what?” Turn 6: “<...> I have no time for loafing. The third time – well, this is it! I was saying, then, five-hundred-and-one million...” Turn 7: “Millions of what?” Turn 8: “Millions of those little objects,” he said, “which one sometimes sees in the sky.” Turn 9: “Flies?” Turn 10: “Oh, no. Little glittering objects.” Turn 11: “Bees?” Turn 12: “Oh, no. Little golden objects that set lazy men to idle dreaming. As for me, I am concerned with matters of consequence. There is no time for idle dreaming in my life.” Turn 13: “Ah! You mean the stars?” Turn 14: “Yes, that's it. The stars” (De Saint-Exupéry, 1945, pp. 41-43).

As one can observe, this excerpt contains yet another vivid example of the author’s deliberate confusion of the dialogue. After the in-group evaluation and the fishbowl discussion, students assessed this excerpt as follows: in terms of Dimension 0, the score is “Strong Evidence” (4) – all conversational turns are present; for Dimension one, the score is “Inconsistent Evidence” (3) – half or more of conversational turns build on previous turns to adequately build up an idea, which may be incomplete or lack clarity; in terms of Dimension two, the score is “Inconsistent Evidence” (3) – half or more of conversational turns sufficiently focus on the intended results of the conversation, but this focus may be superficial or lack clarity. For each score, students provided evidence according to the CAT method and compare excerpts one and two, thus scaffolding their negotiating skills.

The third excerpt was taken from Nothing Lasts Forever (1994) by Sidney Sheldon, which features a conversation between a physician (Paige Taylor) and a father of a six-year-old patient: Turn 1: “Mr. Newton?” Turn 2: “Yes.” Turn 3: “I'm Dr. Taylor. I was just in to see your little boy. He was brought in with abdominal pains.” Turn 4: “Yes. I'm going to take him home.” Turn 5: “I'm afraid not. Peter has a ruptured spleen. He needs an immediate transfusion and an operation, or he'll die.” Turn 6: “We are Jehovah’s Witnesses. The Lord will not let him die, and I will not let him be tainted with someone else’s blood. It was my wife who brought him here. She will be punished for that.” Turn 7: “Mr. Newton, I don’t think you understand how serious the situation is. If we don’t operate right away, your son is going to die.” Turn 8: “You don’t know God’s ways, do you?” Turn 9: “I may not know a lot about God’s ways, but I do know a lot about a ruptured spleen. He’s a minor, so you’ll have to sign this consent form for him.” Turn 10: “And if I don’t sign it?” Turn 11: “Why...then we can’t operate.” Turn 12: “Do you think your powers are stronger than the Lord’s?” Turn 13: “You’re not going to sign, are you?” Turn 14: “No. A higher power than yours will help my son. You will see” (Sheldon, 1994, pp. 161-162).

This dialogue represents an obvious ideological barrier between the physician’s worldview and that of the patient, which significantly impedes their communication. Immediately after this conversation, Dr. Taylor decides to operate without the father’s consent, violating the law to save the child. After the in-group evaluation and the fishbowl discussion, students assessed this excerpt as follows: in terms of Dimension 0, the score is “Strong Evidence” (4) – all conversational turns are present. For Dimension one, the score is “Strong Evidence” (4) – half or more of conversational turns build on previous turns to effectively build up a clear and complete idea. In terms of
Dimension two, the score is “Attempting Interaction” (2) – few conversational turns focus on the intended results of the conversation. For each score, students elaborated, explained, and paraphrased their ideas, thus demonstrating their clarifying skills.

The fourth excerpt was from Verbal Transcription – 6 a.m. (1932) by William Carlos Williams. This short story presents a unique unilateral communication between an alarmed wife, whose husband has suffered a heart attack, and an ambulance physician. In particular, the physician’s narrative figure completely dissolves in the woman’s desperate speech. The author deliberately removes the physician’s turns from the conversation: Turn 1: “The wife: About an hour ago. He woke up, and it was as if a knife was sticking in his side. I tried the old reliable, I gave him a good drink of whisky, but this time it did no good. I thought it might be his heart so I… Yes. In between his pains he was trying to get dressed. He could hardly stand up but through it all, he was trying to get himself ready to go to work. Can you imagine that? Rags! Leave the man alone. The minute you’re good to him he… Look at him sitting up and begging! Rags! Come here! Do you want to look out of the window? Oh, yes. That’s his favorite amusement – like the rest of the family. <…> We have to lean out as if we were living on Third Avenue. <…> Yes. We have quite a menagerie. Have you seen our blue-jay? He had a broken wing. We’ve had him for two years now. He whistles and answers us when we call him. <…> And a canary. Yes. You know I was afraid it was his heart. Shall I dress him now? This is the time he usually takes the train to be there at seven o’clock. Pajamas are so cold. Here put on this old shirt – this old horse blanket, I always call it. I’m sorry to be such a fool, but those needles give me a funny feeling all over. I can’t watch you give them. Thank you so much for coming so quickly. I have a cup of coffee for you already in the kitchen” (Williams, 1984, pp. 102-103).

After the in-group evaluation and the fishbowl discussion, students assessed this excerpt as follows: in terms of Dimension 0, the score is “Inconsistent Evidence” (3) – interlocutors produce half of the conversational turns. Nevertheless, the conversation is quite understandable even though the physician’s turns are lacking. Therefore, for Dimension one, the score is “Strong Evidence” (4) – half or more of conversational turns build on previous turns to build up a clear and complete idea. In terms of Dimension two, the score is “Strong Evidence” (4) – half or more of the turns effectively focus on the communicative objective and intended results of the conversation. Table 1 summarizes students’ evaluation of the literary dialogues using the CAT in each Dimension.

Table 1. Students’ scores for literary dialogues

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialogues</th>
<th>Dimension 0</th>
<th>Dimension 1</th>
<th>Dimension 2</th>
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<tr>
<td>Excerpt No. 1</td>
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<td>Excerpt No. 2</td>
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<td>Excerpt No. 3</td>
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<td>Excerpt No. 4</td>
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The researchers used Table 1 at the end of class as a visual basis to reach relevant concluding remarks and to achieve the broader learning objective of the lesson.

Discussion
The specific learning objectives of the lesson were: (1) to examine the selected pieces of world literature, (2) to study the author’s intentions and the reader’s expected receptive capacity, (3) to practice literary analysis using the CAT, (4) to enhance students’ ESOL proficiency in general, and (5) to improve their skills of clarifying, negotiating and fortifying ideas in English in particular. The broader learning objective was to demonstrate possible associations and interrelations between the physical nature of dialogue (i.e., the graphic and acoustic embodiment) and its pragmatic capacity. To this end, the authors applied the fishbowl model: each team presented their ideas in front of fellow students. After each “fishbowl” group had some discussion, other students contributed their feedback. For this purpose, the researchers used the following prompts: “What is your opinion? Why?”; “To what extent do you agree/disagree with your fellows,” etc. In each case, the authors fostered the communicative skills of negotiating, fortifying, and clarifying ideas. Students were supposed to elicit information from these excerpts and to understand the author’s narrative intentions based on this information.

For class discussion on the first excerpt, the researchers used the following prompts: “Why does the author apply this technique?”; “What effect is it expected to exert on the reader?”; “What role does the author assign to the reader in this dialogue?” and discourse moves (e.g., prompting peer-to-peer talk: “Can anyone add to (Student’s name)’s idea?”). In the course of classroom discussion, the authors elicited the necessary conclusions from students, such as the author’s intentions (“to disrupt the fundamentals of logic and achieve the comic effect of nonsense”; “to undermine the stable identity of the modern man and unveil the absurdity of the society,” etc.), and the reader’s expected receptive capacity (“to enter the author’s game in deciphering the symbolic space and constructing the meaning”). All these pragmatic features herald the advent of the Modernist era. Students concluded that this excerpt is perhaps one of the most vivid examples of the author’s experimental play with logical laws through deliberate narrative non-cohesiveness and incoherence of literary dialogues. In general, students had virtually no difficulties in achieving the learning objectives of the lesson.

For the second excerpt, the researchers used the following prompts: “Why does the author apply this technique?”; “What effect is it expected to exert on the reader?” and discourse moves (e.g., prompting peer-to-peer talk: “Can anyone add to (Student’s name)’s idea?”). Students made relevant conclusions about the writer’s intention (“to juxtapose the innocent and unspoiled world of childhood to that of grown-ups”). They also comprehended the reader’s possible reception (“to perceive the absurdity and cynicism of the world of adults and the contemporary society,” “to understand and remember what things are essential in life,” etc.). Students found it difficult to identify the similarities and differences between these excerpts in terms of their pragmatic features. Therefore, the authors used several prompts (“Were these two dialogues equally ineffective?”; “Which characters attempted to sustain a conversation?,” etc.) and discourse moves (e.g., probing: “What do you mean by that?”; “Can you tell more about that?”; pressing (e.g., “Can you give an example?”; “What evidence do you have?”; re-voicing a student’s idea (e.g., “I understand your explanation, but did you mean to say that…?”). Further, students explained, which turns in the dialogue demonstrated “Inconsistent Evidence” in Dimensions one and two. Students correctly identified that the turns from the Little Prince (turns 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13) serve as a “pivot” of communication and keep the entire conversation to the point, no matter how the interlocutor tries to stray from the subject (turns 2, 4, 6), ignoring the protagonist’s questions (turns 4,6). Hence,
unlike the previous dialogue, the second excerpt is more consistent, and the Little Prince eventually achieves his pragmatic goal (finds out that the businessman is counting stars through reiterative inquiries).

To facilitate discussion for the third dialogue, the following prompts were used: “Why does the physician challenge the father’s decision?”; “Why did the author present this conversation?”; “What would you do in Dr. Taylor’s place?” and the like. To support their scores with evidence, students identified the off-topic turns (turn 6), and turns that completely digressed from the subject of conversation (turns 8, 10). To foster the skill of clarifying ideas, the authors used the discourse move of probing (“What do you mean by...?”; “Can you clarify the part about…?”). Further, the researchers applied pressing (“Can you be more specific?”; “What does that mean?”; “What do you mean by...?”; “Can you elaborate on the...?”; “Can you clarify the part about…?”; “How is that important?” etc.). The discourse move of re-voicing a student’s idea was also useful (“To paraphrase what you have just said, you think that...”). Thanks to these prompts, the researchers elucidated several new terms, such as deontology, bioethics, and informed consent, by providing their English definitions and explaining their meaning. After several prompts, students clarified their answers (“turns 8, 10 contain rhetorical questions”; “the conversation did not achieve its objective because the physician did not manage to persuade the father to sign the consent form,” etc.). During class discussion, students reached relevant conclusions: the physician breaks the law because she prioritizes her patient’s life above everything and cannot let the boy die because of his father’s religious commitments. Hence, the writer intended to demonstrate a difficult moral choice that a physician may face in their professional practice. As a result, the reader sympathizes with the protagonist and contemplates the relevant issues of bioethics, religion, and humanism.

For the fourth dialogue, the researchers decided to scaffold all three communicative skills. Students demonstrated their clarifying skills by explaining how exactly the author reflects the character’s stressful condition (“by applying the Modernist stream of consciousness method”; “by using the technique of narrative ellipsis”). After that, students provided definitions for the terms “stream of consciousness” and “ellipsis” in English. Next, students suggested the physician’s possible questions and described his actions to match the woman’s turns. The authors checked students’ fortifying skills by asking them to prove that this conversation was successful (“the woman reacts to all questions and statements from the physician”; “they ultimately achieve the intended result of communication, namely, transportation of her husband to the hospital”). Finally, students practiced their negotiating by comparing excerpt four with the previous three dialogues in terms of the CAT scores, the author’s intentions, and the reader’s reception. The researchers used the following prompts: “Why are the physician’s turns absent?”; “What is the role of silence in the narrative structure of this conversation?”; “Why does the author apply this technique?”; “What effect is it expected to exert on the reader?”; “What role does the author assign to the reader in this dialogue?” and discourse moves (e.g., prompting peer-to-peer talk: “Can anyone add to (Student’s name)’s idea?”).

Students reached conclusions consistent with their literary theory readings, as provided by the curriculum. For instance, in class discussion, they concluded that the physician’s narrative “silence” in the dialogue gives the reader a certain extent of receptive freedom in constructing the narrated scenes. It induces the reader’s receptive potential and invites them to co-create the story.
Consequently, the reader obtains a certain degree of responsibility in deciphering the author’s message and revealing the receptive capacity of the text. The author invites the reader to assume the physician’s role and fill in the narrative gaps with their receptive potential.

At the end of class, the authors elicited students’ relevant concluding remarks, necessary for achieving the broader learning objective of the lesson. Table 1 demonstrated that a strong Dimension 0 does not necessarily imply coherent and successful communication (excerpts one-three). Meanwhile, a robust Dimension one can be a feasible basis for Dimension two (excerpt four). A weak Dimension one is likely to result in a low Dimension two score (excerpts one and two). However, a strong Dimension one does not guarantee the consensus between interlocutors. It can be due to possible communicative barriers, such as ideological differences (excerpt three).

Moreover, an inconsistent Dimension 0 can serve the author’s particular artistic intention, such as an elliptic receptive effect of a literary text (excerpt four). At the same time, it still may ensure robust Dimensions one and two. Thus, the authors achieved the broader learning objective of demonstrating that the physical presence of communication and its cohesion may not be a prerequisite for its pragmatic capacity.

Conclusion

The research problem addressed in this study was searching for novel instruction techniques targeted at improving communication skills in the 21st-century globalized world. The central research question of the article was whether this method is as feasible for teaching literature as it is for ESOL classrooms. The research proved that the CAT could be an efficient method for the formative assessment of senior students in the world literature classroom. This technique serves as a feasible “litmus paper,” representing students’ general ESOL communicative competence, their negotiating, clarifying, fortifying skills, and their abilities to conduct the literary analysis of the text. The suggested method demonstrates students’ progress in the studied topics and identifies possible gaps in mastering the educational content. It also reveals the pragmatic features of fiction dialogues, the writer’s narrative intentions, and the reader’s expected reception. Applying the CAT in the world literature classroom improves students’ learning outcomes and enhances their English language proficiency, allows teachers to achieve their instructional objectives effectively, and, in general, fosters a beneficial communication-oriented educational setting. It is necessary to test the CAT on other examples from world literature to refine this technique and derive even more instructional benefits. The results of the study will contribute to the development of language and literature syllabi at universities. The findings can also be useful for other academic settings, improving the teaching content in different areas and outlining new methodological directions for lesson development and delivery.

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Language Maintenance and Language Shift among Keralites in Oman

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Abstract  
This study explores the current status of language maintenance (LM) and language shift (LS) among Keralites, popularly known as ‘Malayalees,’ living in Oman. It analyses the leading factors that affect language maintenance and language shift: a particular focus is given to identifying the various domains in which language maintenance is facilitated; the attitudes held by the Keralite parents and their children towards their first language (L1), the initiatives taken by parents, religious and cultural organizations; and the role of educational institutions in promoting language maintenance. Data for this study have been gathered from semi-structured interviews and participant observation of Keralites who have lived in Oman for more than ten years. Analysis of the data indicates that while parents value their mother tongue as their first language and take various measures to maintain it, second-generation children are not keenly attached to L1. Instead, their first language oracy is strikingly marked with code-switching and code shifting, and their writing skills in L1 are diminishing. Refuting the previous findings, the present study reveals that language shift is a temporary phenomenon, and it does not take place at the cost of L1. On the contrary, various factors contribute to the maintenance of their heritage language. Also, the migrant Keralites, as a result of their living abroad, acquire two or three more new languages: English, Hindi, and Arabic depending on their study and work domains, thereby making them a multilingual society. Language shift can gradually result in linguicide, which can have various effects such as alienation from and the loss of culture and cultural values. It is expected that this study will unveil if there is a language shift of a severe nature among the Keraitis in Oman.

Keywords: code-mixing, code shifting, Keralites in Oman, language maintenance, language shift, the local language, multilingual, multicultural, and sociolinguistics.

Introduction

Homo sapiens have never been content with remaining confined to a permanent place of settlement; they have always yearned for the other side that looked greener to them either for physical comfort or spiritual reasons. What is more, people of different socio-political conditions—nomads in search of new pastures, migrants in search of better opportunities and living conditions, refugees driven out of their homelands by the ravages of war or famine—have not always been keen on honoring the age-old ‘wisdom’ of not crossing the shores. History enumerates several instances of people being brutally ripped of their lands and taken to foreign lands as slaves to toil for their masters or sent in exile as people unfit to live in a ‘civilized’ society.

This transplanting and settling of people in new lands have paved the way for many socio-politico-economic and linguistic developments worldwide. When people migrate, they often carry a heavy load of things such as their cultures and languages. When these cultures and languages come into close contact with those of their newly adopted lands—either voluntarily chosen or forced upon—both the groups experience a cultural and linguistic transformation. Rubbing shoulders with each other through social interactions, they are unconsciously imbued with each other’s predominant cultural traits, which bring about attitudinal changes in both the parties. Consequently, it helps them to become global citizens, transcending their entrenched parochial attitudes.

One of the concomitants of the changes in demography is that languages and the communicative modes are considerably affected. When people of widely different linguistic and cultural backgrounds come to live together in a geographical region—sharing everyday socio-economic and political activities of the community—stable bilingual and multilingual societies are created. There can also be diglossic situations where a speech community uses two varieties of the same language for different functions. The main characteristic of a diglossic situation is the existence of two varieties – high variety and low variety.

Bilingualism/multilingualism, code-switching/code-mixing, diglossia, pidgins and creoles, language shift, and language maintenance are some of the unique sociolinguistic phenomena arising from languages coming in contact. In this regard, Graddol (2000) has made a very pertinent observation that the languages people speak exhibit two main influences: the most influential factor, in most cases, is the speech community they are born into; and the next is that the linguistic behavior of people is affected by the languages they learn throughout life. Education, employment, migration, and improved social mobility can add more languages to the linguistic repertoire of people during their lifetime, and they may find that one language becomes more used than the others, including their first language itself. But major language shift from one first language to another is usually slow, taking place across generations. When this process of moving away from one’s mother tongue to replace it with a newly adopted language is complete, there is said to be a language shift. If an individual or a community intransigently clings to using their traditional first language, despite compelling situations to renounce the same, it is known as language maintenance.

Linguistic scenarios have always been in a state of flux. Languages have come to dominate over specific periods and, conversely, they have also receded from the linguistic scene and even...
become subject to linguicide either from natural or political reasons. Mismatch in power relations can force a speech community - majority or minority - to affiliate themselves with the dominant group’s language. Code-switching to English from both majority and minority languages is yet another linguistic phenomenon. It is in this way the English language has percolated into all spheres of life.

Oman is a multilingual country with Arabic as the dominant language and Balushi and Swahili as the minority languages. English is ubiquitous in Omani society in an unprecedented way. The presence of expatriates in the country has paved the way for spreading other languages such as Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Tagalog, Sinhala, etc. The expatriates from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal use Hindi as a link language among them, especially in labor camps and local markets, whereas people engaged in white-collar jobs speak mostly English and Arabic. As Arab News (2020) reports, Indians are the largest expatriate community in Oman, and most of them who are employed in various fields such as education, health, engineering, IT, business, trade, industries, media, and some unskilled areas as well are from Kerala. They are forced to speak English, Arabic, or Hindi as a link language while interacting with other speech communities as part of their job requirements. Some people, in the absence of proficiency in a link language, speak in a mixture of two or more languages.

This study probes into one of the oft-occurring linguistic phenomena of language maintenance and language shift among the Keralite expatriate workers, and their families in the Sultanate of Oman. Furthermore, it is an attempt to find out whether a linguistic succumbing has taken place among them. If the traditional speech communities, despite their prolonged stay in the Sultanate, have succeeded in language maintenance by retaining their languages, it is interesting to know what factors have helped them. And if they have failed, what has been responsible for the language shift?

Literature Review

Several studies have been carried out on how language maintenance or language shift occurs through language contact conflicting situations in various communities across the globe. The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (2013) defines language maintenance as the degree to which an individual or group continues to use their language, particularly, in a bilingual or multilingual context or among immigrant groups. While not refuting the above definition of language shift, it is also a process by which a new language is acquired by a community, usually leading to the loss of the community’s first language. Both language maintenance and language shift occur as a result of contact with other dominant languages. In the opinion of Habtoor (2012), Language maintenance is the product of language contact wherein a linguistic minority, or a marginalized ethnolinguistic group is successful in keeping its original language despite the pressure exerted on it by the dominant linguistic group. In essence, a language shift takes place when the members of a linguistic community gradually abandon their first language and use another one (Trudgill, 2000). However, this being a maiden study on the prevailing linguistic scenario in Oman, there is a shortage of literature on the topic in the Omani context to corroborate my conclusions from the studies conducted by others. The researchers were, thus, compelled to draw on similar studies done outside Oman to explore the why and how of language maintenance and shift.
Not very long ago, one very notable study was done in Europe to investigate 48 minority languages within the European Union, and a report named Euromosaic—the production and reproduction of the minority language groups in the European Union—was published in 1996. The objective of the study, as mentioned in the title of the report, was to ascertain the status of the minority language groups through an inquiry into their potential for production and reproduction of their languages and the difficulties they confront while doing so. The survey investigated various areas such as the use of minority languages within families, in education, and among the members of the linguistic groups. The results of the study showed that the prestige attributed to languages or the role of a language in social mobility and cultural reproduction plays a vital role in language shift or maintenance. Also, the results index the value of linguistic tradition in language maintenance. If linguistic skills and values are not transferred from one generation to another, this phenomenon will naturally lead to linguistic attrition.

Wolck (2004) has discussed the imperatives for language maintenance. Maintaining a language implies using it, and that is possible only if one knows the language; one is loyal to that language and cherishes positive attitudes towards it. Wolck identifies a set of nine factors, which he calls the universals, relevant to language maintenance and language shift. According to Wolck, the most influential factor is generational continuity and language transfer from parents to children. In case of intergenerational dislocation wherein grandparents use their language to communicate with their grandchildren and parents use the same language to communicate with their parents but not with their children, there is all the possibility of language decay. If a language is to be maintained, there should be generational continuity and language transfer from parents to children.

Linguistic unification and standardization are other factors contributing to language maintenance. Wolck (2004) identifies this as the decisive factor that saved Bolivian Quechua from linguicide. Diversification and dialectal fragmentation are catalytic to language shift. A minority language has better chances of survival if it is not fragmented.

Sharing domains of usage with the majority language can also help in language maintenance. When using a minority language is restricted to selected domains, it can be stigmatized as fit only for those fields. However, the presence of a minority language, and the majority language in the same domains, strengthens the minority language. Wolck (2004) seems to be very close to the truth when he observes that this kind of co-existent bilingualism is more protective of minority languages than functional separatism and complementation.

Factors Affecting Language Maintenance and Language Shift

The family or home is the most crucial domain that can enhance language maintenance. Pauwels (2008) argues that the ultimate survival of a language depends on intergenerational transfer. The role of parents is crucial in laying the foundations for language maintenance. If the use of L1 diminishes at home, it will negatively affect other domains, too. Clyne and Kipp (1999) believe that the family plays a crucial role in language maintenance. If a language is not used in the home domain, then it cannot be maintained elsewhere. As most Keralites in Oman live with their family, they get ample opportunities to preserve their first language. Studies show that the number of people living in a family can affect language maintenance. Hence, it is only logical that children living in extended families have better language maintenance chances than someone
living alone or in a nuclear family (Pauwels, A. 2005). If the number of L1 users is significantly less in the household, the chances of language shift to the dominant language are likely to become high.

From a demographic perspective, the numerical strength of a linguistic community and the concentration of speakers in one area are crucial variables in promoting language maintenance (Edwards, 1995). Most Keralites in Oman prefer community living, especially in areas near Indian schools or dominated by their language community. The formation of such residential colonies often becomes like a linguistic enclave, which is a crucial factor in strengthening language maintenance.

Another critical factor in promoting language maintenance or shift is the attitude of the natives or the dominant group towards the language of the migrant community. A positive and supportive attitude of the dominant group gives the minority groups more opportunities for language maintenance (Pauwels, 2016). Omanis are very hospitable and cordial to Keralites mainly because of their social and cultural affinities. It is not rarely we come across scenes of local Omani traders using Malayalam (the language of the Keralites) while trying to sell certain goods at marketplaces. This cannot be seen just as a mere market strategy employed by a group of shrewd businessmen; instead, it is a perfect example of the positive attitude of the natives towards the migrant folk. Moreover, this cordial relationship enables the migrant group to acquire the language of the natives without affecting their heritage language. Although it doesn't lead to language shift, it often results in code-mixing. There is always a strong resistance from Malayalee communities to halt or reverse language shift. Fortunately, they enjoy generous institutional support in Oman. The latest example is a project titled ‘Malayalam Mission’ started by the Department of Cultural Affairs, the government of Kerala, which aims at promoting language and cultural activities among Keralites living abroad.

Studies reveal that the age of the migrants and the length of their residence are essential variables for language shift. For instance, Waas found that a small group of German teenagers who migrated to Australia almost lost their first language after two decades of living abroad (as cited in Guardado, 2012). It is challenging for young migrants to maintain their first language after a considerable length of stay in a foreign country. Empirical studies suggest that language shift does not happen abruptly but over a period (Kouritzin, 1999; Merion, 1983). Gardner-Chloros, McEntee-Atalianis, & Finnis (2005) state that the process of language shift goes through at least three generations before it becomes complete. It begins with a bilingual stage, and the signs of language shift become intense with the second generation. It may even lead to the loss of L1 by the next generation, especially if immigrants integrate well with the dominant culture. Mills (2001) found from her research that there is a negative correlation between acculturation and language maintenance (as cited in Garcia, 2003). The acculturation is likely to become strong depending on the length of residence in a foreign country.

Stoessel (2002) claims that social networks have a strong influence on language maintenance and shift. She states that most people in the initial stage of their immigration tend to interact with the same language community on social media platforms, which significantly contributes to their L1 maintenance. However, as time passes, they begin to expand the social network with other
linguistic groups, which leads to reduced use of L1. One’s attitude to a language is another factor that affects language maintenance and shift. While instrumental attitude is self-oriented, integrative perceptive is social and interpersonal. Many researchers believe that integrative attitude to L1 enhances language maintenance. According to Baker (1992), an integrative perceptive to a language will create an attachment to it and encourage the speakers to identify themselves with that language group its distinct culture proudly.

Research Methodology
For this research, a qualitative method was employed to explore language maintenance and shift. Data for this study have been collected from semi-structured interviews and participant observation. The participants of this research were Keralites who have been in Oman for more than ten years. Fifteen people from different age groups and various walks of life including adolescent students, young professionals, unskilled laborers, social workers, businesspeople, and homemakers were interviewed. Besides, samples of recorded speeches from social and cultural events were analyzed to re-confirm the findings.

Research Questions
The current study was guided by the following four research questions:
1. What are the attitudes of Keralites towards their heritage language and culture?
2. Is there a sign of language shift among Keralites in Oman to any other language?
3. If yes, what are the factors affecting this language shift? If no, what factors influence their language maintenance?
4. Is code-mixing or code shifting a real threat to L1 maintenance?

Data Analysis and Discussion
The data collected from semi-structured interviews and participant observation have revealed a few important facts: Keralites’ educational background; attitude to L1; domains of L1 use; factors affecting language maintenance and shift; and exposure to other languages. Most of the results agree with previous research findings on language maintenance and shift. Nevertheless, a surprising finding is the increasing number of multilingual people among the Malayalee community—especially among the second-generation students. Most Malayalee children who study in Indian schools in Oman are fluent in Malayalam, English and Hindi, and some in Arabic, too.

An essential finding of this research is in line with the common belief of linguistic researchers that the family domain is very vital for language maintenance. It is generally agreed that if there is intense communication in the home domain, transferring the language from the older generation to the younger generation can run smoothly. Pauwels (2008) believes that the language practices of parents, grandparents, and other relatives are essential for the maintenance of a minority language among future generations. The study reveals that most Keralites in Oman live with their family and others live with friends in bachelor accommodations, mostly in areas dominated by members of their linguistic community. This indicates that they get enough opportunities to use L1 both at home and with their neighbors. What is more, living in the same vicinity with people of the same linguistic community facilitates the frequent family gatherings and small parties. Such socializing events are, indeed, crucial for language maintenance. In addition to this, the large size
of the Malayalee workforce and student communities in Oman gives them opportunities for much L1 use.

The most obvious result of this research is the revelation of the extent of code-mixing and code-switching among the Keralites in Oman. The speech of the first-generation migrants whose job requires active and direct interaction with the natives is marked with code-mixing. Some of the standard Arabic terms used by Keralites in their speech are Insha Allah, Alhamdulillah, halal, haram, baladiya, jawaz, pathaka, surtha, ijaza, furhan, rahat, zahlan, etc. The number of Arabic words in speech increases in proportion to the length of time of an immigrant’s stay in Oman. However, what is noticeable here is that this code-mixing is unlikely to lead to language shift. The reason is—as this study has revealed—that code-mixing does not occur as a result of the migrant’s loss of L1 substitutes; instead, it is the result of the conscious effort taken by the migrants to manifest their affinity with the local language and culture. On repatriation, many of them carry these experiences and language traits to their home country and transfer them to the local culture. Now the influence of Gulf Malayalees is visible in many facets of life in the State, such as art, literature, language, culture, business, food habits, etc.

Code-mixing or code-switching is not limited to Arabic alone. Commonly, Keralites tend to speak Malayalam mixed with other languages such as English and Hindi, and some even alternate between languages. Holmes (2001) asserts that code-switching is associated with language shift. However, most Keralites are strong advocates of their heritage language, and they always disapprove of code-mixing and code shifting. As reactions to these linguistic phenomena are still adverse in the State, most elders condemn the young generation’s speech, which is frequently mixed with English, and they call it ‘Manglish’ disdainfully. As most Malayalees living abroad are aware of this fact, they take maximum care to save their first language from being devoured by other languages.

Keralites usually value their heritage language and distinct culture even when they speak other languages and integrate with different cultures; it helps them maintain their first language and cultural identity. Language, identity, and culture are inextricably related (Norton, 2000). All the participants except a housewife said that they speak more than two languages. Most of them speak Malayalam, English, Hindi, and Arabic. Although most respondents agree that they are very successful at maintaining their heritage language abroad, some admit that their writing skills are diminishing due to less usage.

The results of the current study also revealed that mass media play a crucial role in language maintenance. Most respondents consider traditional media as an essential source that helps language maintenance. Keralites who live abroad are generally very curious to know about the political, economic, social, and cultural development of their home state. Hence, they frequently view Malayalam TV programs, and read online or print newspapers and articles. As men are interested in politics and literature, they often engage themselves in political debates or discussions on social media platforms of their linguistic communities. Besides, most homemakers view only Malayalam channels on TV, which confirms the general notion that women are the real preservers of heritage language and culture.
The two significant findings of this study are code-mixing and multilingualism among the Keralites in Oman. When the former one raises some concerns for the advocates of pure Malayalam, the latter is a progressive result of globalization, which does not pose any threat to the maintenance of heritage language. The literacy program organized under the Malayalam Mission banner, a government initiative, has significantly contributed to language maintenance. The role of traditional media is also equally important. The availability of Malayalam newspapers and TV channels, the social clubs named Malayalam Wing and Kerala wing, social and family gatherings, neighborhoods - all these have contributed to language maintenance. Besides, studying Malayalam as an additional language in Indian schools has saved the second generation from a potential language shift.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the data analysis, all Keralites who live with their families in Oman, except for a few second-generation children, prefer to use Malayalam in the home domain. However, those living in labor camps or shared accommodation with other nationalities or people from different states of India are forced to use Hindi, English, or Arabic for communication, which is not an obvious sign of language shift but an inevitable impact of globalization. Although they use these languages in educational and work domains or a mixture of two or more languages as the situation demands, the ultimate result is not any language shift but code-mixing and acquiring additional languages. With time, most Keralites living in Oman become fluent speakers of Malayalam, English, Hindi, and Arabic. What is most encouraging is that they also become a multilingual, multiethnic and multicultural society maintaining the heritage language and preserving the essence of their distinct culture, which can be summarized as the transformation of a local Malayalee into a global one.

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Exploring the Effect of Using WhatsApp on Saudi Female EFL Students' Idiom-Learning

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Abstract
The study aimed at investigating the effect of using WhatsApp-based learning activities on developing idiom knowledge among Saudi university English as a foreign language (EFL) students compared to conventional method. It also examined the students’ perceptions towards the application of WhatsApp in idiom-learning. The rationale for conducting this study is to provide students with useful learning tools that may improve their idiomatic knowledge and also help them to practice English idioms anytime and anywhere outside the classroom. It also aimed to help teachers to streamline EFL instruction, making it more efficient, effective, and user-friendly. As such, the main research questions are what is the effect of WhatsApp-based learning activities on developing university female EFL students? and what are Saudi female EFL students’ perceptions on learning idioms using WhatsApp?. To answer these questions, 70 EFL female students in the Department of English Language and literature at Imam Mohammad ibn Saud Islamic University (IMSIU) involved in the study. They were assigned into two groups; experimental group, who was taught English idioms via WhatsApp-based learning activities, and control group, who was taught English idioms conventionally in classroom. Two instruments were used to collect the data; a pre-post idioms achievement test and a post-study questionnaire. The findings demonstrated that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group in idioms achievement post-test. Moreover, the results showed that the majority of the experimental group had a positive perception towards learning English idioms via WhatsApp.

Keywords: idiomatic expression, mobile assisted language learning, Saudi female EFL students, students’ perceptions, WhatsApp

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Introduction

Idioms are essential segments of second language acquisition programs which aim to help students achieve native-level language proficiency (Mahmoud, 2002). Unfortunately, the teaching of idioms in the Saudi EFL context has not received adequate attention in classroom learning environments. According to Alhaysony (2017), most Saudi EFL undergraduate students lack idiomatic competence. EFL teachers encounter various challenges in idioms teaching. The limited class hours and overcrowded classrooms do not allow EFL students to have enough exposure to idiomatic expressions and to be able to understand them and use them accurately (Haghighi, 2016). According to Noor and Fallatah (2010), the non-interactive environment in the conventional classrooms minimizes the opportunity to identify the meaning of idioms and to receive adequate feedback. In addition, teachers may struggle to motivate learners to use and pick up idioms outside the classroom (Al-Kadi, 2015). This raises several questions regarding the effectiveness and appropriateness methods for teaching and learning idioms employed in Saudi EFL context. Therefore, it is important for EFL teachers to integrate English idioms effectively in EFL classrooms to develop students’ achievement as well as improve their language proficiency level.

The ubiquity, usability, and flexibility of mobile technologies can help to improve EFL learners’ idiomatic knowledge (Chen & Chung, 2008). Nesselhauf and Tschicold (2002) claimed that learning applications are suited for teaching idioms and collocations as these are easy to implement in mobile learning (m-learning) applications. They also argued that vocabulary can easily be practiced beyond the classroom context. Undoubtedly, there is a need to incorporate new techniques and teaching aids that help EFL students to understand and use English idioms effectively.

WhatsApp is one of the most widespread messaging applications, and it is sometimes utilized as a source of communication between teachers and students. According to Yalcinalp and Gulbahar (2010), the advantages of using WhatsApp as an educational tool are as follows: it motivates learners, makes collaborative learning productive, and encourages learner-to-learner interaction. However, the potential of this educational tool has not been exploited enough by educators for learning idiomatic expressions. Therefore, WhatsApp can be operationalized in this study as a medium by which students share online resources, pictures, and videos.

The current study addresses a significant issue in language learning. For EFL students, instructor and curriculum designers. It aims at providing students with useful learning tools that may enhance their idiomatic knowledge by practicing English idioms Anytime and anywhere outside the classroom. Furthermore, this study will help instructor and curriculum designers to create new and updated ways of teaching that will bridge the gap between formal learning inside the classroom and informal learning outside it.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the effect of WhatsApp-based learning activities on developing university female EFL students?
2. What are Saudi female EFL students’ perceptions on learning idioms using WhatsApp?
Literature Review

The Significant of Using Idioms in Learning English Language

Idiomatic competence is a necessary aspect of second language learning. The importance of idioms in developing fluency and understanding spoken and written languages is well-documented in the literature. According to Boers, Eyckmans, Kappel, Stengers, and Demecheleer (2006), there are three reasons why idiomatic expressions are beneficial for learners. Firstly, they help students to achieve native-like performance. Secondly, they are recalled from memory in units that help to reduce learners' hesitations. Thirdly, they facilitate fluent language production. Many researchers view mastery of idiomatic expressions as a step towards the fluency of native speakers (Liontas, 2002; Liu, 2017; Schmitt, 2000).

The Difficulties of Learning English Idioms

Mastery the meaning of English idioms has been an argumentative issue among EFL learners. The pragmatic, semantic, and syntactic features of idioms make it challenging for EFL learners to recognize their structures and comprehend their meanings (Al-Kadi, 2015; Andreou & Galantomos, 2007; Chen & Lai, 2013; Ghazala, 2004). Noor and Fallatah (2010) explored the difficulties encountered by EFL students in learning idiomatic expressions. The finding indicated that the insufficient coverage of idioms in language curricula is one of the problems that make idioms difficult for EFL students. Moreover, Haghighi (2016) clarified that teachers should find alternative ways to teach idiomatic expressions and make students responsible for their learning. One of the methods that could help teachers to teach idiomatic expressions is using various technologies that are accessible to students.

Mobile-Assisted Language Learning

The use of mobile devices to support language learning has presented a turning point in technology-enhanced language learning (Chinnery, 2006). Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL) is considered a subdivision of both m-learning and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) (Viberg & Grönlund, 2012; Kukulska-Hulme & Shield, 2008; Chinnery, 2006).

The role of MALL in improving idiomatic knowledge among EFL learners has been examined to some extent (Amer, 2010; Basal, Yılmaz, Tanriverdi, & Sari, 2016; Haghighi, 2016; Hayati, Jalilifar, & Meshahi, 2013; Thornton & Houser, 2005). One of the studies was conducted by Amer (2010), who tried to solve traditional EFL idioms- learning problems by developing an application called “Idiomobile.” Data from the application showed that, the more learners used the program, the higher they scored on the application’s quizzes. Findings also indicated participants’ positive attitudes towards using mobile applications in language learning. In the Iranian context, Hayati et al. (2013) examined the effectiveness of three ways of English idioms instruction: Short Message Service (SMS)-based learning, contextual learning, and self-study learning. The findings showed that the SMS group scored the highest and the self-study group the lowest on the post-test. Furthermore, the post-experiment survey showed that mobile phones and SMS messages are effective and recommended teaching methods. Another example is a study carried out by Haghighi (2016), who examined the effect of Telegram—an instant messaging service—and movie clips on idioms learning. The results of the study indicated that the Telegram and movie clip groups substantially outperformed the control group in the post-test. Moreover, the findings of the
questionnaire revealed that learners had positive attitudes towards using Telegram and movie clips in idiom-learning.

**WhatsApp as a Language Learning Tool**

The widespread accessibility of smartphones and wireless networks has led to a growing number of SNSs (Karpisek, Baggili, & Breitinger, 2015). According to Alshabab and Almaqrn (2018), teaching and learning styles have been affected by the development and the availability of mobile applications. In Saudi Arabia, WhatsApp is the most popular messenger application, exceeding other social media tools such as Facebook and Snapchat (Fattah, 2015; Fodah & Alajlan, 2015). A study conducted by Baishya and Maheshwari (2020) concluded the importance of educational WhatsApp groups and the functions of these groups are mainly education related. According to Yalcinalp and Gulbahar (2010), the advantages of using WhatsApp as an educational tool are as follows: it motivates learners, makes collaborative learning productive, and encourages learner-to-learner interaction.

Given the ubiquity of smartphones and the heavy use of SNSs, a number of quasi-experimental studies have investigated the effectiveness of WhatsApp in vocabulary learning (Alsaleem, 2013; Batawi, 2019; Bensalem, 2018; Castrillo, Martín-Monje & Bárcena, 2014; Çetinkaya & Sütçü, 2018; Fageeh, 2013; Jafari & Chalak, 2016) and some aspects of vocabulary such as collocations (Ashiyan & Saleh, 2016). These studies proved that WhatsApp is more effective and preferable language learning method than other social networking applications, printed materials, and computers. On the other hand, a study carried out by Dehghan, Rezvani and Fazeli (2017) did not support these purported effects of WhatsApp on vocabulary learning. The findings of the study indicated that there were no significant differences between the WhatsApp group and the traditional group in terms of post-test performance. The researchers attributed the lack of better performance in the WhatsApp group to students’ distraction by irrelevant activities, the absence of rules regulating the use of this application for learning, the limited number of participants, and the choice of vocabulary words.

To date, most research on WhatsApp for language instruction has proven it to be an effective tool for foreign and second language learning. Nevertheless, the impact of this application for learning and practicing idioms has not been sufficiently researched. Therefore, this research tries to fill an academic gap by exploring the effect of using WhatsApp-based learning activities in improving the idiomatic knowledge of Saudi EFL learners, as well as their perceptions about the implementation of this technology in idiomatic practice.

**Students’ Perceptions of WhatsApp in Language Learning**

One factor that may contribute to the effectiveness of mobile-mediated language learning is students' positive attitudes and perceptions towards mobile technology. Indeed, educational research (Alghamd, 2019; Alshammari, Parkes, Adlington, 2017; Bensalem, 2018; Çetinkaya & Sütçü, 2018; La Hanisi, Risdiany, Dwi Utami, Sulisworo, 2018) has indicated that WhatsApp, in particular, has been positively received by students.
A variety of theories and models have developed to investigate learners' perceptions of the adoption of new technologies such as Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT).

**Technology Acceptance Model**

TAM was developed by Davis (1989), and it included four main perceived constructs: perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, behavioral intentions, and attitudes towards the use of technologies. Perceived ease of use refers to a person’s belief that a technology will be relatively effortless to use, while perceived usefulness refers to a person’s belief that a technology will promote his or her job performance (Davis, 1989). In term of behavioral intention, it refers to a person’s subjective likelihood to perform or not perform a specified future behavior (Davis, Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1989). Additionally, Attitude towards the use refers to a person’s feelings about a particular stimulus object (Davis, 1989; Davis et al., 1989). To supplement these four constructs, Venkatesh and Davis (1996) expanded the TAM model by adding external variables (e.g., users’ computer self-efficacy) that affect intention to use and actual use. According to Compeau and Higgins (1995), computer self-efficacy (CSE) refers to a person’s perception of his or her capability to use a computer.

Based on the literature, TAM has been adopted and expanded in many studies for different types of technology. For instance, Huang, Huang and Huang (2012) used TAM to examine students’ perceptions on the ubiquitous English vocabulary learning UEVL system. Turning our attention to more recent literature on technology acceptance, Rahman Ramakrishnan and Ngamassi (2019) utilized the TAM model and perceived risk to explore university students’ perceptions of social media use and its effect on their satisfaction.

**Innovation Diffusion Theory**

Innovation Diffusion Theory (IDT), which is developed by Rogers in 1962, has been widely applied in disciplines such as education, sociology, marketing, and so on (Rogers, 1995). IDT devises a model to examine the transformation process of emerging innovations or existing technologies. Rogers (1995) proposed five main constructs in his diffusion of innovations model: relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability. In the present study, the researcher only adopts compatibility as an external variable because it is related to the reasons why participants adopted new innovations.

Previous studies (Cakir & Solak, 2015; Chang & Tung, 2008; Chung, Chen, & Kuo, 2015) integrated IDT into TAM to investigate different purposes. Chung et al. (2015) investigated the factors related to Taiwanese EFL university students’ behavioral intentions towards mobile English vocabulary learning resources. Much like the present research, their study extended TAM by including self-efficacy and compatibility. The findings showed that students’ behavioral intentions positively correlated with use of mobile devices.

The current study examines students’ perceptions of using WhatsApp in idiom-learning by incorporating TAM and IDT. The researcher uses the TAM constructs of perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, and behavioral intention, alongside two additional constructs: self-efficacy and compatibility.
Methods

The present study followed a quasi-experimental design of nonequivalent groups. Brown (2004) describes a quasi-experimental design as one that involves a pre-test, treatment, and post-test on normally occurring groups. The independent variable of the study was WhatsApp-based learning activities, and the dependent variable was the achievements of Saudi female EFL students in idiom-learning.

Participants

The participants of the study were 70 EFL female students who were chosen purposefully from the seventh level of the Department of English Language and Literature at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University. A convenience sample was used by selecting available participants from three intact classes and they were divided into two groups; the control group consisted of 35 students, and the experimental group consisted of 35 students. Their level is supposed to be defined as upper-intermediate or advanced proficiency level since they have accomplished the requirements of the previous English levels. Liu (2017) suggested that the acquisition of second language idioms correlated, to a degree, with the learner’s proficiency in the target language. Accordingly, advanced learners could acquire idioms better than low-proficiency learners.

Research Instruments

To achieve the purpose of the study, the researcher utilized the following instruments:

The Idioms Achievement Test

The idioms achievement test was used as a pre-posttest. This test was designed and developed by the researcher. It consisted of 30 questions distributed in three sections. The test used common English idioms adopted from the Oxford idioms dictionary, Cambridge Dictionary, Macmillan Dictionary, and online idioms worksheets to measure the students’ idiom knowledge (see Appendix A).

Post-study Questionnaire

The post-study questionnaire was adapted from Chung et al. (2015). It based on Davis’ technology acceptance model (1989) and Roger’s innovation diffusion theory (1995). The goal behind this questionnaire was to elicit the experimental group’s perception regarding the use of WhatsApp in learning English idioms after the implementation of the treatment. The questionnaire was designed in the form of a five-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

Both content validity and internal validity were considered to evaluate the accuracy of the measures. The researcher assured the content validity of the instruments by giving it to a jury of three experts of applied linguistics to decide whether it is suitable for the research purposes, and whether it is appropriate for the students’ English level. In accordance with their suggestions, the researcher made the due modifications. The internal validity was ensured through a pilot sample to assess the clarity of the items before administering it to the participants. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to determine the correlation between each item of the instruments with the total mean. The correlation analyses showed that all 30 questions of the test and 15 items of
the questionnaire were highly significant at the 0.05 level and the 0.01 level, which confirm the validity of the questionnaire (see Appendix B).

To examine the reliability of the instruments, Cronbach’s alpha was calculated from the pilot study. The reliability coefficient of the idiom achievement test was 0.861, and the calculated alpha of the questionnaire was 0.885. This indicates that the instruments have a high level of internal consistency.

The Design of Materials

The idiomatic expressions, that were chosen to be taught during the study, were selected according to their relevance and appropriateness to the educational environment and cultural background. Due to the limited period of the study, a total of 30 idioms were selected from many English dictionaries, such as the Oxford idioms dictionary, Cambridge Dictionary, and Macmillan Dictionary.

The Control Group

In the line with the finding of Amer’s study (2010), which emphasized the importance of providing EFL learners with resources to assist their idiomatic expressions and collocation learning. The researcher developed a booklet that was designed as tables with three columns that sequentially present the idiom, the definition, and three examples. In addition, the idiom booklet provided various exercises, such as fill in blanks, choose the correct idiom from the brackets, and write the meaning of each idiom. The example is presented below.

Table1. Sample of idioms booklet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idiom</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vote with your feet</td>
<td>To show that you do not support a decision a place or organization</td>
<td>• When the price of skiing doubled, tourists voted with their feet and just stopped going.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thousands of citizens are already voting with their feet and leaving the country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• I am prepared to vote with my feet if the meeting appears to be a waste of time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Experimental Group

The researcher selected a series of images, clipart, animations, and videos to promote students’ idioms competence. Each idiom was presented by; displaying a picture that explained the meaning of the idiom (e.g., throw in the towel), showing a clipart or an animation that illustrated the idiom meaning (e.g., a character who cries and holds a surrender flag), presenting a video that showed the idiomatic meaning through a scenario or an instructor who explained the origin of the idiom and its meaning, and providing at least two written examples that presented the
usage of the idiom in different contexts (e.g., When John could stand no more of Mary’s bad temper, he threw in the towel and left.)

**Procedures of the Study**

After receiving the required permission from the institution in which the data was collected, the participants were divided into two groups; experimental group and control group. The pre-test was given to both groups to determine their prior knowledge about idioms, and to ensure that the two groups had the same prior knowledge of English idioms.

After that, both the experimental and control groups received the same list of idioms using different teaching methods. The control group was given a printed paper-based list of educational material. The participants were taught by the researcher through conventional methods, without any assistance of any mobile applications. Classes were held once a week for 45 minutes covering an average of eight idioms per week over the course of four weeks. Accordingly, the experimental group received the same idiom lists via WhatsApp in a scheduled timetable. That is, three English idioms were sent four days a week by the researcher on time intervals between 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Discussion and illustration of some idiomatic expressions were conducted between the researcher and participants. This process took three weeks to complete.

To measure the participants’ progress after the treatment sessions and to determine the effect of each method for idiom-learning and retention, a post-test similar to the pre-test was given to both groups at the end of the study. Furthermore, the experimental group was asked to complete an online survey through Google Form on the final day of the treatment to obtain their perceptions toward the application of WhatsApp in learning English idioms. The statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) was utilized to analyze the research data.

**Results**

**Results Related to the First Research Question**

To answer the first research question, participants’ achievement scores on the idiom pre-posttest were calculated by using means and standard deviations. Furthermore, degree of freedom, t-statistic and statistical significance are presented.

To compare the performance of the groups, an independent sample t-test was run between the pre-posttest scores of the control and experimental groups. The results are presented in Tables two and three.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S. D</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table two shows that there are no statistically significant differences at the 0.05 level among the means of the students’ scores in the pre-test of both groups. Accordingly, this could suggest that the participants’ knowledge of idioms before the beginning of treatment are nearly equal.
emphasizes that the control and experimental groups are homogenous in their idiom knowledge; thus, any change in their performance could be attributed to the treatment applied in the study.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of Control and Experimental Groups’ Post-test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S. D</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19.63</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table three shows that there are statistically significant differences at the 0.01 level between the means of the control and experimental groups in their post-test scores. The post-test mean for the experimental group is 23.20, which is higher than the mean of the control group 19.63. This result indicates that the differences were in favor of WhatsApp treatment than the conventional group. Consequently, this result could suggest that WhatsApp-based learning activities are effectively improve EFL learners' idiomatic competence.

To examine whether there is a significant improvement in students’ scores from pre-test to post-test, a dependent sample t-test was run for each group. Table four illustrates the results.

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations of Control and experimental Groups’ Pre- posttest Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S. D</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>per-test</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12.37</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9.13</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>post-test</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19.63</td>
<td>6.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>per-test</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11.77</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>post-test</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23.20</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table four reveals that the control group’s scores significantly improved in the post-test. The difference between pre-test and post-test means score is (7.26), which indicates that the conventional classroom lessons are effective in enhancing students’ idioms competence. Nevertheless, students’ achievement in the experimental group is higher than the control group’s achievement. The difference between the mean scores of the experimental pre-test and the post-test reaches to (11.43), which indicates that there is a tremendous effect for WhatsApp-based learning activities on students' achievement scores compared to the conventional group’s achievement. These findings show that the use of WhatsApp-based learning activities assist students to learn English idioms better than those who used conventional classroom lessons.

Results Related to the Second Research Question

To answer the second research question, the participants’ responses to the questionnaire were calculated by using means and standard deviations. Furthermore, the percentage of the questionnaire items are presented. The results illustrate in tables five to nine.
Table 5. Mean and Standard Deviation of Participants’ Responses on the Construct of Usefulness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S. D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Learning idioms through WhatsApp is not restricted by time and place</td>
<td>% 2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>68.6</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Learning idioms through WhatsApp can help me accessing the information I need</td>
<td>% 2.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Learning idioms through WhatsApp enhances the effectiveness of my learning</td>
<td>% 2.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table five demonstrates that the respondents of EFL learners have overall positive perception towards the usefulness of WhatsApp in English Idioms learning with an overall mean of (12.34). The table shows that “Learning idioms through WhatsApp is not restricted by time and place” was perceived as the most useful items when it comes to WhatsApp learning with a mean value of 4.54 and with standard deviation of 0.89. Furthermore, “Learning idioms through WhatsApp enhances the effectiveness of my learning” was the lowest rated with mean value of 3.80 and standard deviation of 1.05.

Table 6. Mean and Standard Deviation of Participants’ Responses on the Construct of Ease of Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S. D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Learning idioms through WhatsApp saves my time</td>
<td>% 2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Learning idioms through WhatsApp is convenient</td>
<td>% 2.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Learning idioms through WhatsApp is easy to use</td>
<td>% 2.9</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table six shows that the respondents of EFL learners have overall positive perception towards the ease-of-use WhatsApp in English Idioms learning with an overall mean of (12.77). The table shows that “Learning idioms through WhatsApp is easy to use” has received the highest rating in the construct with mean value of 4.54 and standard deviation of 0.82. On the other hand, “Learning
idioms through WhatsApp is convenient” was identified as the lowest mean value of 4.09 and with standard deviation of 0.89.

Table 7. Mean and Standard Deviation of Participants’ Responses on the Construct of Self-Efficacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S. D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I can complete idiom tasks through WhatsApp without anyone’s help</td>
<td>% 2.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I can complete idiom tasks through WhatsApp if someone helps me</td>
<td>% 8.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I can overcome the difficulties I encounter when I use WhatsApp to learn idioms.</td>
<td>% 2.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is obvious from Table seven that the respondents of EFL learners have overall positive perception towards self-efficacy of WhatsApp in English Idioms learning with an overall mean of (11.43). “I can overcome the difficulties I encounter when I use WhatsApp to learn idioms.” has been considered by respondents as the most self-efficacy in idiom-learning. It has got the highest mean value of 3.94 and standard deviation of 1.00. Furthermore, the lowest rating in this construct was received by” I could complete learning idiom tasks through WhatsApp if someone helps me” with mean value of 3.69 and standard deviation of 1.25.

Table 8. Mean and Standard Deviation of Participants’ Responses on the Construct of Compatibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S. D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Learning idioms through WhatsApp does not require significant changes in my existing work routine</td>
<td>% 5.7</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Learning idioms through WhatsApp is as same as using other applications I have used</td>
<td>% 14.3</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Learning idioms through WhatsApp can be done through the computer</td>
<td>% 25.7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table eight presents that the respondents of EFL learners have varying perceptions towards the compatibility of WhatsApp in idiom-learning with an overall mean of (9.32). In addition, it can observe that “Learning idioms through mobile applications does not require significant changes in my existing work routine” was perceived as the highest item in the construct of compatibility with mean value of 3.94 and standard deviation of 1.08. While “learning idioms through WhatsApp is as same as using other applications I have used” was the lowest rated with mean value of 2.49 and standard deviation of 1.07.

Table 9. Mean and Standard Deviation of Participants’ Responses on the Construct of Behavioral Intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S. D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am willing to use WhatsApp in learning idioms</td>
<td>% 0.0</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>using WhatsApp to learn idioms in the future</td>
<td>% 5.7</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I will advise others to learn idioms through WhatsApp</td>
<td>% 0.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is obvious from Table nine that the respondents of EFL learners have overall positive perception towards the future intention of using WhatsApp in English Idioms learning with an overall mean of (11.63). The table shows that “I will advise others to learn idioms through WhatsApp” has been identified by respondents as the most users’ intention. It has got the highest mean value of 4.20 and standard deviation of 0.09. Furthermore, the lowest rating in the construct was received by “I am willing to use WhatsApp in learning idioms” with mean value of 3.57 and standard deviation of 1.12.

Discussion

The results of the first question revealed that participants’ idiomatic knowledge improved significantly in both the experimental and control groups, but that the experimental group, whose participants learned English idioms via WhatsApp-based learning activities, significantly outperformed the control group, whose participants relied on the conventional teaching method. This confirms the potential efficacy of WhatsApp as a tool for idiom-learning. This finding is consistent with the findings of other studies (e.g., Amer, 2010; Basal et al., 2016; Haghighi, 2016; Hayati et al., 2013) that confirmed the effectiveness of mobile applications in developing learners’ idiomatic competence. Furthermore, it matches the findings of previous studies (Alsaleem, 2013; Ashiyan & Saleh, 2016; Bensalem, 2018; Castrillo et al., 2014; Çetinkaya & Sütçü, 2018; Fageeh, 2013; Jafari & Chalak, 2016) that demonstrated the positive impact of using WhatsApp on vocabulary learning compared to traditional learning, other social networking applications, and
computers. However, it does not support the findings of Dehghan et al. (2017), which revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between learning by using WhatsApp and traditional method in terms of vocabulary learning outcomes.

There are a variety of underlying reasons that could explain the positive effect of WhatsApp in enhancing learners’ idiomatic knowledge, as observed in this study. Throughout the experiment, the WhatsApp group was provided with several forms of multimedia. The multimodality of WhatsApp, which incorporates video, animated pictures, text, and sound to present the meaning of new idioms, may have facilitated the participants’ significant progress in idiom-learning. It may capture learners’ interest and help them to acquire and retain new idiomatic expressions. This finding is consistent with a previous study which was conducted by Batawi (2019), who found that using multimedia makes learning more valuable and enjoyable, thus it impacts learners’ memory and recall. Moreover, this finding corresponds with Haghigihi (2016), who reported that providing learners with various visual aids can attract their attention and stimulate their subconscious mind. Thornton and Houser’s (2005) findings also aligned with the results of the current study. They concluded that rich multimedia can grab learners’ interest and help them to comprehend the meaning of idioms. The dual-coding theory which was proposed by Paivio (1971) supported the impact of multimodality on idiom-learning. This theory states that learning could be enhanced by interconnecting verbal information such as text with visual imagery. The dual-coding theory posits that verbal information is more easily remembered when it is presented with visual information. Consequently, it is reasonable to assert that the experimental group, by using various types of multimedia, has learned the new idioms better than the control group.

The flexibility and ubiquity of WhatsApp may also have influenced the considerable improvement in the experimental group’s scores. The advantage of learning on the move is that it produces a flexible and autonomous learning environment where learners can access learning materials anywhere and anytime beyond the classroom. Moreover, freedom from time and place barriers could give them greater control over their learning and thus enhance their motivation. Accordingly, the role of the researcher in this study shifted from a teacher to a mentor, materials provider, and on-demand guide. Therefore, the experimental group participants were indeed found to be more enthusiastic about learning than the participants in the control group. This confirms the main finding of Alghamdy’s (2019) study, which revealed that most participants were enthusiastic about learning English through WhatsApp due to their enhanced motivation. Moreover, this finding corresponds with previous studies (Alshammari et al., 2017; Basel et al., 2016; Hamad, 2017; Hayati et al., 2011). Alshammari et al. (2017) stated that the use of WhatsApp in teaching and learning shifts control from teachers to students and increases students’ autonomy through collaboration with their peers. Basel et al. (2016) clarified that one of WhatsApp’s benefits is enabling instructional activities to take place anywhere and anytime and allowing students to engage asynchronously and synchronously with teachers and other students. Furthermore, Hayati et al. (2011) found that flexible and ubiquitous access to information encourage engagement in m-learning and help students to overcome the motivational obstacles of idiom-learning.

The collaborative and interactive capabilities of WhatsApp as a non-threatening environment may attribute to the improvement in the experimental group’s scores. For instance, through the group chat, participants helped each other to understand the meaning of idioms and
contextualize new expressions by providing an appropriate equivalent in Arabic. They also asked questions, requested clarifications, shared their ideas freely without anxiety or fear of making mistakes. This finding aligns with those of Batawi (2019) and Yalcinalp and Gulbahar (2010), wherein WhatsApp increased students’ interactive and collaborative learning.

With regard to the second question of this study, Data collected from a post-study questionnaire revealed that learners were generally positive about using WhatsApp in idiom-learning. This indicated that participants were aware of the efficiencies and affordances of WhatsApp for learning English idioms. This finding corresponds with those of prior studies (Alghamdy, 2019; Alqahtani et al., 2018; Alshammari et al., 2017; Bensalem, 2018; Çam & Can, 2019; Çetinkaya & Sütçü, 2018) that indicated that students have positive perception about the use of WhatsApp in language learning.

The findings showed that, of the five given constructs, ease of use was perceived as the most important. The majority of the survey items relating to ease of use received positive responses ranging between “agree” and “strongly agree.” Thus, it seems that WhatsApp’s ease of use played an important role in students’ positive perceptions and acceptance of the application for idiom-learning. This result corroborates Chung et al.’s (2015) study, which examined EFL college students’ acceptance of m-learning in vocabulary learning and found that ease of use scored the highest among the five constructs. Furthermore, it supports La Hanisi et al.’s (2018) conclusions, which attributed participants’ positive perceptions toward using WhatsApp in language learning to the application’s ease of use. Cakir and Solaks’ also found that perceived ease of use, self-efficacy, attitude, and satisfaction have a positive effect on learners’ academic achievement.

Usefulness was perceived as the second most important construct, and responses to the related survey items were ranged from “agree” to “strongly agree.” This indicates that participants recognized the usefulness of using WhatsApp in their learning. They admit that WhatsApp is flexible, accessible, and effective. This finding aligns with the result of Rahman et al. (2019), who concluded that perceived usefulness positively affects students’ perceptions of social media’s use in language learning. Furthermore, Huang et al. (2012) discovered that perceived usefulness positively influences active participants’ perceptions on the UEVL system. However, Aloraini and Cardoso’s (2018) findings did not match the current study results. Their results indicated that, compared to Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, WhatsApp was perceived as the least useful SNS for both advanced and beginner students.

Regarding the constructs of self-efficacy, use intention, and compatibility were also positively perceived by students. Thus, it appears that students’ positive perceptions of WhatsApp’s ease of use, usefulness, self-efficacy, and compatibility affect their intention to utilize WhatsApp for their future idiom-learning. This finding aligns with some of Cakir and Solaks’ (2015) findings, self-efficacy positively effects learners’ academic achievement. Moreover, some of Chung et al.’s findings (2015) were also in line with the result of this study. They confirmed that the learners’ intentions to use had positive correlations with mobile applications’ compatibility, self-efficacy, and perceived ease of use respectively.
Conclusion and Recommendations

This study sought to identify the extent to which WhatsApp-based learning activities could improve Saudi EFL university learners’ idiomatic competence. In addition, it explored EFL learners’ perceptions on using WhatsApp for idiom-learning. For this purpose, TAM and IDT models were combined to analyze students’ acceptance of WhatsApp as an educational tool. Through this study, it is clear from the experimental and survey findings that WhatsApp can be regarded as an effective medium for learning English idioms. This study provided insights into the potential educational benefits of using WhatsApp for idiom-learning. Based on this evidence, the researcher believes that incorporating MALL into idiom-learning can solve many of the current challenges in idiom- learning, such as limited class hours, rare opportunities for learning English idioms outside the classroom, and lack of motivation on the part of learners.

Several limitations influenced the result of the study. The study was conducted on 70 university female students from the seventh level of the Department of English Language and Literature at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University during the first semester of the academic year 2019/2020. Therefore, a more well-formed studying could be carried out in different EFL contexts, and with students at varying levels of language proficiency to obtain a more in-depth understanding of how MALL could help foster idiom-learning. Since the current study utilized WhatsApp as the main learning tool in an informal learning context, future research could tackle the use of WhatsApp as a supplemental tool that supports formal learning in the classroom. Because the current study paid special attention to learners’ perceptions, further studies could focus on teachers’ perceptions on this new environment. Teachers’ opinions could also provide a better understanding of the potential of WhatsApp in idiom-teaching.

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Appendix (A):

Idioms Achievement Test

Name: Phone Number:

Section 1: Determine the meaning of the bolded expression. Choose the best answer:

1. John wanted to fix his cousin’s computer, but he was already having problems setting up his Aunt’s Wi-Fi network and he didn’t want to open a whole new can of worms.
   1. John was sick of spending his time helping his family.
   2. John wanted to go fishing instead of working on computers.
   3. John was having difficulties untangling the computer wires.
   4. John was not ready to begin working on a complicated new problem.

2. Mrs. Robison expects Cassie and my presentation to be good, but we have been working on it every night for the last week, so we are really going to knock her socks off.
   a. Cassie and the speaker are not prepared to give a good presentation.
   b. Cassie and the speaker intend on hitting Mrs. Robison rather than presenting.
   c. Cassie and the speaker’s presentation will far exceed Mrs. Robison’s expectations.
   d. Cassie and the speaker’s presentation will meet Mrs. Robison’s expectations.

3. When Cassie called Devon "stinky pants" on the playground, Devon wanted to call Cassie a mean name too, but Devon's mother had always taught him to turn the other cheek.
   a. To forgive an act of aggression.
   b. To return an act of aggression with equal force.
   c. To delay an act of aggression for another situation.
   d. To hide from aggression in order to protect oneself.

4. Mr. John was sick for years. He kicked the bucket yesterday.
   a. Mr. John hit the container.
   b. Mr. John recovered from illness.
   c. Mr. John died.
   d. Mr. John got worse than before.

5. It was raining cats and dogs when we got off the bus.
   a. There were many cats and dogs when we got off the bus.
   b. It was raining really hard.
c. We were getting really wet.
d. It was raining on the cats and dogs.

6. John would have been playing ball until the cows came home if it hadn’t been for Suzie dragging him home for dinner.
a. John was just about to stop playing ball.
b. John didn’t even want to play ball to begin with.
c. John prefers nature to athletics.
d. John would have continued playing ball for a long time.

7. Cassie had to eat his words when it turned out that he had chosen the wrong horse in the race.
a. Cassie admits that he was hungry
b. Cassie stops speaking.
c. Cassie admits that he was wrong.
d. Cassie was angry

8. I can only repeat that I want you to wait until Tuesday before you tell her, remember mum's the word.
a. remember don't tell mum.
b. remember don't speak aloud.
c. remember don't say anything.
d. remember don't answer anything.

9. When John’s father came home and saw the mess, he hit the roof and grounded John for one month.
a. John’s father was somewhat disappointed.
b. John’s father was enraged.
c. John’s father punched the ceiling.
d. John’s father hit his son, John.

10. Catherine doesn't like her run-of-the-mill job.
a. Catherine doesn’t like her regular or ordinary job.
b. Catherine doesn’t like her low-pay job.
c. Catherine’s job is difficult or challenging.
d. Catherine doesn't like pulp mill.

Section2: Fill in the blanks with suitable idioms:

1. You will have to learn to speak clearly about what you want. You won’t get anywhere if you ____________________.
a. fits the bill
b. keep beating around the bush
c. throw in the towel
d. kept a stiff upper lip

2. I need someone who can speak both French and Spanish. Do you know anyone who ____________________?
   a. keep the wolf from the door
   b. fits the bill
   c. throw in the towel
   d. hit the roof.

3. “That was such a difficult question! How did you get it right?” Reply: “I just took a ____________________.”
   a. shot in the dark
   b. stiff upper lip
   c. storm in a teacup
   d. a fish out of water

4. Don’t worry about the silly row. It was just a ____________________.
   a. stiff upper lip
   b. storm in a teacup
   c. throw in the towel
   d. a fish out of water

5. The investment scheme looked good initially, but I ____________________ when the adviser could not answer a few of my questions satisfactorily.
   a. smelt a rat
   b. hear it straight from the horse’s mouth
   c. keep beating around the bush
   d. throw in the towel

6. I have heard her excuses and they ____________________ with me.
   a. throw in the towel
   b. cut no ice
   c. smelt a rat
   d. kept a stiff upper lip

7. My grandfather told me that he had worked hard even when he was not physically fit to__________________.
   a. cut no ice
   b. keep the wolf from the door
   c. hear it straight from the horse’s mouth
   d. smelt a rat

8. I don’t believe it that he did it. I’m going to go to him and ____________________.
   a. hear it straight from the horse’s mouth
b. smelt a rat
c. keep the wolf from the door
d. throw in the towel

9. Often enough, they try to maintain a good heart and a ______________ when all the circumstances are against them.
   a. shot in the dark
   b. stiff upper lip
   c. storm in a teacup
   d. throw in the towel

10. the competition is difficult, but Sara do not want to ______________ and give up.
    a. fits the bill
    b. throw in the towel
    c. smelt a rat
    d. hear it straight from the horse’s mouth

Section 3: Match the idioms to their correct meanings:

1. _____ Have a chip on your shoulder.
2. _____ keep your head down.
3. _____ Lets the cat out of the bag.
4. _____ Have a mountain to climb.
5. _____ Vote with your feet.
6. _____ Kill two birds with one stone.
7. _____ go against the grain.
8. _____ below the belt.
9. _____ every cloud has a silver lining.
10. _____ a fish out of water.

   a. get two things done at the same time.
   b. To oppose or resist a strong force.
   c. was unfair and cowardly.
   d. Be angry because you think you have been treated unfairly.
   e. show contempt or dislike by leaving a place.
   f. Attempt to avoid trouble by being unnoticed and quiet.
   g. Accidentally and unintentionally reveal a secret.
   h. have a very difficult goal to achieve.
   i. Some difficult or unpleasant situation has some advantage.
   j. uncomfortable in a specific situation:
Appendix (B):
The Internat Validity of the Instruments

Table 9. Pearson correlation between the items and the main mean of the idiom achievemnet test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items N</th>
<th>Correlations</th>
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<th>Correlations</th>
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<td>0.47**</td>
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<tr>
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<td>17</td>
<td>0.49**</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.39**</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.33**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.34*</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0.56**</td>
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<td>0.32*</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.44**</td>
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* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 10. Pearson correlation between the items and the main mean of the post-study questionnaire

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</tr>
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<td>0.81**</td>
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<td>0.74**</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
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</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.
** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.
Challenges of e-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic Experienced by EFL Learners

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Abstract
COVID-19 has disrupted most of the industries in the world. Education is the only industry that is completely transferred to online mode in most countries around the world. Online learning was the best solution for continuing education during the pandemic, especially in tertiary education. This study aims to determine the challenges and obstacles confronted by English language learners (EFL) in Science and Arts College, Alula, Taibah University, Saudi Arabia, during switching to online learning in the second semester of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The contribution of this study is to evaluate the learners’ new experiences in online education and to assess the feasibility of the virtual methods of learning. This is achieved by analyzing 184 learners’ responses to the survey-based questionnaire. A descriptive statistical method was used to test the validation of the study. It is found that the main problems that influence and impact online EFL learning during COVID-19 are related to technical, academic, and communication challenges. The study results show that most EFL learners are not satisfied with continuing online learning, as they could not fulfill the expected progress in language learning performance.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, EFL learners, learning challenges, Online learning, Taibah University

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Introduction

The need for education updating was required because of the fast advances in technology. They need to learn at any time, and any place was in its way to be achieved. (Wolfinger, 2016). Over the past two decades, online learning has been activated in some global institutes. However, most schools, colleges, and universities do not use this education mode, and their staff does not know what is involved in e-learning. MOOC (Massive Online Open Course) has facilitated and increased academics’ awareness of online learning and its involvements (Lynch, 2004). The utilization of guidance for students to be motivated in virtual learning depends on practical orientation on cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement (Hartnett and Louwrens, 2015). The transition to a new environment of education, learners need special social care to improve their concentration and motivation to online learning in such a crucial crisis (Eccles et al., 1993; Harter, Whitesell, & Kowalski, 1992; Midgley, Anderman, & Hicks, 1995; Roeser & Eccles, 1998).

The global decision to close the educational institutes was rational to keep social distancing to stop its spread. Some countries switched to online learning immediately because they were already prepared for online learning. In Saudi Arabia, all the universities used the Blackboard tool for distance education and taught some elective and general courses.

This research focused on university EFL learners’ challenges and obstacles during the current global pandemic and the possible facilities and solutions that can be delivered to overcome these problems in the future. The significance of the present study is to explore the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on the EFL learning process. The shape of the hazardous change in the post-Covid-19 crisis will occur in all societal institutions and mainly in the educational sector. These changes need wise leaders to make guidelines for reshaping the future of all the sectors. Higher education will play a vital role in this process, starting from education, then healthcare sectors, economic, sport, etc. Otherwise, an unguided plan will lead to failure and confusion. It has been noticed that the remarkable responses and efforts of the academic and medical sectors in most countries globally during the novel coronavirus crisis, and Saudi Arabia is one of these countries. The transition to online learning was the only option during the situation’s gravity because of the COVID-19 outbreak. Most states apply the lockdown to prevent society from the outbreak of the novel coronavirus. Taibah university was able to launch online learning on 2nd March 2020. The university’s previous experience with blended learning before COVID-19 facilitated the rapid transition to e-learning during the pandemic. Blended learning in all university colleges was activated with some general or elective courses using the Blackboard platform before the coronavirus outbreak. That enabled some faculty members to have good experience in using the Blackboard tool in teaching online. Those faculty members organized training sessions for other colleagues in their colleges about using Blackboard in online teaching. The university’s training and development unit vigorously conducted online training sessions for all the faculty members in different university colleges and branches.

There are some advantages and disadvantages of online learning; the accessibility of online education globally, saving time, money, and efforts are advantages of online learning. In teaching, the lecture’s recording is one advantage of online learning when students ask teachers to record the classes. The teachers are reviewing and preparing well for recording, which certainly improves
teaching strategies and methods. Students can access the lectures anytime and can understand better. Some difficulties were in English language skills and other English courses, such as writing challenges, speaking challenges, and reading challenges. For linguistics courses such as phonetics and phonology challenges where the teacher needs to teach phonemes, allophones, morphemes, etc. face to face. Not all learners have good internet connectivity. Some learners suffered from network problems, lacking high-quality learning devices.

Nowadays, the challenges to access online learning are less because both learners and teachers have been experienced the excellent opportunity of knowing and interacting with educational technology tools such as mobile-based learning, computer-based learning, and web-based learning (Pellegrini, Mirella, Vladimir Uskov, & Casalino, 2020; Byun, Sooyeon, & Slavin, 2020). According to Prensky (2001), today’s learners are entirely different from their predecessors because they are native speakers of the technological language. Their interaction with the virtual and digital world is more. The interactions of today’s’ learners with different sorts of technology for various purposes enabled them to be active recipients of e-learning (Vai, Marjorie & Sosulski, 2015; Mohalikand & Sahoo, 2020; Ko & Rossen, 2017).

The study answers the following questions:

• Q1. What are the challenges of online EFL learning and what will be the provided facilities to students during online learning?
• Q2. Can students in remote towns get a good quality of internet connectivity during online learning?
• Q3. How to make online English classes more engaging, motivating, and innovative during e-learning?
• Q4. Will EFL learners become familiar with online platforms and get enough experience and confidence to continue online learning?
• Q5. Do the recent social media applications facilitate students’ technical skills needed for online education?

The objectives of this research are as follows:

• Identify the challenges and obstacles of e-learning during the COVID-19 crisis encountered by EFL learners.
• Understand and utilize the best methods and modes to engage and motivate the EFL learners in e-learning.
• Familiarize the EFL learners and teachers with the currently used platforms and applications that can assist in enhancing and reinforcing education during pandemics.
• Explore the reflection results of the mass movement by the university to the online learning process.
Challenges of e-Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Mahyoob

**Literature review**

The following section presents the previous studies conducted in online learning during the COVID-19 crisis and some studies related to online learning challenges and educational technology in general. A study was conducted to evaluate students’ views about the future of mobile learning after the current pandemic in basic education college in Kuwait. The study concluded with a good impression from the student in utilizing mobile learning in higher education. The advantage of the study is the recommendation for developing and teaching courses about m-learning use and application. This study’s disadvantage is that the sample (52 participants) is insufficient to generalize m-learning in higher education (Alanezi & AlAzwani, 2020). Another study explored online learning challenges in medical education during the COVID-19 outbreak (Rajab, Mohammad, Gazal, & Alkattan, 2020). The study engaged 208 participants: learners and faculty members in the college of medicine of Alfaïsal university in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The study’s reported that the challenges were communications, assessment, online education experience, technology use tools, time management, anxiety, and coronavirus disease stress.

However, students reported positively the effectiveness of online learning during the pandemic. A meta-analysis study was conducted by Yıldız (2020) about recent trends in educational technology during 2015-2020. The study paid attention to several factors in the field. The findings of the study displayed that using educational technology in teaching and learning was appropriate. An article published by editorial board Liguori and Winkler (2020) is about the pandemic’s impact on entrepreneurship education. They called for more studies and resources on the challenges regarding online entrepreneurship education. Another study explored the importance of online learning and investigated the analysis of weaknesses, strengths, challenges, and opportunities of online education in the time of the pandemic (Shivangi, 2020). The study provided some guidelines for dealing with online learning challenges at natural disasters and epidemics. A case study for features of adolescent online learners was investigated in Pennsylvania by Wolfinger (2016). The study focused on the achievement of fully online virtual schooling through middle school. The research paid attention to academic, social support, learners’ characteristics, and educational support. The results revealed the importance of teachers’ role in virtual learning, and parents’ involvement could promote their academic achievements. A survey was conducted by the International Association of Universities 2020 about the impact of COVID-19 globally on the higher education institutes. The findings of the study indicated that all the activities of the participated institutes have been affected by the COIVD-19 crisis. The results also showed that a negative influence on the quality of activities and the inequity of education opportunities. A study by Ali (2017) focused on Blackboard utilization as a motivator in English language learning and teaching. The study found out that some learners were motivated to work harder in learning English using the Blackboard platform, and some other learners were demotivated to learn using Blackboard. Alturise (2020) conducted a study about learners’ and teachers’ satisfaction in the online learning model using the Blackboard platform at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. The study concluded that e-learning mode is an advancement in education, but significant works are needed to improve online learning applications. Some researchers investigate challenges and obstacles in e-learning during COVID-19 according to their educational environment and provided facilities by different institutes. The focus of this study is
to identify university students’ obstacles during the current global crisis and the possible solutions that can improve the learners’ performance and overcome these problems in the future.

**Theoretical framework**

The application of technologies and digital literacies have been developed and improved (Coiro, Knobel, Lankshear, & Leu, 2008: p.4). The pedagogical theories and teaching approaches need to respond to the novel methods of using technology and how it can be integrated into learners’ education effectively. Many theories are involved in educational processes, techniques, and approaches. However, they still adhere to traditional methods of learning. The theoretical perspective which reinforced the development of the new pedagogies is the activity theory (Mwanza & Engeström, 2005). In this theoretical approach, the focus is on the interaction between humans and computers. It played an essential role in learning expansion using instruments, tools, mediation, etc. this theory highlights the potential impact on teaching and learning using new tools as vehicles for modernizing, contextualizing, and transforming activity procedures (Engestrom, 1987). Vygotsky (1978) focused on learning development and social interaction, (Cole & Wertsch, 1996). Attwell (2010, a) explored Vygotsky’s ideas in terms of technology-enhanced education and personal contextual learning. Coffield (2008) said there is no " convincing evidence that learners can be divided by their learning preferences into four groups: visual, auditory, kinaesthetic or tactile" he added (p.32) “this movement allows its disciples the pretense of student-centered teaching, and it neatly transfers the responsibility of students’ failure to learn to tutors, e.g. ‘You didn’t match your teaching style to their learning styles”.

The Covid-19 Pandemic transformed the whole education process to online, especially ELE (English language education), which has been transited to e-learning in most universities worldwide. In our case, it is the first time for EFL learners to be engaged in e-learning officially. So, this study focuses on the online challenges and obstacles encountered during the pandemic and what needs to be done to support avoiding these problems. As other issues of using technology in traditional teaching and learning have been investigated and covered by several studies and projects.

**Methodology**

The purpose of the current study is to find out the challenges confronted by learners in Taibah University, Saudi Arabia, during the transition to online learning in the second semester of 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and explore possible solutions and suggestions for future virtual learning.

**Participants**

The study was conducted at the undergraduate level for English language learners in the Faculty of Science and Arts–Alula, Madinah, Taibah University, Saudi Arabia. It was performed after completing online teaching classes and during the final examinations in the second semester of 2020. The sample comprised 184 students: 85 male and 99 female students in all bachelor’s degrees with English majors. Students in the English department form the highest number of college students whereas other departments have few students. Most of the students do not have any previous experience with online learning. One or two Arabic general courses were conducted online on the main campus before the recent crisis, and it was optional. The students choose to opt
for the online courses offered, but the examinations were conducted face-to-face. The following figure displays the percentage of the participants.

![Figure1. Sample structure distribution](image)

**Research Instrument**

For the investigation and data collection, an online survey-based questionnaire was designed to estimate the EFL online learning challenges during the unprecedented health and economic crisis. The survey-based questionnaire contains 23 multiple questions (yes/no, multiple-choice, and open-ended questions), which covered the study’s objectives. It was designed via Google Forms and distributed among students using WhatsApp groups at the end of the 2nd semester 2020. The questionnaire consists of different parts; the first part is about students’ demographic information, the second part includes a set of questions about learners’ experiences with online learning platforms (Blackboard, and other platforms) and the facilities which they could use, the third part is about the problems which they encountered during online learning, the fourth part is about their satisfaction with online learning, and finally, open-ended questions to get any extra information about online education -during the crisis- students want to add or mention. The questionnaire was checked for validity and reliability fulfillment.

**Results**

The study adopted descriptive research methods for the analysis of the obtained data, and its findings focus on four main factors:

- The use of available activities and services in the Blackboard tool.
- The alternative tools used during online learning other than Blackboard.
- The challenges and obstacles encountered during online English learning classes.
- EFL Learners’ satisfaction with face-to-face virtual learning during COVID-19.

The first research question was about the learners’ ability to use all the Blackboard facilities to perform online learning activities. The results revealed that 69.80% of learners could use all the Blackboard services for online learning. They could join the online classes, participate effectively, submit their assignments, and perform the examinations. 10.50% only could attend classes, 7.80% attend and participate during the lectures, they could not submit their assignment and could not complete the examinations online, 4.50% of learners attended, participated, and submitted the projects, and 7.20% they could not perform the mentioned activities using the Blackboard
platform. Figure two below displays the percentage of used facilities of the Blackboard tool in online English learning during COVID-19.

![Figure 2. Activities carried out using Blackboard Platform](chart)

The second research question was about the alternative tools used by some EFL learners when they failed to use the Blackboard tool. WhatsApp was used to send and receive homework and other assigned tasks. Some teachers used WhatsApp for conducting classes; the highest percentage was in using WhatsApp with a ratio of 72%, the second alternative platform is emails with a ratio of 53.60%. The third platform was Zoom, with a percentage of 33.50%. Other platforms like google classroom and Microsoft team etc., were used with 24%. The percentages of operating platforms and tools other than Blackboard in online learning during the COVID-19 outbreak are shown in figure three below.

![Figure 3. Alternative online educational platforms](chart)

The third research question was about the reported challenges and obstacles; the first issue is internet speed, where about 48% of learners face this problem. The learners who did not encounter any problem during e-learning is 18% only. Online access and the material downloading score is 14%. Issues in conducting online exams score 13% as some students could either not access the online examinations or have internet connectivity problems. No lab session score is 8%. Figure four below addresses these online learning-related issues:
The last research question discusses the learners’ satisfaction with online learning during the pandemic. 43.20% of learners were satisfied with online learning, whereas 42.90 were somehow satisfied with some preservations. 13.80% of learners were not happy with online learning.

The following figure indicates the learners’ responses to their satisfaction with online learning.

Table one summarizes the descriptive statistical analysis of the study. It is noticed that the highest scores of all the statistical measures (Mean, Standard Deviation, Sample Variance, Kurtosis, Skewness, and Confidence Level (95.0%)) are listed in the challenges and related online issues in online English language learning during the pandemic. The mean score is 3.65 in the challenges variable whereas other variables’ scores are less than one as it is depicted in the table below, Blackboard facilities’ mean score is 0.199, the alternative used platforms’ mean score is
0.458, and Learners’ satisfaction with online learning is 0.333. That means the challenges negatively influenced EFL online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 1. Summary of variables’ statistical descriptive analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Sample Variance</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Confidence Level (95.0%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard Facilities</td>
<td>0.1996</td>
<td>0.279429</td>
<td>0.07808</td>
<td>4.884151</td>
<td>2.203594</td>
<td>0.346956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternative Used Platforms</td>
<td>0.45825</td>
<td>0.214812</td>
<td>0.046144</td>
<td>-1.95412</td>
<td>0.440486</td>
<td>0.341814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>3.6514</td>
<td>7.520839</td>
<td>56.56302</td>
<td>4.984711</td>
<td>2.231877</td>
<td>9.338355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.333</td>
<td>0.168882</td>
<td>0.028521</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>-1.73144</td>
<td>0.419525</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the online education issues faced by EFL learners during the current pandemic. Some of these issues are e-learning challenges, learners’ interaction with information technology tools in e-learning, and learners’ satisfaction with online learning. According to the results, many students (more than 30%) missed many tasks, duties, and communications with teachers, which are essential in the educational process activities.

The results indicated some technical issues in using the Blackboard tool, such as online class access, class materials downloading, audio, and video playing, this is in line with Alturise (2020) in his study, which reported a worry about the technical issue’s solution. The study recommended that technical support is needed to enable reliability in online learning. Teachers and students were forced to tackle this issue and utilize other online education platforms for undisrupted learning during the crisis. They used platforms such as emails for submitting their assignments, Microsoft teams, Google, and Zoom platform for conducting some lectures either due to the non-availability of the course in Blackboard at the beginning of transition or students could not logging in to the Blackboard. Besides, the WhatsApp platform was used by most of the students during online learning. The availability of mobile phones helped online learning succeed because most students used their mobile phones in this context. The results of this study are in agreement with (Kaid & Bin-Hady 2019) observation, which supported the impact of using social media applications in learning and recommended activation of these applications in English language learning.

As noticed in the results section above, challenges and related online issues in online English language learning showed the highest scores of all the statistical measures. The study addressed these issues where most EFL Learners encountered during COVID-19 online learning; most of the students are coming from remote towns where the network is experiencing pressure due to the COVID-19 crisis as all the students, teachers, and most of the other sectors shifted to work online. Learners confronted some difficulties accessing online lessons, materials downloading, online exams conducting, etc., students reported these issues as the most significant issue. Some other students could not open online exams on their mobile phones because of some
format or extension not supported by their devices. There are also some other issues that the learners faced; such as, the lack of digital skills in using Blackboard platforms, the need for all online learning equipment, tools, systems, lack of real English language practice with the teachers and their classmates, etc. The findings of the current paper corroborate the findings of previous research on the same issues about online learning during COVID-19, and the results showed that students are not happy with distance education and many obstacles have been encountered (Bataineh, Atoum, Alsmadi & Shikhali 2020; Rajab et al., 2020).

The last discussion is the analysis of the general satisfaction of learners with online English language education during the COVID-19 crisis. Offering some online courses in most Saudi educational institutions before the COVID-19 pandemic has supported, facilitated, and provided an excellent opportunity for students and institutes to switch to online learning after the outbreak of this pandemic. However, in the beginning, most of the learners came online for the first time. They lacked the experience and confidence to learn online using a new medium. After some time, most learners could overcome most of the technical issues related to online learning platforms. But the English language learning challenges are still problematic in online learning during the pandemic. These findings add to the growing body of literature on the significant challenges and problems that encountered EFL learners during the sudden change to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the necessary steps are needed to facilitate the online education process and to overcome these reported issues.

**Conclusion and Future Recommendations**

The study aims to explore and investigate online learning challenges, and problems during COVID-19 encountered EFL learners. The synchronized e-learning was the panacea at the time of the pandemic. However, it negatively influenced the learners’ performance and learning outcomes. The study found out that learners encountered difficulties in accessing the Blackboard platform. About 30% of learners missed the classes and other tasks using Blackboard, and they shifted to alternative applications during online learning. The study reveals that the major challenges encountered by EFL learners in online learning were technical issues. Some learners faced internet connectivity problems, accessing classes, and downloading courses’ materials problems. Online exams could not be opened on learners’ mobile phones. Regarding language communication issues, learners could not effectively interact with teachers during virtual classes of English language skills, as revealed in learners’ responses to open-ended questions. EFL learners’ satisfaction with online learning is low; less than 50% are satisfied with online learning, whereas 14% of learners are not satisfied with online learning, and 43% of learners are not fully supporting continuing online education if there is no crisis. It is recommended that further research should be undertaken to understand the teachers’ views and experiences towards online English language teaching during the pandemic.

**About the author**

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References


Routledge.


Standardization of EFL Undergraduate Skill Exam Papers: A Case Study at Majmaah University

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Abstract
Designing standardized exams for EFL undergraduates is a matter of great concern in pedagogical practices that assess learners’ academic achievements. This case study was conducted at Majmaah University, Saudi Arabia, to explore the significance of educational exam standardization and its impact on the process of implementation, leading to a balanced and equitable assessment of English language skills. During the study, 250 final English skill exam questions of two semesters were analyzed. A mixed-method approach using a questionnaire and Focused Group Discussion was adopted to collect relevant data. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 16, and the qualitative data was processed by thematic analysis. The quantitative data results showed that questions were balanced, valid, and reliable in language skill exam papers designed for undergraduate English students. The qualitative data revealed four major themes – standardization of questions, the efficacy of Bloom’s taxonomy, assessment/evaluation, and alignment of the question with learning outcomes. These emerging themes highlighted the effectiveness of standardizing exam papers, identified problems, and suggested ways of improvement. The study indicates that exams must be scrutinized for the sake of standardization in terms of maximum course coverage; the variety in the question item; clear, concise, and precise instructions; validity and reliability of exam papers; and the alignment of questions with the course and program learning outcomes to ensure the implementation of the revised Bloom’s taxonomy. The study suggests, to generalize the results, that further investigation should be done in another Saudi university for the sake of comparison.

Keywords: Standardization, EFL undergraduate students, Majmaah University, Bloom’s taxonomy, Course Learning Outcomes

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Introduction

Although designing questions for the final exam of ESL or EFL learners is a sensitive task, hardly any hard and fast method to ensure the standardization of question items exists (Inbar-Lourie, 2012). For informative evaluation, language teachers remain confined to classrooms to evaluate the learner’s understanding (Black & William 2009). Hence, standardization of exams cannot be followed strictly as assessing communicative skills, as an informative evaluation is more an activity of listening and speaking, feedback, and oral observation. Conversely, the final achievement test as a tool of a summative assessment of listening, speaking, reading, and writing is more dependent on questions and test instructions (Taras, 2005). Questions prepared hastily and carelessly without professional judgment increase language learners’ stress and badly influence their ultimate performance. Much depends upon the individual educator’s expertise in how he designs the summative question papers for students, since assessment is essentially a process of professional judgment (Brookhart, 2011). If the assessor is competent enough, he will design the question items so that students find no impediment in comprehending what is required in the answers. However, in case of a flawed exam, even an excellent student may find himself perplexed when attempting to answer the questions. This inevitably undermines the validity of the exams and unjustly penalizes the students (Downing, 2005).

At the undergraduate level, cognitive skills assessment has to be associated with Bloom’s taxonomy, which offers classification of learning processes (Adams, 2015). Hence, while designing question papers, the question items have to be aligned with course learning outcomes and program learning outcomes, as this is now a focal point in education (Crespo et al., 2010). The primary concern is that in an institutional language teaching milieu in which a series of programs and modules are imparted by multiple faculty members with varying learning objectives, the uniformity of evaluation tends to be a significant concern (Sivaraman & Krishna, 2015). Here, the different perceptions of the teachers about the relevance and efficacy of Bloom’s taxonomy are implicitly at work in the course of designing question items for assessment of EFL skill courses. These teachers’ perceptions of Bloom’s taxonomy for assessing learners’ the English language skills needs to be evaluated in quantitative terms for in-depth validity.

As mentioned above, the standardization of exams has always been a significant concern in the overall pedagogical process. Bloom’s taxonomy offers a model for instruction and assessment. NCAAA (2019) in Saudi Arabia enjoined universities to follow Vision 2030, which aims to standardize the educational procedures, specifically standardization of their exams to facilitate the learners’ final achievements. Hence, this research focuses on how questions are designed by various English teachers for their courses in terms of language, instructions, and variety and level of items. The results should lead to better validity and reliability of questions for fair and authentic summative assessment. Besides, the study can serve as a guideline for teachers to use questioning as a useful tool to stimulate students’ cognition. In a congenial learning environment, effective question-designing occupies a cardinal place (Estes, Welch & Ressler, 2004). Another contribution of this study is in the use of Bloom’s Taxonomy. The questions have to test different learning levels in knowledge, skills, and competence domains vis-à-vis the learning outcomes. The findings of the study will help teachers make Bloom’s taxonomy more effective in the triangular process of instructions, objectives, and outcomes.
The objectives of this study are as follows:
1. To examine the accuracy and balance of the final exam question papers designed for assessing English language skills.
2. To check whether teachers adhered to Bloom’s Taxonomy in designing question items.
3. To explore how far the Academic Board’s performance is successful in streamlining final exam question papers and achieving the CLOs and POs.

The following are the research questions of this study:
1. How do teachers design final exam papers in terms of item patterns, variety, and balance?
2. To what extent do teachers adhered to Bloom’s Taxonomy in designing questions?
3. How successful has the Exam Board been in achieving balance and standardization of final exam questions to achieve the outcomes?

Literature Review
Revisiting the previous research on the subject reveals that very few studies have been conducted on designing and standardization of EFL or EFL final exam questions specifically. Most of this kind of research is confined to low-order and high-order questions based on Bloom’s Taxonomy. Bloom’s theory was first formulated in 1956 (Forehand, 2010), and over the last 63 years, it has undergone various changes to remain compatible with emerging trends in pedagogical practices and assessment criteria. The history of developing standardized test items dates back to 1956 when Benjamin S. Bloom, who worked as Associate Director of the Board of Examinations at the University of Chicago, emerged as a pioneer of this idea (Krathwohl, 2002). In the same article, Krathwohl provides details about the cognitive domain pyramid, classifying into six categories i.e., knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, and evaluation, which later emerged in a new version in 2001 that changed the nouns to verbs: remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating as shown in Figure one.

The findings of a study by Köksal (2018) conducted in Turkey suggested that for a valid language assessment, there should be a balance in higher and lower order comprehension questions. A similar study was carried out in Jordan, analyzing the questions of secondary school exams exclusively based on Bloom’s Taxonomy cognitive level, in the end suggesting that more high-level questions need to be incorporated in the exams (Alzu’bi, 2014). In his doctoral dissertation, Lach (2014) analyzed end-of-semester final exams conducted in Chicago high school science classrooms exploring the depth and breadth of content that students learn in science classrooms. Although this research deals with the final exams, there was no focus on the content of exams in terms of language accuracy, a variety of questions, and overall standardization. Many other studies focus on the assessment mechanism, validity, reliability, and wash-back effect. The questions are also analyzed based on the challenge involved in levels of learning for the examinees in various domains (Swart, 2009). Arshadi and Lubis (2017) make a distinction between higher-order and lower-order questions to assess the cognitive skills of ELT students and concluded that appropriate designing of questions plays a crucial role in developing and creative and analytical skills, which serve as an asset in their future academic and professional pursuits. As for writing multiple-choice questions (MCQs), the general view is that these types of questions assess a lower level of learning, but by adopting some appropriate strategies, higher learning levels can also be tested, as suggested by Jovanovska (2018).
While analyzing an English textbook, Qasrawi and BeniAbdelrahman (2020) highlight the role of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) and Low Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) in developing language skills. However, these skills have to be assessed through Higher Level Questions (HLQs) and Lower Level Questions (LLQs). Once created, the standardized questions can be used in question banks of a Learning Management System (LMS). While discussing the steps for designing questions for a question bank for a system such as Blackboard, Hamad and Alnuzaili (2020) remarked, “We can specify the number of questions, type of question and level of difficulty, and the system will choose the questions randomly from the folders in the pool with the desired criteria. Besides, that there is a great advantage that each student will have different questions, and if they have multiple attempts, they will have different questions each time.”

However, assessments of speaking skills have always been very challenging. Ounis (2017) pointed out the issues relating to the designing of speaking exam rubrics. The issue of the imbalance of exam questions that affects assessment and evaluation was a crucial point in the findings of Serpil (2017). The same problem has been alluded to by Tsang (2020). Dunbar, Brooks, and Kubicka-Miller (2006) suggested pre-service training for teachers for assessing oral skills.

A close relationship exists among assessment (in which final exams play a crucial role), objectives (learning outcomes) ,and instruction (what is taught in the classroom). Continual alignment is needed among the three for learners to perform better (Airasian & Miranda, 2002). Anderson (2002) illustrates this relationship using the following triangle.

Figure 1 Levels of learning and Bloom’s Taxonomy (from Jovanovska, 2018)
Simultaneously, teachers’ perceptions about Bloom’s taxonomy and the whole process of standardization have been a focus of research because these do influence students’ achievements in the long run. Malik (2019) focused on teachers’ practices and perceptions to the extent of their conformity with the standards. Individual and group marking strategies evolved by the EFL/ESL teachers were examined, and subsequently, the focus shifted to students’ involvement in the assessment process. The researchers confirmed the scarcity of studies that concentrate on both dimensions. English instructors responsible for designing substantial language tests may need strong test design skills, knowledge of educational measurement, and awareness of theory and concepts. The combination of these skills and this knowledge should help them bring about quality products (Giraldo, 2018). He and Shi (2008), while analyzing ESL students’ views and understandings of standardized English writing tests pointed out in their concluding remarks that “Future study needs to find out how instructors who are teaching the test preparation program see their roles and the function of the test” (p. 143). ESL and EFL teachers and instructors differ a lot in their perceptions regarding the assessment process. According to Brown (2019), it is imperative for an English language evaluator must have an acute sense of the global and local standardization requirements in English proficiency tests. “The design and development of assessment criteria, procedures, and tasks should take full account of local practices and embrace a variety of assessment formats, activities, and reporting instruments that can help sample and reflect learner/user performance adequately. In other words, we are talking not just about ‘assessing EFL’ as such but about taking account of EFL use where appropriate in the conceptualization and design of English language assessment” (Jenkins & Leung, 2017, p. 13). Hamad (2019) emphasized the need for training for English language instructors in using Bloom’s taxonomy and the specified verbs to acquaint themselves with the basics of writing test questions for achieving learning
objectives in a scientific pedagogical manner. Tajgozari and Alimorad (2019) suggested that using MCQs for assessment of writing skills is not appropriate because learners have to write sentences and paragraphs to demonstrate their writing ability. Hence, an overview of the literature on ESL/EFL teachers’ perceptions regarding standardization of final tests about taxonomy and assessment rules admits further inquiry into the issue.

The standardization of a final exam paper in the English department, Majmaah University

According to Bloom’s taxonomy and quality assurance departments, standardization of exams is a matter of great concern for pedagogical practices that assess learner’s achievements. This study in the Department of English at the College of Education, Majmaah University, Saudi Arabia, endeavors to evaluate how far a balanced approach is realized in using Higher-Level Questions (HLQs) and Lower-Level Questions (LLQs) along with their alignment to Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and Program Outcomes (POs). Simultaneously, the implementation of Bloom’s taxonomy and the standards set by the indigenous Academic Board for assuring the quality of exams has been measured in terms of perceptions and practice. As seen in the light of Blooms’ taxonomy (Krathwohl & Anderson, 2009) and the quality documents of NCAAA, the Saudi accreditation authority, questions have to measure the learning outcomes. This consideration is supposed to be very much in the exam writer’s mind while writing questions for the final exam. Generally, its implementation takes place through the Quality and Accreditation units that exist in every department. Recently, a requirement has been introduced for a cover page for each exam containing a table in which the Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and the Program Outcomes (POs) for each question are indicated.

![Alignment of questions with CLOs and POs](image)

This clipping from the cover page of Listening and Speaking’s three final exams shows the questions alignment with Course Learning Objectives and Program Objectives. Here, we also see a slight extension of Bloom’s taxonomy. Since this is an advanced course, more questions fall...
within the Cognitive Skills domain. Question six is about speaking that involves a higher level – Interpersonal Skills and Responsibility. As for weighting, 20 points each are allocated for knowledge, cognitive skills, and interpersonal skills. The same practice is followed in other skill exams – reading and writing with varying allocations of points, domain, and weights. At the end of the final exam, every teacher has to submit the Course Report for each course showing how the learning outcomes have been achieved by the exams and activities. Subsequently, a discussion occurs between the Course Coordinator and the course instructor, and actions for improvement to be implemented in the next exam are agreed upon. The practice just described is that which is explicitly followed by the Department of English, Majmaah University. However, for a better understanding of this practice, perceptions of the English teachers regarding Bloom’s taxonomy and the Academic Board that sets national standards need to be surveyed in quantitative terms.

The Department of English at Majmaah University evolved a unique process for standardization of English language skill exams, taking into account the discrepancies observed by the internal reviewing committee when the exams had been revisited after the declaration of results and the analysis of students’ feedback. To address the problem, an Academic Board was constituted to make arrangement to evaluate the exams before they were given next. This process has gone on for a couple of years but has not yet been evaluated or analyzed. However, as per the requirements of the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA, 2018), the questions in the exams must be standardized along with conformity with the learning outcomes that stem from the learning objectives covering the domains, such as “knowledge, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and responsibility, communication, information technology, numerical, and psychomotor” as components of holistic assessment approach (Fathelrahman, 2019).

Hence, just before the commencement of final exams, the Head of Academic Board of the Department issued instructions for preparing examinations, which were taken as standards for this study.

Standard 1: Vary your questions (include a wide range of question types: essay, semi-essay, objective questions: multiple choice, filling in blanks, matching, true/false, etc.) whenever deemed appropriate. Remember that each type has its strengths and weaknesses.

Standard 2: Observe mark weight (distribution of marks). Keep it as balanced as possible.

Standard 3: Show good clarity (avoid ambiguous, tricky, or vague questions). These questions will affect the validity of your tests (a test should test what it ought to be testing).

Standard 4: Proofread carefully whatever you write and keep doing this while writing exams. Remember that good writing is always rewriting, and that we very often don't see our own mistakes until shown to us by someone else.

Standard 5: Keep your test well-organized, well-presented, well-formatted, and preferably also neat-looking.

Standard 6: Write questions for all difficulty levels: advanced, complicated, moderate, easy, and very easy.

Standard 7: Use the Times New Roman font (12–14 point).

Last but not least, the evaluation of the Academic Board’s functioning will also help in streamlining the process of designing and aligning final exam questions to course learning outcomes (CLOs) and program outcomes (POs). To summarize:
1) This research studies the perceptions and practices regarding the exam papers’ standardization in Majmaah University.
2) It reviews the process of implementation of standardization in the university.
3) It evaluates the relevance and efficacy of Bloom’s taxonomy for standardization of exams.
4) The study explores how Bloom’s taxonomy is relevant to standardization of exams in particular and how it can provide a guideline for overall the standardization of exams throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia under Vision 2030.
5) This will also serve as a guideline for the implementing standards and capacity building of English teachers in the rapidly progressing educational system in Saudi Arabia.
6) Standardization will lead to the elimination of fear of exams, lowered student anxiety levels, and improved student performance through an equitable exam system.

Following this, faculty members design questions and submit the question papers to the Academic Board for scrutiny for meeting the set standards. After necessary corrections, instructions, and alterations, the exam papers are finalized for printing. This practice needs to be examined for three reasons. First, how do the teachers design exams for assessing EFL students’ English language skills? Second, how successful is it? Third, to what extent has it been beneficial for students to achieve the set objectives? The study aims to evaluate this internal mechanism of standardization of final EFL exams.

**Methods**

This case study employs a mixed method. The first segment deals with the analysis of the final exam questions pertaining to the assessment of English language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—to see how this practice works. The second part of the study involves perceptions of English teachers as question designers of the role of Bloom’s Taxonomy while writing the exam questions, and also their perception of the Academic Board that acts as a supervisory body to ensure that the questions are standardized, rationalized, valid, reliable, and error-free. This data was subjected to a qualitative method. The third part of the research needed to engage both the Academic Board members and the English teachers who design the question items for English language students for in-depth thematic analysis through qualitative methods of Focused Group Discussion (FGD). Hence, a sequential explanatory design of a mixed mode has been used to achieve the study aims.

**Data Collection**

The content of final examinations from two semesters (Spring and Fall, 2018) assessing English language skills proficiency at the Department of English, Majmaah University, Saudi Arabia, were analyzed. Then, the English teachers who design final exam papers for testing English language skills were engaged through a questionnaire. Finally, English language teachers and the Board members who set the standards participated together in Focused Group Discussion (FGD) for discussing issues arising during the course.

**Sample and Sampling Techniques**

As the research is a case study at Majmaah University, a non-probability convenient sampling technique was used. The first sample comprises 250 question items designed to assess English language skills during the two semesters. The second sample consists of 16 exam writers who are responsible for creating English language exams. The third sample consists of 12 English teacher
participants as exam writers and the English Academic Board members accountable for monitoring, editing, and proofreading the contents of EFL undergraduate exam papers.

**Instruments**
- Content of the final English exam questions to be analyzed.
- Questionnaire (Having two parts, one for the relevance of Bloom’s Taxonomy in question writing and the other for evaluating the Academic Board’s role in implementing the standards.)
- Focused Group Discussion (Taking participants from both English teachers who are also exam writers, and members of the English Academic Board for in-depth thematic analysis.)

The questionnaire to measure teachers’ perceptions was adapted from Wozney and Abrami (2006). The number of items in the questionnaire is 20 and the responses to these items are based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (five points) to Strongly Disagree (one point). The sample was requested to express their extent of agreement or disagreement with the items by selecting the answer from the five options of the Likert Scale. The questionnaire was vetted by veteran faculty members and was modified in view of valuable comments and feedback. A sample from 16 faculty members was subjected to Cronbach’s alpha, and the internal consistency came to be 8.3, which amply validates the questionnaire reliability.

Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with members of the Academic Board and English teachers, six from each group, to see how effective the examination methods are, and how the practice of standardization of EFL final exams works. The following is the theoretical framework of this study:

![Theoretical framework of the study](image)

*Figure 4* Theoretical framework of the study
Results

Content Analysis of Skill Exams

Question 1: How do the teachers design final exams in terms of item patterns, variety, and balance?

To examine how teachers distribute subjective and objective questions in terms of high and low levels, 250 exam questions based on four language skills—listening, speaking, reading, and writing—were analyzed using SPSS. The ratio of High Level Questions (HLQs) and Low Level Questions (LLQs) for multiple types of questions were calculated. Among listening skill questions, 25% were HLQs and 75% were LLQs. Speaking skill questions were 39% HLQs and 61% LLQs. Reading skill questions were 40% HLQs and 60% LLQs. Finally, among writing skill questions, 62% were HLQs and 38% LLQs. Table 1 presents detailed statistics for the questions sets in the exams.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of skill exam question papers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions Type</th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
<td>Subjective</td>
<td>Objective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLQs</td>
<td>LLQs</td>
<td>HLQs</td>
<td>LLQs</td>
<td>HLQs</td>
<td>LLQs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCQs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T/F or Y/N</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIB</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WH Questions</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperative Questions (Bloom’s Verbs)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%of HLQs and LLQs ratio</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bloom’s Taxonomy

Question 2: To what extent do teachers adhere to Bloom’s Taxonomy in question designing?

Exam questions were classified based on Bloom’s Taxonomy and the standards set by the Academic Board. The information gathered was tabulated for convenience. The questionnaire data was entered and analyzed using SPSS 22. Mean + S.D was given for quantitative variables. Frequencies and percentages were given for qualitative variables. Mean scores were calculated for all questionnaire Likert scale responses. The themes arising out of the discussion were analyzed in detail.

The data was collected using a questionnaire containing ten items that measured the English teachers’ perceptions about the use of Bloom’s Taxonomy by the faculty members’ designing questions. Sixteen exam writers in the English Department at Majmaah University were requested to respond to the given items. The obtained data was fed into SPSS 22 for descriptive statistics. The range of the individual items’ mean came to be M = 3.6–4.5 (SD = 0.51–0.71). Item #3 pertaining to striking a balance between high level and low level questions had the highest mean score (M = 4.5, SD = 0.51) with a high degree of satisfaction. The average mean score and standard deviation for the questionnaire sub-skill came to be (M=4.0, SD=0.49). The lowest mean score and standard deviation (M=3.6, SD=0.71) was received by item #8, which dealt with the relevance of Bloom’s Taxonomy theory today. Table 2 illustrates the statistics of teachers’ adherence to Bloom’s Taxonomy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am fully conscious of Bloom’s taxonomy while designing questions.</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>1.03280</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The instructional verbs are useful for writing questions.</td>
<td>4.125</td>
<td>.61914</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I try to strike a balance between high level questions and low-level questions.</td>
<td>4.5625</td>
<td>.51235</td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>More questions are asked in the knowledge domain for beginners.</td>
<td>4.0625</td>
<td>.85391</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>More questions are asked in the skill domain for higher level students.</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>.89443</td>
<td>64.0</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am always clear about the high level and low-level questions.</td>
<td>4.4375</td>
<td>.62915</td>
<td>71.0</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The questions are designed to meet the learning outcomes.</td>
<td>4.125</td>
<td>.50000</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bloom’s taxonomy is still relevant for designing questions.</td>
<td>3.625</td>
<td>.71880</td>
<td>58.0</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bloom’s taxonomy is compatible with the course descriptions and course reports.</td>
<td>3.6875</td>
<td>.94648</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Vision 2030 of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is followed while designing questions.</td>
<td>3.9375</td>
<td>1.12361</td>
<td>63.0</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic Board

Question 3: How successful is the Exam Board in achieving balance and standardization of final exam questions to achieve the desired outcomes?

The tool used for collecting data was a questionnaire comprising ten items regarding the faculty members’ perceptions towards the Academic Board for editing and proofreading exams. The questionnaire was administered to 16 faculty members of the English Department at Majmaah University. The data was analyzed using SPSS 22. For descriptive statistics, the mean of the individual items in the questionnaire fell between the range of M=3.0–4.5(SD=0.6–1.09). The highest mean score and the standard deviation were received by item #10 pertaining to a variety of question types (M=4.5, SD=0.62), and the degree of satisfaction level was high. This is one of the significant aims of standardizing exams to offer the learner a variety of questions weighted in accordance with the time and coverage of the course items during pedagogical activities. This tends to make the exam more valid and reliable (Abuhattab & Yousef, 2017). The average mean score and standard deviation for this sub-skill of the questionnaire were (M=4.2, SD=0.45). Item #6 concerning encroachment by the Board on the exam writer’s autonomy received the lowest mean score, and standard deviation (M=3.0, SD=1.09), and its level of satisfaction were moderate (2.5–3.4). This indicates a rift between the board members, who have to ensure balance in respect of numbers of items, and the allocation of grades, where the board tends to have its will and logic prevailed. Numbers of disputes also occur between the board and the exam writers, as is evident from item #7 (M=3.0, SD=1.1). This is because of a difference of opinion and the authority that lies with the board. Table 3 presents the results of the Academic Board in the implementation of standards.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Academic Board for implementing standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Academic Board rationalizes the exams.</td>
<td>4.1875</td>
<td>.98107</td>
<td>67.00</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The members of the board are competent enough for the job.</td>
<td>3.5000</td>
<td>.96609</td>
<td>56.00</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The exam questions become valid after going through the board.</td>
<td>4.0000</td>
<td>.73030</td>
<td>64.00</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reliability of the questions is ensured.</td>
<td>3.9375</td>
<td>.57373</td>
<td>63.00</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>This practice should continue for standard exams.</td>
<td>4.0000</td>
<td>.89443</td>
<td>64.00</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The members of the board encroach upon the autonomy of the exam writer</td>
<td>3.0000</td>
<td>1.09545</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>This practice gives rise to disputes between the exam writers and the members of the board.</td>
<td>3.5625</td>
<td>.72744</td>
<td>57.00</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Exam writers feel embarrassed when too many mistakes and errors are pointed out.</td>
<td>3.9375</td>
<td>.77190</td>
<td>63.00</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The case of a course taught by more than one teacher, a uniformity of questions is achieved.</td>
<td>3.3125</td>
<td>1.01448</td>
<td>53.00</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A variety of question types with rational weightage is stricken.</td>
<td>4.5625</td>
<td>.62915</td>
<td>73.00</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total | 4.2 | 0.45 | High |
Focused Group Discussion

The contents of the questionnaire and the comments given by the respective faculty members gave way to specific themes and sub-themes for discussion. Hence, all six members were engaged in focused group discussion (FGD) – three from the exam writers and three from the Exam Academic Board for thematic analysis (Wilkinson, 2004). During the discussion, it came to the fore that initially, the Academic Board was established to rectify the typographical errors that created ambiguity and confusion for the examinees in the final exams. However, later the team responsible for corrections and post-examination feedback from the students and course coordinators needed to focus on consistency, validity, and reliability of exam items. “Sometimes, there were unintentional lapses by a few exam writers involving spelling mistakes, questions too easy or too difficult to be valid, inconsistent question items, and these needed to be corrected,” remarked one of the Board members. Another Board member balked at giving comments by saying “As a member of the academic board, I am afraid my responses could not be very objective.” Nevertheless, the exam writers admitted the utility of the members’ tasks for streamlining the exams. “Even the frequency of dispute between the board and the paper setters lessened as the practice moved forward,” reaffirmed the head of the board. It also came to the fore during the discussion that even in Finland’s education system, which is considered the best in the world, standardization of exams is reported to have fairer results (Hendrickson, 2012).

The relevance of Bloom’s Taxonomy to low level and high level questions also came under discussion. One of the participants in the FGD opined: “Although the taxonomy is now very old, it is amazing that it is still in many ways relevant and valid. Bloom was a legend. Appreciating him, should not, however, mean that his work shouldn’t be questioned or criticized.” Another pointed out that new theories show up all the time and old ones keep on adjusting their respective arguments according to the unique needs, along with the changing character of today’s learners/readers of English. Also, on low level and high level questions, the FGD participants agreed that this technique helped grade the questions, starting from the knowledge and advancing to application and evaluation. Participants said that in listening, speaking, and reading skills exams, low level questions get more space, whereas writing skill exams are more topic-based rather than subjective, and these fall more in the domain of high level questions. The delineated themes and subthemes are shown in Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Standardization of questions</td>
<td>a) Consistency of items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Validity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c) Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Efficacy of Bloom’s Taxonomy</td>
<td>a) Relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) High level questions (HLQ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c) Low level questions (LLQ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Assessment/Evaluation</td>
<td>a) Uniformity of exam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b) Allocation of grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c) Weighting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 Thematic Analysis in FGD
4. **Alignment of questions with Learning Outcomes**

   a) **Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)**
   b) **Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs)**

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**Discussion**

An analysis of the pattern of the questions in the final exam papers for four basic skills, i.e., listening, reading, and writing, has been done. The speaking exam does not involve any writing; the faculty member individually evaluates the speaking capabilities and awards the marks according to the prescribed standards in an assessment rubric to give it more objectivity as is mentioned by Tsang (2020). However, speaking exams are challenging and need more consideration for validity and reliability (Ounis, 2017). There are three graded listening in listening and speaking courses (Listening Speaking 1, Listening Speaking 2, and Listening Speaking 3). The first two courses have two groups in each semester, whereas the third one has only one group. Hence, in all ten questions, papers were scrutinized from the two previous semesters for each course. The similar distribution of groups was found in reading and writing as well. The number of questions in each paper was six to seven. In six questions, each question carried ten marks as the final exam was worth 60 marks. However, with seven questions, the division of marks varied slightly in a couple of questions.

The seven standards set by the Academic Board have been followed to a larger extent as is evident from Table 1. Standard one focuses on a variety of questions and standard two relates to the weight and balance of question items. In all, 40 question papers with around 250 questions came under examination. The ratio of objective questions is always on the high side for except writing skills, which is in line with the proposal of Tajgozari and Alimorad (2019). The same pattern exists in HLQs and LLQs, which leads to a rationalized mark weight for valid and reliable assessment. Similarly, the question items are also varied as MCQs, True/False, Yes/No, fill in the blanks (FIB), Wh-questions and imperative questions. Hence, the standards set in Bloom’s taxonomy and the Academic Board’s instructions cannot be followed blindly. Standard two relates to the weighting and balance. The distribution of marks varies according to the course item coverage; the Academic Board only ensures that the items in each question should not cross a particular limit. For instance, out of a total 60 marks, each question should not go beyond ten marks. This automatically keeps the weight in a state of balance. Clarity is ensured by Standard three. The practice is that the exams are submitted to the Academic Board, which scrutinizes them carefully. If any confusion or ambiguity exists, the paper is sent back to the exam writer, who follows the instructions and rephrases the questions or instructions wherever necessary. Hence Standard three is implemented without any problem. Standard four is just an instruction for being careful in writing exams. It is better if some peer review is made, which may help exam writers to be more vigilant. The format and organization of the exams were found be excellent, as Standard five is followed willingly by each exam writer. Standard six set by the Academic Board is an extension of Bloom’s Taxonomy, which relates to the level of questions in terms of difficulty. Bloom’s levels of questions are bifurcated between low level and high level. However, the Board extends it to excellent, above-average, average, below-average, and low. This standard tends to ensure that all the learners must get something to attempt; i.e., the questions should range from easy to difficult. At face value, the exams seem to follow this practice as well, particularly in terms of LLQs and HLQs. Standard seven deals with font size (12 or 14). All papers follow this standard for better readability. The practice mainly goes in line with the qualities of assessment enumerated
by Brown and Race (2013) as validity, reliability, transparency, inclusivity, authenticity and fairness.

The responses of English instructors as given in Table 2 reveal that the theory of Bloom’s taxonomy is still considered relevant today. The principles as laid down in Bloom’s Taxonomy offer a guideline for the faculty members responsible for designing question papers “but it is largely left to them to bring out a balanced paper as the final outcome” (Sivaraman & Krishna, 2015, p. 8). However, its level of satisfaction was still high (3.5 – 5). Although specifics may be argued, the matter is settled one way or another, even though in some cases either the exam writer or the board has to accede to the opposing view. Overall, the high numbers for all other item responses illustrate that the role of the Academic Board is viewed as highly positive in achieving a balance and standardization of the contents of question papers. Furthermore, the results shown in Table 3 pertaining to statistics about the performance of the Academic Board showed the satisfaction of the exam writers with the process. Nevertheless, some reservations are evident in terms of encroachment on the autonomy of the teachers in writing exams. Another issue is that if a course is taught by more than one instructor, the uniformity of questions is compromised, which sometimes leads to an imbalance of weight in assessment and evaluation, eventually affecting learners’ achievements, as highlighted by Serpil (2017).

The FGD participants unanimously recommended 60:40 ratios for sessional and final assessments so as to have parity with other colleges offering the same courses. At the same time, the question of weighting was also on the anvil. “The issue of determining weights on the basis of topics and outcomes is often challenging. There is no clear cut mechanism or guideline for designing the weights for each topic and item on the exam,” opined one of the members of the discussion group. The overall assessment and evaluation process were also discussed. As 40% of the total evaluation was based on formative assessment, standardization of all items or exam questions was impossible. However, for the final exam, the assessment is summative. This area where standardization of exams is most important for uniformity of questions, in case a course is taught by more than one teacher. Here again the matter of allocation of grades, marks, or points was debated.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

The study looked into multiple dimensions of the process of exam writing for the final EFL exams by analyzing the practice and measuring perceptions. All of this does not occur in isolation. The language of the exams, the content of the items, the distributions of marks, and aligning the questions to the course learning outcomes (CLOs) and program outcomes (POs) are intimately interconnected. The content analysis revealed that more low level questions (LLQs) are incorporated in final exams than the high level questions (HLQs). However, despite all the grievances of the exam writers, the role of the supervising body—academic or exam board—is highly positive in making the exams flawless, uniform, balanced, and standardized (Holme, 2003). The very presence of this body rendered the faculty members more mindful of making use of the revised Bloom’s taxonomy in designing questions to ensure validity and reliability. After editing and proofreading by the board, the questions on the exams were largely rationalized and standardized. In addition, the study reaffirms that the theory of Bloom’s Taxonomy is still relevant though expounded long ago. It was felt that the application of Bloom’s Taxonomy system had
enabled teachers to set examination papers that are well balanced, testing different cognitive skills without a tilt towards a tough or easy paper perception. The process also goes in line with the instructions of National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) and Vision 2030 of Saudi Arabia. Even the pedagogical implication of this study cannot be overlooked. Standardization of final exams not only streamlines the process of assessment but also has a direct effect on what is taught in the classroom. Finally, standardization of exam items as analyzed in this study goes to the benefit of the learners who get better and fairer assessment with less confusion and ambiguity in the Final Achievement Test.

It is, however, recommended that this practice needs to be replicated in other departments and institutions as well. The Quality departments should take into consideration the findings of this study to improve the quality of final exam papers. In view of the findings of this case study, it can be suggested that final exams prepared by an individual writer must be scrutinized for the sake of standardization in terms of maximum course coverage; the variety in the question item; uniformity if the course is taught by more than one teacher; clear, concise and precise instructions; validity and reliability of the exam papers for fair assessment; and the alignment of questions with CLOs and POs to ensure the implementation of revised Bloom’s taxonomy. With awareness of the themes discussed in the FGD framework, it is suggested to hold seminars on assessment and quality issues and devise comprehensive guidelines for exam writers to follow.

Limitations
This study was confined to participants who are all male members of a single English Department. This was because the process of standardization of question papers was exclusively practiced here. Another limitation pertains to the role of the participants in the study. Some of the exam writers were also members of the Academic Board, so it was difficult for them to be entirely unbiased on both sides. However, this issue was partly resolved in FGD.

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References


Religious Expressions as Situation Bound Rituals in Iraqi Computer-Mediated Communication

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Abstract
This study aims at exploring the linguistic habits of Iraqi Arab speakers and the situations wherein Iraqis invoke religion and the lexicon of Allah in their daily online communication. Throughout this work, it was sought to answer the question whether the religious belief of Iraqis is reflected in online chats Iraqi by involving situation-bound rituals in their CMC and the functions these expressions fulfil in this communication. Although computer-mediated communication lacks nonverbal behaviour and prosodic features support the speakers’ polite intention, many researchers assert that there are many resources whereby individuals can resort to in demonstrating their solidarity. The Methods is based on examining synchronic messages exchanged on WhatsApp and Viber in four groups with the participation of 99 participants in total whose age ranged from 15 to 70 years old, with different educational qualifications and religious orientations. Social distance between the participants varied from intimate to neutral, and large. Likewise, social rank ranged from equal footing to low-high relationships and high-low relationships. The setting involved different occasions such as congratulations, greetings, farewell, thanking, offering condolences as well as receiving bad news. The findings of this research have shown that Iraqi Arabic speakers incline to enhance the politeness of their message by involving religious vocabularies that take mostly the form of supplication. Besides, the religious lexicon stands as a form of etiquette that promotes the speakers’ and the addressee’s faces. It is hoped that this work would lead to further studies related to religious expressions across computer mediated communication.

Keywords: computer-mediated communication (Iraq), religion, pragmatics, politeness, speech acts, situation bound utterances

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Introduction

Politeness is a widely researched area in pragmatics. Since the development of this theory, it has become a subject of investigation by many researchers, whether via exploring the norms of conversation in a particular culture, studying cross-cultural, or investigating intercultural communication. Researchers have also paid substantial interest to the difference in politeness strategies between computer-mediated communication and face-to-face interaction. Due to the collectivistic nature of Arab societies, people tend to establish solidarity and harmonious relationships. They are keen on promoting their positive face and that of their addressee. Further, there are linguistic habits that might distinguish them from speakers of other communities (Bouchara, 2015).

The recent interest has been extended to studying politeness as a pragmatic and sociocultural phenomenon (Al-Khatib, 2012). Besides, religion, in its association with politeness, has been investigated by some researchers. For example, Bouchara (2015) has conducted a study in the Moroccan context with an emphasis on greetings and the role of religion in enhancing their politeness. Kadhim (2017) has studied Al-Husseini expressions as situation bound utterances in the Iraqi community. Nevertheless, throughout the study of the literature and to the researcher’s best knowledge, the linguistic habits in the Iraqi society and the pragmatic aim behind uttering religious expressions, as situation-bound rituals that carry the religious implications, have not been investigated in online chat yet. Hence, it is essential to fill this gap and extend the body of research into a study that tackles the polite aim of recruiting religious vocabularies and the lexicon of Allah in computer-mediated communication from a socio-pragmatic perspective.

The objective of this study is to extend the theories of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987) into a new area of investigation represented by the influence of religion on politeness. While focusing on the Iraqi society, it also aims to explore the contexts in which situation-bound rituals that involve the lexicon of Allah and religious vocabularies in daily online synchronic communication and the pragmatic aims behind. In this regard, this study opens an eye to the speech behaviour of Iraqis, the influence of their Islam as a religion, and Quran as a holy book on their polite language use in their computer-mediated communication. Therefore, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent Iraqi Arabic speakers involve situation-bound rituals in their CMC?
2. What are the functions these expressions fulfil in this communication?

The theoretical part of this work consists of four parts: the first one presents a brief summary of speech act theory as well as an explanation of the speech acts related to this study. The second part describes the strong association of the Islamic religion with language mostly reflected in the expressions adopted by Arabic speakers in their desire to manifest positive politeness. Next, situation bound utterance will be explained, focusing on its different usage in the western and eastern, particularly Muslim, cultures. Computer-mediated communication will be tackled, including its users’ adherence to politeness strategies, with the aim of promoting their positive and negative image and that of their addressee. The practical side presents the methods of data collection ending with highlighting the religious expressions with an explanation of their functions. Then, discussion interprets the findings of this study in relation with the literature.
discussed in the theoretical pert. Finally, this work ends with the conclusion arrived at and the resources adopted.

**Literature Review**

*Speech acts theory*

Before proceeding on to politeness in Islam, it is relevant to provide a brief summary of speech act theory developed by Austin (1975). He has stated that some utterances have the grammatical structure of a statement, yet they are not subject to truth-conditional analysis. Listing the verbs that perform actions, Austin sought the possibility of applying a grammatical formula in defining performative utterances, consisting of a first-person singular subject with a verb in the simple present tense. An optional self-referential adverb can also be used in this formula.

(1) I (hereby) first person verb-present singular active voice X…….

I hereby pronounce you husband and wife

Utterances are of two types: ‘explicit performatives’ and ‘implicit performatives’. The former follows this formula and contain a performative verb that makes explicit what kind of action is performed. The latter there is no performative verb, as in:

(2) a. I promise that I shall be there (explicit performative)
   b. I shall be there (implicit performative)

Then, Austin introduce three acts performed simultaneously upon uttering a sentence incorporating both explicit and implicit performatives (Austin, 1975, pp. 98-101):

i. **Locutionary act**: This is the act of producing a meaningful utterance.
   (3) Shoot her.
ii. **Illocutionary act**: This is the act performed intentionally upon uttering a linguistic expression.
   (4) He urged me to shoot her.
iii. **Perlocutionary act**: This is the bringing about of consequences or effects on the audience through the uttering of a linguistic expression.
    (5) He persuaded me to shoot her.

Austin has categorised illocutionary verbs into five classes according to the effect found in their explicit form:
- **Verdictives**: “giving a verdict by exercising judgment”, for example ‘verdict’.
- **Exercitives**: “exercising power, rights, and influences”, for example ‘warn’.
- **Commissives**: “promising or undertaking”, for example ‘promise’.
- **Behabitives**: “showing attitudes and social behaviour”, for example ‘apologies’.
- **Expositives**: “fitting an utterance into the course of an argument or conversation”, for example, ‘state’
In an attempt to systematize and formulate Austin’s speech acts, Searle (1969, 1975) presented his ‘neo-Austinian analysis’. In the first place, he distinguished between two types of rules: ‘the constitutive’ and ‘the regulative’. The former defines an activity or creates it, and the latter regulates a pre-existing activity. Furthermore, Searle noted that speech act utterances contain functional indicating devices, defining them as formal features in the utterance that determine the illocutionary force. These devices include word order, stress, intonation contour, mode of verbs, and the set of illocutionary verbs. He names these features ‘illocutionary force indicative devices’ (henceforth IFID).

Austin’s felicity conditions have been updated by Searle and Vanderveken (1985) dividing them into seven type:

i. Propositional content  
ii. Preparatory conditions  
iii. Sincerity condition  
iv. Illocutionary point  
v. Degree of strength of illocutionary point  
vi. Mode of achievement  
vii. Degree of strength of the sincerity condition:  
   (Green, 2007, pp. 6-7); (Vanderveken, 1998, pp. 171-183).

Searle (1975b), as cited in Huang (2004, pp. 106-109) has classified illocutionary points into five categories:

i. **Assertives (Representatives):** This type of speech act commits the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition as in asserting, claiming, concluding, reporting, and stating.  
   (6) The soldiers are struggling on through the snow. (Huang, 2004, p. 106; ex. 4.27c. )

ii. **Directives:** These are acts that show speakers’ attempts to make their addressees do something such as requesting, questioning, commanding, ordering, and advising.  
   (7) Open the door

iii. **Commisives:** These acts commit the speaker to a future course of action as in promising, threatening, offering, refusal, and threats.  
   (8) I will never let you down.

iv. **Expressives:** These are the expression of a psychological state of happiness, sadness, like/dislike. They can be seen in thanking, apologising, welcoming, and congratulating.  
   (9) I apologise

v. **Declaratives:** These acts produce changes in some current state of affairs. A speaker would effect changes in the world by performing this act as in christening a baby, declaring war, firing from employment, excommunicating, and nominating a candidate.  
   (10) President: I declare a state of national emergency. (Huang, 2004, p. 106; ex.4.31a. )

A later development in this theory is the distinction between direct and indirect speech acts. An indirect speech act is multi-purpose function. In the following example, the sentence can play a dual role, one being a question and the other a request. (Huang, 2004, p. 110).

(11) Will you lock the door, please?
Searle’s (1975b) model of indirect speech acts proposes the existence of two illocutionary forces associated with the indirect speech act, one of which is literal and the other non-literal. The former is secondary, while the latter is primary. Searle affirms that the meaning might be arrived at through taking the contextual conditions into consideration, where inferences play a vital role in this process to arrive at a successful interaction.

Speakers rely on indirect speech acts for the purpose of obtaining a social or communicative advantage, enhancing politeness, and avoiding anything that might cause embarrassment to the hearer and possibly to the speaker.

A summarised explanation for the speech acts involved in this study:

1. **Congratulations**

   Congratulations is an expressive speech act through which a speaker can express his feelings and emotions towards the addressee (Searle, 1976). This act is mostly performed when the interlocutor achieves a desirable thing for which the speaker shows that he/she shares in the other’s joy.

   As to Leech’s (1983) classification of congratulation is as ‘convivial’. He describes some speech acts, among them are compliments, thanking, and congratulations, as “intrinsically polite” that aim at promoting the addressee’s positive face (Leech, 1983, 2014); (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This speech act is associated with the approbation and modesty maxims in which speakers are recommended to minimize the hearers’ dispraise and maximize his/her praise (Leech, 1983).

   The common (IFIDs) associated with this speech act is ‘congratulations’ (see Levinson 1983; Aijmer 1996). However, Elwood (2004) remarks that different situations demand different patterns and expressions.

2. **Thanking and Gratitude and their Responses**

   Gratitude are listed within the expressive acts in Searle’s (1975) typology because the illocutionary point is to “express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content.” (p.12). The objective of showing appreciation is to establish and maintain solidarity with the interlocutor. On the contrary, failure of being thankful might create an unpleasant feeling and can negatively influence the relationship between the speaker and the hearer (Eisenstein & Bodman 1993). Thanking is defined by Searle (1969, p.65) as “an illocutionary act produced by a speaker as a reaction to a past act carried out by a hearer which the speaker considers that has been beneficial to him/her.” Since they refer to a past or ongoing action, thanking and gratitude are post-events or retrospective acts.

   Coulmas (1981) distinguishes between the different types of thanking: firstly, thanks for a favour, promise, offer, invitation; secondly, thanks for material things such as gifts immaterial thinks as in desires, compliments, congratulations, information; thirdly, thanks for an action done by the addressee; finally, thanks that imply indebtedness, or those that do not signify indebtedness.

   Okamoto and Robinson (1997) state that thanks and gratitude are expressed via different expressions, whose choice is determined by the relationship between the interlocutors and characteristics of the action, i.e., the weight of imposition of the action on the hearer, which
involve the amount of effort, time, money, etc. demanded by the action. The greater the imposition on the giver, the more polite the gratitude and its form should be.

Further, as Coulmas (1981) demonstrates, thanking is universal speech act to such an extent every language. Nevertheless, each language has a range of conventional devices adopted by its speakers to carry out such an action.

3. Compliments
As it is with the previous two speech acts, by Searle (1979) lists compliments within the expressive acts. It is described by Kasper and Schmidt (1996), as “a particular relation between the speaker(S) and the hearer (H): (Whether it explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to the person addressed for her/his good (characteristic, skill, possession, etc.) is valued positively by the S and the H.” (as cited in Jibreen, 2017, p. 7). Further, compliments are also given mitigate face-threatening acts like criticisms, apologies, requests, to initiate a conversation, and are used instead of some speech acts such as greetings gratitude, apologies, and congratulations (Han, 1992, cited in Yousif, 2003).

As in congratulations, compliments according to the notion of politeness are also listed within the convivial acts in the sense that the social goal of this speech act is to maintain comity (Leech, 1983, 2014). In its relation to face and politeness, a compliment is part of positive politeness and, hence, it is a face-saving act (Brown & Levinson, 1987). While it promotes the addressee’s positive face, Leech (2014) classifies compliments within the acts that threaten the speaker’s positive face as it demands the speaker express his tributes and show admiration.

Nevertheless, the evaluation of face-saving acts varies from one culture to another. In some cultures, a compliment might threaten the addressee’s face when associated with the evil eye. Therefore, a compliment, in Arab communities, is advised to follow specific formulae so as the evil eye can be excelled, and to transmit the message to the complimented that the speaker does not aim at envying him/her (Nelson, Al-Batal & Echols (1996).

4. Greetings and Leave-taking
Farewells and greetings are well-defined speech acts, marking the boundaries of a conversation. They may focus on individual expressions used in such interactions, such as hello, good morning, how are you, goodbye, or farewell (Jucker, 2017). Although they are ritualised and are devoid of propositional content, they are, in fact, more complex (Searle, 1969). They are often embedded in more extended exchanges; hence, such speech acts are performed either via interactional sequences or formulaic expressions that regularly occur in these sequences. Therefore, a salutation is an indication that includes both greetings and farewells, are highly formulaic (see Levinson,1983; Aijmer, 1996)

After this brief cover of indirect speech acts, politeness and the related concepts, the next section introduces the concept of Islam, its morals, and the influence of religion on language in general and politeness in particular.
Politeness and Religion in Arabic

Islam is an Arabic verbal noun, derived from the triliteral root s-l-m. It is also derived from the Arabic verb *aslama*, meaning “to give up, to surrender, to resign oneself” (to God). Ideally, each person submits and is surrender to God and His will (Abdalati, 2010). Masjid Al-Huda (2011), asserts that “Muslims believe in one, unique, incomparable God; in the angels created by Him; in the prophets through whom His revelations were brought to mankind; in God’s complete authority over human destiny; and in life after death” (as cited in AlKhatib, 2012, pp. 481-482). Without any discrimination, they also believe in all the messengers of Allah. Further, an essential belief in Islam is the 99 names associated with Allah’s traits. These names stand for kindness, forgiveness, graciousness, compassion, mercy, kindness, pity, etc. (Abdalati, 2010).

In Islam, the Holy Quran is the last word of God. Because it tackles aspects of life, it is the primary source of Islamic commandment. All the subjects that concern human beings are covered in this book, including wisdom, doctrine, worship, and law. Its basic theme, though, is the relationship between God and His creatures. Meanwhile, guidelines are provided for a stabilised equal society and proper human relations. Islam regulates aspects of human life through detailed commandments, instructions, and code of conduct (Abdalati, 2010). Islam aims at a well-knit society where ethics is the core concept (Al-khatib, 2012).

Religion, on the other hand, strongly interferes with people’s manners of behaviour and communication (Al-Khatib, 2012). It is integrated with people’s behaviour by bounding their relationships, displayed in the language they communicate with, which adds a more religious sense to their polite expressions (Alsabbah, 2017). Bouchara (2015) has asserted that there is cohesive relationship between politeness and religion which is demonstrated via linguistic expressions as well as the pragmatic function of the utterances that are likely to govern the use and interpretation of politeness strategies in Arabic. Such a tendency is justified by Harrel, Abu-Talib, and Carroll (2003), who remark:

> It is an important cultural pattern that compliments or words of praise should be accompanied by a deferential reference to God. Without the reference to God, such statements appear crude, and in older, more traditional social circles, they are taken as bad omens which bring misfortune. References to God of this sort are usually not directly translatable into English. (p. 352)

Regarding the incorporation of religion within politeness, Hamady (1960, p. 160) asserts that Arabic politeness is strongly marked by its religious character. He notes:

> Religion is, to a large extent, the source of politeness. The terms of bienseance where God’s name is either uttered or implicitly understood are numerous. The habitual consciousness of God in everything is so deeply rooted that He is always invoked even when His name is not pronounced. (Cited in Bouchara, 2015, p. 75)

In exploring the relationship between politeness and religion, Prophet Muhammad emphasised morality, saying: “You cannot treat people by means of your wealth; hence, you should treat them by means of your moral conduct” (al-Bukhari, 2010, cited in AlKhatib, 2012, p. 483). He also...
says: “If you have nothing to give, give a kind word or even just an affectionate smile” (al-Bukhari, 2010, cited in AlKhatib, 2012, p. 483). In this domain, Al-Khatib (2012) has studied the linguistic aspects of politeness in the Holy Quran from a socio-pragmatic perspective. By examining a large number of verses taken from more than 18 chapters of the Quran, he has observed that besides the primary function of the qur’anic verses, represented by calls for submission to God, many moral and theological messages have been identified. There was also a substantial number of instructions regarding the mutual relationship between God and humankind, amongst human beings, and towards society. Such information, as he states, has to be depicted in both the linguistic and structural features of the verses. As to politeness, its strategies are expressed via multiple channels, including direct method of address, storytelling, and exemplifying. He has concluded that except for the off-record politeness strategy, the Holy Quran incorporates the other three strategies of politeness, suggested by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), namely: bald on-record, positive strategy, and negative strategy. Furthermore, Al-Khatib (2012) investigates the politeness principles proposed by Leech (1983), stating that “politeness is a form of behaviour that establishes and maintains comity.” (p. 132) He has detected that the Holy Quran adheres to strict rules and conventions that regulate mutual relationships, rights, and obligations.

Bouchara (2015) states that in addition to the three social variables of politeness (power, social distance, and degree of imposition) put forward by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), religion is another hand-in-hand significant factor that might affect face threat. Islamic religion and culture impact politeness and harmonious relationships. Bouchara (2015) clarifies that religion is the key factor that governs social behaviour. He further mentions that despite the obvious influence of French on the speech and behaviour of the ruling elite upper classes in Morocco, religion constitutes a substantial part of Moroccans speech regardless of people’s religious belief.

It is deduced that this close connection between the Arabic language and religion might stem from its being the language of the Quran and the Sunna. Being central to the Islamic faith makes it inseparable from the Arabic identity in general and the Iraqi Muslims in particular. According to Morrow and Castleton (2007), the standard Arabic language unifies not only the Arabic countries but also “shapes and molds that world.” (p. 202)

This review of the association between politeness and the Islamic recommendations enforces the necessity of observing the fixed expressions shared by the members of a given society and the variation in incorporating them between tradition-oriented culture and future-oriented cultures as well as the incorporation of religious expressions by Muslim communities.

**Situation Bound Utterances in Oriented Cultures**

Formulaic language is “multi-word collocations which are stored and retrieved holistically rather than being generated de novo with each use” (Kecskes, 2007, p.139). Examples of formulaic language are Collocations, fixed semantic units, frozen metaphors, phrasal verbs, speech formulas, idioms, and situation-bound utterances (Kecskes, 2000). Such expressions are part of the pragmatic competence and reflect native-like behaviour. They are also culture-specific that express the values, attitudes, and expectations of a particular culture (Kecskes, 2014).
Within formulaic language are situation bound utterances (SBU), which are tied to the pragmatic competence and language socialisation and are associated with particular events and situations (Kecskes, 2014). Coulmas (1981) states that “a great deal of communicative activity consists of enacting routines making use of prefabricated linguistic units in a well-known and generally accepted manner” (p. 1). Such expressions are familiar to everyone in the speech community and are expected to be understood according to the communicative goals and conventions of those members. Thus, Kecskes (2014) assures the necessity of learning these routines in any foreign language to make language use sounds native-like.

Situation bound utterances vary across cultures. What might be a requisite in one culture is not necessary to be the same in another. This variation makes it difficult to transfer them from one language to another, as they will not carry the same meaning and function they used to have in the original language. In addition to being culture specific, SBUs are strongly associated with sociocultural values (Kecskes, 2014).

Strongly related to sociocultural values, the slightest differences between cultures can lead to different cognitive mapping and lexicalisation (Kecskes, 2003). A significant example is welcoming guests. Although they are valued equally in American, French, and Hungarian societies, Kecskes (2014) highlights interesting differences.

(12) Make yourself at home. (English)
(13) Faites comme chez vous. (‘Do as [you do] at home.’) (French)
(14) Érezze magat otthon. (‘Feel yourself at home.’) (Hungarian)

Despite the functional equivalence of these expressions, the imperative verb *faites* is equivalent to *to do*. In Hungarian, the imperative verb “érezd” is equivalent to feel, which shows that languages differ in highlighting the important things in the same situation.

Moreover, a distinction is made by Kecskes (2003) between situation-bound routines, such as *take care* and *welcome abroad* and situation-bound rituals, such as *God bless you* and *thank you*. The latter is associated with interactional rituals, as Goffman (1967) remarks. Generally, situation-bound rituals associate the actual situation with other situations, events, or agents. Kecskes (2003) adds that they are adopted more frequently in ‘tradition-oriented cultures’ including Japanese, Arabic, Chinese, and Turkish. Such expressions are somehow obligatory without acceptable substituted phrases. Matisoff (1979) asserts that:

Often it is not so much that the speaker is using an emotive formula that actually belies his true feelings, as that the formula has become a surrogate for the true feeling, an almost automatic linguistic feature that constant usage has rendered as predictable and redundant as the concord in number between subject and verb (p. 6).

Situation-bound rituals are usually fixed sets of incomplete utterances. These expressions are not considered insincere as individuals in these cultures have accepted their evidence for the true feeling. In Turkish, for example, many formulaic expressions consider humans as powerless; God and the magic power of words are the two sources of power. Turks would say *Allah kolaylık versin,*
meaning ‘May God give ease’, when they ask for God’s assistance (Tannen & Oztek, 1981). The diversity between cultures in recruiting situation bound utterances is observed by Bear (1987), who demonstrates that some situations that demand verbal reaction in tradition-oriented cultures are, on many occasions, not recognised by English native speakers.

There is a remarkable difference between cultures in the inclination to formulaic expressions. Nelson et al. (1996) note that Arabs are prone to insert such formulae more than the Americans do. Further, it is sometimes difficult to find an English equivalent to Turkish, Chinese, or Japanese situation-bound rituals. This diversity is because situation bound routines in future-oriented cultures, like the American, are preferred more than situation-bound rituals. In Kecskes’s (2003) standpoint, situation-bound routines, in contrast to situation-bound rituals, give confidence and certainty to people in conversation as it can be interpreted in one particular way. For future-oriented cultures, expressions, such as See you soon, I’ll talk to you later, Look forward to seeing you again, Why don’t we have lunch tomorrow? are quite natural and do not attempt to establish rapport between the participants.

Having introduced the tendency of incorporating fixed expressions in daily communication within the members of tradition-oriented countries and since computer-mediated communication is the method of obtaining data, it is essential to specify a section for it, illustrating whether politeness strategies differ from face-to-face interaction.

**Politeness in Computer-mediated Communication**

Computer-mediated communication (henceforth CMC) is a recent means of human communication, whereby people can interact via written language, which enables the establishment and maintenance of social relationships (Taleghani-nikazm, 2012). It came in response to the rapidly developing technologies for telephone- and computer-mediated communication enabled a wide range of “semiotic resources, better access to direct participation, and greater user mobility” (Kasper 2008, p. 283). As Kecskes (2014) demonstrates, interaction in CMC takes place between one or more interlocutors via telecommunication networks. It includes different types of interaction, among which are chat, computer messages, e-mail, computer conferencing, forums, and online bulletin boards. Some of these methods permit real-time interaction, whereas others are fixed in response time (Taleghani-nikazm, 2012). Kádár and Haugh (2013) and Kecskes (2014) indicate that CMC can be one of the fastest-growing fields of discursive research, serving as a major source of data. Locher (2010) identifies three reasons for such noteworthiness: firstly, due to the diversity in text types, genre, and the involved communities of practice, online language develops its own sets of norms like netiquettes that offer a significant source of studying the variable norms of politeness. Secondly, the possibility of a larger audience than private FtF interaction added to the variety of arising politeness in different ways of online communication while merging the private and public interaction. Thirdly, due to their multimodal nature, online socialisation provides unique polite messages via emoticons.

In comparing CMC with FtF interaction, because of the modification in the speech system, CMC lacks some elements FtF is rich with, such as physical encounter and paralinguistic cues. To indicate interest, understanding, or confusion, nodding head, maintaining eye contact, raising and lowering intonation, and changing the facial expressions are all elements that can assist in changing
the verbal messages in FtF and promote its solidarity. Further, different sociocognitive and emotional meanings can be conveyed. In online communication, these cues are replaced with the language and its multimodal, semiotic systems. It has been shown that different devices have been developed by the participants that might perform the same function nonverbal behaviour can do to overcome the constraints imposed on CMC (Carter, 2003; Golato & Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006; Park, 2008). These devices involve contractions, abbreviations, such as lol (laughing out loud), OMG (Oh my god), and capital letters (signifying the intensity of attention to the recipient). To simulate gestures and facial expressions, emojis can be adopted.

Research on politeness in the e-mail, synchronous chat, and web discussion board concluded that there are some linguistic and paralinguistic similarities and differences between FtF interaction and online communication. After taking into account the topic and the setting, it is found that direct forms of speech acts have been utilised in CMC more frequently than FtF interaction. Secondly, the speech style is mostly short and concise in online chats, contributing to the fact that the conversers need to catch up with the stream and speed in online chat programs (Dorta, 2008; Park, 2008).

Taleghani-nikazm (2003) concludes that in reducing the intensity of a specific act, speakers in online conversation tend to utilise linguistic strategies in designing the Non-linguistic features adopted in FtF interactions. Furthermore, verbal and nonverbal devices can be employed in managing face work in online communication. Thus, the cognitive assessment of the participants determines the evaluation of the social variable of politeness.

Contrary to this view, Westbrook (2007), Dorta (2008), and Park (2008) assert that as in FtF, positive and negative politeness strategies are employed in online interaction. They demonstrate that an example of enhancing solidarity, proximity, and interpersonal relationship among the participants is seeking common ground via expressing shared background knowledge, interest, or experiences. Negative politeness, on the other hand, is depicted when individuals give apologies and employ conventional indirectness, such as ‘could you meet me at 10 Am?’ as well as using discourse markers of politeness represented by the pragmatic modifiers like hedges, for example (Lakoff, 1973), which all contribute to soften the intensity of face-threatening acts (Harrison, 2000; Al-Shalawi, 2001; Westbrook, 2007; Dorta, 2008; Park, 2008). By exploring synchronous and asynchronous transcripts in CMC, Hiemstra (1982) has realised that, as it is the case in FtF interaction, there is a high rate of face-threatening acts like disagreements, criticisms, requests, and giving directives in CMC. He has concluded that remedial politeness is employed with a considerable frequency in CMC to reduce the intensity of these acts. As far as positive politeness is concerned, researchers attribute the usage of simplified syntactic structure and informal speech style to the participants’ desire to show solidarity, decrease social distance. Hence it promotes harmonious relations (Harrison, 2000; Park, 2008).

The only aspect available in FtF not in CMC is interruptions, which are conversationally important, potentially dysfunctional, or indicative of dominance (West, 1984). On the other hand, facilitated by technology, CMC can be rich with interpersonal intrusions via clicking the send bottom.
To sum up, as Morand and Ocher (2003) propositions suggest that despite online communicators are often reported to be impolite, with the prescription of improving the politeness level of this medium, politeness theory can prove to be a useful tool for CMC research. They add that positive and negative tactics can prove being useful in analysing CMC transcripts and their relational regularities and patterns.

Methods

This section describes the method adopted in collecting the data of this study. Because of the reputed claim that online exchanges tend to be short and lack complete structure, it was thought to examine whether Iraqis tend to use messages that are equivalent to ftf Interaction or emoticons and abbreviation, which are currently adopted in social media, would replace these expressions. The following subsections describe the participants whose expressions are examined, and the instruments recruited in collecting data:

The participants

The number of the participants in this study was 18, 23, 50, and 8 in the first, second, third, and fourth groups, respectively, making the total number 99 participants. As to their age, it ranged from 15 to 70 years old, with different educational qualifications. Regarding their religious orientations, it was thought to include participants of different tendencies. Some of them are more reserved in their religious beliefs, and others are less strict. Regarding the social distances between the participants, the data involved different relationships. Some of them were intimate; others were neutral, and some with large social distance. Social rank, or power, was of variable difference, ranging from equal footing relationships to low-high relationships and high-low relationships. The participants are from different Iraqi cities, characterised by either conservative or less conservative communities. Some of the participants are English citizens who have been living in England for more than two decades, and others live in Arabic countries, Dubai in this study, which is of a less religious atmosphere. It might be claimed that individuals, who inhabit cities of religious environment, incorporate religious expressions more than those who live outside Iraq or in more liberated Iraqi cities (Alsabbah, 2017).

Instrument and setting

Instruments used in collecting data are WhatsApp and Viber. They applications provided in the Playstore and IOS that can be used to chat via text, voice call, or video call. They can also be used to share photos, videos, files, send a location, recordings, music, and making group chat. They can be installed in numerous Smart phones like Android, iPhone, Windows Phone, and some types of Nokia phone (Chairunnisa & Benedictus, 2017). Facebook is a social networking application, which widely used as it helps in keeping people close to their family and friends. People can post and comment on what others post.

Synchronic messages exchanged on WhatsApp and Viber in four groups has been traced. Also, several comments on Facebook have been observed. These interactions involved different occasions; some of them were positive with good news while others were negative with sorrow incidents. Thus, the participants performed different speech acts ranging from congratulations, greetings, farewell, thanking, etc.
In this research, qualitative method of analysis is adopted including samples that strengthen the research results. This type of research method is done through constructing reality and understanding its meaning. It is originated from the depth, nuance, context, multidiscipline, and complexity. The result of qualitative research could be derived from valid findings through comparison and conclusion (Somantri, 2005).

For the next part of the study, the formulaic expressions will be identified with a comprehensive explanation for the pragmatic function they perform.

**Findings**

In this section, the formulae that interlocutors exchange in their synchronic chats will be investigated. Most of these expressions involve the lexicon of Allah; meanwhile, they carry a polite aim. As will be shown below, they are classified according to their pragmatic function and the speech act performed.

**Congratulations**

In the examined online interactions, the participants were experiencing different events, among them are expecting and welcoming babies, promotions, moving to a new house, passing viva, and being awarded the Ph.D. degree. The following extract is a sample of the congratulations offered to the awarded person:

(15)

RS01: الموفقية للجميع

We congratulate our Sister Dr RS08 for passing her viva and gaining the Ph.D. Insha’Allah Good luck and advancement will be granted to everybody.

RS09: lakhra الرفع في الدرجات في الدنيا والله لك الف مبارك يا دكتورة واسأ

One thousand congratulations, Dr. I ask God to raise your ranks in life and after death.

In examining the variant expressions Iraqis use in their congratulations, it is observed that in addition to the Illocutionary Force Indicating Devise (IFID) represented by the word ‘congratulation’, they express their good wishes via seeking the will of Allah that assist them in promoting their ranks and achieving success. It must be noted that with the increase of religiosity, people’s messages take the form of supplication, asking God for more success, blessing, luck, and happiness not only during life but also hereafter (life after death). In response, the addressee also expresses his/her gratitude and returning the same wishes for the congratulator. Such additional expressions promote the level of politeness and show the sincerity of emotions.
Upon the congratulations on the birth of a new baby, the most common situation bound ritual takes the form of religious wishes by saying, ‘الله يتربي بعزكم إن شاء الله’, ‘may he/she to be raised with your grace Insha’Allah’. By inserting Inshallah, the speakers wish that the baby may be raised in the parents’ prosperity and care. People also thank God for the safety of the mother, ‘الله يسلم الساحة’, They also ask Allah to protect the baby and his family from harm, and the strength this wish with a famous expression ‘اللهم صل على محمد وآل محمد’, ‘Allah blessings be upon Muhammad and his family’.

In return, the congratulated person thanks God for this gift and returns the same wishes to the congratulator, hoping that they will be protected from any harm. It will be demonstrated in the next section that Iraqis mainly use the expression ‘الله رحمة والدابكم’, ‘may God mercy your parents’ when they desire to express gratitude. Below is an example of the expressions used on such occasion:

(16)
Masha Allah, One thousand one thousand congratulations. A blessed birth Inshallah in these sacred days of the month. Thank God for RS48’s safety. May Allah make him one of the righteous children, and may He protect you from any harm in the name of Allah’s blessing upon Muhammad and his family.

(17)
May Allah mercy your parents.

(18)
May God reward you with the best.

(19)
Thanks, and may God bless you.

(20)
Thanks, may God grant you health and keep you safe for us.
In the next example, after the payment of £300 on behalf of RS35, although he RS35 will pay the money back, RS35 expresses his sincere appreciation in a long utterance.

(21)

RS35: اسف جا لا و هللا والديكم ...... ورس ف جا لا ازعاجكم بس لى اعونكم وما طناشركم ... تحياتي و بالمي الى الحجي وتمنياتي لكم بالموفقه.

May God mercy your parents. Thank you very much. I am so sorry if I bothered you, but I feel you are close to me, and I have nobody to ask for help. My regards and greetings to your husband and accept my wishes for your prosperity.

RS23: ماكو داعي تتاسف احنا اهل وهذا واجبي. واني هم امون عليكم وماعندي غيركم. اللهو حميتم بعماي حميايوي وماعي وماعي وماعي وحيد وذا واجبي: 23

Dear RS35, you are like my big brother. By God, there is no need to apologise. We are family members, and this is my duty towards you. Likewise, I feel free to ask you for help. May Allah grant you success and help you to accomplish your study Insha’Allah.

By using the IFID ‘thank you’, RS35 apologizes for his request, justifies it, sends greetings to the interlocutor’s husband, and ends his message by wishing them success. In return, RS23’s response was a denial of any effort, praising back the first speaker, dismissing any need of apologising, and ends with the supplication of success and high achievement.

In other cases, when people want to thank the addressee for a service presented, they support it by asking God to protect the interlocutor, her husband, and the kids:

(22)

RS22: ينح ي من الله وابوهم ويوم الى تفرحون بنجاحه لا يخليلج ا

May God save your kids and their father and hopefully, you will celebrate his graduation.

In response to the gratitude, the addressee needs to reply to this thanking by supplicating mercy to the first speaker’s parents. See the following extract:

(23)

May God mercy your parents

And may mercy go to your parents

Sometimes, the hearer returns the wish and thanks for God. In the next example, the speaker is telling the addressee that she is doing her duty, and it is only God who must be thanked:

(24)

Thank is for God, dear. This is my duty.
Closely related to thanks and gratitude, compliments and their responses will be explored in the next section.

**Compliments**

Within this section, I highlight instances when a compliment is expressed, and a praise is given by examining the formulae which Iraqis use in performing this speech act, see the following sentences usually written in commenting a post on Facebook.

(25)

إِنْ شَاءَ اللَّهُ فَخَصَصْنَاهُ بِالْبَيَانِ

*Well done on this publication. May Allah reward you for good.*

A Compliment is given not only for achievements but also to praise the appearance of somebody. As in congratulation, the expression لَقَدْ مُصَلِّي، وَلَقَدْ مُحَلَّي، وَلَقَدْ مُحَلَّي، تَغْيِينَا تَغْيِينَاتِنَا إِن شَاءَ اللَّهُ

*May Allah’s blessings be upon Muhammad and his family. The girls have grown up, Masha Allah.*

(27)

الله يسبح وحده وحده، وحده الإله العزيز

*God bless you and accept your deeds by God’s willing*

Whether the speaker is complimenting or congratulating his/her address, the expression *Masha’ Allah* is mostly attached to the performed act. According to Wikipedia, the tri consonantal root of *šā‘* is to will. The literal translation is ‘God has willed it’. The exact meaning is that ‘what Allah wanted has happened’. In comparison with *Insha’Allah*, which means ‘if Allah wills’, referring to future events, *Masha’ Allah* is used in the past tense. The reason why *Masha’ Allah* is used with compliments and congratulations is to express admiration for the will of Allah and complimenting it. In some cultures, people utter this expression, believing that it would protect the completed person from jealousy and the evil eye. This protection is understood to come from Allah only. A speaker might express his/her polite wishes enforcing them with *Insha’Allah* by expressing their wish for more success and advancement.

Significantly mentioned, Iraqis mostly use the name of almighty ‘*Allah*’ to show admiration and praising the appearance of the beholder:

(28)

Darling, my mother says you look gorgeous, Allah

The last manner of showing exclamation and surprise to be presented in this section is by using *Subhan Allah*. This phrase can be translated as ‘praised be to God or glory (be) to
God’. It gives the meaning that God is perfect and above any inaccurate descriptions. However, there is no counterpart for this phrase in the English language, so all the above definition explains its meaning.

In response to compliments and praise, the complimented expresses his/her gratitude, supporting it with wishes that encompass the lexicon of Allah and, in return, wishing prosperity for the first speaker that will be achieved with the help and will of Allah. The next identified speech acts to be discussed below are greetings, farewells, and leave-taking.

Greetings and Leave-taking

Greetings and farewells in the Iraqi culture are of different types; in addition to morning and evening greetings, there are Eid and Ramadhan (the fasting month) greetings. As to leave-taking, it might include travel wishes, temporary leave-taking, or farewell.

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Morning salutations are صباح الخير ‘good morning’, مساء الخير ‘good evening’. The most famous Islamic greeting is أسلام عليكم Assalamu ‘aleikum. Salaam is a word that is derived from the root slam. It refers to peace, commonly translated as ‘peace be upon you’ and means: May you remain safe from every pain, sorrow, and distress. It is usually responded with عليكم لسلام ‘and peace be upon you too’.

This formula is one of the Islamic regulations, stated explicitly in the Holy Quran which directs Muslims on how they should greet each other: “wa ?iða huyyitum bitahiyatin fahayyu bi?ahsana Minha ?aw rudduha ?inna ?al-laha kana κσala kulli šay’in hasiba” ‘When a (courteous) greeting is offered you, meet it with a greeting still more courteous, or (at least) of equal courtesy. God takes careful account of all things’ (En-Nisa, 86).

Individuals who are stricter in their religious belief use the complete expression مُسِلَّمُ عَلَيْكَمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ ‘May Allah’s peace, mercy, and blessing be upon you’. They advise others who might use a more informal greeting like hello or hi to use the Islamic one. Even when the first speaker uses a more casual greeting or the shortened Islamic one, they reply with the complete form. This tendency can be evident in examining the following exchange between two students pursuing their Ph.D. in one of the British universities.

(29)
RS23: طي حبي
Hello love
RS23: سارع ال ززه: A question please
RS27: أسلام عليكم Peace be upon you
RS27: ألا مسلمين غير تكولي سالم عليكم Aren’t we Muslim? Why don’t you say peace be upon you?

On another occasion, a similar exchange took place between the same participants:

(30)
Ps ps is a sound generally made to call a cat and is usually used between very close friends. When responded with the formulaic expression, RS23 realised the mistake that she committed after she had been advised of using the Islamic greeting. In order to manifest her feeling, RS23 enriches her message by inserting a grimacing emoji, showing bared teeth, which is generally used when a mistake or unfavourable situation has arisen.

Besides Alsalm Aleikum, there are other ways of salutation, which also incorporate the lexicon of Allah as in ‘may God make your evening happy’ and ‘may God make your morning happy’.

Another type of greeting identified in online data are those related to the Ramadhan, the month of fasting in Islam, and that of Eid. With the approach of Ramadhan, people would exchange typically religious messages, since the event is religious, saying:

(31) 
Ramadhan is generous.

(32) I wish you (all) (celebrate) it again and again.

(33) May Allah accept your obedience.

(34) May Allah accept your fasting.

Usually, individuals are not satisfied with these expressions in isolation; the more religious a person is, the more he/she might support this greeting with supplication and wishes to reflect their sincerity and enhance the solidarity of their message. Below is a message received from a friend characterised by religious interests:

(35) 
May Ramadhan is generous on you, us, and all the Islamic nations. Inshallah, this month will be the month of worship and the acceptance of deeds and obedience. May Allah grant us paradise with his generosity.

As to Eids, the most casual greetings exchanges in this event include:

(36) Happy Eid
May your days be happy.

Eid Mubarak

May every year you are fine.

Similar to these of Ramadan, these greetings are supported with religious wishes to promote its positive politeness:

May Allah accepts your good deeds, grant you paradise, and Insha’Allah, it returns while you and your beloved in the best condition by Muhamad and his family.

Having explored greetings exchange online, I turn to farewells; an act perfumed when people leave, travel, or end a conversation. Upon leave-taking, Iraqi might say:

God with you

In the trust and protection of Allah

Protected and cared for by Allah

Likewise, upon farewells, the hearer would typically say:

Insha’Allah, you arrive sound and safe.

More wishes would be attached depending on the type of travelling. If the travel is to a religious place, like Mecca (a city in Saudi Arabia, where people from different parts of the world go to perform the rituals of pilgrimage and Umrah), the following wishes were given:

May Allah accept their visit, and Insha’Allah they arrive sound and safe.

We ask God acceptance.

In this example, the first speaker wishes the acceptance of this visit to a religious place, asking God the safety of their trip. In reply, the second speaker asks God to accept this visit.

Bad News, Death, and Dissatisfaction

Further to what has been outlined above, this section reviews the expressions that individuals use upon getting bad news. The first event to be examined is death, a common topic which most people react to passionately. In most cases, condolences are offered by using the following formulae:
It is observed that the participants use expressions that seek forgiveness to the lost person, paradise, patience for his/her departure, end of sorrow, and beseeching strength from God. Notably, the more sincere and polite a condolence aimed to be; the more religious supplications are attached. In some cases, a text message combines more than one fixed formulae:

We were severely influenced by the death of your mother. It was a sorrow for us as it was for you. We are for Allah, and to Him, we are returning. May Allah make your reward great, strengthen you on your tragedy, and count it within your good deeds. For God, what he reclaimed and what he gave, and everything is determined by a specific date. We ask God to forgive her, inhabit her in his paradise and grant your patience and consolation.
As in the recitation of Allah lexicon and resort to his will in promoting politeness, this lexicon is also inserted as a means of showing dissatisfaction for a situation, damning enemies, and ask for God’s revenge. Chats on CMC demonstrate the inclination of Iraqi Muslims of resorting to God upon receiving lousy news, struck by a calamity, encounter a situation that is beyond their control. They put their trust in the hands of Allah and submit themselves to him by saying,

لا حول ولا قوة الا بالله

There is no power and no strength but in Allah

Further, in order to excel a bad possibility, as the speaker might say:

لا اسمح الله

May God forbid that.

On other occasions, individuals might display their dissatisfaction via impoliteness that also incorporates religious phrases such as:

عذبكم الله

God damns you/them

حسب الله و حسب المؤمنين

For us, Allah sufficeth, and He is the best disposer of affairs.

The expression in (65) is said by a person who is very confident in God's help, does not fear any of his creatures. It is usually uttered by people in other different situations, such as when they experience injustice, and they cannot recuperate their rights. Literary this expression means: I have confidence in God, I count, and depend on Him.

As a means of comfort, there is a strong inclination to mention the will of GOD, telling the addressee that what is happening is a test from Allah to observe the reaction and patience of the testified person.

Besides, to show sympathy, a speaker might say:

يساعدك الله

both mean ’may God help you

In responding to attempts of comfort given by the first speaker, the data shows that the second speaker demonstrates the firm belief in the ability of God to solve any complications might be encountered and ask strength from Him in overcoming their missions by saying:

والله هو الامير

Allah is the best

God is generous

To understand the politeness repertoire, it is necessary to be aware of the meaning and function of such religious expressions, the context they appear in, and their suitable response. Otherwise, if they have been used mistakenly, they might lead to odd phrases and, hence, misunderstanding.
Discussion

This paper has investigated the integration of religion with language and culture in Iraqi society. Specifically, it studies the role it plays in enhancing the politeness level of utterances and the pragmatic function performed when incorporated within situation bound rituals in Iraqi computer mediated communication.

Contrary to the claim that computer-mediated communication has special politeness strategies, as people incline to emojis and shortened expressions (Carter, 2003; Golato & Taleghani-Nikazm, 2006; Park, 2008). The instances explored in this work demonstrate that Iraqis tend to transfer their verbal FtF politeness strategies to their written online interaction. They write lengthy text messages in showing the sincerity of their emotions. The goals behind are always promoting solidarity and enhancing the positive face of both the speaker and his/her addressee.

It has also been observed that there is an intensive rely on the lexicon of Allah in showing the sincerity of wishes and raising the politeness level. Such wishes that take the form of supplication, have been depicted in congratulations, thanking and gratitude, and greetings and leave-taking, not only in the performance of these acts but also in their responses. It is also realised that Iraqis resort to the will and grace of Allah when they receive bad news and when they want to express their dissatisfaction. This result is in line with the conclusion arrived at by Bouchara (2015), Nelson et al. (1996), and Harrel et al. (2003), who demonstrate that there are fixed expressions that reflect the religious orientation of Muslims in their daily communication.

In interpreting the literal meaning of religious phrases, it might imply to outsiders that individuals in Iraqi culture are deeply imbued with religion. Nevertheless, many participants in this work are not characterised by a strong religious orientation, and still, they insert the formulae. This observation is similar to what Davies (1987) remarks that even agnostic or atheist Arabs frequently invoke these formulae in their conversation while they might mean to convey their literal meaning. Similarly, Bouchara (2015), who studied the invitations in the Moroccan culture, remarks that the insertion of religious vocabulary is a habit in the sense that no matter the degree of commitment to the Islamic commandment, people resort to swearing and religious lexicon to enhances the politeness of these invitations, and to achieve their pragmatic end, i.e., the invitee accept that invitation.

Nevertheless, this study illustrates that regardless of the cities and countries the participants inhabit, they incorporate the same expressions spontaneously as if they became part of the culture and language. This conclusion contradicts Alsabbah’s (2017) finding that the city where individuals live add a religious atmosphere, reflected in polite language use.

These expressions and their functions are taken for granted by Iraqis, whose interpretation is shared by the members of the community whereby they use them spontaneously in their communication, which might make externals to this religion and speakers of other languages struggle either in interpreting the intended meaning and, or their pragmatic function.
Also, the necessity of responding to many polite formulae such as ‘والديك بالرحمة’ (and mercy goes to your parents) is replied to the expression of gratitude uttered by the first speakers who usually say, ‘والديك الله رحم’ (may God mercy your parents). Likewise, the typical reply to Arabic greeting in Arabic لله الحمد ‘God is thanked’ is not available in English were no-stereotype response is performed (Davies & Bentahila, 2012). Kecskes (2014) supports this remark saying that situation-bound routines are fixed expressions that mostly demand replies from the addressee, which is also a fixed expression. Otherwise it would be regarded as impolite not to reply. This variation in using formulaic expressions across cultures and their strong association with politeness can be seen a source of cultural misunderstandings (Davies, 1987).

Conclusion
At this modernised era, CMC has replaced face to face interaction, lacking many significant features such tone of voice and nonverbal communication. Many symbols and abbreviations methods are being recruited to compensate this shortage and to enhance the courtesy of CMC. As to Muslim Communities, Islam has integrated within their language and interpersonal relations to indorse the scale of positive politeness. This study explored the adherence of Iraqis to incorporate the lexicon of Allah and religious expressions as situation bound rituals and the pragmatic functions to be achieve in online communication. Below is a summary of the results concluded through out this research.

It is found that written online interaction reflect the verbal FtF politeness strategies by sending long text messages to enhance solidarity and positive politeness. The lexicon of Allah has been heavily included in these messages in supplication that perform many speech acts such as congratulations, thanking and gratitude, and greetings and leave-taking. Such involvement has been observed not only in positive politeness but also in receiving bad news and expressing dissatisfaction by resorting to the will and grace of Allah and seeking His assistance.

From the data analysed that covered messages sent by people of variant ages, cities and countries of residence, and degree of religious orientation, it is realised that these expressions are share between the speakers of the same dialect, incorporated equally and spontaneously which could indicate that they have become part of the Iraqi culture and dialect, regardless the speakers’ religious interest.

Further, there is a strong demand to respond to many of these fixed formulae which might be problematic for many outsiders when they are not aware of the necessary reply.

There was, however, slight reliance on emojis, abbreviations, and stickers in performing these acts which contradict the current tendency in relying on these facilities that help in speeding the online communication and reflect the sentiment of the message.

It is hoped that this study triggers future research that can show a better understanding of this type of communication, i.e., situation-bound rituals, particularly its relation Fwith intercultural communication and foreign language use.
About the Author

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Inculcating Learners’ Listening Motivation in English Language Teaching: A Case Study of British Education and Training System

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Abstract
Motivation plays a significant and crucial role in ELT and it boosts up the level of aplomb and interaction during learning English language. It creates sense of respect inside learners and makes them on the right direction. This research attempted to identify the impact of motivation on listening skills of students enrolled in English Language Course at British Education and Training System (BETS) Lahore, Pakistan during January to February, 2020. The learners for this class look forward to hone their speaking skills by listening as much as they can. The results show that there is a positive correlation between listening strategy instruction and motivation. Listening motivation was recorded utilizing the English Listening Comprehension Motivation Scale (ELCMS) and strategy use was tracked with the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ). Pre- and post-test scores of 36 participants (control group, n=20; experiment group, n=16) were analyzed using a mixed-effects regression and paired t-test to determine differences after a four-week treatment period. The results revealed that the participants’ motivation level in both groups decreased over the treatment period, with the experiment group seeing a smaller decrease than the control group.

Keywords: English, language, listening, metacognition, motivation, strategies

Introduction

In English language teaching, listening is considered one of the most important skills. It is neglected as compared to the other skills like writing, speaking and reading (Flowerdew & Miller, 2013). Dornyei (2002) stated that the learner’s enthusiasm, commitment and persistence were the key determinant of success or failure. Hinkel (2006) states that in 1980s there is a small focus on listening skill and its phonological and lexical patterning. The main focus on the listening abilities of a student, in this way, the linguists come to know that how the learner activates his knowledge and uses it. In the last few years, the focus is changed listening and speaking are major skills than reading and writing. The learner uses cognitive strategy, when he is listening something in target language which helps him to speak error free sentences in the target language (Hinkel, 2006). As everyone knows that if listening skill is good than speaking skill is also improved.

Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) is produced by Vandergrift, Goh, Mareschal and Tafaghadari in 2006, to collect the results of the students about the usage of the metacognitive strategy. Number of the researchers examine and describe that Listening skill is focused by the metacognitive strategy (Birjandi & Hossein, 2012; Bozorgian, 2014; Goh, 2008). It is clearly appeared that this whole research is based on the importance of the listening skill and the metacognitive strategy.

Linguists are also very much interested to know about the link between the motivation and listening because it increases and improves the communicative ability there is a great role of motivation. The concept of motivation describes differently by every researcher (Brown, 2007; Dornyei, 1998). Some researchers do not connect the listening proficiency with the motivation because everybody thinks according to his own state of mind (Hsu, 2006; Jafari, 2010).

Through the review of the different researchers, it is cleared that to develop the listening skill, metacognitive strategy and motivation both play a great role. According to the Vandergrift (2005), in listening skill there is a significant relation between the metacognitive strategy and motivation. Other linguists are also agreed with it and says that if there Is a higher proficiency in listening than there is a great need of higher motivation (Harputlu & Ceylan, 2014; Kassaian & Ghadiri, 2011; Nezhad, Behzadi , & Azimi, 2013).

To develop the listening ability both are very useful and connected with each other in a positive manner. Linguists are also not fulfilled to know that whether the relationship is positive or causal or whether not. This Is because of that; the past researches are focused on the metacognitive and motivation rather than the progress of the student which is appeared with the passage of time. Previous researchers examine the listening skill, according to the setting of EFL instead of the ESL which has rich environment and opportunities to explore the target language. In ESL setting, listening strategy effects the motivation one can better the listening quality or ability by the training of the metacognitive strategy.

That is why the research aims to demonstrate the metacognitive strategy which motivates the learner to gain the listening skill. It is cleared that if the student has the self-motivation than he will be able to learn easily and quickly the listening instructions.
British Education and Training System (BETS) claims to cultivate confidence in students and remove any hesitation they may feel when speaking in English. The eight hours of comprehensive training sessions per week help students become proficiently fluent in spoken English. This study was conducted to check whether metacognition and motivation are pertinent to learners’ proficiency? Past research on metacognition and motivation have only examined foreign language learning where students have limited exposure to the target language outside of class. No research has investigated metacognition and motivation in an ESL setting in which learners are exposed to the target language constantly in the environment, not just in school classes. Thus, this research attempts to fill an important gap in listening instruction research by measuring ESL students’ self-reported metacognition and motivation scores over the course of several listening-based strategy instruction units.

Objectives and Research Questions
This study seeks to investigate the relationship between motivation specifically towards listening and metacognitive strategy use. Unlike previously conducted studies, this one takes place with adult English as a second language learners enrolled in an intensive English learning program. This context was selected due to the lack of studies that have been conducted in it. The main objective was to gauge and identify metacognitive instructions and to highlight the difference before and after this particular test. In regard to these objectives, the researchers intend to answer the following questions:

1) How do scores change on a pre- to post-test assessment of listening motivation?
2) How do scores change on a pre- to post-test assessment of listening strategy use over a four-week strategy course?
3) Which strategies on the MALQ do students most commonly report using before and after the strategy treatment?

Literature Review
According to Eggen and Kauchak (1994), motivation in psychology, is a force that energizes and directs behavior toward a goal. Just as a force moves an object, motivation moves a person. More visualized, if individuals are machines, motivation is as the very engine that powers and directs individuals’ behavior. In the context of second language acquisition, and pertinent to listening in specific, Goh and Yusnita (2006) approve the direct and positive impact of listening strategies on the listening performance. According to Yang (2009), instructing listeners about the role of metacognition in L2 listening helps learners to tackle the listening task more effectively, differentiating successful listeners from unsuccessful ones.

Hinkel (2006) proposed that latest approach to listening pedagogy is that of metacognitive listening instruction. According to Vandergrift and Goh (2012) metacognition can be defined as a person’s own ability to think about his own thinking or cognition. Further it also means to think about how can we process information for a variety of purposes and be able to find the way we do it. In 2009, Yang classified metacognitive strategies into seven types: planning, monitoring, evaluation, selective attention, directed attention, functional planning, and self-management. While some strategy types are more frequently used than others, he asserted that listeners’
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Metacognitive awareness should be cultivated and strategy instruction should be integrated into the teaching of listening. Vandergrift and Goh made the observation in 2012 that many classroom listening activities seem to focus on learners’ outcome of listening as opposed to the process they go through in order to comprehend an oral text. They further commented that, unlike reading, listening does not easily allow for instructors to direct attention to certain segments of text or adequately scaffold thinking and comprehension. Instructor cannot physically direct listeners to specific parts of aural passage. Repeating or pausing a text is an option which can divert the attention from listening practice. Language tool enables language learners to receive and relate with language input and facilitates the emergence of other language skills, so they stress on the importance of listening a language as a tool. Rahimirad (2014) mentioned that the role of metacognitive strategy instruction is to assists students in modifying their learning and consciousness to control their listening processes.

**Metacognition and Listening**

The connection of listening and metacognition has only recently been explored. In his 2004 study, Vandergrift reviewed two approaches to listening, which included developing lexical segmentation along with word recognition skills and raising metacognitive awareness. He then proposed an integrated model. He encouraged the usage of metacognitive strategies such as planning, directed attention, monitoring, problem solving, selective attention, and evaluation. It allows learners to analyze a text after listening to ensure conception of vocabulary. Many subsequent studies have utilized this model in their own research of listening development (Benyo & Kumar, 2020; Bozorgian, 2014; Goh & Taib, 2006; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010).

Vandergrift in 2006 developed metacognitive awareness scale for listening instruction to measure self-reported levels of metacognitive awareness, the MALQ. It allows users to reflect on their usage and attitudes towards metacognitive strategies (in this case, listening strategies that require certain amounts of metacognition). The making and authentication of the MALQ is a 21-item questionnaire. It uses a 6-point Likert scale, the scoring of it makes an individual’s metacognitive awareness measurable. The creation of the MALQ led to an increased number of studies which measured language learners’ self-perception of metacognitive listening awareness.

According to Bozorgian’s study (2014), 30 native Persian speakers acknowledged metacognitive instruction in an EFL class over an eight-week semester. During those eight weeks, participants practiced listening in five stages: planning/predating, first verification, second verification, final verification, and reflective. Each of these stages was related to one or more metacognitive strategies. These strategies were emphasized as part of a treatment, resulting in increases in listening proficiency and a strong correlation between metacognition and listening ability.

Rahimirad and Shams (2014) implemented the listening module of the IELTS alongside the MALQ Related to Bozorgian’s study (2014), for their study on 50 female Iranian university students. In all of these studies, the procedure of controlling a metacognitive strategy instruction treatment to an experimental group was to use some form of pre- and post-listening comprehension assessment to measure differences in improvements between the experimental and control groups was constant. Results showed that each experimental group, which received metacognitive strategy
instruction, outperformed their respective control group counterparts.

Despite each of these studies’ differences from each other and the previously mentioned studies in which the MALQ was implemented, all of the described studies revealed the same results. In each study, participants from the experimental group outperformed those of the control group. Thus, based on the results of this and the previously cited studies, it can be seen that exposure to strategy instruction strongly correlates with improved listening proficiency.

**Motivation and Listening**

Gardner and Smythe (1975) elaborated that strategy instruction, motivation in general has historically been explored as a moderator to language learning. Gardner (1985), investigated that the hypothesis of individuals who seek to integrate into a language community will demonstrate high motivation to learn the language and thus will achieve high levels of proficiency. Indeed, a meta-analysis of Gardner’s motivation research has been revealed a strong and compatible positive correlation between motivation and language achievement (Masgoret & Gardner, 2003).

According to Byrne (1988) “sometimes the length of time we are required to listen for, without participating, may cause memory problems or even fatigue, so that in the end we simply no longer listen with understanding. Researchers have defined motivation in various ways over the last several decades. For instance, Keller (1983) described motivation as the way to choose from society what positivity they gain from them. Motivation is what People make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will make an effort in this respect. Brown (2007) asserted that motivation is commonly thought of as an inner voice, urge, stimulus, emotion, or desire that moves or compels a person toward a particular action or task mainly. Brown's view is different from Keller’s view of motivation as a choice.

Jafari (2010) and Hsu (2004) directed similar studies in which they also looked at the relationship between English listening motivation and listening proficiency scores. Both of the studies shared same result as the first author’s study in (2004), there was a high correlation between learner English listening motivation and proficiency scores and the other results regarding the general English scores, gender and major area of study, and extracurricular practice were not shared. Her study was managed along with 112 Taiwanese college students without the ELCMS, but with listening motivation questions are about Chang’s Intrinsic Motivation Orientation Scale (2001) the same source from which the ELCMS was derived.

**Metacognition and Motivation**

Today, motivation and metacognition are recognized as key factors in the fields of second and foreign language learning; both are complex, multi-faceted constructs (Kumar, 2020). Ziahosseini and Salehi (2008) explored that there is a connection between high levels of motivation and language learning strategy use namely, the higher the level of language learners’ motivation, the higher chances of using a language learning strategy. This is perhaps because of both motivation and metacognition they are sharing some common factors, such as value, expectancy, self-efficacy, and attributions. Because of these similarities Vandergrift (2005) began his studies about the relationship between these two highlighting areas. In his study, participants were given a French listening comprehension test, immediately following which they were administered an early version of the MALQ and the Language Learning Orientations Scale (LLOS), a motivation...

In a similar study, Kassaian and Ghadiri (2011) also used the MALQ alongside Vallerand’s Academic Motivation Scale the instrument from which the previously mentioned LLOS was derived—in order to investigate the relationship between motivation and second language listeners’ metacognitive awareness and the use of strategies. The sample for this study were 30 participants from Iranian undergraduate EFL learners from English Institutes, there ages were 18 to 28. Results from the study showed that 1) problem-solving strategies are used more frequently than others by high-intermediate EFL learners, while planning and evaluation strategies are used least frequently, and 2) there is a positive relationship between metacognitive strategies and both types of motivation extrinsic and intrinsic.

It is documented that EFL learners encounter difficulty in listening comprehension due to more than one factor. For example, they lack control over the speaker’s speed, are unable to get things repeated, and fail to recognize pauses. Additionally, they have difficulty in interpretation, concentration and developing learning habits (Underwood, 1989). Moreover, they fail to develop listening habits or to enhance the capacity to process information (Chen, 2005). Other factors that add to EFL students' suffering in listening comprehension include limited vocabulary and/or poor grammar, and misconceptions about listening activities (Bento & Kumar. 2020; Graham, 2006). Some other difficulties in listening comprehension may arise because of the type of listening material adopted.

Listening skills have been neglected by teachers and researchers. Nunan (2002) argues that listening skills are treated as a secondary skill and as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. According to Graham (2003), listening in a foreign language is a complex but underestimated skill. It was not until the 1960s, which witnessed emphasis on oral language skills, that listening was given a boost (Nunan, 2002).

Methods
The purpose of this study was to determine whether metacognitive listening strategy instruction, administered over a period of time, would increase learners’ self-reported motivation towards improving their English listening comprehension. The criteria for participation in this study required that participants 1) be current students at British Education and Training System (BETS) Lahore, Pakistan, 2) take courses of high proficiency level offered, meant for advanced-low to advanced-mid level learners, and 3) complete their respective surveys during their assigned Listening and Speaking course.

Participants
The participant sample consisted of 36 students, 20 females and 16 males. Their native languages included the following: Punjabi (8), Urdu (6), Saraiki (1), Sindhi (1), Pashtu (1), Arabic (1), Kashmiri (1) and Lahori (1). The experiment group consisted of 36 participants, 20 females and 16 males. Their native languages included the following: Urdu (23), Punjabi (1), Sindhi (1), and Saraiki (1). They were also studying other skills such as reading and vocabulary, composition,
advanced grammar. Listening skill is one of the most challenging subjects comparing other skills. This is the reason why the researchers tried to internalize the peculiarities and the functions of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on listening skill.

**Data collection and Analysis**

Having collected data, questionnaire results, were assessed by SPSS PASW Statistics 18 software program. All values and the percentages are shown at the tables. Besides, the results are also shown by graphics explicitly. There were two instruments used in this study: the English Listening Comprehension Motivational Scale (ELCMS) and the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ). Both instruments were administered online via Qualtrics, with seven identifier and demographic-related items added to the ELCMS (participant ID number, instructor name, age, native language, native country and reason for learning English), and one identifier and one diagnostic item added to the MALQ (participant ID number and list of strategies). The ELCMS was administered to both control and experiment groups twice as pre- and post-tests whereas the MALQ was administered twice and only to the experiment group. The control group did not take the MALQ as it was an integral part of the treatment. See the appendices section for original copies of the ELCMS and MALQ, as well as a detailed description of the strategy treatment used for this study.

**The Procedure**

The procedure, depicted in Figure one, involved the following steps: 1) prospective participants were invited to take their respective survey(s); 2) participants in the experimental group received a treatment of listening strategies coupled with metacognitive discussion over a duration of four weeks; 3) participants took their respective survey(s) a second time; 4) a mixed-effects regression was conducted in order see if the treatment influenced their scores over time. The strategy treatment was administered to experiment group participants by the researcher in order to ensure uniformity of instruction. The control group participants had no interactions with the researcher apart from ELCMS administration. All participants were taught by their normally-appointed course instructors.
Figure 1. Listening Motivation Integrated model

The strategy treatment was implemented following the same integrated model used by previously described studies (Birjandi & Hossein, 2012; Bozorgian, 2014; Cross, 2010; Goh & Taib, 2006; Rahimirad, 2014; Rahimirad & Shams, 2014; Vandergrift, 2005; Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010). The treatment period began with an introduction to the topic of metacognition, what it means, and how it can be applied to listening, and the first administering of the MALQ. During each week of the study, the regular course curriculum was supplemented with additional listening and note-taking practice for which participants followed a three-stage process: planning/prediction, verification, and reflection. The listening strategies taught during the treatment period, in chronological order, were 1) listening for organizational cues, 2) predicting content and lecture direction, 3) recognizing digressions, 4) recognizing paraphrase, repetition, and exemplification, 5) listening for key terms and definitions, 6) listening for causal relationships and comparisons, and 7) listening for lists and classification. The lecture audio for these strategies came from Lebauer’s (2010) textbook “Learn to Listen, Listen to Learn: Academic Listening and Note-taking”. Each lecture averaged 10-15 minutes in length and were on topics from the fields of linguistics, psychology, biology, anthropology, astronomy, food science, and chemistry. Non-lecture listening exercises consisted of audio files 1-3 minutes long. These exercises placed more focus on strategy practice and less on adhering to any one specific subject.

Data Analysis

In order to answer our first research question, the data gathered from the ELCMS pre- and post-tests was analyzed using a mixed-effects regression. By using a mixed-effects analysis, the researchers were able to account for the repeated measures and the fact that participants gave multiple responses. The researchers were also able to control for extraneous variables such as age, gender, and native language, none of which were the focus of this study, but could potentially have a substantial effect on our results. With that same analysis, the researchers were also able to compare data between and within our participant groups. Had the researchers opted to use a factorial or repeated measures regression, the researchers would not have been able to get all of that information with a single analysis. Thus, using the statistics program IBM SPSS Statistics 25, the researchers ran our analysis with scores as the dependent variable, with group, pre/post, gender, and native language as factors, and age as a covariate.

For the fixed effects input on SPSS, the researchers looked at all of these factors and covariates as main effects, while also looking at an all 2-way interaction of the group and pre/post factors. Participants were the random effect.

For the second research question, the MALQ results were analyzed using a paired t-test, also using IBM SPSS Statistics 25. Because only participants in the experiment group took this survey, and because the researchers already analyzed their demographic data in the previous mixed-effects regression, only a t-test was needed to look at the difference in pre- and post-test scores of the MALQ.

Results and Discussion
The essential point of this examination was to inspect and analyze oneself announced degrees of English student inspiration towards improving listening capacity, with an optional point of taking a gander at the impacts of listening technique guidance and metacognitive talk on the test gathering's listening inspiration. It was speculated that the analysis gathering would, because of the technique treatment they got, see a fundamentally bigger increment in listening inspiration when contrasted and the benchmark group. This area presents the quantitative consequences of the blended impacts relapse performed on the pre-and post-test aftereffects of the ELCMS, and the matched t-test performed on the pre-and post-test aftereffects of the MALQ.

Research Question 1
The main research question asked how listening inspiration scores changed over a 4-week treatment period. The researchers further needed to know whether there was a contrast between member gatherings and inside member gatherings. A blended impact relapse was led so as to take a gander at contrasts in pre-and post-test scores between bunches just as inside each individual gathering. There was no critical contrast in the pre-to post-test scores among the benchmark group (p = .223), nor the scores of the test gathering (p = .639). In any case, the connection between pre/post-test scores and gathering yielded a critical contrast with a F proportion of F (1, 54) = 6.535, p = .013. As can be found in Figure two, the mean scores of the two gatherings' post-tests were lower than those of their pre-tests, yet the trial gathering's mean dropped by 1.38 focuses contrasted with the benchmark group's 2.8 focuses.

Figure 2: Plot of pre-and post-test score implies for the investigation and control gatherings

A similar relapse examination additionally controlled for the potential impacts old enough, local language, and sexual orientation on test scores.

Research Question 2
The subsequent research question solicited how mindfulness from listening procedure use changed over a four-week treatment period. A combined t-test was directed so as to decide changes on pre-
and post-test scores on the MALQ. Albeit self-saw levels of metacognitive mindfulness expanded, there was no huge contrast in the scores for the pre-\((M=87.15, \ SD=9.5)\) and post-test \((M=90.31, \ SD = 11.1)\) evaluations of the trial gathering's self-revealed methodology use; \(t(25)=-1.722, \ p = .097\).

Figure 3: Plot of pre-and post-test MALQ score implies

**Research Question 3**

The third, and last, inquire about inquiry posed to which listening systems examine members utilized at the hour of information assortment. Endless supply of the MALQ, members were given a rundown of 12 methodologies taken straightforwardly from the MALQ. Members showed whether they utilized every one of the recorded procedures by either checking every technique's going with box to demonstrate that they utilized it, or leaving the case unchecked in the event that they did not.

Table one shows that the three most normally known/utilized systems before procedure treatment, with their separate client sums, were: “I utilize the words I comprehend to figure the significance of words I don’t comprehend.” (81%), "When I surmise the importance of a word, I recollect everything else that I have heard to check whether my conjecture bodes well." (77%), and “I center more earnestly when I experience difficulty understanding.” (73%).

Given a similar study adhering to the system guidance treatment, the most generally utilized/realized techniques were somewhat extraordinary. “I utilize the words I comprehend to figure the importance of words I don't comprehend.” (96%) remained the most announced known methodology. “I utilize the general thought of the content to assist me with speculating the importance of what I don’t comprehend.” (81%) ascended to turn into the second-most revealed known procedure. “I center more diligently when I experience difficulty understanding.” (77%) remained the third-most detailed known methodology. One other methodology significant is “As I tune in, I contrast what I comprehend and what I think about the point.” This system saw the most noteworthy increment in detailed use, from 10 to 19 members.
The ‘Understanding Score’ segment in Table one reveals that the normal score chose on the genuine MALQ. The reaction to everything on the MALQ was a Likert scale extending from one (unequivocally deviate) to six (emphatically concur). In this way, any score going from 1-3 would be on the differ side, and the backwards for scores running from 4-6. In a perfect world, a technique that is accounted for to be broadly utilized would have a higher Agreement Score. This is demonstrated to be valid for all the recently referenced things; the techniques with most noteworthy detailed use have higher Agreement Scores. One thing, “I utilize the general thought of the content to assist me with speculating the importance of what I don’t comprehend.”, had the most elevated Agreement Score (5.0) for both the pre-and post-test in spite of having huge contrasts in announced utilization, with the pre-test demonstrating 58% and the post-test indicating 81%, separately.

The purpose of this study was to calculate the magnitude of which an action of listening tactics reformed the self-reported listening motivation of adult ESL learners registered in advanced levels of ESL courses at an IEP. From Vandergrift’s (2005) study, the researchers saw that learners who reported a larger use of metacognitive strategies also stated more motivational power. Therefore, the researchers predicted from this study that, in a side-by-side comparison, the testing group would report larger gains in listening motivation than the control group when observing at ELCMS results. The researchers had also expected a significantly higher level of listening strategy usage from the research group. The results of our arithmetical analyses were mixed.

As earlier reported, the results of the mixed effects ANOVA the researchers can presented that both the control and experiment groups’ self-reported levels of listening motivation turn out to be poorer by the end of the study. Both sets started at nearly the equal exact level of inspiration towards listening (see Figure one). This is notable considering that the control group consisted of participants at the same level of ability but registered in different class sectors during different semesters.

Observing at each groups’ scores separately, the deviations over time were too small to be statistically significant, so while motivation levels reduced, it was only by a minor amount. It is worth remarking that, although both groups’ pre-test marks had nearly the same mean, the experiment group’s post-test mean score was greater than that of the control group. Looking at the groups’ combined scores, the difference was found to be statistically significant, with a p = .013. These results oppose Vandergrift’s observation that increased strategy usage is connected with increased motivation. A possible of these results is that the method of treatment employed in this study does not have abundant of outcome on IEP-enrolled ESL learners of a higher proficiency, which verifies the findings of previous studies that lower aptitude of learners benefits the most from strategy instruction (Cross, 2011; Harputlu and Ceylan, 2014; Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari, 2010).

The MALQ was administered to the experiment group in order to measure their self-reported levels of listening strategy usage. A paired t-test showed that there was a slight increase in reported strategy usage, but this increase was not statistically significant. As previously stated,
the researchers predicted that study participants would report an increased usage in listening strategies. This expectation develops from studies shown by Rahimirad (2014), Rahimirad and Shams (2014), and Vandergrift (2006) all of which examined the effects of listening strategy instruction on learners and showed improved listening comprehension scores, self-regulation, and confidence. Although our expectation was correct that the participants’ strategy use would increase, the increase was not statistically significant. This is likely due to the short duration of this study and the partial amount of practice participants had with each strategy, especially the ones taught towards the end of the treatment period. Had the post-test been postponed, or even administered again at a later time, allowing participants more time to practice the approaches taught, the resulting increase might have been greater. Regardless of this increase in strategy usage, the experimental group’s motivation level still reduced, albeit not as much as the control group’s motivation level.

For the final research question, we expected that the problem-solving strategies would be reportedly used more than the other types of strategies, based on previously directed studies (Harputlu & Ceylan, 2014; Kassaian & Ghadiri, 2011; Vandergrift, 2005). Along those same lines, and based on previous literature, it was expected that the psychological translation strategies would have the least-reported amount of usage. In this subsection, the researchers looked at the changes that took place in the reported usage of numerous selected strategies.

The problem-solving strategy “I use the words I understand to guess the meaning of words I don’t understand.” was one of the most used strategies reported in both the pre- and post-test results. A superficial number comparison showed that a minor increase in reported usage, starting with 81% participants using it before the strategy instruction, and 96% afterwards. This could be credited to explicit strategy order and in-class discussions, but this is also a result that should be an ordinary outcome of fixed and systematic listening practice over a period of time.

Second in the list is the problem-solving scheme, “When I guess the meaning of a word, I think back to everything else that I have heard to see if my guess makes sense.” On the pre-test, this was the second most used method, with 77% participants reporting using it and a contract score of 4.3. The post-test results revealed a slight 8% fall in usage however the agreement score rose to a 4.5, which expresses us that even though there were a few or less participants who reported using this strategy, its frequency of usage essentially increased. It is likely that fewer applicants used this method because they found another one that operated better for them.

Another strategy, this time directed attention, with high reported usage was, “I focus harder when I have trouble understanding.”, which remained as the third most used strategy on both the pre- and post-test, with 73% and 77% participants using it, respectively. Again, the change in agreement scores, from 4.7 to 5.0, tells us that participants reported using this strategy more frequently by the end of the study. Similar to the first reported strategy, this is a result that should be expected as a natural outcome to regular extended listening practice.

The problem-solving strategy, “I use the general idea of the text to help me guess the meaning of what I don’t understand.” saw one of the major increases, going from 58% participant usage to 81% usage on the respective tests. This strategy saw the second-biggest increase in
usage—the strategy with the largest growth is discussed in the next paragraph—and became the second most used strategy by the end of the study. It also has the maximum and most consistent agreement score of all the strategies listed a 5.0 for both pre- and post-test results. These results can be taken to mean that this is an important strategy for English learners, because, no matter the amount of participants who used it, the agreement score shows it was considered to be used at the highest frequency possible.

One last strategy’s pre- and post-test scores will be interpreted. The problem-solving strategy, “As I listen, I associate what I understand with what I know about the topic.” saw the largest upturn in reported usage, going from 38% to 73% usage. Interestingly enough, the contract scores for this strategy remained fairly reliable, seeing only a slight increase from to 4.8. This indicates that the participants who reported using this strategy on the pre-test, used it fairly frequently, and more or less maintained that frequency when taking the post-test. The slight increase in agreement score tells us that the participants who stated using this strategy on the post-test also use it frequently. This increase in reported usage could be credited to frequent discussion on the lesson’s topics, the introduction of extracurricular materials, and regular pauses during listening practice to prompt participants to make networks to the material with what has already been viewed in the class on the topic.

Finally, the researchers looked at the three least-used strategies on the list, all of which are related to decoding or translating while listening. However, the strategy involving translating keywords saw a small increase in reported usage, the other two, converting mentally and translating word by word, decreased; the former going from 23% to 8% usage, and the latter from 4% to 0%. The agreement scores for these relevant strategies are also the lowest out of all the listed strategies.

Although previous research has found the association between self-reported listening strategy use and self-reported listening motivation to be positive, this study found no such relationships but instead recognized that increased strategy training had no positive impact on self-reported listening motivation. These divergent results may be explained by the fact that previous research has studied strategy-motivation effects within EFL contexts and among low-level learners. The present research observed high-level IEP students in an ESL context. These groups of learners are likely to have very different motivational and strategic profiles. For instance, ESL learner motivation is likely to be much more integrative (in order to survive in an ESL setting by navigating public services, attending school in English, socializing and problem-solving in the target language, etc.), and their strategy usage may be much more refined because of their advanced language ability, longer language experience, and greater experience to listening strategies prior to the study. Thus, the mutual results of previous research along with the present study seem to indicate that listening strategy instruction is likely to be more motivating among beginning language listeners in EFL settings than for innovative listeners in ESL settings.

**Conclusion**

This study was meant to look at how high proficiency learners’ levels of motivation towards listening in English changed over a 4-week period of time, with and without explicit listening
strategy treatment. Upon analyzing data gathered from 36 participants, overall motivation was found to have decreased over the course of the study, with the experiment group’s levels being slightly higher than those of the control group. Based on the results, there is a robust connection for a positive correlation between metacognition and motivation in the listening classroom. The duration of the study was also fairly short: four weeks spoken English Course. Previous studies have shown that the students who gain the most from strategy instruction are low proficiency language learners, not high proficiency ones (Harputlu and Ceylan, 2014; Cross, 2011; Vandergrift and Tafaghodtari, 2010). The proficiency of the participants in this study were placed in classes meant for English learners at the advanced-low to advanced-mid level. This small increase would appear to reflect this idea of lower proficiency students gaining more benefits from strategy instruction, because higher proficiency learners would already be at least somewhat familiar with such strategies.

For future research, it is recommended that a much larger sample size be utilized, as well as conducting the study over a longer period of time. Four weeks of instruction with immediate testing before and after yields limited results. Administering follow-up surveys a month or two after the study’s conclusion would allow seeing if the strategy instruction had any longer-lasting effects. It also would be ideal to have participants be at a lower level of English proficiency, as studies have shown that lower-level learners benefit more from receiving explicit strategy instruction. Qualitative data regarding preferred strategy usage could also contribute greatly to the results of future research.

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A Semantic and Rhetorical Study of Manipulation in Two English and Arabic Political Speeches

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Abstract
Manipulation is a discursive phenomenon used by speakers to affect the thoughts (and indirectly the actions) of the recipients. This study is concerned with manipulation in two political speeches; one in English delivered by the American President Donald J. Trump, while the other in Arabic delivered by the Iraqi President Barham Salih to be the study's data. Each one of these two speeches is divided into serial-numbered extracts (henceforth Ext.). The study aims at investigating the semantic and rhetorical devices utilized as manipulation strategies in these speeches. To this end, the qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis will be followed in this study. The significance of the study stems from how the ideological dimension based on bettering off the speaker's image and derogating others' image plays a vital role in the political speeches. This study draws on Van Dijk's ideological approach to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of political discourse, and accordingly, it is adopted as a model. Results revealed that both speakers use lexicalization, a list of three, repetition, and citing as effective techniques in their two speeches to affect their recipients' minds. The study concluded that the ideological framework of "positive self-presentation" and "negative other-presentation" is the central umbrella under which manipulation can exist and work freely. The findings might help linguists and political analysts to understand how politicians use the linguistic features in their discourse to affect the audience's thoughts and behaviors manipulatively.

Keywords: ideological dimension, manipulation, political speeches, rhetorical devices, semantic devices

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Introduction

Politicians, just like the rest of all human beings, need language and its communicative ways to do some actions which can fulfill their ends. They realize the significance of specific linguistic devices and means in achieving these goals, prominent of which is what is called manipulation. To this end, politicians exploit the linguistic features dexterously and use them for strategic functions with multiple meanings to be sent to different persons or groups of various political, social, religious, or educational propensities at certain times and places. In sum, politicians utilize language to modify people’s ideas and understanding, and send upbeat messages about their agenda and actions and downbeat indications about their opponents' intentions and deeds. The study examines some influential strategies used in political discourse, particularly in political speeches. It also sheds some light on the ideological dimension based on positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation through which manipulation can flourish and exist.

The present study, thus, attempts to answer the following research questions:
1. What are the manipulation strategies used at the semantic and rhetorical levels of the two selected English-Arabic political speeches?
2. What is the effect of the positive-self/ negative-other ideological dimension in agitating a manipulative discourse for the political ends of the speaker?

Literature Review

Manipulation

Manipulation is a term that has received vast consideration in political discourse. According to Van Dijk(2006a), it has a deceptive, dark-sided nature utilized by dominant persons or groups who practice forms of "illegitimate domination, social power abuse, and cognitive mind control" (pp.359-360) in discursive interaction over dominated people. It is required to be considered within CDA because this approach has its own theoretical and analytical devices to view such a notion visibly, especially when there is a form of social inequality in the ideological discourse loaded with praising our good matters and dispraising others'. To this end, CDA is dedicated to investigate how 'ideologies are produced and reflected in the use of discourse" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997 as cited in Paltridge, 2012, p.187). On the other hand, manipulation is considered from two points of view: one is paternalistic, and the other is not where the former is dedicated to people's interests, whereas the latter works as an influential device to subvert the target's interests and motivations for the manipulator's self-interests (Barnhill,2014). However, for Blass (2005), manipulation is an act of deception dedicated to “affecting the target in such a way that his behavior/action is an instrument of attaining the goals of the manipulator who acts without using force but in such a way that the target does not know the goal of the manipulator’s actions” (Blass, 2005, p.170). Handelman (2009) argues that manipulation is an elusive, indirect motivating action mixed up of other motivating actions as: coercion, persuasion, and deception, and is located in an area referred to as a gray area.

Political Discourse

The relation of politics and language cannot be easily divorced because one depends on the other. Political discourse, thus, reflects sociopolitical text/talk action and interaction of experienced politicians in specific contextual circumstances, and covers several genres, namely: partisan programs, political slogans, political speeches, etc. (Van Dijk,1997). Moreover, politics
is seen from two opposite angles: one is positive because of its denotative meaning, which is associated with politicians who run their countries, and the other is negative due to its connotative meaning, which is related to deceptive, evil practices of politicians who do "nothing but corruption" (Beard, 2000, pp. 3-5). In a broad sense, politics is seen by numerous scholars as to study "political language" (Claeys, 2013, p. 776). According to Goshgarian, who goes further identifying the political language, sees it as "a language of power, which influences government policy and actions, identifies the dominant values of the moment, and wins votes. Likewise, "it is a language that is capable of making war, establishing the needs of its users at a particular time". Thus, "it has a reputation for being flexible and ambiguous or, worse" (2011, p. 426). Political language is one of the main targets to be studied by critical discourse analysts because they realize language itself has no enough power. Still, it is the political actors who use it and make it powerful to meet the needs of effect on their recipients (Wodak, 2001). Moreover, Fairclough (1992) argues that politicians' selected words or constructions may sustain ideological stands reflected in their political communication. According to Van Dijk (1997), the political discourse has specific structural levels, which start from topics (or issues under consideration), overall semantic framework, lexical selection, syntactic constructions, rhetorical ability, paralinguistic features as expressive structures, and finally pragmatic effects of the implicit meaning. He also adds that ideological polarization is the main criterion of doing discourse. In sum, political discourse presents two opposite perceptions; firstly, it is the reflection of a never-ending struggle between the dominating elite who fight to preserve power, and those dominated people who confront it. Secondly, it is "as a cooperation, as the practices and institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money influence liberty and the like" (Chilton, 2004, p. 3).

**Political Speeches**

Political speeches, as stated by Schaffner, are characterized by functional and thematic features. They fulfill various functions due to various political activities and hold topics related to politics. She also adds that political speeches are often delivered in different settings. Politicians, for example, when addressing other politicians of the same political or ideological background, are involved in internal political communication. However, they are engaged in external political communication when addressing their nation publicly (1996). Due to their non-homogenous and communicative nature, political speeches can be analyzed pragmatically, semantically, syntactically, and phonologically (Schaffner, 1996, p. 3). The significance of political speech is that it goes side by side with rhetoric. As Klein (1995) believes, modern political communication is an extension of the classic political rhetoric features. It is, thus, commonly known that the political speech shows a tendency in using rhetorical language, which is described by Woodward and Denton Jr (2009) as a form of communication in which the politician's values, attitudes, and beliefs are defended. Besides, David (2014) states that numerous scholars conceive rhetorical language as a form of linguistic manipulation followed by politicians who utilize the persuasion techniques to persuade people and make them take specific actions for political ends. Thus, the political speech, being the prominent form of political discourse, is not randomly written or spoken. Rather, it is a well-organized, recipient-oriented, and functional-aimed communicative process acted by politicians who employ every possible linguistic feature to turn it into a powerful manipulation strategy within specific contextual situations.
Features Shared by English and Arabic Political Discourse

To enforce their ideological dimension in the recipients and to fulfill particular aims, politicians strategically use multiple language techniques in their political communication. After examining various political discourses, Van Dijk observed that politicians resort to using significant linguistic features to draw and hold the attention of people, and convince them of their views (Van Dijk, 1997). Among these features noticed in both English and Arabic political discourse are lexicalization, nominalization, pronouns, metaphors, and repetition. Lexicalization is a visible way of how politicians see and describe themselves and others. It is a process of selecting words through which politicians can positively depict themselves, and show others negatively (Van Dijk, 2000). According to Nordlund, politicians make use of the positive/negative connotation of the selected words that reflect ideologically-loaded views. Hence, when politicians use "terror, terrorist, or terrorism" in their speech, they try to trigger a negative connotation in association with those with whom they are associated (Nordlund, 2003, p. 13). Nominalization is an aspect of linguistic transformation. Politicians utilize this feature to keep some relevant information from the eye of the masses. Modality, actions, the doer of the actions, and timing could be kept hidden through nominalized structures, which in turn add more mystification (Fowler, 1991, p.79). The third important feature of political discourse is pronouns. They are defined as "groups of words that are able to appear in the place of other words, most often nouns, other pronouns or noun phrase" (Håkansson, 2012, p. 5). Pronouns are the most salient manipulation tools in political discourse since they are used to reflect the politicians' ideopolitical stands (Chilton & Schäffner, 2002, p. 30). Bramley, however, explores pronouns in detail, stating that using the pronouns in the political discourse does not only reflect the traditional linguistic functions of person, number, and gender. Instead, they are involved in what is called "identity work" of presenting the "self" and the "other" (Bramley, 2001, p. V). No political discourse is considered powerful without using metaphors. Metaphors are defined as the "figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them" (Merriam-Webster, 2014). In metaphorical communications, abstract ideas are given concrete labels (Kulo, 2009, p. 3). Metaphor in the political discourse is an imperative device of persuasion and an essential factor affecting the recipients' consciousness (Stepanyan, 2015, p. 371). Beard, however, states that politicians heavily rely on war and sport terminology as a source of metaphor. Thus, politicians might give the impression that they are in a fight when they "take flak" from their opponents (Beard, 2000, p. 18). Another feature politicians often utilize in their discourse is repetition. Repetition is generally defined as "doing, saying or writing the same thing more than once" (McArthur, 1992, p. 861). But in politics, repetition may hold a rhetorical dimension since it is used to enhance the process of perceiving the discourse and to draw the recipients' attention. Besides, it is a strategic tool that manipulates the recipients to make up an "ideology" and convince them of its credibility (David, 2014, p. 167). Regardless of its simplicity, repetition can hold a long political speech together and keep its underlying points focused on through uttering some words, nouns, or even presuppositions many times (Beard, 2000, p. 39).

Previous Research

Several studies have dealt with manipulation as a process of pragmatic criteria because it is considered "a type of language in use or a talk-in-interaction of a pragmatic approach" (Blass,2005,
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p.171; Danler, 2005, p.46; De Saussure, 2005, p.117), which uses most of the linguistic features to achieve specific functions for the speaker's pre-determined ends in certain contexts. In a more recent contrastive study executed by Al-Hindawi and Kamil (2017) on British and American political debates done by the British Prime Minister nominees Clegg, Brown, and Cameron on the one hand, and the American Presidential candidates Biden-Ryan and Bush-Kerry on the other hand, the researchers concluded that manipulation is a process consists of three stages namely; "inauguration, argumentation, and conclusion," follows four significant criteria which are "distortion, fabrication, equivocation, and concealment," is achieved by pragmatic strategies including, personal deixis, (im)politeness, speech acts, violating conversational maxims, strategic maneuvering and finally pragmatic moves related to Relevance Theory. They also noticed that the politicians in these debates executed seven types of manipulation, namely volitional, deceptive, rational, submissive, social, emotional, and speaker/hearer-oriented type. They also observed that the highest pragmatic strategy used in these debates is "Manipulative Speech Acts".

Although manipulation in political discourse has widely been discussed pragmatically, the researchers of the current study found it necessary to explore some manipulation strategies at the semantic and rhetorical levels of the political speech and how the ideological polarization in this type of discourse plays a crucial role in enhancing manipulation.

Methods

Van Dijk’s (1995, 2006b) theoretical and analytical views are adopted to explore the manipulation strategies of two political speeches delivered by two veteran politicians. The ideological influence exerted on the speech may control its nature, and hence, gives the impression that this communicative process is based on bettering off the speaker's image and derogating other's one. Before starting up with analyzing the data, it is necessary to take into account the contextual information that surrounds the speech, namely who is the speaker?, what are the general topics included in the speech?, what are the situations associated with the speech?, etc. to help take a general contextual overview. The next step is to deal with the semantic and rhetorical levels of the two speeches, and see how the speakers respectively employ the strategies of lexicalization, a list of three, repetition, and citing. Lexicalization is a process of selecting words (verbs, nouns, adjective or adverbs) or expressions based on their connotative ideologically-loaded meaning, whether being positive or negative (Van Dijk, 2000), while the other semantic move is called "a list of three," defined by Beard (2000) as a group of three words of a similar form and meaning, or different forms and related meaning, that is used strategically to enhance specific meaning dedicated for the sake of the speaker. Repetition is a rhetorical device by which the speaker reflects his stylistic command and, more importantly, seeks to create an immediate rhetorical influence on his recipients by repeating some lexical items, phrases, or clauses (Johnstone, 1994). Citing is the second rhetorical strategy utilized by speakers for their audience to be more affected emotionally and more inclined to their arguments, and usually cite from religious, historical texts, academic sources, etc. (Van Dijk, 2006b). For the economy of space, only (13) examples out of the representative examples of these devices manifested in the two speeches are to be analyzed.
qualitatively, whereas the quantitative method of analysis is manifested by the frequency and percentage of the occurrence of manipulation strategies in numbered tables. Besides, the selected Arabic examples will be translated into English by the authors.

**Data of the Study**

The selected data for analysis were two political speeches: the first was an English political speech delivered by President Trump on February 4, 2020. The second was an Arabic political speech delivered by President Salih on October 7, 2019. Each speech was divided into serially-numbered extracts. The Arabic extracts were translated into English by the researchers. Then we analyzed the data in the light of Van Dijk's theoretical views, which stressed the importance of taking a contextual overview before applying the practical side. However, for the economy of space, only thirteen examples of the manipulation strategies were selected and analyzed qualitatively. The quantitative method of analysis, on the other hand, was followed by the frequency of the occurrence and the percentages of each strategy utilized in both speeches.

Following Van Dijk's (1995,2006b) views of presenting the self positively and the other negatively as a theoretical background for ideological discourse, the researchers identified the linguistic devices affecting the audience's thoughts and feelings as manipulation strategies. The analysis started with a contextual overview in brief about the main issues and the circumstances surrounding each speech.

**Results**

**Analysis of President Trump's Speech**

*A Contextual Overview*

President Trump made his third State of the Union speech on February 4, 2020. This speech was considered essential to him due to the problems and challenges he faced, namely the impeachment trial by which he has been accused of abusing power and obstructing the U.S. Congress. Hence, he aroused various topics to enhance his picture publicly, including the American economy and the economic challenges with China, internal and external security, healthcare, education, military forces, immigration, terrorism, etc. The speech was employed to show Trump's positive image through emphasizing his outstanding achievements done in just three years since taking office in 2017 and the well-planned future vision for the American nation, in comparison with the failures, weaknesses, and inactivity of the previous administrations, particularly the Democratic ones. Thus, the speaker intended to make his recipients make sense that he is, unlike others, a man of actions and achievements, and a national leader who could face the internal and external risks and challenges represented, for example, by the "illegal criminal immigrants," "China's massive theft of America's jobs" to name but a few.

**Manipulation Strategies at the Semantic Level**

*Lexicalization: Words/Expressions of Ideologically-positive Connotation*

Example One:

The vision I will lay out this evening demonstrates how we are building *the world’s most prosperous and inclusive society* — one where every citizen can join in *America’s*
unparalleled success and where every community can take part in America’s extraordinary rise. (Trump, 2020, Ext.5)

From the beginning of the speech, which was delivered in the chamber of Congress, President Trump intended strategically to create a general meaning net or framework aimed at serving his ideopolitical ends outlined in his speech. This meaning net draws mainly upon emphasizing his internal/external policy, achievements, and future vision, and de-emphasizing the previous administrations' administrative and economic policies. In this example, President Trump addressed the American people selecting words of positively-loaded connotation. He addressed the Americans' mentality and feelings. He somehow sent forward a form of assurance that his future vision was widely different and deeply dedicated to building a prosperous society enjoying success at all levels and living in good conditions which were missing under the previous presidents' failed policies and visions.

**Lexicalization: Words/Expressions of Ideologically-negative Connotation**

**Example Two:**

“In sanctuary cities, local officials order police to release dangerous criminal aliens to prey upon the public, instead of handing them over to ICE to be safely removed.” (Trump, 2020, Ext.83)

This example involves lexicalized nouns, which hold a sense of negativeness against those who cross the American borders illegally. Associating the immigrants with words of ideologically-negative connotation in such a setting illustrates clearly that President Trump wants to stimulate the audience to share his sense of hatred and non-acceptance towards the immigrants who are metaphorically depicted as dangerous animals through uttering 'to prey upon'. That is why he indirectly urges the agency of ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) to remove those dangerous criminal immigrants from the country. In addition to this sense of hatred, there is also some sense of criticizing and derogating others, particularly the local officials of some states, including New York City, who provided the illegal immigrants with a safe sanctuary where they can live, work and take advantage of the benefits of education, health, and social support.

**A list of Three**

**Example Three:**

“The Iranian regime must abandon its pursuit of nuclear weapons; stop spreading terror, death, and destruction.” (Trump, 2020, Ext.110)

This example manifests how President Trump reflects his external policy and aggressive orientations towards Iran and its nuclear program. He tried to make the audience visualize that Iran is a source of danger via making a list of ideologically-negative words 'terror, death, and destruction'. This strategy was utilized to manipulate American people's thoughts, plant a gloomy picture about Iran in their minds, and prepare the favorable conditions for any action against it. On the other hand, one can understand that President Trump, by this strategy, intended indirectly to present the policies of the previous administrations, particularly President Obama's administration,
negatively due to his tolerant orientations towards the Middle East, especially Iran. Thus, Trump managed to create a completely gloomy picture of the Iranian regime by associating it with acts of terror, death, and destruction. The American people might show an acceptance of any future severe action taken by him.

**Manipulation Strategies at the Rhetorical Level**

**Repetition of a Lexical Item**

This strategy was highly used by President Trump in his speech where the pronouns *We* and *I* and their derivative forms *Our* and *My*, and the words *American, America, first, always*, etc., were repeated many times. The following is an example of such a device.

Example Four:

In just three short years, *we* have shattered the mentality of American decline, and *we* have rejected the downsizing of America’s destiny. *We* have totally rejected the downsizing. *We* are moving forward at a pace that was unimaginable just a short time ago, and *we* are never, ever going back. (Trump, 2020, Ext.3)

*We* was repeated several times in President Trump's speech. He aimed at creating an impact on the audience and establishing a stylistic command. The intended aim of using *We* in such a context is to make the recipients understand that he is taking direct personal responsibility for all the actions and reform steps that have been taken, are being taken, or will be taken in the future. Hence, he could utilize the inclusiveness of *We* to turn it into a reference to his personality and direct responsibility. The ideological polarization is also noticed between lines when he refers to one of his primary achievements in just three years of his presidency. This achievement is represented by terminating the 'American decline' due to the previous policies and turning it into overall prosperity that no one thought was possible to happen.

**Repetition of a Phrase**

This type of repetition is also used throughout the speech to send purposeful messages strategically decoded by the American audience. Many examples of phrases repeated in the speech, including 'My administration,' 'Health care system/reform,' 'Criminal aliens,' 'Our economy' and others. Here is an example of phrasal repetition:

Example Five:

“*Since my election*, we have created seven million new jobs…” (Trump, 2020, Ext.8)

“*Since my election*, the net worth of the bottom half of wage earners has increased by 47 percent…, we have seen a 16 percent pay increase *since my election*” (Trump, 2020, Ext.16)

“*Since my election*, U.S. stock markets have soared 70 percent,…” (Trump, 2020, Ext.18)

The above extracts represent a good example of repetition by which the phrase 'Since my election' has been said four times. The intended influence of this repeated phrase on the audience...
is observed clearly. President Trump wants to reflect his positive image by stating some of his achievements that are concerned to the American citizens, and indirectly emphasize the previous administrations' negative image and failed policies. Thus, he utilized this rhetorical device to affect the audience's mind for his ideopolitical ends and agenda.

Repetition of a Clause
The repetition of specific clauses many times is also established manipulatively by President Trump. 'We will always protect ...', 'We have rejected the downsizing...', 'My administration is also defending...' are some examples of this type of repetition by which he also intended to exert some influence over the audience.

Example Six:
“I’ve also made an ironclad pledge to American families: We will always protect patients with pre-existing conditions. (Applause). And we will always protect your Medicare and we will always protect your Social Security. Always.” (Trump, 2020, Ext.54)

This example shows how the speaker repeated the same clause three times. He was metaphorically depicted as a loyal fighter or a brave soldier who expressed a future commitment to fight and protect the interests of his people. The effect of this strategy was noticeable, and the audience acted in response to this repeated commitment by a round of warm applause as a sign of this influential rhetorical device.

Citing
President Trump used the strategy of citing to stimulate the American people's emotions for specifically intended aims. He quoted from private letters of some people whose cases were employed to take critical actions against some persons. Thus, it had the same rhetorical effect on the audience as repetition did. Here is an example of citing strategy:

Example Seven:
…their beautiful daughter Kayla became a humanitarian aid worker. She once wrote, “Some people find God in church. Some people find God in nature. Some people find God in love. I find God in suffering. I’ve known for some time what my life’s work is, using my hands as tools to relieve suffering.” (Trump, 2020, Ext.103)

Here, President Trump cited from a private letter written by a girl called Kayla Mueller to her parents when she worked in Syria within a humanitarian mission. She was kidnapped, tortured, and killed by al-Baghdadi, the leader of the terrorist ISIS. President Trump aimed at agitating a sense of sympathy with Kayla, and manipulatively creating the suitable environment and the emotional effect to justify the revenge and ending al-Baghdadi's life.

Analysis of President Salih's Speech
A Contextual Overview
The Iraqi President Barham Salih addressed the Iraqi people in general, the young demonstrators in particular, on October 7, 2019, after six days of the demonstration kick off in Baghdad and other cities. After years of deterioration of public services, rising unemployment, fragile economy, and other motives that had been the main reasons for these demonstrations, this
speech at such a contextual situation had an importance for the speaker. He tried to calm down the demonstrators' intension. Therefore, a commissive, emotional language was used. Moreover, the language was utilized to urge a sense of nationalism and inclusiveness among the Iraqi people. A sense of fatherhood was also noticed to gain the satisfaction of the youth. Besides, President Salih indirectly criticized those involved in financial and administrative corruption and patrician quotas spread throughout the country. Finally, he talked about the steps of reform to meet the young demonstrators' demands and, more importantly, to touch upon their minds and feelings for calming down the critical situation.

Manipulation Strategies at the Semantic Level

Lexicalization: Words/Expressions of Ideologically-positive Connotation

Example Eight:
الصرح بالحقيقة يجب أن تتبعها خطوات جادة وفي مسيرات «الحرية و الأمن في ظل السلام، والحرية، و الأمن في ظل السلام، والخدامات الأساسية».

(Salih, 2019, Ext.17)

"The real honesty must be followed by serious steps, not slogans, promises, and wishes. The people demand social justice, free, dignified life, freedom, security, job opportunities, and basic services."

The lexicalized words and expressions of ideologically-positive connotation in the above extract represented an excellent example of how the semantic net was conducted to be in favor of the speaker who tried to gain the demonstrators' trust and absorb the public anger. He realizes that expressions and words like الحقيقة –the real honesty، خطوات جادة- serious steps، الحرية- freedom، etc., have intended impact and purposeful effect on the minds of the hearers. Using this well-ordered meaning framework in such a setting, brings President Salih closer to a more positive picture. At the same time, the negative image is indirectly associated with those who are inclined to say just شعارات- slogans، وعودا- promises، و تمنيات- wishes. And this is the primary purpose of this strategy.

Lexicalization: Words/Expressions of Ideologically-negative Connotation

Example Nine:
محدث من مستشاريgovernment مظاهرات تظاهرات البيت الأبيض، والموجودات الأخرى في واشنطن، والموجودات الأمريكية في بغداد، والإعلامي المستشار في وزارة الداخلية العراقية.

(Salih, 2019, Ext.17)

"Targeting the peaceful demonstrators and security forces by live bullets, and targeting the media and journalists is unacceptable in Iraq."

President Salih, in the extract above, used some lexicalized words of negative connotation. He sent a somehow double-aimed message by uttering هدف- targeting. One is dedicated to addressing the angry young demonstrators, some of whom had been fallen dead or injured during the events. The second message is aimed at criticizing and derogating indirectly those involved in targeting the demonstrators, without naming or referring to them directly. That is why the nominalized form of هدف- was in favor of the speaker who preferred not to provide enough information to state clearly who did that action. President Salih, thus, managed to show his political
and linguistic skill and to better off his image by sending a consolatory and supportive message to the Iraqi people and an indirect accusatory message to others.

_A list of Three_

Example Ten:

” wholesome steps to fight off a current issue, namely, breaches and violations, and non-legal and illegal cases . ”

(Salih, 2019, Ext.7)

“These young people who have fallen left a wound in the hearts, which cannot be healed by reassurances, talk, or promises.”

This extract manifests how the speaker evaluates the situation in just three words in which he was able to beautify his image positively and derogate others' image negatively. President Salih showed his ideopolitical ability in forming a list of reassurances, talk, and promises to express his condolence and pain over the victims of the bloody confrontations, and to send a covert message that was seemingly employed to criticize other political partners due to their abandonment in dealing with issues that matter to the Iraqi people namely, high unemployment rate, widespread corruption, appointments, education, health care, and others which were the significant factors for the demonstrations to erupt.

_Manipulation Strategies at the Rhetorical Level_

_Repetition of a Lexical Item_

Pronouns ـ (We and Our: whether explicitly or implicitly), -Iraqi, -blood, -our people, etc., are some examples of repeating one lexical item many times in President Salih's speech. This rhetorical strategy has a contextual necessity in a critical situation where the speaker had to get closer to the Iraqi people's feelings and, in particular, the demonstrating youth.

Example 11:

"يجب ان نتكاتف جميعنا لنطبب جراح العراق في هذه المحنة ونمضي مام الى امتحدين شددنا وآخر ظهر الآخر ، و نصحت منราชينا وحفظ مرجعية الدولة وهيبتها ويرس بناء مؤسساتها ( Salih, 2019, Ext.7)

“We must all join hands to heal the wounds of Iraq and move forward in unison, supporting each other in a way that preserves the pride of our people and the authority and prestige of the state and strengthens its institutions.”

The personal pronouns were strategically used in President Salih's speech for ideopolitical aims. Concerning the nature of the Arabic language, pronouns are of two types: _الضمناء الظاهرة والمعركة_ - explicit pronouns and implicit pronouns. The pronouns which have no visible shape and cannot be expressed, yet implied in mind are called _الضمناء المعبة_ – implicit pronouns. The other classification-the explicit pronouns, on the other hand, can be written or spoken clearly, and is divided into _مضمناء متصلة_ - connected pronouns or _مضمناء فصلة_ - independent pronouns (Abdul-Hammed, 2007, as cited in Darwish, p. 143). Here in this example, just like other extracts, President Salih used repeatedly the pronoun _نحن_ - We and its possessive form ـ _نا_ - Our explicitly and
implicitly throughout the speech employing them to indicate the Iraqi people, and hence, to send the message of collectivity and nationalism. Therefore, he utilized the sense of collective identity agitated by these pronouns to speak on behalf of the Iraqi people and, more importantly, of the young demonstrators. Thus, repeating this item many times is in the speaker's interest, who followed the policy of positive self-presentation and native other-presentation. Unlike other political partners, President Salih talked about how he and the rest of the Iraqi people should have worked together to heal and relieve Iraq's wounds and pains, and to move forward, etc.

**Repetition of a Phrase**

**الحكم الرشيد -** **good governance,** **حوار بناء -** **a constructive dialogue,** **الرصاص الحي -** **live bullets,** **مصارحة حقيقية -** **real honesty** are some examples of phrasal repetition by which the speaker intended to arouse an impact in the mind of the recipients for his ideopolitical agenda. The following example will make the point clear.

**Example 12:**

(Salih, 2019, Ext.14)

"Partisan and factional quotas refuse to leave our reality…"

(S Salih, 2019, Ext.15)

"When partisan interests and quotas replace the national will…”

The rhetorical effect of repeating the phrase **المحاصصة الحزبية - partisan quotas** on the audience is strategically vital in such a context where President Salih presented his point of view positively. He referred to the current reality of the political process in Iraq, which is based on negative concepts and practices represented by sectarianism and partisan belonging. He indirectly criticized other politicians and officials whose factional and partisan practices led the internal situation to get worst, and matters could be out of hand. This example gives an obvious representation of ideological polarization in which the speaker is intentionally depicted in a good picture. Others are in a pessimistic picture that reflects the reality of the political process in Iraq.

**Citing**

In his speech, President Salih used this rhetorical device to conciliate the recipients' emotions, whether the citizens or security forces, for aims outlined in his speech.

**Example 13:**

(Salih, 2019, Ext.8)

“This blood is Iraqi blood.. The one who chants slogans to demand his rights is Iraqi.. And those security and military forces who defend the institutions are Iraqis.. We must not reach this stage where we see the blood of our sons on the streets.. We need to re-support one another: the citizen, the official and the soldier to overcome this ordeal.”
Instead of using Standard Arabic, President Salih used a citation of Colloquial Arabic. There are two reasons for using this rhetorical strategy. The first reason is that President Salih intended to utter this piece of speech colloquially because he realized that most people preferred to be talked to in a simple, not complicated language. The second reason for this strategy is that it enabled him to send his message to the people correctly because he hoped to touch upon the feelings and emotions of the recipients, to affect their thoughts, and hence, to absorb and calm down the intension between the demonstrators and the security forces. That is why this strategic device was manipulatively used for the speaker's image to be positively viewed in the eyes of the Iraqis.

The results of the semantic and rhetorical devices as manipulation strategies in President Trump's speech are clarified in tables (one and two) below with their frequencies and percentages:

**Table 1. Semantic Devices as Manipulation Strategies-Trump's Speech**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Level</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Lexicalization: Words/Expressions of Ideologically-positive Connotation</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>58.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Lexicalization: Words/Expressions of Ideologically-negative Connotation</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>35.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A List of Three</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table one reveals that President Trump's speech was written to create an intended effect of meaning with two main strategies: lexicalization and a list of three. The lexicalized words or expressions of positive connotation scored the highest frequency of occurrence, amounting to 137 examples forming 58.54% of this level. The lexicalization of negative-connotation words/expressions was utilized with a frequency of 84 examples to create 35.89%. The strategy of a list of three was used 13 times with a percentage of 5.55%.

**Table 2. Rhetorical Devices as Manipulation Strategies-Trump's Speech**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetorical Level</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Repetition of a Lexical Item</td>
<td>377</td>
<td>80.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Repetition of a Phrase</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>16.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Repetition of a Clause</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Citing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table two sheds light on the rhetorical devices used by President Trump in his speech. It is observed that he used the strategy of repetition of one lexical item 377 times, holding 80.38% of the rhetorical level, while the repeated phrases recurred 78 times with a percentage of 16.63%, and
only 11 times of repeated clauses with a percentage of 2.34%. The strategy of citing was used three times, constituting 0.63% of the rhetorical level of the speech. Tables three and four below illustrate the frequencies and percents of the manipulation strategies actualized by the semantic and rhetorical devices used in President Salih's speech.

Table 3. *Semantic Devices as Manipulation Strategies- Salih's Speech*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic Level</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Lexicalization: <em>Words/Expressions of Ideologically-positive Connotation</em></td>
<td>175</td>
<td>60.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Lexicalization: <em>Words/Expressions of Ideologically-negative Connotation</em></td>
<td>105</td>
<td>36.58</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A List of Three</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>287</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

President Salih also used the lexicalization strategy with two opposite connotations. The words/expressions of positive-ideologically connotation constituted 60.97% of the semantic level with a frequency of 175 times, while those of ideologically-negative connotation recurred 105 times with a percentage of 36.58%. He used the strategy of a list of three seven times to hold 2.43% of the semantic network.

Table 4. *Rhetorical Devices as Manipulation Strategies- Salih's Speech*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhetorical Level</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Repetition of a Lexical Item</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>89.40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Repetition of a Phrase</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Citing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>198</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table four considers how President Salih used the rhetorical devices represented by the repetition of lexical items and phrases for aims predetermined in his speech. The repetition of lexical items held 177 examples having a percentage of 89.40% of the rhetorical level. The repetition of phrases recorded 20 times in total, with a percentage of 10.10%. Citing strategy was used once throughout the speech, which constituted 0.50% of the rhetorical level. It is worth mentioning that the strategy of clausal repetition was not used in President Salih's speech.

**Discussion**

*Research Question One: What are the manipulation strategies most used at the semantic and rhetorical levels of the two selected English-Arabic political speeches?*

After applying the eclectic model to the two speeches, the study found that the speakers showed strategic independence on specific linguistic features to be employed manipulatively within the
A Semantic and Rhetorical Study of Manipulation in Two English Presidents’ Speeches

Jasim & Mustafa

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Semantic and rhetorical levels. Both presidents semantically used the strategies of lexicalization and a list of three in their speeches. They also used the strategies of repetition and citing at the rhetorical level of their speeches.

Research Question Two: What is the effect of the positive-self/ negative-other ideological dimension in agitating a manipulative discourse?

Obviously, both the speeches reflected one of the main principles of CDA, which was "ideologies are produced and reflected in the use of discourse" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997 as cited in Paltridge, 2012, p.187). The ideological dimension of positive-self and negative-other presentation was actualized through using either positiveness-bearing words or negativeness-bearing words. Hence, the political actions, economic procedures, reform steps, nationalism, collectiveness, sympathy, and other positive-ideologically selections were invested to better off the speaker's image. The other part of the selected words was dedicated to criticizing others' behaviors and practices. Therefore, it was a reflection of how the speakers presented others negatively. The second marked semantic feature was a list of three in which the two speakers showed mastery in directing the semantic effect towards specific points of criticizing the others directly or indirectly. At the rhetorical level of the two speeches, types of repetition were used, except for the clausal repetition. It was not used in Arabic political speech. The purpose of repeated some lexical items, phrases, or clauses was to create the intended influence on the recipients' thoughts and understanding for ideological aims that helped to emphasize the speaker's sense of personal responsibility, inclusiveness, or nationalism, and to better off his image. The strategy of citing was used to hopefully exert some influence on the recipients' thoughts and feelings. Trump, for example, cites from the private letters of specific people whose words had emotional content. Salih also made use of some words and expressions of the Colloquial Arabic most Iraqis understand. Thus, a crucial aspect of manipulative language in politics is the selected words or structures considered a reflection of politicians' ideological agenda in their political communication (Fairclough, 1992). Hence, politicians show their skill in using language effectively to target the people's minds and emotions, who are viewed as "victims" (Van Dijk, 2006a, p. 361), i.e., they lack the sufficient ability to grasp the manipulator's real intention.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the present study is different in some perspectives: first, the studies cited in the literature review concentrate on manipulation as far as English is concerned, whereas the current study explores manipulation in English and Arabic. Second, this study is concerned with manipulation from semantic and rhetorical points of view. Third, the present study investigates manipulation in two political speeches delivered by two presidents. Fourth, the two speeches' ideological dimension has been taken into consideration, and has been turned into a kind of the point of departure for enhancing the power of manipulation in these two speeches to fulfill the speakers' political aims.

Conclusion

This paper presents findings of how some semantic and rhetorical features are used as manipulation strategies in two English and Arabic political speeches by two presidents. These strategies aim to affect the recipients' thoughts and actions. Also, the findings show that English
and Arabic political speeches have a sum of these strategies in common, such as lexicalization, a list of three, repetition, and citing. It is also revealed that positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation is the general ideological dimension under which manipulation is visible in these two speeches.

Starting from the strategy of lexicalization, both presidents highly used selected words or expressions of positive connotation. For President Trump, this type of lexicalization was employed to show him as a man of actions and achievements. It was dedicated to depicting his image and administrative policies positively. President Salih also used this strategy to be in his favor. He mainly utilized it trying to enhance his image, and to absorb the public indignation spread among the young demonstrators. Lexicalization of words or expressions of negative connotation was used by both presidents to create some effects on their recipients. President Trump aimed at agitating a sense of hatred and resentfulness in the American people's minds towards, for example, the "illegal immigrants" and the "failed policies" of the previous administrations. President Salih used this strategy to indirectly criticize those involved in "targeting the demonstrators", and in "administrative and financial corruption".

The second semantic feature used by both speeches is a list of three. In both cases, the speakers used it strategically. They invested the three-lists in their speeches to evoke their recipients' emotions and to make up a type of slogan that the recipients will remember. President Trump, for instance, wanted the American people to associate the Iranian regime with "terror, death, and destruction" which spread throughout the world. In contrast, President Salih wanted to go along with the Iraqi people's collective consciousness towards the political class which presented nothing but "الطمئنات - reassurances, لقلم - talk, and الوعود - promises."

Repetition is one of the most important rhetorical features in Trump's and Salih's speeches. Throughout his speech, President Trump repeated specific lexical items, phrases, and clauses many times. Nevertheless, the repetition of lexical items was strategically highlighted in his political speech. "We, I, America, and American" are some examples of this type of repetition. "Since my election," "my administration," "criminal aliens," and others are examples of phrasal repetition. He also repeated specific clauses in his speech, including "we will always protect" and "my administration is also defending." First and foremost, President Trump desired to beautify his image by the strategy of repetition. President Salih used only the repetition of lexical items and phrases. However, the repetition of clauses was not included in his speech. He repeatedly used the personal pronoun نحن - we, دم - blood, and others in his speech. He also repeated phrases, such as - partisan quotas, جروحنا - live bullets, حوار بناء - a constructive dialogue, and other phrases.

Regarding the use of the strategy of citing, both presidents involved this rhetorical feature in their speeches. In both cases, the two speakers intended to evoke their recipients' emotions for the goals outlined previously. President Trump, for example, cited from private letters of specific people who wrote them down in critical times. Thus, he used their words to arouse the American people's emotions and to affect their minds. President Salih used the strategy of citing some speech
from the Colloquial Arabic realized by all Iraqis. He also wanted to evoke the emotions of the Iraqi people and, in particular, the young demonstrators.

From an analytical point of view, it is evident through this examination that manipulation in English and Arabic political speeches is actualized via using strategic linguistic features employed for the speakers' agenda. Besides, the ideological dimension plays a crucial role in enhancing the concept of manipulation in political discourse. In light of this study, linguists and political analysts are invited to figure out more features that might be used as manipulation strategies in any form of political communication.

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Contribution of Meta-Cognitive Competence in Preserving Student Self-Regulation in Algerian Higher Education: A Case from ENS of Laghouat

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Abstract
The processes of teaching and learning the English language have reached a globalized turn to the extent that educators and learners became highly exposed to teaching materials and classroom strategies to ensure long-life, independent, and self-guided learning. Ultimately, in a language class, learners may confront difficulty in understanding a literary text which can derive from the limited language proficiency, and presiding over lack of linguistic, cultural, and academic competence. In order to affirm this hypothesis and answer the question of the extent to which can self-directed learning be achieved and improved through metacognitive competence in performing a task in literature, this study aims at highlighting the effectiveness of incorporating certain innovative teaching activities and management practices, notably self-cognition and self-reflection on pursuing learners’ metacognition in understanding a literary text. By adopting a quasi-experimental methodological design, this study uses a participant observation with twenty-six subjects at Higher College of Teachers of Laghouat, they are assigned into two groups to measure their level of meta-cognitive competence and self-regulation, and prove their impact on achieving independent learning in studying a literary text. Results assured learners’ enthusiasm, high competence, and positive responses upon compiling metacognition and self-reflection which are not only learning strategies, but also learning paradigms for increasing learners’ self-directed learning and performance in class. Further studies may include engaging in improving independent learning and self-regulation of post-graduated learners through compensation and memory-related strategies.

Keywords: Algerian EFL context, cognitive monitoring, educational psychology, literacy teaching, self-regulation

Introduction

It is necessary to forward the place of using literature in ELT classrooms, which can be a motivating medium for language learning and a valuable material for language learners to practice language skills and stimulate their imagination. Besides, teaching literacy has perceived a considerable attention in the English language teaching context as an outstanding trait. It is viewed as teaching of a set of abilities and competencies which may lead to independent learning and allow learners use their prior and intellectual knowledge as context for new learning. The development of literacy at an early stage to EFL learners of higher education turns crucial in order to manage, analyze, criticize and synthesize multiple streams of simultaneous information. The degree to which students can make use of language to read and understand literary texts in all types is a key indicator of their ability to make and communicate meaning.

With the drastic change in society and development of technology in language and literacy teaching, today’s learners may need the acquisition of meta-cognitive skills which will enable them to learn independently using their cultural, intellectual, and linguistic knowledge to another knowledge context as modern learning doesn’t require learners to memorize subjects but to appreciate what they learn. Therefore, learners need methods and materials to understand it better and get familiar with the content, genres, and literary knowledge in order to understand better literature and not the contents of literature teaching. Learners do not need only to learn and memorize particular subjects; they need to apply it using their basic language skills, plans, and their management process. This will vehemently be related to learners’ high order skills and types of thought which are directed thinking, non-directed thinking, and meta-cognition.

Metacognition belongs to different fields of study such as psychology and philosophy and associated with self-control, self-regulation, metacognitive awareness, beliefs, and skills. It refers to constructing prior metacognitive knowledge and regulation by developing metacognitive skills. It is the ability to reflect upon learners’ own learning behavior and provide their awareness of their strategies, self-reflection and self-regulation. Therefore, by applying prior meta-cognitive knowledge, learners can achieve efficient self-guided learning. Learners can learn to think about their own thinking process and use their learning strategies that will help them adjust with their learning. (Altindag & Senemoglu, 2013) when teachers allow learners to use their basic skills and study independently, they can develop their competences and believe that autonomous learning is achieved; over and above, educationalists tempted to encourage their learners take responsibility of their own learning, which can reflect their metacognitive competence by being adaptive, reflective and able to cope with the literary text.

However, in the higher educational context of English language teaching in Algeria, independent learning has recently been given awareness through implementing instructional strategies for the sake of achieving learning autonomy and self-guided learning. The problem in the study can be contextualized through the way EFL learners can achieve self-regulation and independent learning. This yet can be achieved through co-operative learning, group discussion, planning, literature response, role-playing, self-assessment … etc. These are learning strategies selected independently by learners to use them efficiently to perform tasks to achieve the desired goals. These strategies have been instructional strategies or techniques, before being learning strategies, used by teachers to help learners become independent learners. Achieving independence
in learning is not an easy task because it requires basic skills of learners, readiness, selecting appropriate learning strategies, notably meta-cognitive including self-assessment, self-reflection, monitoring, self-editing … etc, so that learners can assume full responsibility of learning, and subsequently be independent and autonomous learners.

This study aims at exploring the effects of meta-cognitive competence of the learners in performing a task and on reaching independent learning progress in a literature class. Hence, prior to the aim of the study, the researcher tempts to identify the development of EFL learners’ metacognitive strategies and skills through self-assessment and self-reflection for the sake of reaching self-guided learning. Depending on the main problem, we can raise the question of the extent to which can meta-cognition competence and meta-cognitive learning strategies contribute to improving and promoting self-directed and self-regulated learning in performing a task in a literature class. In this vein, learners who are exposed to meta-cognitive learning strategies and instructional strategies are more likely to be competent while studying a literary text. Therefore, a frequent use of self-assessment will provide authentic learning and high level of response towards reading, understanding, and analyzing a literary text, in addition to building readiness for planning the learners’ own learning independently and making choices, setting goals, solving problems, monitoring, and self-evaluating the learning progress.

**Review of Literature**

Recently, in the English language teaching arena, the Constructivist learning theory has been around for attaining learners’ active role in learning. They are encouraged to use their prior knowledge and the knowledge they seek to acquire and construct themselves. Tuysuz & Karakuyu (2008) For, in order to accomplish language tasks and perform activities in class, learners need to explore the role of their cognitive and meta-cognitive competence and performance of a given task along with monitoring, self-reflection, self-editing, and self-assessment. In effect, cognitive and metacognition aspects play a vital role in accomplishing cognitive tasks, as tasks and activities are determined by metacognitive decisions and actions. As (Lester & Garofalo, 1985) assume that cognitive performance depends on prior knowledge or input, and acquired knowledge or output, and control of that knowledge. Occasionally, researchers argued that meta-cognitive knowledge, regulation, and skills serve as a way of monitoring the learning process.

Andrew (2010) investigates that cognitive and metacognitive strategies can influence learning by helping learners develop their critical and cognitive ability to have an adequate understanding and have problem-solving and decision-making ability. As those strategies require basic metacognitive skills which make learners be self-directed and self-regulated in their learning. Shank (2017) by being aware of their own cognitive process, learners can measure their performance through self-assessment and self-evaluation. This can foster their metacognitive awareness in improving their prior knowledge regulation, as it enriches the learning setting which is appropriate to constructing and building their metacognition.

Learners need to conduct their learning in a regular and planned manner, as they need metacognitive awareness about accomplishing their tasks and performance. (Akin et al., 2007) However, metacognitive strategies are multidimensional and are used by teachers in order to help learners be self-guided and choose their appropriate learning strategy independently through
Instructional strategies which can help them assume and construct their metacognitive awareness in class. Such instructional strategies are prior knowledge and regulatory skills, and appropriate learning setting to the use of metacognition. For that, learners are able to think about their own thinking process and apply learning strategies that will help deal with their learning and accomplish tasks.

Cognitive knowledge, according to Bloom’s Taxonomy, has a facet of cognitive processes which incorporate six processes which are conveyed by remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, creating and evaluating. (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001, p. 268) Metacognition generally refers to thinking about thinking, taking into consideration the learner’s knowledge, awareness, and control of one’s own cognition and human cognition in general. As being a self-directed learner involves three cyclical stages or phases according to (Zimmerman & Campillo, 2003), as shown in figure 01.

![Cyclical Phases of Self-regulated Learning](image)

Figure 1 Cyclical Phases of Self-regulated Learning (Zimmerman & Campillo, 2003, p. 239)

Knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition are parts of learners’ cognition. Thus, as metacognitive knowledge and regulation serve as aspects of learners’ cognitive development, metacognition can be enhanced through instruction in learning which can have the aim of achieving independent learning and can be developed through teaching; as (Akpunar, 2011) asserts that the role of metacognition in the learning process is persistent in helping learners accomplishing individual tasks and understanding learning abilities and independent learning skills.

In effect, metacognition is identified by Flavell (1976) as “one’s knowledge concerning one’s own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them and refers, among other
things, to the active monitoring and consequent regulation and orchestration of these processes … in the service of some concrete goal or objective” (p. 232) the learner can have understanding of knowledge and have a reflection on it by applying it effectively even they do not have an idea about how to use it. (Brown, 1987, p. 66) Metacognition also requires awareness of the learning process, learning evaluation, and building metacognitive strategies to learn. (Hacker et al., 2009).

Whitebread & Pino Pasternak (2010) view metacognition as “the monitoring and control of cognition, while self-regulation refers to the monitoring and control of all aspects of human functioning, including emotional, social, and motivational aspects” (p. 693) As meta-cognition is composed of executive functioning in particular academic contexts which is called metacognition, and self-regulation through which the learner is meta-cognitively, competent in his learning process and can apply more metacognitive strategies so that they can be autonomous and self-directed learners. They become more directed in activities, including questioning, planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating. Maxim (2009), by being self-regulated, learners can use metacognitive strategies and know how, where, and when to use them.

Recently, educationalists in the field of English language teaching have been giving considerate acclaim in exploring the role of cognitive monitoring in the accomplishment of cognitive tasks. They argue that metacognitive beliefs, decisions and actions are the keys for success or failure in a many tasks and activities. Effective cognitive performance depends on knowledge and control of that knowledge in order to be cognitively competent. Lester & Garofalo (1985) In other words, meta-cognitive skills of learners play a vital role in monitoring the learning process; as metacognitive awareness is significant in the academic success of learners. (Zhao & Mo, 2016) they can help learners be self-guided, and self-directed and self-regulated and more strategic learners. (Shank, 2017)

In English language teaching classes, the teaching and learning processes require approaches, techniques, methods, and strategies to accomplish tasks. Recently, the Constructivist theory has emphasized the role of the learner in class by having an active role in the learning process and being able to use their adequate prior knowledge through the implementation of their metacognitive skills. (Tuysuz et al., 2008) Metacognition can also serve as a strategy of learning, which refers to acquiring knowledge and skills based on the learner’s self-perceptions and beliefs for achieving a particular goal. (Zimmerman & Pons, 1986)

According to (Kostons & Werf, 2015), metacognition is the ability to reflect upon one’s own learning and behavior. It tempts to reveal awareness of the learner’s strategies, knowledge, and self-regulation. Metacognition has a positive impact on learning as prior metacognitive knowledge of the learner can be highly effective when performing a task. However, learners’ ability, readiness, and necessary skills can also be higher in those who have prior metacognitive experience. This can give the claim that prior knowledge is the most influential determinant towards the learning capacities of learners in the class.

Occasionally, it has been claimed that self-guided learning is necessary for improving learners’ skills and preparing them for independent learning. As (Hennessey, 1999) identifies meta-cognition as “awareness of one’s own thinking, awareness of the content of one’s
conceptions, an active monitoring of one’s cognitive processes, an attempt to regulate one’s cognitive processes in relationship to further learning, and an application of a set of heuristics as an effective device for helping people organize their methods of attack on problems in general” (p.03) As Kuhn & Dean (2004) argue that metacognition can help learners use a particular strategy they learned in a given context and retrieve it in another new context through monitoring and self-regulation.

Learners can monitor and self-regulate their own cognition through metacognitive experience, a thing that can develop their meta-cognitive knowledge. In this vein, cognitive knowledge and cognitive regulation can be interrelated. (Schraw and Moshman, 1995) believe that in meta-cognitive theory, cognitive expertise and mental regulation are significant in which learners can construct cognitive ability and plan cognitive tasks. Further, (Martinez, 2006) asserts that metacognitive strategies can develop persistence and motivation during accomplishing challenging tasks. And learners can be able to monitor and appreciate their own cognition through metacognitive systems of their learning, namely monitoring, cooperation, classification, evaluation and assessment, and process management in which they can set favorable conditions and goals for their education.

In teaching and learning, learners need to develop metacognitive and basic language skills and be aware of their own cognitive activity and self-adjustment and strategies. This appeared recently with the shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches which require a more active learning setting. For that, learners can be able to have independent choices, make decisions, solve problems, think critically, and construct knowledge. Ultimately, learners can acquire and learn new information and construct this new information through meta-cognitive skills and knowledge during learning tasks. As (Demirel, 2011) proves that metacognition is a theory through which learners can afford the knowledge they construct and the new knowledge using their own learning in new similar contexts.

Metacognitive competence can help in processing learning, as learners can plan, organize, and evaluate their learning. (Doganay, 1997) states that learners with metacognitive competence are aware of their learning processes and are able to control them, can make independent plans and choices, and organize learning tools, and make self-evaluation for assessing task results with effective metacognitions. In effect, learners can also solve problems, make decisions, and be aware of the learning strategies they choose, and evaluate their learning processes effectively. As (Everson & Tabias, 2002) think that learners can update their expertise and make independent choices and plans for new learning; however, they can be aware of their own cognition and cognitive ability.

Metacognition is related to the learner’s reflection on his knowledge, experiences, and learning in all fields which are reflected by the learner’s language awareness in three fields Language, Language learning and Language teaching. Metacognition in fact is associated with these three fields in language teaching. Moreover, metacognition is related to teachers’ and learners’ beliefs, the teaching and use of learning strategies, meta-linguistic, and inter-cultural awareness. In cognitive psychology, planning, monitoring and evaluation are categorized as the three determinants of self-regulated learning. Indeed, (Wenden, 1998) refers to learners’
knowledge about a particular content as domain knowledge. Therefore, domain knowledge is viewed as distinctive from metacognitive knowledge, but Wenden portrays the importance and equality of both domain knowledge and cognitive knowledge in accomplishing a task.

Learners can become aware of their own learning processes once they learn how to control these processes using their metacognitive skills (Thompson, 2007). Further, they will be strategic learners and have more autonomy than learners who are not aware of their meta-cognitive skills. As metacognitive strategies are keys to promoting metacognitive awareness for learners to become self-regulated and independent. According to O’Mally & Chamot (1990), metacognitive strategies also belong to higher order skills such as planning, organizing, monitoring, and evaluating the learning task.

![Figure 2 Metacognition’s Relation to Language Awareness and its Subfields (Haukas, 2018, p. 15)](image)

By using those strategies, learners can be more independent and self-directed. Further, these metacognitive strategies are self-regulated involve using mental activities and thinking about them, monitoring during learning, and evaluating after learning. They involve both cognitive and metacognitive strategies which can help learners control, monitor, and assess their own learning. (Zimmerman, 2008) Indeed, as (Schraw & Hartley, 2006) view self-evaluation, organizing, goal-setting, questioning, and planning, choosing information, awareness of strengths and weaknesses for success in learning are self-regulated strategies used by self-regulated learners, therefore cognition and metacognition, motivation and content are involved in self-regulation learning.

**Methods and Materials**

**Design and Participants**

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed through a triangulation data collection tool which is a participant observation for the sake of affirming questions and validating the research hypothesis. Besides, it uses a quasi-experiment for achieving the aim of the study and to view the differences between two comparable groups who receive different treatments. The
study was carried out with the effect of the level of meta-cognitive competence on EFL learners’ ability to achieve self-directed learning.

For that, the researcher tempts to conduct a quasi-experiment to put this problem under investigation. Through using meta-cognitive strategies of learning, the participants in this study are familiarized with a poem to be studies and are directed into completing a task. The sample of the study consists of 26 students who represent the whole population and who are selected from Higher College of Laghouat. They are similar with regard to their social, cultural, and intellectual backgrounds. They are divided randomly into two comparable groups, EG (experimental group) and CG (control group) for the sake of giving one group more treatment than the other to validate the hypothesis of the study.

The EG is receiving the treatment of the study which lasted for two sessions for both groups, the EG is accustomed with reading and analyzing a poem using their meta-cognitive strategies through organizing their learning, reading the text aesthetically, thinking creatively and critically, self-reflection, and processing information and constructing knowledge, while the other group, CG is not exposed to any treatment for completing the learning task. To validate the research hypothesis, the researcher tempts to incorporate two research variables which are meta-cognitive competence and self-guided learning. This is to determine what treatment the independent variable which is meta-cognitive competence will get and which group will receive a particular treatment. The researcher also longs to classify the variables of research through an ordinal scale measurement to view the impact of one variable over the other or test their causal relationship.

For examining the level of meta-cognitive competence of learners through meta-cognitive knowledge and self-regulation of learners, which are aspects of metacognition along with metacognitive experience, and metacognitive monitoring, self-reflection, and self-control; the researcher tempted to explore the interactive effects of these metacognitive determinants on the learners’ meta-cognitive competence, to urge the role and impact of metacognition on developing self-directed learning. The researcher tempts to adapt (Thomas, 2002) meta-cognitive orientation learning environment scale to measure metacognitive competence paradigm in the class, in addition to meta-cognitive aspects of Flavell (1979) and Polya (1957) meta-cognitive regulation. These aspects are successively, meta-cognitive awareness and meta-cognitive strategies.

The learners of both groups have been familiarized with a poem of the American Modern era entitled *Leaves of Grass* (1855) by Walt Whitman. Through the aspects of Flavell (1979) and Polya (1957), the EG has been directed through a task with responding to a set of questions asked by the teacher using their meta-cognitive strategies. They tempted to process their knowledge, organize their learning, choose resources, set goals, ask questions, and self-assess their learning for analyzing the poem. The major claim of EFL teachers is to uphold meta-cognitive skills in their literacy classes to help their learners have independent choices and improve their meta-cognitive awareness by being meta-cognitively competent. This Learning setting can get them highly engaged in processing their knowledge by being self-regulated learners.
The meta-cognitive skills of learners were measured using analytical questions to be answered after reading the poem through the learners’ beliefs, perceptions, language and meta-cognitive awareness, in addition to their self-regulation. The EG students read the poem and have been directed to answering questions through critical analysis. The observation sheet is based on scores ranging from 1-5. Using ten criteria and aspects of meta-cognitive skills conducted for answering the analytical questions on the poem for the experiment to complete the observation sheet, each statement was scored on a tape of 1 (low, not very involved) to 5 (intermediate, very involved, and excellent). Thus, the highest possible score was 20 on any one statement during the treatment. One each statement, the researcher circled one number (from 1 to 5) with the average mark of 3 on any statement.

Analysis of Data

In order to analyze the numeral data of this research, the researcher comes to utilize the quantitative approach in order to classify the research variables: metacognitive competence and self-guided learning. The study consisted of the students’ perception of their own meta-cognitive skills and how this contributed to enhancing their meta-cognitive competence, as the researcher tempted to highlight their perceptions and beliefs of their meta-cognitive knowledge and self-regulation. Both groups have been administered through treatment in studying the poem with CG dealing with no treatment during the analysis of the themes, while EG students familiarized with implementing their meta-cognitive knowledge and cognitive monitoring through meta-cognitive strategies such as self-assessment, self-reflection, aesthetic appreciation of the poem, and planning while accomplishing the task.

To ascertain the answer to the research question about the effect of meta-cognitive learning skills and strategies on improving and fostering meta-cognitive competence in learners, and thus achieving self-directed learning in performing a task in a literature class. Table 01 depicts the means and variation between the CG students’ scores on their meta-cognitive awareness when responding to the poem during the treatment class which lasted for two successive sessions.

Table 1. CG students’ Average scores on their Meta-cognitive Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Meta-cognitive Awareness</th>
<th>Session one</th>
<th>Session two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a-Learners’ beliefs about their self and others’ cognitions (learner)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b-Information about aspects of the cognitive Enterprise (task)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c-Knowledge about approaching a particular cognitive enterprise. (strategy)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Score</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total group Average score 1.3+ 2.3= 3.6 (out of the highest score) 3.6/2 (two sessions) =1.8< 3

The table above shows that most of the CG students haven’t been majorly interested or involved in showing their meta-cognitive awareness, and this appeared through their performance
and involvement in class between the levels 1 (low), 2 (not very involved) after being familiarized with the poem. In the first class the learners’ beliefs and perceptions about their own cognition, their knowledge about cognition, and their awareness about approaching a task are below intermediate between scores 1 to 2. In the second session, most of the students of the group scored between 2 (not very involved) and 3 (intermediate) as appearing in the final score of 2.3 depicting that most of the participants have problems in dealing with the analysis of the poem and fail to use their meta-cognitive knowledge to accomplish the task through answering the questions.

Therefore, the CG students’ performance was significantly estimated low with an overall average score of 1.8 <3 out of the highest score.

Table 2. **EG students’ Average scores on their Meta-cognitive Awareness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Meta-cognitive Awareness</th>
<th>Session one</th>
<th>Session two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-Learners beliefs about their self and others’ cognitions. (learner)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Information about aspects of the cognitive Enterprise (task)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Knowledge about approaching a particular cognitive enterprise. (strategy)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Score 3.8 4.5 8.3 (out of the highest score) 8.3/2 (two sessions) = 4.1 > 3

As to the persistent effects of the level of meta-cognitive awareness of the students of the EG, findings suggested that the EG participants have high proficiency in showing their meta-cognitive awareness compared to CG student’s. The overall score of the students’ performance in EG was estimated with an overall average session score of 4.1 > 3 as higher than the average score.

The table below incorporates the findings of the average scores out of five of the level of self-regulation of the CG during the sessions of studying the poem of *Leaves of Grass* (1855) by Walt Whitman, also how the participants responded to the questions without being directed through a meta-cognitive task. The table below shows the total average scores about the level of self-regulation the learners hold, which can appear through their performance in dealing with the task. Most of the CG participants haven’t been highly involved with the task because the teacher is not using instructional strategies which can help them choose their own meta-cognitive strategies such as monitoring and self-assessing their learning.

Table 3. **CG students’ Average scores on their level of Self-regulation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meta-cognitive Regulation Aspects</th>
<th>Session one</th>
<th>Session two</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Assessing, understanding and analyzing the problem;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Planning, choosing and organizing behavior and actions;</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
c. Executing and monitoring plans; 1 1.5

d. Evaluating, verifying and reflecting on decisions and outcomes 1 1

Total Average Score 1.5 1.75

Total group Average score 1.5+ 1.75= 3.25 (out of the highest score) 3.25/2 (two sessions) =1.6< 3

The table above shows the total average scores about the level of self-regulation the learners hold, which can appear through their performance in dealing with the task. Most of the CG participants haven’t been highly involved with the task because the teacher is not using instructional strategies which can help them choose their own meta-cognitive strategies such as monitoring and self-assessing their learning. This appears in the scores of both sessions with 1.5 and 1.75, and with a total average score of 1.6 < 3 which is lower than the average score.

Table 4. *EG students’ Average scores on their level of Self-regulation*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of Meta-cognitive Regulation</th>
<th>Session1</th>
<th>Session2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Assessing, understanding and analyzing the problem;</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Planning, choosing and organizing behavior and actions;</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Executing and monitoring plans;</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Evaluating, verifying and reflecting on decisions and outcomes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Average Scores 4.3 4.8

Total group Average score 4.3+ 4.8= 9.1 (out of the highest score) 9.1/2 (two sessions) =4.5> 3

However, the results of the participants of the EG are shown in Table 04 which reveal that the general trend in students’ perception of their self-regulation led sufficiently to improving their meta-cognitive competence through cognitive awareness and self-reflection. The total average score of the group participants about the level of self-regulation is 4.5> 3 which developed gradually from session one to session two due to the appropriate choice of their meta-cognitive strategies. This high level score signifies the high competence in learners who succeeded in processing, monitoring, and self-reflecting, and evaluating their learning process.

To be considered jointly, the EG level of self-regulation results on developing their meta-cognitive competence signifies a pattern reporting differences between the results obtained from the CG participants’ level of self-regulation, which typically contributes to enhancing their self-directed learning by being fully responsible learners.

In an attempt to spot light on the extent to which meta-cognitive competence of learners can contribute to create self-guided learners in literacy classes, the researcher tempts to analyze data from a particular perspective about the cognitive learning paradigm by investigating the correlation between meta-cognitive competence and self-directed learning. The following graph
represents the determinants which contribute to enhancing meta-cognitive competence of the EG who are accustomed with the treatment of the study.

The graphs below provide the analysis of the level of some meta-cognitive behaviors of the students of the group suggested by (Schoenfeld, 1987), and how they contributed to structuring their meta-cognitive competence in class. The development of level of metacognitive competence is revealed as follow. The impetus claim for engaging in a learning process to foster self-efficacy and self-directed learning is about practicing certain behaviors which can lead to this endeavor such as setting goals and strategic planning. In this vein, students can be self-regulated learners through cooperation, collaborative work, group work, and interactive feedback, also through assessing learning progress and holding self-efficacy beliefs, the effects of these practical behaviors are discussed as follow. In graph A, cognitive monitoring progress has the highest score which increased from session one to session two.

**Graph A** Determinants of level of meta-cognitive competence of EG students

On the other hand, graph B reveals other determinants or behaviors which can contribute to developing meta-cognitive competence including content knowledge, academic self-efficacy, reflective awareness, appropriate strategy selection, meta-cognitive control, beliefs and perceptions. Evidence from the graph signifies that the level of meta-cognitive competence of the participants of the group increases due to their awareness of their meta-cognition and to applying their self-regulation and meta-cognitive knowledge.

**Graph B** Determinants of level of meta-cognitive competence of EG students
Arguably, life-long learning occurs through self-directed practice, support, guidance, and most importantly a favorable learning environment. Self-directed learners need self-control and self-regulation awareness to achieve high level of performance and interaction in class. Indeed, meta-cognition involves knowing about one’s own cognitive knowledge and activity and how his knowledge is used to regulate cognitive activity during learning. It consists of metacognitive experience, awareness, and self-regulation which all lead to self-regulated performance and meta-cognitive competence.

Discussion

Based on the above data analysis through the observation sheet completed by the researcher herself; and prior to the review of related literature of the study, it is clear that the level of the students’ ability in pursuing meta-cognition use is not frequently improved when they are directed to the teaching methodology. On the other hand, the EG students findings are revealed through the scores introduced in table two.

The EG scores highly increased from session one to session which signifies the students high level of meta-cognitive awareness in dealing with the task, and because they are aware of making effective choices of their meta-cognitive learning strategies such as processing information, organizing, monitoring, and self-assessing their learning. Table two reveals their scores which are rated between levels 3 (intermediate), 4 (very involved), and level 5 (excellent) and after dealing with the literary text. It is apparent in session two that most of the participants in the group considered their level of meta-cognitive awareness as above intermediate scoring between 3 and 5, the highest score resulting in the final score of 4.1 which is higher than the standard score. Aspects of Meta-cognitive awareness scores increased because they render as determinants of most of the participants of the group’s meta-competences.

Consistent with the findings of the students’ scores on their meta-cognitive awareness, the level of the students’ ability of completing the task after reading the poem is noteworthy and highly developed. This demonstrated the importance of the learners’ perceptions of full responsibility and knowledge construction and use through their meta-cognition. Similarly, the researcher tempts to investigate the level of meta-cognitive strategies use through self-regulation of learners by adopting Polya (1957) aspects of meta-cognitive regulation including organization, verification, orientation, and execution. On the other hand, the results of the average scores on the students’ self-regulation suggested that the level of the students’ self-regulation in completing the task after reading the poem is not efficient and they didn’t perceive competence which can make them independent learners by choosing their own meta-cognitive learning strategies and skills. This demonstrated lack of the learners’ full responsibility which can be represented through setting objectives, achieving goals, seeking resources, communicating, and setting conditions for their learning.

Cognitive monitoring process level increased which signifies that the participants of the group have cognitive ability in monitoring their own learning because they have a good choice of meta-cognitive strategies in their learning task, then planning and presenting projects has a second high score because most of the participants succeeded in setting objectives for their learning and seeking adequate resources for the learning content. Additionally, the participants managed to
assess the results of their learning task by collecting evidence of their learning progress and achievement over the two sessions of learning. This proves the development in the learning progress of the participant which resulted in self-directed learning. By this learners tempt to prove their independent learning through the use of meta-cognitive strategies of learning which contributed to increasing their meta-cognitive competence in dealing with the task.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study of the effectiveness of meta-cognitive competence on achieving independent and self-guided learning in Algeria provided valuable data about the benefits of conducting an experiment on which the investigation is. The significance of the interaction effects between the two research variables highly supported and impacted the findings of the study. Indeed, the analysis of the data revealed the great potential of working with a poem in the class to promote meta-cognitive competence and opens up the possibility for a major goal which is achieving life-long learning through meta-cognitive awareness and self-regulation. Considering the research question of the study of the effects of meta-cognitive competence on the achievement of self-guided learning and on processing an independent learning progress in literacy classes, the findings demonstrated that the students of the EG perceived the learning task as highly effective and fundamental. They have been directed to applying their meta-cognitive skills which helped them pursue high level of understanding of the poem as interpreted in level of average scores of the group. The study resulted in the fact that self-regulation, self-reflection, meta-cognitive awareness, and monitoring which are meta-cognitive strategies all contributed to increasing the level of meta-cognitive competence of learners which typically led to self-guided learning.

Therefore, the findings of the study tempted to be highly effective compared to other research findings in the field which affirm and prove the high benefit of meta-cognition in the Algerian higher educational level. The study has set the agenda for future research in sub areas such as learning autonomy, learning strategies, assessment and evaluation in the ELT classroom, and provides various practical implications for teachers and independent learners to achieve autonomy and self-directed learning in a literary class. Further studies should therefore explore how these topics are discussed and practiced in teacher education curriculum. Since meta-cognitive strategies and competence in learning have been essential to developing self-directed learning in higher education level with undergraduate and graduate learners, further studies can be conducted with post-graduate learners. Plenty of learning practices and materials, and ongoing processes can contribute to developing learning English as a foreign language and its literature. These can be instructional strategies, teaching materials, and teaching methods which can improve meta-cognitive awareness and learning abilities such as independent choice, organizing information, interpretation and self-reflection. Therefore, the integration of meta-cognitive knowledge and skills in teaching English language and literature is an efficient effort, as it proves to be a highly fundamental issue in engaging EFL learners in active learning situations by being self-directed learners with high level of meta-cognitive competence in class.

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The author would like to extend her thanks to all the participants who make part in this study for their valuable participation.
Contribution of Meta-Cognitive Competence in Preserving Student

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A Shift from a Monoglossic to a Heteroglossic View: Metalinguistic Stego-Translanguaging Lens Approach

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Abstract
This research study aims at replacing monoglossic approaches with a stego-translanguaging pedagogy (i.e., the indirect use of the mother tongue to enhance the target language perception and acquisition). To solve the problematic constant decline in the learners’ reading and writing IELTS scores in Port Said Language Center and to check the influence of the stego-translanguaging approach, two groups of participants were randomly chosen, an experimental group with 33 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners from different colleges in Port Said University in Egypt and a control group with 30 EFL learners. The participants in the experimental group followed a heteroglossic pedagogy, whereas the control group followed a strictly non-plurilingual monolingual approach. The results of Kruskal-Wallis test showed that the stego-translanguaging approach was much more influential in teaching IELTS reading than the monoglossic conventional approach with 1.483 as a mean difference between the two groups as (µ1=7) in the experimental group and (µ2= 5.517) in the control group. Another crucial result was displayed by a parametric test conducted to examine the significant differences between the IELTS writing posttest scores in the experimental and the control groups. The test showed that µ1 > µ2 with an estimation difference of 1.535, where µ1= 6.818 and µ2 = 5.28

Keywords: stego-translanguaging, heteroglossic approach, monoglossic pedagogy, IELTS

1. Introduction
This study is regarded as a contribution to a comparatively modern advance in second language learning and acquisition, defined by Taylor and Snoddon (2013) and Lin (2013) as a paradigm alternation that unlocks unprecedented approaches to perceiving teaching in addition to learning and which is marked by the rising recognition of the need to set an account for plurilingual repertoires that become the zeitgeist nowadays. This variation has been referred to in various ways, encompassing a bilingual pedagogy embracing translanguaging approaches that remove the limits and boundaries between languages. These approaches are based on recognizing the plurilingual tincture of classroom activities and communicative repertoires of the learners and teachers in multilingual environments, and the confirmation of plurilingualism as a prospective resource rather than an obstacle to content learning (Cummins, 2009; Creese & Blackledge, 2010).

In principle, what the researcher finds in common among all these theorists and authors is an utter objection to the monolingual principle (Lin, 2013; Cummins, 2009) or language separation policy (Palmer et al., 2014), according to which language teaching should occur singularly via that language because the intervention of other languages leads to a decrease of the students’ exposure to chances to employ the target language. Therefore, the researcher suggests an indirect use of the target language (i.e., stego-translanguaging) rather than the direct employment of the mother tongue (i.e., translanguaging)

2. Theoretical Framework
2.1 The expanded scope of translanguaging terminology
Often employed in association with the modern trends in bilingualism and multilingualism, the concept ‘translanguaging’ has been recently applied to pedagogy and multimodal communication. (Wei, 2017). Canagarajah (2011) defines translanguaging as the dynamic process by which multilingual and bilingual learners directly use their mother language as an integrated communicative system to shuttle between languages. Nowadays, translanguaging is an umbrella terminology that encompasses a wide variety of theoretical as well as practical proposals that break the conventional ideologies of language detachment. Never the less, such extended employment of translanguaging can be vague simply because it is a multifaceted terminology (Baker, 2012; Leung & Valdes, 2019; Khair, Rosmayanti, & Firman, 2020; Inayati, 2015)

The challenges that encountered translanguaging begin in its theorization and how it can be put into practice. The theory of translanguaging has been under swift advance, and immense reconceptualization has been suggested (Baker, 2012; Wei, 2017; MacSwan, 2017), impacting pedagogical practices and taking many forms. Recent theorizations imply that translanguaging goes against monolingual ideologies of language use and the detachment of the languages in the learner’s repertoire (Otheguy, García, & Reid, 2018). Further, it portrays how bilinguals and multilinguals employ their linguistic repertoire, whether they use one or two languages to make sense of the world or a mixture of languages to convey their messages. Therefore, translanguaging is a naturalistic episode among both bilinguals and multilinguals that is usually involuntary and unplanned, and often unconscious; hence translanguaging as a theory is concerned with the unprompted usage of languages, a phenomenon that is also known as unplanned translanguaging (Otheguy et al., 2018; Cenoz & Gorter, 2015)
Kachru and Nelson (2006) pointed out when referencing to world Englishes that acquiring a language involves functional differentiation and overlapping, sometimes manifested by code-switching or code-mixing. Translanguaging is thus considered considerably distinct from code-switching and code-mixing simply because it is not merely a shift between two or three languages, but the language users use their first language (L1) in discursive practices.

According to Lewis, Jones, and Baker (2012), the radix of translanguaging, as is well known, can be traced in Welsh bilingual pedagogy where it was employed in 1990. It is a pedagogical practice placed by the teachers who use a sturdier language to ameliorate a weaker one, and in such a way, it suggests a profound understanding of the meaning and can lead to a growing proficiency in the two languages. In its modern sense, translanguaging is utilized in a context where both the L1 and second language (L2) are employed as languages of teaching and where the target is to improve proficiency in the two languages.

However, translanguaging is a commonly employed terminology that has expanded beyond the intended teaching strategy utilized in Welsh classrooms. Garcia (2009a&b) defines translanguaging as “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (p.45). Garcia’s concept refers to natural activities that have not been planned as a teaching strategy and that could occur inside and outside the classroom. For Makoni and Pennycook (2007), the notion of translanguaging is intended to soften the limits between languages and to oppose the widely common premise of deconstructing named languages.

2.2. Neoteric studies on translanguaging

While a group of studies deals with translanguaging activities and the outcomes of these practices, fewer concentrate on the enforcement of translanguaging pedagogies. Several studies have investigated the translanguaging activities of instructors in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). While the terminologies ‘stance’ and ‘shift’ are recent and have not been employed in many articles yet, the notions themselves are not that modern and have been exemplified. Some researchers in France and Luxembourg have depicted the affirmative stance of instructors who adopted bilingualism and multilingualism. These instructors acted as bilingual and multilingual models, raised the clarity of languages, and enhanced the usage of multiple languages (Kirsch, 2017; 2020; Duarte & Günther-Van der Meij, 2018). Translanguaging has proved to contribute to learners’ knowledge construction (García & Sylvan, 2011) and sociocultural as well as socio-emotional development (Gort & Sembiante, 2015). Further, it has been shown to contribute to learners’ identity development (Garrity et al., 2015; Velasco & Fialais, 2018).

Some neoteric research studies concentrating on translanguaging practices and their enforcement come from the Netherlands, Malaysia, and South Africa. Some researchers stressed favorable learners’ outcomes as metalinguistic awareness (Kirsch, 2017; Leonet, Cenoz, & Gorter, 2017; Vaish, 2019a&b; Makalela, 2015) and ameliorated reading apprehension. Seltzer and García (2019) depicted newly developed pedagogies; the report issued by the CUNY-NYSIEB project, which included principals and teachers from 67 educational institutions in New York, gives promising examples of three intermediate school teachers, one of whom worked with multilingual students speaking Arabic, English, and Polish. Guzula, McKinney, and Tyler (2016) depicted the
ways how school teachers and students collected linguistic, paralinguistic, and extra-linguistic sources to construct meaning in both literacy and mathematics.

Bin-Tahir et al. (2018) measured the effect of trans languaging approach in teaching Arabic reading comprehension to a group of Indonesian students; 64 students have been randomly chosen and 32 students took part in each of the experimental (E) and control (C) group. Bin-Tahir et al. (2018) employed a reading test to get some information about the students’ achievement in reading, and it was distributed to the participants after the final translanguaging-based treatment had been given. To calculate the mean score, standard deviation, and the t-test value between the pretest and the posttest, the researchers employed Minitab 17.1 program and discovered that the use of translanguaging approach in learning Arabic reading comprehension ameliorates the participants’ ability of Arabic reading comprehension much better than the monoglossic traditional method.

Vaish (2019a) provided valuable insights into the instructors’ translanguaging pedagogies in some educational institutions in Singapore. First, the instructors translated, then explained, and finally, modeled. Few research studies investigated the obstacles posed by the application of translanguaging practices (or heteroglossic pedagogies). Vaish (2019b) reported three basic obstacles that encountered instructors who endeavored to employ English and Malay alternatively: (1) the diversity of the students, (2) the super-negative attitudes toward the mother language, (3) and the overwhelming teacher-oriented pedagogy. Duarte and Günther (2018), who implemented the translanguaging activities in 12 educational institutions in the Netherlands, reported that instructors needed much time to be able to use the proposed holistic model of translanguaging multilingual instruction that depends on Dutch in addition to English and the students’ home languages.

3. Research problem
The constant decline of the EFL learners’ scores in ELTS reading and writing sections is one of the basic obstacles that encounter instructors at Port Said Language Center. For the past five years, the learners’ highest scores have been obtained in speaking and listening, and what was easily noticed was that the learners got low scores in reading and writing sections. That is why this research study raises the following question: Can a stego-translanguaging approach be used instead of a monoglossic one to ameliorate the learners’ scores in IELTS reading and writing sections?

4. Research questions
Based on the research problem illustrated above, this research study attempts to answer the following research questions:
1. Which approach is more influential in teaching IELTS reading: stego-translanguaging or monoglossic?
2. Are there any significant differences between the scores of IELTS writing posttest in the experimental group and in the control group?

5. Hypotheses
1. There are significant differences between the scores of the experimental group and those of the control group in IELTS reading posttest.
2. There are significant differences between the scores of the experimental group and those of the control group in IELTS writing posttest.

6. Study significance
The importance of this research study lies in its pioneering introduction of the stego-translanguaging approach as a replacement for translanguaging and for the conventional monoglossic one to develop the learners’ scores in ELTS reading and writing sections. This study poses a serious query concerning the rational and moderate but indirect use of the mother tongue to develop and brush up the target language. The Arabic language can lend a hand to EFL learners as they consciously will conduct a contrastive analysis to see the similarities and differences between the source and the target languages. Furthermore, reading or writing about a topic in Arabic before doing the same in English will facilitate the counterpart processes in English in terms of comprehension and study time.

7. Methods
7.1 Participants
Steven K. Thompson’s equation is employed to calculate the sample size (see 1 below). In an attempt to attain external validity and representativeness, the researcher randomly selected the research participants out of 75 EFL learners. The study sample consists of two groups: experimental and control. The experimental group consists of 33 EFL learners (20 females and 13 males) from different colleges in Port Said University: 12 engineering senior students, five nursing postgraduate students, six pharmacy graduate students, four Law graduates, and six graduates from the Faculty of Education. The control group consists of 30 EFL learners (19 females and 11 males) from different faculties in Port Said University: nine senior engineering students, four nursing postgraduate students, seven pharmacy graduate students, six Law graduates, and four graduates from the Faculty of Education. The participants aged from 19 to 24.

\[ n = \frac{N p(1 - p)}{(N - 1)(d^2/z^2) + p(1 - p)} \]

Where \( n \) = sample size (82); \( N \) = Population size (105); \( z \) = confidence level at 0.95% (1.96); \( d \) = error proportion (0.05); \( p \) = probability (50%)

Regarding the internal validity of the research instruments employed in this study, the researcher administered a placement test to ensure that the participants are qualified for the IELTS course. This placement test was submitted to some experts who are Ph.D. holders and in the Departments of English at the Faculties of Arts in Port Said, Suez Canal, Suez, and Sattam Bin Abdul-Aziz Universities. After consulting these juries and taking their comments and recommendations, some modifications were conducted on the placement test to make it suitable and valid to be administered.

7.2. Research procedures
1. The participants in the experimental and control groups were given a reading and writing pre-test and were asked to answer the test in 120 minutes (reading: three texts, 40 questions, 60 minutes; writing: two descriptive tasks, 60 minutes).
2. To check the reliability of the pre-test, the participants were retested after three days and the co-efficient correlation was calculated \((r = 0.734)\). To avoid the participant error, the pre-tests were conducted on an open – schedule day chosen by the participants. To evade the subject bias, the examiner asked the participants not to write their names on the test paper.

3. The participants underwent a comprehensive stego-translanguaging-based reading and writing course. The researcher gave the learners some reading passages and writing activities to carry out, but the participants were asked to read first in Arabic about some of the topics involved in the reading and writing activities before starting to answer them. These Arabic passages were intended to enhance the participants’ knowledgeable background. The treatment has lasted for four successive weeks (three-classes per week).

4. The participants in experimental group underwent 120-minute reading and writing posttest (reading: three texts, 40 questions, 60 minutes; writing: two descriptive tasks, 60 minutes) to check the impact of the stego-translanguaging treatment given. To check the reliability of the posttest, the researcher retested the participants again after eight days and the co-efficient correlation was calculated \((r = 0.675)\)

5. The control group, a sample of 30 EFL learners belonging to different educational institutions in Port Said University and with approximately the same age as the experimental group. The control group was selected with the experimental group out of 75 learners. This group was taught in a monoglossic way; no intervention of Arabic support. The participants in the control group conducted a posttest after completing their monoglossic-course. To check the reliability of the posttest, the researcher retested the subject again after seven days and the co-efficient correlation was calculated \((r = 0.791)\)

8. Results
To check the impact of the stego-translanguaging and monoglossic approaches on the IELTS reading scores in the experimental group (EG) and control group (CG); first, the normal distribution of the scores of the reading posttest in the two groups was conducted (See table 1 below and figures 1&2). The basic three tests – Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov, and Anderson and Darling – show that \(p <.05\). It means that the null hypothesis \((H_0)\) is rejected and the alternative one \((H_1)\) stating that the scores of the participants are not normally distributed is accepted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Tests of normality for reading posttest in EG and CG</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Post-test (EG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Post-test (CG)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(a.\) Lilliefors Significance Correction
Therefore, a non-parametric test – Kruskal-Wallis test – was administered as a second step to check the influence of the approach used on the IELTS reading scores. The test showed that the influence of the stego-translanguaging considerably transcended that of the monoglossic approach; the mean rank of the reading test submitted to EG equals 41.5, approximately double that of the reading test submitted to the CG (21.5). The mean difference between the two groups is 1.483 for the experimental group (µ=7) over the control group (µ= 5.517) (see table [2] and figure [3]).

Table 2: Kruskal-Wallis Test: Reading Posttest EG & CG

Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Z-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>-4.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Test

Null hypothesis: H₀: All medians are equal
Alternative hypothesis: H₁: At least one median is different

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>H-Value</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not adjusted for ties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18.79</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted for ties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.88</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To validate the second hypothesis investigating the impact of the stego-translanguaging and monoglossic approaches on the IELTS writing scores in the experimental group (EG) and control group (CG), first, the normal distribution of the scores of the writing posttest in the two groups was conducted (See table 3 below). Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov show that $p > .05$ (61.9% and 52.1%); it means that the null hypothesis ($H_0$) is accepted and the alternative one ($H_1$) stating that the scores of the participants are normally distributed is rejected. Therefore, a parametric test – two-sample t-test – was conducted to test the significant differences between the scores in the two groups. The test displayed that $\mu_1 > \mu_2$ with an estimation difference of 1.535, where $\mu_1$ (equals 6.818) is the mean of the scores of the IELTS writing posttest in EG and $\mu_2$ (equals 5.28) is the mean of the scores of the IELTS writing posttest in CG. Both the individual value plot and the boxplot of the writing posttest showed influential effect of the stego-translanguaging in EG over the monoglossic approach in the CG.

Table 3: Tests of Normality in IELTS writing posttest in EG and CG

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov$^a$</th>
<th>Shapiro-Wilk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statistic</td>
<td>Df</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Post-test (EG)</td>
<td>.202</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Post-test (CG)</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction
9. Discussion

Teaching English reading and writing is traditionally associated with a monolingual bias and the exclusive use of English language in the educational settings is highly promoted and recommended in many countries worldwide. However, this study asserts that the strict separation of languages can be problematic as it prohibits learners from using resources they have formerly acquired in other languages (Cenoz & Gorter, 2020). Therefore, the previous section endeavors to trace the impact of the monoglossic and heteroglossic approaches on teaching IELTS reading and writing. The results section attempts to answer two basic questions: (1) Which approach is more influential in teaching IELTS reading: stego-translanguaging or monoglossic? and (2) Are there any significant differences between the scores of IELTS writing posttest in the experimental group and in the control group?

Kruskal-Wallis test, a non-parametric test, validated the first hypothesis and set a crystal clear answer for the first question. It showed the considerable impact of the stego-translanguaging over...
the monoglossic approach in developing the participants’ IELTS reading scores with 1.483 as a mean difference between the two groups as (µ=7) in the experimental group and (µ= 5.517) in the control group. This finding is in alignment with Aka (2020) who pointed out that English reading skills can be promoted by indirect help from the Japanese language (i.e., the mother tongue of the participants). After giving his experimental group (n = 74) the planned intervention, Aka noticed that the English reading performance of the Japanese learners witnessed much more development in the posttest, whereas the control group (n=83) achieved the normal performance. It indicates that stego-translanguaging can be regarded as one of the influential factors that enhance reading performance. Nonetheless, this finding does not go with Saraka (2020), who claimed that teaching English entrepreneurship to Indonesian students should be done via a monoglossic rather than heteroglossic approach regarding the later pedagogy as a mental distraction. Saraka (2020) reached this conclusion by analyzing a questionnaire submitted to a random sample of 35 students and five teachers, 78% of which preferred the use of English only with an Indonesian intervention to study and teach English entrepreneurship.

A parametric two-sample t-test was conducted to examine the significant differences between the IELTS writing posttest scores in the experimental and the control groups. The test showed that \( \mu_1 > \mu_2 \) with an estimation difference of 1.535, where \( \mu_1(6.818) \) is the mean of the scores of the experimental group IELTS writing posttest and \( \mu_2 (5.28) \) is the mean of the scores of the IELTS writing posttest in CG. This finding is in alignment with Somblingo and Alieto (2019), who examined the English language attitudes among Filipino EFL teachers and concluded that the Filipino EFL teachers prefer to use Filipino language while teaching English writing skills. However, it does not go with Francisco and Madrazo (2019), who believed that the monoglossic approach should be strictly followed in teaching writing and reading to Philippine Grade V and no other enhancement should be obtained from other languages, especially the mother tongue. However, the research results are in alignment with Al-Awaid (2020), who asserted that teachers' classroom practices in EFL undergraduate programs at Jazan University were guided by their so heteroglossic beliefs that the instructors should make use of any possible language means to pave the way for target language learning.

The researcher attributed the influential impact of the stego-translanguaging approach over the monoglossic one to the fact that the human mind always works well in the absence of pressures and stresses. For example, when the EFL learners were asked to read some articles in Arabic on traffic congestion in the USA, they were totally stress-free as they did not know that they would be asked to write a four-paragraph essay in the coming class. Had the learners known that they did this activity for testing purposes, they would have been very stressed and read little that did the purpose. But being stress-free, they have read a lot and when they were asked to write an essay on this subject, they wrote with much verbosity, and of course, they asked their instructor for some translation assistance. The difference between translanguaging and stego-translanguaging is that in the former approach the students know that they do an activity for testing purposes. Therefore, stego-translanguaging approach makes indirect use of some metalinguistic aspects to enhance target language learning.
10. Conclusion
One of the problematic conventions of teaching ELTS reading and writing in Port Said Language Center is the association of the teaching pedagogy with a monolingual bias and exclusive use of English language; this traditional insistence leads to the rapid decline of the learners’ scores in the last five years. Monoglossic approach was highly promoted and recommended in many countries worldwide including Egypt, but it seems that the stego-translanguaging pedagogy can amend what has been spoiled and destroyed by monoglossic approach. The learners are indirectly given the target language by covering it under the learners’ mother tongue, which is used to accelerate the process of target language absorption.

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A shift from a monoglossic to a heteroglossic view

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Computer Assisted Language Learning Integration Challenges in Saudi Arabian English as a Foreign Language Classes: The Case of EFL Teachers at Tabuk University

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Saudi Arabia, Tabuk

Abstract
Recent decades have witnessed unprecedented growth in the educational technology industry. Such significant developments have made Computer Assisted Language Learning an indispensable constituent of the teaching methodology in English as a Foreign Language classes. Meanwhile, several studies report that English as a Foreign Language teachers in many parts of the world is in shortage of skills required for Computer Assisted Language Learning integration in their classes and teaching methods. In view of the variances in different parts of the world as to the status of Computer Assisted Language Learning integration, the current study aims at exploring challenges that English as a Foreign Language teachers, at the University of Tabuk, Saudi Arabia, are assumed to confront in employing Computer Assisted Language Learning as an integral constituent in their classroom teaching methodology. With this end, the study is carried out in light of the question ‘Are the EFL teachers able to integrate CALL applications effectively in their classroom teaching methodology?’ The study employs a mixed-methods research design in which quantitative and qualitative approaches are used in both data collection and analysis. The required data for analysis was collected by using a questionnaire of Likert items that were distributed to a convenient random sample of EFL teachers working at the English Language Institute (ELI) at the University of Tabuk. Quantitative data were analyzed statistically with the support of SPSS whereas qualitative data were analyzed in light of invitational theory proposed by Purkey and Novak (1992). The results of the analysis are significant in drawing inferences that help in making valid conclusions and decisions for designing and developing suitable teacher professional development programs for successful integration of CALL in their EFL classrooms.

Keywords: Computer Assisted Language Learning, English as a Foreign Language, Foreign Languages Teaching, Saudi EFL teachers, University of Tabuk

Introduction

Despite the technological exuberance in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes in many parts of the world, many studies report that a great number of EFL teachers are in a shortage of skills required for the integration of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in their classes. Ineffective CALL integration in EFL classrooms hampers desired learning outcomes, especially of the current technology-savvy generation, as well as the achievement levels of institutional goals of education that need to be addressed properly. At the outset, CALL is considered as a study of computer applications for their suitability and implementation in teaching and learning language (Chapelle, 2010). The CALL, as per many studies, implies searching and using the computer applications that are interactive, informative and suitable to use in classroom teaching. Language education based on CALL keeps on increasing year after the year, but the number of technology-savvy teachers is not being produced to meet the demand of increasing CALL based language learning (Hubbard, 2008). In Saudi Arabia, despite the governments 'efforts to provide computers’ and internet required for effective CALL integration in schools and colleges the cultural barriers are considered to be impeding the progress of CALL education (Alresheed, Raiker & Carmichael, 2017).

On the other hand, the effectiveness of successful integration of CALL in higher educational institutions in Saudi Arabia witnessed a great change in the attitudes of students positively towards learning English (Hashmi, 2016). Many teachers expressed about many challenges in the integration and implementation of CALL in Saudi Arabia English education context. Farooq and Soomro (2018) mention that Saudi Arabian teachers are aware of technology but they don’t integrate it at the preparation and planning level of teaching. However, they use technology in classrooms to work on some activities.

In view of the varying opinions about the challenges in integrating CALL in Saudi Arabian EFL classes, this case study of the EFL teachers at the University of Tabuk is taken up to find out the challenges being faced by Saudi Arabian EFL teachers. Driven by the question ‘Are the EFL teachers able to integrate CALL applications effectively in their classroom teaching methodology?’ the study aims at finding out the challenges that EFL teachers face personally with technology and institutionally from the administrative personnel. Besides, the study attempts to identify necessary skills that teachers need to acquire for successful integration of CALL. The required data for the study were collected through a Likert-Scale questionnaire which was distributed to a conveniently random sample of EFL teachers at the University of Tabuk. This is followed by semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the teachers. Data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively for each item individually which was assigned a specific score. The sum of the individual scores was taken into consideration for quantitative analysis. In light of the findings and the consequent inferences, major factors that operate in hampering CALL integration in the EFL classroom were highlighted.

Literature Review

Azmi (2017) highlighted the point that the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in EFL teaching and learning improves the motivation levels of the learners and make them more autonomous learners. Several studies available in literature hold that CALL intervention could improve students' self-efficacy in reading. The advantages of integrating CALL
in EFL classes range from “enhancing motivation to promoting autonomous learning, fostering critical thinking skills, encouraging innovation and creativity, establishing interaction, boosting communication, promoting research and cooperative learning in the language classroom and boosting students ’performance on written class assessment (Azmi, 2017, p. 111). CALL can act as a motivating factor by being a novel way of learning, thus encouraging students towards being more independent and improve their language skills at their own pace.

On the other hand, many studies mentioned that ICT integration becomes a waste of time, money and efforts unless it is planned well. Nim Park and Son (2009) “reported that external factors such as lack of time, insufficient computer facilities, rigid school curricula and textbooks and lack of administrative support negatively influence the implementation of CALL in the classroom” (p. 112). The important stumbling block that needs to be carefully dealt with, in the process of integration of ICT is the selection of culturally suitable authentic materials available online and the measures to be taken in training the EFL teachers for their efficient use of technology in teaching. Lee (2000) highlighted the financial barriers that pop up in purchasing the latest software and hardware required for classroom teaching. While some learning sites need high amounts of money to offer their services, plenty of free learning sites can be found online. However, there are many students in all parts of the world, who feel it burdensome to meet the expenses required for having the desired software and hardware.

Teachers can be positioned at different levels with regards to knowledge and practice of using and integrating computers in language teaching. A study of Alkahtani (2011) reveals that EFL teachers' beliefs about CALL integration in their classes depend on various factors that include teacher's level of computer usage, the technical support they receive from the institutional authorities and the extent of teacher training support they obtain from the institute. However, teachers 'training aimed at improving and upgrading their knowledge of computers for integrating and using for practical teaching purposes seems to be neglected by many scholars. And so teacher education and teacher training are scarcely presented as important challenges being faced by many language teachers. In tune with the importance levied upon the integration of CALL in EFL classes, Levy and Stockwell (2013) differentiated the 'emergent' CALL practitioners from the 'established' CALL practitioners. The emergent practitioners keep checking trends in teaching and upgrading their skills with the latest developments in technology. They aim towards exploiting technological advantages in their language classroom. On the other hand, established practitioners are traditional language teachers who confine themselves to a level of CALL integration in their teaching methods. Those teachers keep using the technology they are familiar with creatively without involving much into the manipulation of technological advancements.

There has been a significant increase in learning/teaching models and strategies that efficiently exploit the advantages of current technological innovations. Contextualization of the language learning content makes it easy for the learners to understand, practice and develop fluency. However, learning English in non-English speaking countries takes place mostly in de-contextualized environments. Thus creating a context becomes a challenging task and that is made easy with the technological advancements. Many technological applications nowadays are handy for creating virtually real environments that lead to the Augmented Reality interfaces (Schafer & Kaufman 2018), which could enable the language learning and practice practically by
contextualizing the learning contents. Galvis (2011) noticed that most of the students in their adolescent stage prefer not to communicate with their classmates as part of their foreign or second language practice. On the other hand, they find it easier and smoother to interact with computer-aided applications for practising speaking. When it comes to the use of technological tools available, researchers find that there are varying degrees of usage of them depending on the availability of technological appliances and the applications. Zou, Xie and Wang, (2018) argue that collaborative learning, game-based learning and mobile learning strategies in Technology Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) environment provide the technological interface between teachers and their students for various teaching and learning styles. Moreover, they could design the future TELL teaching-learning model based on Bloom's taxonomy of learning through four stages namely, simple acquisition of language knowledge, integrated acquisition of language knowledge, integrated use of language knowledge and use of language knowledge in socio-cultural contexts. In addition to the factors that refer to Bloom's taxonomy, they introduce the factors of the 'authenticity of the context' and 'the degree of integration'. These make it possible for learners and teachers to create virtually authentic contexts and integrate technological applications suitable for leaning different language aspects. On the flip side, often the interventions of technology-based learning activities seem differently interesting to the learners at different levels. Beginner level or lower level learners may be more interested in using certain technological interfaces of language learning than higher-level learners (Bekleyen & Çelik, 2019).

Tayebinik and Puteh (2019) pinpointed the importance of understanding and considering individual differences in implementing CALL. Individuals naturally vary in their cognitive capabilities, in their learning styles, behavioral patterns and learning attitudes. Some students as well as teachers are more interested and inclined towards Technology Mediated Learning (TML) and CALL while some others look forward towards traditional paper based and totally teacher based learning. The issues related to individual differences amongst learners thus becomes an important challenge to be dealt with carefully by teachers. As per the findings of Timucin (2006), teachers' and administrative people's involvement play a crucial role in implementing CALL in any teaching-learning setting. The study clarifies that teachers of EFL need to engage themselves completely and whole heartedly into the CALL integration process, and the administrative people need to support them by all means and by providing what they need on time and by offering regular maintenance service to the required technological set up meant for CALL integration. On the other hand, as Savas (2019) mentioned, despite the ever growing trend towards CALL and technology integration in education, there isn't much focus on preparing specialists that can support teachers for CALL or technology integration. The study of El Aggoune and Ghaouar (2019) find that there is some resistance from teachers to change despite their digital capabilities. Some teachers know technology well and are capable of integrating technology in their classes but they are reluctant to do so because of the lack of technical support and the sluggishness of the supporting staff in providing the required training programs. Warschauer (2013) noticed the correlation between the changes in technology, in the general and applied linguistics and the teaching-learning strategies. The developments in technology and the related linguistics could impact the teaching and learning styles and their goals significantly and thus the changes in the goals of language learning in the 1980s used to be 'accuracy' and have later shifted to 'fluency' by 1990s, which later on transferred to 'accuracy and fluency' and finally nowadays the primary goal has become the 'agency' factor.
By using the agency factor, the aim of language learning by ICT is to make meaningful use of the learned language to make an impact on the real time activities happening in the world.

**Methods**

**Participants**

With the assumption that EFL teachers have some hurdles in integrating CALL in their classes all over the world, the study hypothesizes that most of the EFL teachers at the University of Tabuk are facing similar challenges. Even though there is not any particular study that highlights a specific challenge that a majority of the teachers face, most of them think that there is a necessity to overcome the challenges by some means. Based on the related literature review, a questionnaire with ten Likert items is prepared for distribution among the randomly selected sample of EFL teachers. A convenient random sample of 35 teachers was selected from the department of English and the English Language Institute together at the University of Tabuk.

**Instruments Used**

The main instrument used is the questionnaire of 10 questions that was used for Likert scale items and was distributed to the sample. The problems that are noticeably prominent in the literature review are identified and are assumed to be rampant amongst the EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia as well. The Likert items are set to the scale that carry the points from one to five with one referring to 'strongly agree', two corresponding to just 'agree' three implying no idea about the problem, four marking 'disagreement' and five indicating 'strongly disagree'. The questionnaire was distributed by hand to 35 EFL teachers (n= 35) who were selected randomly in the way that whoever was seen on the campus on a particular day at the university campus was requested for their participation, and if agreed then the teacher was included, and it took about ten days to complete the sample collection.

**Research Procedures**

Based on their responses to the Likert items, each teacher was given a score that is the sum of the points that correspond to their response to each item. Thus the scores of teachers could vary from a minimum of 10 to a maximum of 50. The table below provides the details of the scores.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q. No.</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Not Sure</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (5.71%)</td>
<td>6 (17.14%)</td>
<td>23 (65.71%)</td>
<td>4 (11.42%) 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18 (51.42%)</td>
<td>11 (31.42%)</td>
<td>2 (5.71%)</td>
<td>3 (8.57%)</td>
<td>1 (2.85%) 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>3 (8.57%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>12 (34.28%)</td>
<td>20 (57.14%) 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9 (25.71%)</td>
<td>21 (60%)</td>
<td>1 (2.85%)</td>
<td>3 (8.57%)</td>
<td>1 (2.85%) 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>7 (20%)</td>
<td>9 (25.71%)</td>
<td>6 (17.14%)</td>
<td>8 (22.85%)</td>
<td>5 (14.28%) 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 (8.57%)</td>
<td>8 (22.85%)</td>
<td>5 (14.28%)</td>
<td>11 (31.42%)</td>
<td>8 (22.85%) 35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table one provides preliminary information about the frequency of responses to the Likert items. This table is used to analyze and understand the severity level of a particular challenge as it is reflected in the number of responses and their relative scores. Further, the study used bar graphs to have visual clarification of the actual distribution of the sample. Later on, the study takes the support of the standard normal distribution curve to analyze and estimate the confidence level of the population mean, and also to come to a conclusion on the hypothesis that was based on the assumption that most of the teachers find many challenges in integrating CALL in their classrooms. The study used the SPSS and Excel to calculate the values related to Z statistic and come to conclusions and draw inferences out of the results.

Later, based on the responses to the Likert items, the study attempts to provide clarification on the categorical data qualitatively in light of the invitation theory proposed by Purkey and Novak (1992). According to the invitational theory, all human beings have immense capability to do numerous activities, and tapping their latent potentiality by inviting them and involving them in interactions that enlighten their spirits is an ethical process that can make life a more enriching, exciting and satisfying experience. The invitational theory relies basically on five assumptions. The first assumption is that all people are valuable, capable of doing seemingly difficult tasks and are responsible for completing the tasks. The second assumption is that education and learning have to be collaborative activities. Third, the process of an activity or learning is the product in making. Fourth, all the people have immense latent potential that needs to be tapped by different means. And the fifth assumption is that the latent potential can be realized by places of learning, policies that encourage people to learn, programs that are designed for learning and training and the processes that are designed specially to invite the people to learn and develop personally and professionally.

**Findings**

**Analysis of the Quantitative Data**

As the sample of the study (n= 35) is good enough for estimating the population parameter, the bar graph provides immediate insight into the number of Likert item that was viewed as the most prominent challenge. The following sentences are the ten Likert items without their corresponding value references that are 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'not sure', 'disagree', and 'strongly disagree' with the values of 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively.

1. CALL integration is carried on well in EFL classes, and the teachers don't find any considerable barriers in EFL classes.
2. Teacher's training required for CALL integrations are not provided well and so the EFL teachers are unable to integrate CALL in their EFL classes.
3. Teachers are mostly in favor of the traditional book and board teaching method and this attitude of teachers is a major impeding factor of CALL integration.
4. EFL classrooms are not sufficiently equipped for effective integration of CALL tools.
5. Availability of internet sources is not up to the desired level of CALL integration that can motivate teachers to use online sources mostly.
6. Most of the authentic sources available online are not culture-friendly and so discourage both students and teachers to integrate CALL resources.
7. Students' level of English is not up to the standard of integrating CALL.
8. Students' computer skills are not up to the level of using CALL resources.
9. Teachers don't get enough support for the complete integration of CALL from the administrative personnel.
10. Students and teachers both find it financially burdensome to maintain internet and the required technological tools that are needed for CALL integration.

Figure 1. The response frequency in table one
Figure one shows that Likert item number one has got more responses for series number four and that indicates most of the teachers disagreed that CALL integration cannot be easily carried out in all their classes. And almost 77% of sample do not agree with the first item and about 17% are not sure about the integration of CALL, leaving only about 3% of them agreeing to the CALL integration in their classes. The teachers who agreed to the first item were consulted personally and in the enquiry about their ability to integrate CALL in their classes in contrast with the 97% of their counterparts, they mentioned that they could do it as they got trained for integrating CALL at the university where they worked before. Leaving this small portion of exceptions in the sample, a lot majority of the teachers in the sample imply that they have some problems in integrating CALL. On the contrary, about 83% of the teachers agreed with the statement in the Likert item two, and the graph shows the tallest bar to series one and next tallest is the bar of series two and
both the bars indicate the importance of in service teacher training programs for effective CALL integration.

The Likert item three receives maximum responses to the corresponding series five of the graph indicating that most of the teachers are in favor of a shift from traditional teaching methods to advanced methods of teaching with the support of technology. Only about 8% of the teachers agreed with the statement and a vast majority of the sample either strongly disagreed or disagreed. When the teachers, who agreed with the statement, were interviewed personally they told that they chose to agree with the statement because to their observation most of the teachers are using traditional teaching methods of using the white board and the prescribed textbooks, the teachers were not provided with any teacher’s training for CALL integration, and also because most of the teachers do not show any serious interest towards CALL integration in their classes. When we look at the responses to the statement in item four, series two of the graph shows up taller and points out that most of the teachers agree with the statement even if they don't strongly agree. Overall, about 86% of the teachers agree with the statement, which implies that if the classrooms are well appointed with required technological support like the internet, laptops for all students and teachers, projectors with remotes most of them would comfortably integrate CALL with their teaching. At the same time, the statement in the Likert item five partially endorses the responses to the item four. The series of bars to the Likert item five show that a little more than 50% of them find that lack of internet facility as a problem, a considerable number of teachers don't find it as a problem for CALL integration. And it can be observed that a considerable percentage of teachers are not sure whether the lack of internet facility a serious problem for CALL integration.

The responses to the sixth item indicate that non-availability of authentic materials online is considered not a major problem. More than 50% of the teachers disagreed with the statement and about 17% are not sure whether it is a problem or not. Even though about 30% of the teachers agreed with the statement, in the personal interview they mentioned that bringing realia into the class is an additionally burdensome teaching process, and creating virtually authentic contexts for classroom purposes are easier online. The statement in the seventh Likert item is worth considering as many teachers either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. They mention that a great number of students Join University courses with the beginner level of English making it difficult to find right materials online that could serve the range of students' level of English in a class of highly heterogeneous student composition. Most of the teachers agree that their students are computer and technology savvy, and despite their ease in working with technological devices and applications, some teachers find that their students 'level of English becomes a kind of impediment that discourages teachers from using advanced technology support. There is a great number of teachers who expressed their concern about the mismatch between the course contents and the heterogeneity of the students in the class. The responses to the item nine reveal that there is little support to the teachers from their administrative personnel although neither the teachers nor the students find it burdensome to carry on their classes with CALL.
Figure 2. Scores of the Participants

Figure two shows that the sample is normally distributed with its range from 27 to 33. The other details of the data are as given below.

Standard Deviation, \( s \): \( \text{1.676831746444} \)

Count, \( N \): 35

Sum, \( \Sigma x \): 1043

Mean, \( \bar{x} \): 29.8

Variance, \( s^2 \): 2.81176470588

Margin of Error (Confidence Interval)

As the sampling means most likely follows a normal distribution, the standard error of the mean (SEM) can be calculated by the following equation:

\[
\frac{s}{\sqrt{N}} = \frac{0.2834362969941}{\sqrt{9}} = 0.0961391229323
\]

Based on the SEM the margin of error (or confidence intervals) at 95% confidence level is \( \pm 0.28343629699419 \) (1.960).

At 95% confidence level of 1.960\( s_\bar{x} \) the confidence interval of the distribution is 29.8 \( \pm 0.556 \) (\( \pm 1.86\% \))

Because this study is for understanding the sample tendency towards the integration of CALL, a confidence level of 95% (or statistical significance of 5%) is considered for data representation.
Table 2. Value Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>2 (5.7142857142857%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>6 (17.142857142857%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>10 (28.571428571429%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>4 (11.428571428571%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>9 (25.714285714286%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>4 (11.428571428571%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Distribution Graph of the Data

The sample size is $N = 35$, the number of favorable cases is $X = 29$, and the sample proportion is $\hat{p}$ and the significance level is $\alpha = 0.95$.

$$\hat{p} = \frac{X}{N} = \frac{29}{35} = 0.8286$$

(1) Null and Alternative Hypotheses
The following null and alternative hypotheses were tested:
Ho: $p \geq 50$
Ha: $p < 50$
This corresponds to a left-tailed test, for which a Z-test for one population proportion needs to be used.

(2) Rejection Region
Based on the information provided, the significance level is \( \alpha = 0.95 \), and the critical value for a left-tailed test is \( z_c = 1.64 \).
The rejection region for this left-tailed test is \( R = \{ z; z < 1.64 \} \)

(3) Test Statistics
The z-statistic is computed as follows:

\[
Z = \frac{\hat{p} - p_0}{\sqrt{p_0(1 - p_0)/n}} = \frac{0.8286 - 50}{\sqrt{50(1 - 50)/35}} = \text{NAN}
\]

(4) Decision about the null hypothesis
Since it is observed that \( Z = \text{NAN} \geq Z_c = 1.64 \), it is then concluded that the null hypothesis is not rejected.

Using the P-value approach: The p-value \( p = \text{NAN} \), and since, \( p = \text{NAN} \geq 0.95 \), it is concluded that the null hypothesis is not rejected.

(5) Conclusion from the quantitative data analysis
It is concluded that the null hypothesis \( H_0 \) is not rejected. Therefore, there is not enough evidence to claim that the population proportion \( p \) is less than \( p_0 \), at the alpha \( \alpha = 0.95 \) significance level.

Confidence Interval
The 5% confidence interval for \( p \) is: \( 0.825 < p < 0.833 \).

**Qualitative Analysis of the Data**

The responses of the sample reveal that the lack of teacher’s training for CALL integration is the most dominant factor that hinders the CALL integration process in EFL classes. It can be inferred that the teacher’s training can boost the range of CALL integration. The invitational theory implies that "inviting is an ethical process involving continuous interactions among and between human beings" (Purkey & Novak, 1992, p. 5). As per the invitational theory, one has to respect the ability and efficiency of others and support their capabilities by providing them with what they need for tapping their abilities. In the face to face interviews conducted by the researcher, many teachers revealed that despite their opinions expressed in the institutional and departmental meetings about the necessity of in-service the teacher’s training for CALL integration, the institutional authorities didn't show serious efforts in organizing them. As it is supposed in the self-conception theory that teachers know well that they will fit well as productive teachers in the ever advancing teaching-learning environment only when they could upgrade their teaching methods. The invitational theory is founded on three concepts that are democratic ethos, perceptual tradition and self-concept theory and the core elements of the invitational theory that are based on
the three foundational elements are care, respect, trust, optimism and intentionality. As the term democracy means that everyone in society needs to have a say, teachers keep expressing something on the activities they keep doing, and when their words go unheard they cease to express and their abilities to perform activities run down.

Organization and execution of educational training programs to the able professionals - teachers in the context of education – need to take into consideration the varying behavioral patterns that are observed by the invitational theory. People with ‘intentionally disinviting’ behavioral patterns are detrimental to any kind of developmental activities. The people with such behavioral patterns in the administrative and decision making positions can cause great damage to the potential and progressive professionals as these professionals are subject to continuous insults, degradations and humiliations that can downsize their confidence levels and potentiality. On the other end of the spectrum, the people with ‘intentionally inviting’ behavioral patterns can boost the morale of the professionals who can reach the pinnacle of their careers by demonstrating their performances at the highest possible ranges. There are some people with an intermediate range of behavioral patterns who happen to be either ‘unintentionally disinviting’ or ‘unintentionally inviting’. While the unintentionally disinviting people are harmless, their lack of knowledge of the factors that operate either positively or negatively in a context can show their impact temporarily. The people with these behavioral patterns can be corrected by training sessions. At last, one can notice that the occasions of ‘unintentionally inviting’ behaviors are accidental and the people with such behavioral patterns are not dependable in a progressive environment. By observing the varying behavioral patterns that keep operating in a dynamically progressive environment, one has to understand the importance of having the intentionally inviting people who always can build the concepts of development viz. mutual trust, respect, the dignity of individuals and the progression of individuals in any working environment.

Teachers keep perceiving the advances in their surroundings and think about their position in the changing environments. Once they perceive the developments they tend to think about the changes in their personality in tune with the changes in the surrounding environment and this kind of change happens only when they perceive the things that happen around themselves and not because someone tells them. By saying so, the invitational theory would mean that individuals, like teachers, are responsible and they keep acting following their responsibilities. Whenever they could perceive a necessity to bring about changes in their knowledge and personality they keep expressing their intention to change and upgrade, and then they need the support required from the administrative personnel for expediting such changes. All the participants in the teaching-learning setting that include teachers, students and the administrative people need to be mutually caring, keep sharing the information about the developments around and organize and invite the fellow participants for training programs where they can upgrade their skills.

Discussion
In compliance with the research works before, it is found that a majority of the teachers are a lot aware of technology and they are capable of using technology for educational purposes. The teachers are usually motivated enough to integrate technology unless there are any barriers in their choice of applications that they would like to use. Alresheed, Raiker, and Carmichael (2017) talk about cultural and religious barriers and Lee (2000) talks about financial barriers and the results
of this study are in tune with the previous studies. The teachers find that they are not getting enough support from the administrative people. As one teacher pointed out that although the higher authorities of the university are well aware of the English studies, the administrative personnel at the lower level are not that cooperative because they aren’t positive about the intensive English language education. Moreover, the findings show that even though the teachers have some shortage in their technological competence, that’s not seen as a great barrier as the teachers are ready to fill the void by participating in any technological training programs. By and large, the teachers are much positive about integrating CALL in EFL classes.

A critical analysis of the responses shows that there is an immense necessity for teacher training programs for all the teachers of EFL for efficient and effective integration of CALL in EFL classes. It is understood that the sample chosen represents a population that finds that CALL integration is not carried out to the expected levels, which otherwise would have been much productive in their teaching outcomes. Most of the teachers personally are much interested in upgrading themselves towards becoming technology savvy and believe firmly the implementation of CALL integration would yield much better learning outcomes. By understanding the necessity to care and respect teachers' responsibilities and their commitments as able individuals, the administrative people need to come forward to organize the required teacher development programs and invite all the teachers intentionally for upgrading their skills and knowledge, so that the entire student population gets developed with far better learning outcomes. As Schmidt (2004) examined, there is a great need of the invitational education to be carried out across the immensely multicultural educational environments. Since behaviors and beliefs of teachers, students, parents, the administrative people and the other people who are a part of an educational institute are directly and closely related to their cultures, the training program needs to be designed for professionals with varying cultural backdrops. Understanding the intensity of the training that can serve professionals from varying cultural backdrops to bring about the required changes in their perceptions becomes easier by understanding the concepts of the invitational theory.

**Conclusion**

Based on the assumption that teachers of EFL in Saudi Arabia have some barriers to successfully integrating CALL in their classroom teaching, a study was carried out to identify the barriers that the EFL teachers at the University of Tabuk are facing. The study was carried out using the questionnaire that comprises ten questions which were set as Likert items and were distributed to a convenient sample of 35 teachers and the responses were analyzed in light of invitational theory. The results of the study denote that there is everything that is needed for complete integration of CALL except an invitation in time for programs aimed at upgrading teachers' knowledge of technological developments. Teachers are usually ready for professional development programs and the only initiative required for them is to contain progressive and respectful teacher training program environment. As the study shows the teachers are more concerned about the way they are encouraged to training programs and the way they are treated at the programs. Students and their teachers have the resources enough both financially, and personally with regards to their readiness to learn new things. They keep looking forward to the resourcefulness of the administrative people to work out, organize and invite them for the developmental programs. When the administrative people are more like intentionally inviting the institutes to see more enthusiastic trainees in their teacher training programs. Having considered
the supportive or helpful and unsupportive or harmful spectra of behaviors there is great necessity to identify and avoid the intentionally disinviting behaviors for successful integration of technology in education. On the other hand, the questions related to which applications of the technology are the most suitable for EFL teaching and learning and what technological gadgets can be the right kind of devices for such effective EFL applications are the questions that need further enquiry in this regard.

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References


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**Appendix A**

**Questionnaire**

1. CALL integration is carried on well in EFL classes, and the teachers don't find any considerable barriers in EFL classes.
   a) Strongly Agree  b) Agree  c) Not sure  d) disagree  e) Strongly disagree

2. Teacher trainings required for CALL integrations are not provided well and so the EFL teachers are unable to integrate CALL in their EFL classes.
   a) Strongly Agree  b) Agree  c) Not sure  d) disagree  e) Strongly disagree

3. Teachers are mostly in favor of the traditional book and board teaching method and this attitude of teachers is a major impeding factor of CALL integration.
a) Strongly Agree  b) Agree  c) Not sure  d) disagree  e) Strongly disagree
4. EFL classrooms are not sufficiently equipped for effective integration of CALL tools.
   a) Strongly Agree  b) Agree  c) Not sure  d) disagree  e) Strongly disagree
5. Availability of internet sources are not up to the desired level of CALL integration that can
   motivate teachers to use online sources mostly.
   a) Strongly Agree  b) Agree  c) Not sure  d) disagree  e) Strongly disagree
6. Most of the authentic sources available online are not culture-friendly and so discourage both
   students and teachers to integrate CALL resources.
   a) Strongly Agree  b) Agree  c) Not sure  d) disagree  e) Strongly disagree
7. Students' level of English is not up to the standard of integrating CALL.
   a) Strongly Agree  b) Agree  c) Not sure  d) disagree  e) Strongly disagree
8. Students' computer skills are not up to the level of using CALL resources.
   a) Strongly Agree  b) Agree  c) Not sure  d) disagree  e) Strongly disagree
9. Teachers don't get enough support for complete integration of CALL from the administrative
   personnel.
   a) Strongly Agree  b) Agree  c) Not sure  d) disagree  e) Strongly disagree
10. Students and teachers both find it financially burdensome to maintain internet and the required
    technological tools that are needed for CALL integration.
    a) Strongly Agree  b) Agree  c) Not sure  d) disagree  e) Strongly disagree
Towards a Stylometric Authorship Recognition Model for the Social Media Texts in Arabic

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Abstract
Numerous studies have been concerned with developing new authorship recognition systems to address the increasing rates of cybercrimes associated with the anonymous nature of social media platforms, which still offer the opportunity for the users not to reveal their true identities. Nevertheless, it is still challenging to identify the real authors of social media’s offensive and inappropriate content. These contents are usually very short; therefore, it is challenging for stylometric authorship systems to assign controversial texts to their real authors based on the salient and distinctive linguistic features and patterns within these contents. This research introduces a new stylometric authorship system that considers both the shortness of data and the peculiar linguistic properties of Arabic. A corpus of 20,357 tweets from 134 Twitter users. A document clustering based on Document Index Graph (DIG) model was used to classify input patterns in the tweets that shared common linguistic features. A comparative analysis using Vector Space Clustering (VSC) model based on the Bag of Words (BOW) model, conventionally used in authorship recognition applications, was used. Results indicate that the proposed system is more accurate than other standard authorship systems mainly based on vector space clustering methods. It was also clear that the model had the advantage of providing complete information about the documents and the degree of overlap between every pair of documents, which was useful in determining the similarity between documents.

Keywords: Authorship recognition, cybercrime, document clustering, Document Index Graph, linguistic stylometry

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Introduction

Despite the influential role of social media in enhancing communication and sharing knowledge and information among individuals all over the world due to its increasing popularity, the problem of anonymity and fake accounts still represents a challenge to individuals and societies (Agarwal, Dokhoohaki, & Tokdemir 2019; Boyd & Crawford, 2012; Budinger & Budinger, 2006; Schallbruch & Skierka, 2018). Due to the anonymous nature of social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Skype, and Tumblr, millions of users can create fake accounts that can be used for unethical practices and illegal actions. Such applications can post negative comments about each other or send abusive messages and inappropriate content to other users. Such practices have, in many cases, negative impacts on the life of individuals, including suicidal thoughts and attempts, stress, defaming, and distorting the reputation of families and businesses (Golbeck, 2018; Görzig & Frumkin, 2013; Kowalski, Limber, & Agatston, 2012; Lowry, Zhang, Wang, & Siponen, 2016).

Recent studies and reports have revealed that most anonymous posts, comments, and messages on different social media platforms, especially Twitter, are not committed to ethical principles and etiquettes (Anderson, 2018; Reader, 2012). These usually have offensive and inappropriate content that violates the sanctity and freedom of others. Many users also use fake accounts to spread fake news, hate speech, and terrorist propaganda. Different social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter have indeed been accused of having a determining role in allowing hate speech and inciting violence against ethnic minorities in different parts of the world (Citron, 2014; Flynn, 2012).

In the face of these problems, social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter are developing technologies that can detect inappropriate content. They have also been working to delete fake accounts in a way to combat what has come to be known as ‘platform manipulation’. One main problem with this approach, however, is that social media platforms cannot keep up with this flood of fake and suspicious accounts and offensive contents. Additionally, the policies and rules of many social media platforms do not require users to reveal their true identities. The claim thus is that social media platforms are still failing to address the issues of impersonation arising from fake accounts. Parallel to the attempts of social media platforms to combat problems of cyberbullying and impersonation, different machine learning systems and data mining techniques, feature engineering methods, network embedding training, and linguistic stylometry have been developed. These have been widely used in solving problems related to authorship detection of online messages and forensic investigations in general. Approaches of this kind have been concerned with finding the most likely author/s of controversial documents.

Despite the effectiveness of such approaches and techniques in addressing different authorship issues, social media contents still pose real challenges to these approaches and systems. This is attributed to the nature of social media language itself, where users usually post very short texts. To illustrate the argument, it is still difficult for authorship systems to handle the large volume of short texts on social media platforms due to the lack of linguistic information in these posts. In the processing of social media posts, these texts, referred to as documents, have to be mathematically represented in data space to be amenable for computational analysis. In very short posts or documents, the data space is usually sparse or empty as it will be predominately populated by many zeroes due to the shortness of data. The result is that it becomes difficult for authorship
systems to capture the discriminative power of the data or the distinctive features of posts due to what is known in the literature as data sparsity. In a database, sparsity describes the number of cells in a table that are empty, so the matrix (the way data are usually organized in stylometric applications) will be predominately dominated by many zeroes. This can be illustrated in Table One.

Table One. An example of data sparsity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User 01</th>
<th>User 02</th>
<th>User 03</th>
<th>User 04</th>
<th>User 05</th>
<th>User 06</th>
<th>User 07</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given a data matrix based on the information shown in Table One, it is clear that the datasets are not meaningful. There will be no point in identifying linguistic patterns that can be used as clues for assigning texts to their plausible authors. This problem has negative impacts on the accuracy and therefore reliability of the results of these approaches and systems (Aggarwal & Reddy, 2018; Grčar, Mladenič, Fortuna, & Grobelnik, 2005; MacKay, 2003; Omar, 2020; Wainwright, 2019).

Another problem is that standard authorship systems do not consider the issue of linguistic peculiarities. In the case of Arabic, standard authorship systems do not usually consider the peculiar nature of Arabic. Farghaly and Shaalan (2009) indicate that Arabic linguistic structures are still challenging for Natural Language Processing (NLP) researchers and developers. They explain that despite the peculiar nature of morphology in Arabic being a highly structured and derivational language, standard NLP systems do not consider the critical role of morphology, which has negative impacts on NLP applications. This can be attributed to the fact that different NLP systems are mostly based on English and other European languages with no consideration of other specific-language features. Numerous studies have indicated that different features of Arabic such as diglossia (Farghaly & Shaalan, 2009), rich and complex morphological system (Attia, 2007), the orthographic representation, and morphological and syntactic ambiguities (Attia, 2008) have negative implications on the consistency and reliability of NLP systems.

Despite the development of different Arabic NLP applications that considered the distinctive linguistic properties of Arabic in addressing different NLP applications including tokenization and Part-of-Speech (POS) tagging (Attia, 2007; Diab, 2009; Habash & Rambow, 2005; Nawar, 2014; Roth, Rambow, Habash, Diab, & Rudin, 2008), spell and grammar checking (Kiraz, 2001; McEnery, Hardie, & Younis, 2018), machine translation (Habash, 2010a; Habash & Rambow, 2005; Hamouda, 2014; Mitkov, 2004, 2014; Soudi, Farghaly, Neumann, & Zibib, 2012), and parsing (Bourahma, Mbarki, Mrouchid, & Mouloudi, 2017; Habash, 2010b; Khoufi, Aloulou, & Belgith, 2013; Zaki, Hajjar, Hajjar, & Bernard, 2017), very little has been done about authorship recognition in Arabic in general and the language of social media in particular. A need exists therefore to develop reliable authorship recognition methods that take into consideration the peculiar nature of Arabic and social media language. In this regard, this study seeks to address this
gap in the literature by evaluating the effectiveness of linguistic stylometry approaches that considers both the morphological and lexical properties of texts on the effectiveness of authorship recognition in Arabic. The rationale is that morphological patterns and structures of Arabic can be usefully used to supplement the authorship recognition applications in Arabic. As such, this study asks whether the authorship of controversial social media language with a focus on Twitter posts can be recognized via only linguistic stylometry using a combination of morphological and lexical properties.

Literature Review
Stylometry, the investigation of an author’s style using quantitative methods to explore the elusive character of his style and the essence of his use of language, has always been central in authorship attribution and recognition studies (Lennon, 2018; Savoy, 2020). These studies have been concerned with exploring the unique stylistic and linguistic properties of authors as a clue for deciding authors of controversial texts. With the development of computational analysis and the expansion of digital texts, computational methods are considered imperative by many critics for their capacities in dealing with large volumes of data (Altintas, Can, & Patton, 2007; Burrows, 2003, 2005, 2007; Holmes, 1998; Holmes & Forsyth, 1995; Jockers, Witten, & Criddle, 2008; Paton & Can, 2004). They argued that linguistic stylometry based on computational methods has proved successful and reliable in developing objective criteria for capturing the style of a text—based on linguistic structures. An earlier attempt of the use of computational methods in identifying the linguistic and stylistic characteristics of authors for deciding authors of controversial texts took place in the 1960s when two American statisticians used computational analysis in their attempt to reveal the real authors of the Federalist Papers (a collection of 85 articles originally published between 1878 and 1888). Mosteller and Wallace (1964) investigated the stylistic use of the function words as discriminators in the disputed texts. The success of the new approach opened the way to the computerized age of stylometry and authorship studies. Over the last three decades, linguistic stylometry based on computational statistical methods has been widely used in investigating the peculiar characteristics of authors for both literary and forensic purposes. This study is only concerned with the applications of linguistic stylometry in forensic applications.

Over the past few decades, stylometry has been extensively used in forensic investigations to reach reliable conclusions regarding the authorship of controversial texts through looking for some internal evidence within the texts using quantitative and statistical methods (Ilsemann, 2019). Given the feasibility of computer-based technology, forensic investigations make use of stylometry to answer authorship questions of disputed and dubious texts (Doultni, & Vijayalakshmi, 2019). Analysts have been concerned with different variables, including lexical features such as frequent words, rare words, token-based word/sentence length; syntactic features such as the use of function words, sentence types, and punctuation marks; and structural features such as indentation for authorship purposes. The assumption is that the identification of such personal distinctive stylistic features makes it possible to detect an author's signature and distinguish the writing of one author from another or others.

In authorship detection applications, forensic linguistics is generally based on the notion of a linguistic fingerprint, which is defined as the process of collecting linguistic data and
features that stamp a speaker/writer as unique. The assumption is that people use language differently and that this difference between people can be observed just as easily and surely as a fingerprint. To do this, forensic linguistics usually adopts quantitative and statistical methods to investigate the linguistic level/s chosen by the researcher (Omar & Deraan, 2019, p. 184).

The chief merit of the quantitative tools adopted in the stylometry approaches is that it is replicable and thus objective. The claim has always been that speculations concerning anonymous and controversial texts can be backed up with objective evidence derived from computational statistical analyses. The replicability of the stylometry tools offers reasonable solutions to the problems of selectivity and subjectivity that have always been attached to traditional stylistic analysis.

Despite its effectiveness in resolving different authorship problems, it is often argued that many traditional fundamental questions concerning authorship recognition remain unresolved (Koppel, Schler, & Argamon, 2013; Rudman, 1997, 2012; Stamatatos, 2009). Stylometric authorship recognition is often blamed because a successful application cannot be appropriately applied to other genres or languages. Many studies, for instance, have indicated that standard stylometric authorship methods are not appropriate for short texts and social media language (Koppel et al., 2013; López-Escobedo, Méndez-Cruz, Sierra, & Solórzano-Soto, 2013). Standard stylometric methods that are used for determining the authors of long texts such as books and articles have been generally unsuccessful in assigning the controversial texts to the known authors correctly. When it comes to very short texts and the language of social media, these usually cannot achieve the same performance due to the sparsity of content in short texts and the peculiar nature of the language of social media. Furthermore, the language of social media is usually unstructured, informal, and ungrammatical as compared to the language of books and articles.

Authorship analysis of online documents is more challenging than analyzing traditional documents due to their special characteristics of size and composition. ….. The traditional literary works such as books and essays are rich sources to learn about the writing style of their authors. Literary works are usually large, ranging from few paragraphs to hundred pages. They are generally well-structured in composition, following definite syntactic and grammatical rules. The study of stylometric features has long been very successful in resolving ownership disputes over literary and conventional writings. Online documents, on the other hand, are short in size, varying from a few words to a few paragraphs, and often they do not follow definite syntactic and/or grammatical rule; making it hard to learn about the learning habits of their authors from such documents” (Fung, Debbabi, & Iqbal, 2020, pp. 29-30)

Concerning the authorship recognition of short texts and the language of social media, different approaches have been developed over the last decades to address the limitations of the literature that traditionally focused on long texts and to find more reliable solutions for the growing authorship detection problems due to the increasing rates of criminal activities as a result of the unprecedented developments of social media channels. These are referred to in the literature as the authorship recognition of micro messages, social media posts, or microblogging messages (Brocardo, Traore, Saad, & Woungang, 2013; Koppel et al., 2013). Researchers have been working
to address the limitations within the stylometric authorship theory and devise new ways that can be applied to very short texts and social media content. They have been using different social media platforms and networks, including Twitter and Facebook to test the developed methods. Raghavan (2010), for instance, introduced the use of both lexical and syntactic features within texts using Probabilistic Context-Free Grammars (PCFG) for maximizing the accuracy of detecting authors of anonymous online messages. Similarly, Bhargava, Mehndiratta, and Asawa (2013) used an integrated method that considers lexical features, syntactic features, and features specific to tweets (such as hash-tags, mentions, and frequency of Emojis) to identify the authors of controversial posts on Twitter. Despite the effectiveness of such methods in improving the accuracy of authorship performance, the results cannot be extended to all other languages, including Arabic. This study attempts to address this gap in the literature by proposing a stylometric authorship model that can be usefully used for determining authors of disputed and controversial online social media texts in Arabic.

**Methodology**

**Methods**

Numerous approaches have been developed for stylometric authorship recognition. Document clustering, however, remains one of the most widely used approaches in stylometric authorship studies and applications. The recent decades have witnessed an unprecedented revolution in developing mechanized solutions for organizing the vast quantity of unstructured digital documents and providing powerful tools for turning this unstructured repository into a structured one (Sebastiani, 2006). The literature suggests that document clustering (simply putting similar texts together) is central in almost all authorship applications (Yu, 2008). Document clustering is used as a starting point for many of the authorship systems (Argamon & Olsen, 2006; Horton, Taylor, Yu, & Xiang, 2006; Labbe & Labbe, 2006; Nakamura & Sinclair, 1995; Ramsay, 2005; Tambouratzis & Vassiliou, 2007; Unsworth, 2000; Yu & Unsworth, 2006). The assumption is that documents or texts clustered together are more likely to be written by the same author. Rexha, Kröll, Ziak, and Kern (2018) explain that authorship recognition can be done using document clustering where the author of a disputed or controversial text can be identified from a set of candidate authors.

Theodoridis and Koutroubas (2003) suggest that text clustering is one of the most primitive mental activities of humans. It long preceded the computer age. It was used to handle a large number of information people used to receive. However, only manual clustering was possible where researchers and professionals used their immediate intuitive knowledge of the world in grouping similar texts together. There was no use of quantitative and numerical methods. In other words, text clustering was usually performed in subjective ways that relied heavily on the perception, knowledge, and judgment of the researcher. With more and easier accessibility to electronic digital data in different disciplines and the power of computing data processing on the one hand and the need for maintaining objectivity standards on the other, it has become ever more likely that such procedures must involve automated computational methods (Gordon, 1996) where human intuition and traditional organization methods are replaced by mathematical and computational techniques (Golub, 2006). In this regard, recent years have witnessed the flourishing of automated statistical clustering and classification systems in authorship systems.
In authorship studies, document clustering is used to automatically group natural language texts according to an analysis of their information/semantic content, using clustering algorithms (Debole & Sebastiani, 2003, 2004). It is a process of grouping similar documents together into distinct sets without labeling them (Maranis & Babenko, 2009). The underlying principle of cluster-based analysis is that closely associated documents tend to be relevant to the same author. In document clustering applications in general, linguistic features of texts (usually lexical and syntactic properties) are extracted to identify the relationship between texts with the purpose of grouping texts that have common linguistic features together (Justo & Torres, 2005; Srivastava & Sahami, 2009). This is usually referred to as content clustering, where clustering of documents is performed based on the words they contain. Content clustering is carried out using computing linguistic the similarity/distance or what can be called measuring proximity within documents. It has always been argued that linguistic information within documents is key to understanding and determining the content of such documents. The failure of content clustering methods to address different authorship problems has raised many doubts about its reliability. Perhaps the most serious disadvantage with ATC applications is that in almost all text classification schemes, semantic relatedness is merely judged at the level of lexical semantics without taking compositional semantics into account (Gabrilovich & Markovitch, 2007). Another major criticism of ATC applications is that many of the algorithms used for computing linguistic relatedness represent documents as just bags of words where context is not considered.

Later, clustering by context has been introduced as a working approach to evade the problems caused in clustering by content (Attardi, Di Marco, & Salvi, 1998; Attardi, Gulli, & Sebastiani, 1999; Flanagan, 2005; Kovacs, Repasi, Baksa-Varga, & Barabas, 2008; Mirkin, 2005; Pedrycz, 2005). Clustering by context is based on grouping web pages whereby the context surrounding a link is used for categorizing the document referred by the link. The conception is based on the assumption that a web page that refers to a document must necessarily involve enough hints about its content which themselves are sufficient to classify the document (Attardi et al., 1998; Pedrycz, 2005). Many software programs have been devised to execute such tasks, including SenseClusters (Purandare & Pedersen, 2004). These programs make it possible for users to cluster similar contexts, such as emails and web pages (Pedersen, 2008). The working principle of such programs is that data documents can be grouped based on their mutual contextual similarities (Purandare & Pedersen, 2004). Programs of this kind have indeed proven a successful clustering method when applied to web pages and its merits are more tangible with multimedia material. Nevertheless, an approach of this kind carries with it some limitations. The most serious shortcoming is that it is not concerned with the analysis of the content of documents. One more drawback is that in almost all context classification applications “identical replications of controlled experiments result in different conclusions” (Martin, Claes, & Thomas, 2005, p. 470). In this regard, clustering by context is not appropriate for stylometric studies and the study.

Content clustering is used. The rationale is that stylometric authorship is based on inferring or detecting the author of a document through extracting the stylometric features from the document contents, which are strong predictors for authorship determinism. Experimental results of document classification indicate that content word representation has been shown to give promising results in identifying the content of a document. Equally important, most studies agree
that content word representation gives better results than other more sophisticated approaches to clustering (Brocardo et al., 2013; Dhillon, Kogan, & Nicholas, 2004; Frigui & Nasraoui, 2004).

**Procedures**

Document clustering based on Document Index Graph (DIG) model was used. The model was first introduced by Hammouda and Kamel (2002). The model is based on building a directed graph where each node represents the unique words and edges represent a complete sentence in any document. This model treats a document as a set of sentences rather than a set of words (Hammouda & Kamel, 2002). Unlike the traditional vector space model (VSM), DIG captures the structure of sentences in the document set, rather than single words only (Castillo, Cervantes, Vilarino, & Baez, 2015; Hammouda & Kamel, 2002).

The DIG has some main advantages. These can be summarized as follows. First, it will enable different features or variables to be represented simultaneously. This means that clustering results are based on both common phrases and single words. Second, it allows incremental phrase-based encoding of documents for detecting the style patterns of documents and efficient phrase matching (Lukka & Shaik, 2016; Momina, Kulkarnia, & Chaudharia, 2007). In this way, the DIG is appropriate for representing the letter combinations, single words, and phrases simultaneously. Third, the DIG model finds the matching patterns while building the graph. Finally, DIG provides complete information about the documents and the degree of overlap between every pair of documents, which is useful in determining the similarity between documents. In the present study, each of the texts also referred to as documents, is represented in a DIG matrix where all words and sentences in all the documents are initially included.

**Data**

A corpus of real-world data derived from Twitter was created. 20, 357 tweets by 134 users on the American rapper Nicki Minaj’s concert in July 2019 in Saudi Arabia were selected. The data were randomly selected following the hashtag in Arabic #ميناج_نيكي (Nicki Minaj). The announcement of a concert by Minaj in Saudi Arabia triggered a social media storm in July 2019. Many conservative groups from different Arab countries expressed their disappointment considering it against the Saudi customs and values. On the other hand, many advocates considered the concert as one way towards the modernization process the Kingdom is undergoing. Nicki Minaj herself was attacked by many groups for appearing in Saudi Arabia. Although the concert was finally canceled, the posts included numerous offensive words which make it appropriate for the study. Only tweets written in Arabic were selected. It was also decided that posts are written in the Franco-Arabic alphabet (also known as the Arabic chat alphabet or ‘Arabizi’) to be disregarded. The rationale is that the orthography of Arabic is utterly different from that of Western languages including English. The Franco-Arabic or so-called Arabizi does not follow the rules of the Arabic alphabet. As the current study is concerned with developing a stylometric model of Arabic, the integration of Arabizi or any other writing format with the Arabic alphabet would have a negative bearing on the reliability of the results.

A profile of the linguistic variables of each user was first created. This resulted in 134 profiles. Each profile included all the selected posts of each user. An example is given in Appendix One. All morphological patterns and lexical types were then extracted and mathematically represented so that they are amenable for processing and analysis. In other words, posts were
converted into a string of morphological patterns and lexicons where the frequencies of all morphological patterns and lexical types were calculated.

One main problem with the corpus, however, is that too many unimportant variables were included. These are described as noisy variables or the curse of high dimensionality data. In stylometric applications, the extremely high dimensionality of text data is a significant issue that has a real bearing on the reliability and accuracy of almost all applications based on such data. Although there must be sufficient information (represented in our case in the number of linguistic variables), having too many variables can be difficult or even intractable. The idea is that the larger the data dimensionality, the more difficult it becomes to define the manifold sufficiently well to achieve reliable analytical results. Only the most important variables thus should be selected because irrelevant and redundant variables often degrade the performance of algorithms both in speed and accuracy. To address this issue, principal component analysis (PCA) was used to define only and all the most distinctive morphological and lexical types.

PCA is one of the basic geometric tools that are used to produce a lower-dimensional description of the variables in a data matrix. The primary function of PCA is to find the most informative and distinctive variables within a database or matrix, hence it is possible to reduce the dimensionality of datasets consisting of a large number of interrelated variables while retaining as much as possible of the variation present in the data sets. The underlying principle is that a data matrix in stylometric applications with large data sets can be reduced so that the most distinctive variables are identified with the purpose of best expressing the data and revealing hidden structures and patterns. PCA works to perform a ‘good’ dimensionality reduction with no significant loss of information as it removes correlated variables within datasets so that it describes the covariance relationships among these variables. The process is done by computing the principal components scores by measuring all the variables in the data set. In so doing the variables that have the highest loading or weight are identified as principal components and other variables are discarded.

Figure 1. A PCA of the morphological types
Based on the PCA of the morphological types and letter combinations, the highest variables were retained. These were decided to be the highest 60 variables. Similarly, a PCA of the lexical types was carried out, as shown in Figure Two.

![Score plot](image)

Figure 2. A PCA of the lexical types

It was decided that only the first 50 variables should be retained. All variables from 51-1667 were removed. The data now is reduced to only 60 morphological types and 50 lexical ones. These are assumed to be the most distinctive features that can help determine the similarity between the texts.

**Results & Discussion**

As an initial step in assigning the posts to their authors, a DIG model was designed to group similar posts. The hypothesis is that posts grouped or clustered together are more likely to be written by the same author. Generated clusters were compared to author profiles for evaluating the performance of the suggested technique. This is technically known as the profile-based method. Results indicate that the accuracy rate is around 83%. For comparison results, a VSC model was built where only the most distinctive lexical frequencies of the posts were included. The rationale is that word-distribution-based document representations have been widely used in assessing the relatedness of documents.

VSC is based on measuring the relative distances between the row vectors. The distance between any two vectors in space is jointly determined by the size of the angle between the lines joining them to the origin of space's coordinate system, and by the lengths of those lines. VSM is simply a technique where documents are compared with each other than indexed or classified in terms of their similarity or distance based on the words they contain. It can be defined as the organization of a collection of documents usually represented by a vector space model into distinct clusters based on similarity. The theory was first developed by Salton (1971) for IR purposes four decades ago and since then it has become a standard tool in IR systems. The underlying formula of VSM is initially to extract all useful information within a document collection and record it in an index known as a vector space. Then, a proximity measurement is used to compute the semantic similarity among the documents with the purpose of grouping similar documents together.

VSM is the most widely used document representation method in document clustering and classification applications. This is the representation of a set of documents as vectors in a common
vector space with one real-valued component for each term (Salton, 1971; Salton, Wong, & Yang, 1975). The basic hypothesis of VSM in document clustering is the contiguity hypothesis: “documents in the same class form a contiguous region and regions of different classes do not overlap” (Manning, Raghavan, & Schütze, 2008, p. 223). The default method of VSM is a clustered document space where the documents are grouped into classes, each being represented by a class centroid. Salton, Wong, et al. (1975) introduced a simple process for VSM where “word stems extracted from documents or document abstracts (are) weighted per the frequency of occurrence of each term $K$ in the document” (p. 615). This method is usually referred to as a ‘bag of words’. In VSM applications, individual words are used as indexing terms. Vector space representations ignore the word order and the context where words are used. Each document is represented by the number of occurrences of each word in the document in Euclidean vector space where each token in the vector corresponds to a unique/given word in the matrix (Joachims, 2002; Ozgur, 2006).

Results indicate that up to 46% of this accuracy was lost, however, when only lexical features were used, and 27% was lost when the classification was based on the morphological patterns only. The implication here is that standard stylometric authorship methods are not appropriate for the authorship applications in Arabic. It can be concluded that the integration of morphological and lexical features enhance the authorship performance in Arabic texts in general and very short texts in particular. The results reported here agree with the previous studies in the sense that authorship recognition systems and techniques have to address the specific features of the language of social media (Fung, et. al. 2020). They also support the arguments that the Arabic morphological system carries distinctive stylistic features that can be usefully used in authorship recognition applications (Alghamdi & Selamat, 2019; Omar, Elghayesh, & Kassem, 2019; Omar & Hamouda, 2020).

Conclusion
So far, authorship recognition of social media texts in Arabic poses different challenges for researchers, professionals, and program developers. This can be attributed to various reasons, including the linguistic specific rules that make Arabic different from other Western languages and the peculiar nature of the social media language. Thus, this study asked whether it is possible to develop a reliable authorship recognition technique based on integrating the morphological patterns and letter-pair combinations along with the lexical features of texts using the DIG model. Results indicate that the accuracy rate of the proposed technique is around 83% that surpassed the performance of the traditional stylometric authorship systems based on vector space clustering of only the lexical properties of texts. It was also clear that the use of the DIG model had positive impacts on the clustering performance with its capacity to include different linguistic variables for each author profile. Given the anonymous nature of social media and the increasing rates of cybercrimes in recent years, the findings of the study can be usefully used in forensic investigations and detecting authors of illegal and inappropriate posts and messages.

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References


**Appendix One An example of a user profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User ID</th>
<th>Profile</th>
<th>Transliteration</th>
<th>English translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ID01</td>
<td>ينكي ميناج بتسوي حفله في السعودية؟</td>
<td>nyky mynaj btswy hafla f’als’ewdy? shaqul , shakhly</td>
<td>Nicki Minaj will headline a music concert in Saudi Arabia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID02</td>
<td>بيكون مشفر ليقولج نص الكلي االنفجار الي ورا</td>
<td>festival in Saudi Arabia. What to do? They say that half the speech would be coded. Why is the explosion in the back?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ID03  | يشكور السعودية على إلغاء حفل #ميناج _نيكي
 oleh اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او لا اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او 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لا تستطيع تحديد راجل او اسمها لا تستطيع تحديد راهلا

ID04 | شصار على #ميناج _نيكي وين وروني خل العن والدينها بالنقليزي | What is new about Nicki Minaj? Where is she? I want to insult her parents in English.

ID05 | الخبر إلغاء الحفلة خبر خير والمنة | The cancellation of the music festival is really a news item. All praise and thanks are due to Allah.

ID06 | حتى اسم #ميناج يجيب الغثيان | Even her name causes nausea

ID07 | إذا قصصت لسلاطين قبل النجاح | We are so pleased with this news item. I was so sure from the very beginning that this story is fabricated by the enemies of Saudi Arabia to distort its image, especially we are in the season of pilgrimage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Text (Arabic)</th>
<th>Text (English)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ID08</td>
<td>اوامر عليا من قيادة الدوله تلغي حفل هذي الشاذه وليس هي من اعتذرت</td>
<td>Supreme orders have been issued by state leaders to cancel the music festival scheduled to be performed by this gay woman. She did not excuse herself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID09</td>
<td>صدرت توجيهات عليا بإلغاء حفل نيكى ميناج</td>
<td>Supreme orders have been given to cancel Nicki Minaj's music festival!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID10</td>
<td>لحق او ما تلحق اغنية مسربة من حفل #نيكي_ميناج في #جده</td>
<td>Hurry up! Don't miss a leaked song from Nicki Minaj's concert in Jeddah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID11</td>
<td>كل شي بصوتها حلو فديتها انهرتت رسميا كنسلت</td>
<td>Everything she sings is fantastic. I adore her. Officially, the music festival has been canceled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID12</td>
<td>هما الجماعة متغاظين من #نيكي_ميناج لياه اِکمن انها لا و ماوزة طحن</td>
<td>Why are those people displeased with Nicki Minaj? Is this because she is really hot chick?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID13</td>
<td>دما الوجاعة نهج معين من #نيكي_ميناج لياح ولا اتشين لنا موزة طحن</td>
<td>It is said that Nicki Minaj will headline a music festival in Saudi Arabia?! Have you ever heard of Nicki Minaj?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID14</td>
<td>تب و بَدَن يا جدعان يُبِينوا لزعت عارف في هاليدي يُبِينوا لزعت في هاليدي! نسرعت مع #نيكي_ميناج طيب</td>
<td>What shall we do guys? You man, do you know what does it mean that Nicki Minaj will headline a music festival in Saudi Arabia?!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>byqwlwa nyky mynaj ht'eml hflh f als'ewdyh allh ghalb hbybna klna wbs bqy 'eshan fyha tabydh dy</td>
<td>It is said that Nicki Minaj will headline a music festival in Saudi Arabia. Nothing to do. You are our darling, indeed!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Calm down; otherwise we would be sentenced for life imprisonment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Impact of Blended Learning on the Twelfth Grade Students’ English Language Proficiency

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Abstract
The blended learning approach utilizes modern technologies and electronic media in teaching to create a technology-based environment. However, it is not an exclusive online environment because the teacher and the students have to be present in a traditional face-to-face classroom. It is widely believed that adopting a blended learning approach will enable learners to have quality educational opportunities and improve their performance. The incentive for conducting the research is to evaluate the effect of the blended learning approach on high school students’ English proficiency. Specifically, the study aimed at answering the question: is there a significant difference in the Twelfth-Grade students’ English language proficiency as measured by IELTS due to the model of delivery (Blended learning model and the traditional delivery model)? To achieve the study’s goal, the researcher applied the experimental method and used IELTS to measure language proficiency. The study sample selected purposively consisted of 63 male twelfth-grade students in one of the private schools in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The study sample was assigned to two groups: the experimental group taught using blended learning consisted of 31 students, and the control group led by the traditional method consisted of 32 students. The results showed statistically significant differences at the level of (a<0.01) between the means of the results of the two groups on the post achievement test in favor of the experimental group. These results illustrated the impact of adopting the blended learning approach in an English Foreign Language (EFL) setting on students’ achievement in standardized tests. However, the successful implementation of blended learning largely depends on how responsible and committed students are towards active learning.

Keywords: active learning, blended learning, e-Learning, English language proficiency, face-to-face instruction, learning styles, technology-rich learning environment

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Introduction

Developing English language proficiency among high school students is widely acknowledged as an essential requirement for joining higher education and requires the teacher’s considerable efforts to build such ability in his/her students. English has been introduced as an obligatory school subject at first grade in all elementary schools in the UAE so that the English learning process extends from primary and secondary schooling systems through the tertiary level (Al Noursi, 2013). Therefore, English learning has become a de facto requirement in UAE schools and college curricula. Educational leadership has also been introducing initiatives to create improved learning environments conducive to effective learning English to meet all students’ different needs. Native English-Speaking Teachers have been recruited and more technological tools have been introduced to create a rich learning environment that is expected to facilitate the acquisition of the English Language. Yet, many senior students at schools fail to acquire band five or higher on the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), which is a requirement for direct admission to the universities in the UAE.

Mastery of the English language as a medium of instruction in high school can be significantly achieved by adopting teaching strategies that appeal to various learning styles (Wong, 2015). Recent studies (Ahmedi, 2018; Ghavifekr, & Rosdy, 2015) have proven many benefits of different technology-based instructional materials for effective foreign language teaching and learning. Among such programs is blended learning, in which online digital media is combined with traditional approaches. Many studies that showed the blended learning method in teaching a foreign language had attracted the interest of language teachers all over the world (Comas-Quinn, 2011; MacDonald, 2008; Neumeier, 2005). In contrast to e-learning, which refers to using only electronic media to learn, blended learning supplements traditional face-to-face teaching and learning environments with different kinds of technology-based instruction (Sezen, 2015).

Reasons for adopting the Blending Learning (BL) strategy range from accommodating more students to improving the quality of courses. It provides opportunities for learners to take more charge of their learning by scaffolding their knowledge. It gives the student some control over their time, space, and learning path and pace. In other words, blended learning promotes active learning as students come to the classroom prepared and have sufficient background about the topic and lead to a more rigorous, challenging, engaging, and thought-provoking classroom. As discussed by Bakeer (2018), blended learning allows learners to visualize, listen, feel, and interact with the learning material. In short, it moves them from theory into practice. MacDonald (2008) also maintains that learners in the blended learning environment can gain a deeper understanding of all the abstractions they get through. They can learn according to their pace, which creates the opportunity for more individualized education. Good achievers can expand their learning and learn things that are not within the school syllabi (Gülten, 2016). However, slow achievers can repeat and revise notes and get feedback from their teachers to overcome the problems and challenges they face (Bailey & Martin, 2013). Schools around the UAE have already started implementing blended learning into their daily classroom activities. Positive feedback has also been reported and well documented in different levels, though it is becoming more prevalent in higher education.

Blended learning has been defined differently (Sharpe et al. 2006). However, all definitions indicate that a blended learning environment/course combines face-to-face/offline instruction and
online learning forms. The blended-based technologies component consists of activities which may be individual or collaborative. According to Stern (2004), these activities may also be synchronous or asynchronous. Some examples include participating on a threaded discussion board, attending an online lesson, instant messaging, doing an electronic collaborative task, doing online assessments, writing on electronic walls, creating media-oriented files, simulation. In other words, any activity in which an individual must take an active role (Shannon & Kathryn, 2016).

For the purpose of this paper, blended learning is defined as the interweaving of face-to-face instruction with online technologies. That is to say; it combines online digital media with traditional classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student, with some element of student control over time, place, path, or pace.

This study is of significance for a set of reasons. It will present evidence on the effectiveness of implementing blended learning activities in the EFL classroom, which may encourage using the blended learning model in English language classes as a possible method of improving learners’ proficiency. Providing a teaching method that could enhance students’ motivation and autonomy and address individual needs is another potential value of the study. Furthermore, the results could give rise to a broader effective pedagogical deployment of technologies in language learning, which may again bring forth more in-depth reviews of the use of technology in the developing the four language skills. Besides, they can also inform technology-based language program designers and language learning software developers by catering to language learners’ needs. Moreover, they can contribute to the current body of literature relevant to the use of technologies in language education.

However, the principal incentive for conducting the research study is probably related to the increased need for transforming the educational approach in a highly technologically rich environment. Besides, the study may constitute a call for other researchers to exploit this learning model in other areas of language learning. Finally, the blended learning model might be potentially more motivating and promising for today’s learners.

**Literature Review**

Most of the researchers who have studied the blended learning approach and its impact on improving English language proficiency for second language learners reported many positive effects. Al-Haq and Al-Sobh (2010) examined the effectiveness of a web-based writing instructional EFL program on Jordanian secondary students’ performance. The study was carried out with 122 students in the eleventh scientific-grade studying in four comprehensive secondary schools, two male schools and two female ones that belong to Irbid Second Directorate of Education. The results disclosed that there were statistically significant differences in the students’ achievement in the post-test in favor of the experimental group.

In a more recent study and in a different region, Burston, et al., (2011) reinvestigated the effectiveness of vocabulary learning via mobile phones and compared two groups of students at a Chinese university. While one group of students studied a vocabulary list via text messages, the other group of students worked on the same list through the paper material. Their findings revealed that students could learn short-term vocabulary more effectively via mobile phones than with paper
material. Similarly, Khazaei and Dastjerdi (2011) constructed a comparative study of the impact of traditional and blended teaching on EFL learners’ vocabulary acquisition. The study aimed to explore the application of SMS to the blended method of teaching L2 vocabulary. The results revealed that the students who received the learning content through the blended teaching approach had better test results than the group of students who received the learning content in the traditional way.

A line of research has also established a high correlation between using technology in the language classroom and higher language proficiency achievement. Dawley (2010) found that e-learning encouraged learners to seek information, evaluate it, share it collaboratively, and ultimately transform it into their knowledge. This conclusion is echoed in Tanveer (2011), who conducted the study “Integrating E-Learning in Classroom-based Language Teaching: Perceptions, Challenges, and Strategies.”

Al-Masry (2012) studied the effectiveness of using the electronic blended learning in teaching a unit in English course at the cognitive levels (recognition, comprehension, and application) by second-year secondary female students in Makkah. The researcher used a quasi-experimental approach. The study sample was all 56 female students, divided into two groups: an experimental group of thirty-one students, and a control group of twenty-five students. An achievement test was used to collect data. The results concluded that there were significant differences between the average test scores of the group of students using the electronic blended learning and the control group of students using the traditional method in post-application of the achievement test at the recognition, comprehension, and application in favor of the experimental group.

In a more recent study, Ghazizadeh and Fatemipour (2017) studied the impact of the blended learning approach in developing the EFL learner’s reading skills in Iran. They used the quasi experimental design where the sixty participants were randomly assigned to two groups: experimental and control. The two groups were tested before and after the treatment to determine the learners’ reading proficiency level. The researchers concluded that using blended learning in reading lessons has a significant influence on developing learners’ reading skills. They also asserted that blended learning facilitates students’ learning and recommended the implementation of blended learning in English reading classes.

However, not all studies investigating the benefits of blended learning activities reported that it impacts academic achievements. Alshwiah (2009) discussed the effects of a proposed blended learning strategy and analyzed students’ attitudes toward the English language at Arabian Gulf University. The sample was divided into two groups: the control group and the experimental group. Findings indicated no significant difference between the two groups regarding achievement or attitude towards the English Language. Similarly, Miyazoe and Anderson (2010) examined the usefulness of different online activities in an EFL setting in a university in Tokyo. The forums, blogs, and wikis proved to be more beneficial in language education, particularly in improving writing styles, although the results did not show significant differences in learning outcomes.

Harker and Koutsantoni (2005) focused on the blended learning effectiveness of an English for academic purposes (EAP) program designed for students from diverse ethnic backgrounds.
Comparisons on student retention, achievement levels and satisfaction with the program between the two groups of students suggested that performance and satisfaction levels were similar in the two groups; however, the blended learning model is significantly superior only in students’ retention.

On the whole, research shows that using blended learning can be useful to develop the learners’ language competencies in the EFL/ESL contexts. The reviewed studies imply that language teachers could utilize blended learning as a teaching model to develop their learners’ language proficiency.

**Methodology**

The true-experimental method was used in the current study in collecting and analyzing data. The duration of the experiment extended for two terms of the academic year 2018 to 2019 with a total number of sixteen weeks of blended learning model encompassing the whole first term and the first half of the second term. The method of teaching is the leading independent variable of the study. It can be classified into: (A) the “traditional” model of delivery, and (B) the blended learning model of delivery. The term “traditional” refers to a student-centered and teacher-driven class with all instruction happening in the face-to-face mode inside the classroom. However, participants of the study use their personal computers (iPad) during their studies and for their assignments. The participants’ performance, measured by the IELTS test overall band, is the dependent variable.

**Participants**

The population of the study included twelfth-grade students from a private school in Al Ain, in the UAE. The study sample consisted of sixty-three male students, and it was selected purposively because of its relevance to the researcher regarding the procedures used. The study sample was divided into an experimental group that included 31 students, and a control group with 32 students from the 12th grade. The control group received “traditional” instruction in class, while the experimental group adopted the blended learning model.

All participants in the study are Arabic-speaking Emirati students who have been studying in this school for more than four years. When students reach grade twelve, they are expected to exit school with an overall IELTS Band Score of 6-6.5. However, students begin their IELTS preparation course in Grade Eleven.

**Research Question**

The present study proposes investigating the effect of adopting a blended learning model of delivery on the achievement of twelfth-grade students in one of the private high schools in Abu Dhabi Emirate as measured by IELTS. More specifically, the study aims at answering the following research question:

Is there a significant difference in the Twelfth-Grade students’ English language proficiency as measured by IELTS due to the delivery model (Blended learning model and the traditional delivery model)?
Research Instruments

To evaluate the effectiveness of the use of a blended learning model of delivery as opposed to the only face to face mode of delivery, the following research instruments were used:

1. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) was used to measure students’ achievement in the English language throughout the four language skills. IELTS is the world's most popular English language proficiency test for higher education and global migration. There is a common consensus among educators that the test is a good yardstick for measuring students’ abilities in English, with conclusions being drawn about the effectiveness of IELTS being used on a global scale. It uses a nine-band scale to identify levels of proficiency, from non-user (band score 1) to expert (band score 9). IELTS has rigorous test design, development and validation processes. These processes ensure that every version of the test is of a comparable level of difficulty and that every test worldwide provides valid and consistent results.

2. The supplementary e-learning activities include various learning activities related to the content of each unit. There are six units in this study that consolidate, reinforce, and expand on the classroom lessons, and students can check their answers automatically. These activities provide students opportunities to either revisit skill-building activities or increase the skills they have already attained, thus enhancing their language learning. These online lessons were developed by the researcher for students preparing for their IELTS. During the development of the activities, the units were tested by the English language teachers at the school and other schools adopting the same textbook to confirm that they covered similar content to the classroom lessons.

Procedures of the Study

The study was conducted over an academic year in one of the secondary schools in Al Ain city, UAE. At the beginning of the first term, students sat for an IELTS to assess their current level of language proficiency, and the collected results were considered as the pre-test. The experimental group studied the six units through blended learning strategies while the control group learned the same units through the face-to-face traditional teaching method. Students in the experimental group were provided with an orientation on how to participate in the blended learning activities. This orientation covered topics such as using the Learning Management System (LMS) to access their electronic workbook, the class blog, the drop boxes for activities, and other features of the LMS. They were also introduced to the webcams, voice recorders, and virtual learning environments that they would be using for some collaborative activities. Online assessment tools such as Quizlet, Kahoot, and Quizizz applications were also introduced to the experimental group, who were asked to sign up for each program. The teacher created classes on these assessment programs for tracking students’ progress online.

The e-learning activities and tools that the experimental group used aimed at encouraging students to practice new language items in their own time. In addition to the textbook, supplementary materials like videos, relevant websites, applications to use, discussion board, electronic wall (Padlet), mind mapping (Poplet), google.doc for doing collaborative tasks and unit theme projects were introduced during the first unit, first four weeks. In-class sessions, on the other hand, the teacher focused on communicative activities through pair and group work, creating a collaborative atmosphere.
Students in the experimental group were informed about the expectations concerning the blended portion of their course, including the requirement that they must complete all activities weekly. The amount of time spent on blended learning activities would depend on an individual student’s motivation to complete assignments. In both groups, teachers meet their students for three ninety-minute blocks a week.

By the mid of the second term, a post-test (IELTS) was administered by the British Council to both groups. Results were collected and analyzed. To calculate the test scores, an independent t-test was used to analyze the findings, and the significance level was set at 0.01 (p<.001) in the study.

**Results**

In order to find out whether the two groups of Twelfth Grade students differ in terms of their language proficiency before starting the intervention, the IELTS test was given as a pre-test. Descriptive statistics and the independent sample t-test were conducted. As displayed in Table 1, students who were taught using the blended learning approach had a similar level of language proficiency (M=4.36, SD=0.94) to that of the group taught through face to face traditional teaching approach (M=4.65, SD=0.86).

<table>
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<th>df</th>
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In order to determine the effects of a blended learning model delivery on Twelfth Grade male students’ language proficiency, descriptive statistics and the independent samples t-test were conducted on course grades of two groups after the intervention. As indicated in table 2, the mean scores for language proficiency after the program were 5.97 (SD=0.76) in the blended group and 5.29 (SD=0.69) in the face to face group (t =-3.69639, p =0.00047).

<table>
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<th>Mean</th>
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It was found that there was a significant difference in the students’ language proficiency between the blended group and the face to face group. This indicated that the treatment increased blended learning group scores, which means that the experimental group learners improved their language proficiency through blended instruction and activities.
Discussion

The statistical analysis revealed that there was a significant difference between the average test scores of the group of students using the blended learning and the control group of students using the traditional method in the post-test in favor of the experimental group. This finding is in line with the results of many studies such as Burston et al. (2011) and Khazaei and Dastjerdi (2011). Several interrelated factors may have led to this result. First, in the controlled group, the instructor follows the textbook from page to page, activity to activity. There are guided input and output activities, focusing on the different language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing, in that particular section. In the experimental group, students used multimedia and authentic realia for some of their activities; therefore, providing more opportunities for learning and engagement. A second possible explanation is related to social learning collaborative activities such as discussion boards and blog activities. The students in the control group turned in their paper-based assignments like writing tasks at the end of the period and received credit. On the other hand, the blended learning group did their blogs online. Students received comments on their blogs could continue an individual interaction with the instructor and other students. Finally, although both groups had their iPads and could access the internet, students in the experimental groups could access a wider variety of learning resources and multimedia that support the teacher and his students throughout the different stages of each lesson. Experimental group students got access to real-life resources that provided them with authentic information and facts leading to a deep understanding of the already handled topics and an active sharing of information by students in the class.

Blended learning has some points that make it significant and influential. It provides a more individualized learning experience as teachers can offer their students different tasks based on their abilities and learning styles. This matter can be difficult to be carried out in a traditional class. It also provides more personalized learning support, where students can be given notes and tips related to their particular tasks other than those that are generalized for the whole class. Students using blended learning activities in the current study received comments, suggestions, and responses on their blogs or discussion boards. On the other hand, the students in the traditional class did not receive any type of feedback but a grade on their tasks. Consequently, those students in the blended learning class possessed both integrative and instrumental motivation by receiving a comment back from their teacher or other classmates. They were able to communicate their ideas and thoughts, and at the same time, implicitly pick up language from different resources that would help them in the future. On the other hand, the students in the traditional classroom had the instrumental motivation of doing their class and homework tasks in order to get the “checkmark” and, therefore the credit for doing the job. However, there was no integrative motivation for doing the work. Blended learning instruction is also believed to increase learners’ proficiency scores to a greater extent than those who only use face-to-face language instruction. This proficiency increase is likely caused by the augmented time spent studying by the group that participated in blended learning instruction.

It is also important to note that the results of the study are also consistent with the constructivist theories of learning. Students in the experimental group constructed their long-term knowledge by applying inductive learning strategies to improve their language skills in opposition to Chomsky’s simplified notion of language learning as an unconscious process. Their knowledge occurred due
to critically analyzing critical concepts at their own pace in an individualized setting such as their homes. In this way, they improved their English language proficiency by consciously following taught strategies.

Probably, one of the most exciting outcomes of the study is that after 2015-16 blended learning was adopted for all students in the English department in the school. There have also been plans to train all teachers on the campus to enhance their knowledge and skills to use the blended learning approach.

Conclusion
The findings of the study suggest that its participants demonstrate a significant improvement in their language proficiency as measured by IELTS due to the teaching method, and this achievement can be attributed to using blended learning instruction. Because blended learning supports and motivates independent and collaborative learning, increases student’s involvement in education, supports and develops a variety of learning styles, provides a relaxing learning environment for the already learned outcomes, and provides flexible studying routine, it proved to be an impactful approach on students’ performance in second language acquisition (SLA). Therefore, successful teaching methods are fundamental in developing the language proficiency of Emirati male students. The teaching method can either be a barrier or a learning opportunity, in this course, it appears to have a positive impact on students’ learning of a second or foreign language.

In anchoring the findings of this study to the larger research literature, some of its limitations must be acknowledged, which may offer opportunities for further research. First, this study employs a true-experimental approach and so inevitably involves uncontrolled environmental variables that could influence the findings. Second, the subjects were all male Arabic-speaking Twelfth Grade Emirati students. Whether the same results would be obtained with students from other backgrounds majoring in other disciplines remains to be determined. Likewise, gender was another limitation that could have impacted the results of the study. Since the research was conducted on a group of male students, perhaps testing the instructional method on female students would have given varied findings. Moreover, because the study is restricted to a standardized test-the IELTS- the results could not be spread beyond the tools and rubrics of the IELTS.

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Dr. Omar Al Noursi has been working as an EFL instructor for more than 20 years. Presently, he works for the IAT as a lead faculty and as an adjunct faculty at Abu Dhabi University. He has published refereed articles and presented papers in international conferences. Al Noursi is a member of reviewing teams for some specialized journals. Omar is a recipient of the GESS Award for Outstanding Contributions in Education, IAT External Participation Award, and Sheikh Hamdan Award for Distinguished Academic Performance.
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Scopus Author ID: 56926768900
References


The Effect of Using a Self-Regulated Jigsaw Task on Female Students’ Performance in the Course of Curriculum Reading in English at Umm Al-Qura University in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract
This study aimed to answer the questions related to the effect of using self-regulated jigsaw task as a technique to improve the students’ performance in the course of curriculum reading in English, and to find out the learners’ perceptions of using jigsaw task in their learning. This study is important since jigsaw task could help learners to become autonomous learners as well as to promote cooperation between learners. The study sample consisted of 40 (two classes) female students studying the course of curriculum reading in English in the Master’s Program of curriculum and instructions at Umm Al-Qura University. The classes were allocated to the experimental group (n=21 students), which was taught using self-regulated jigsaw task, and the control group (n=19 students), which was taught using traditional tasks. Pre-and post-tests have been conducted to find out the statistical differences. Further, an open-ended questionnaire was given to the participants in the experimental group (n=21 students) to find out more about their perception of using the jigsaw technique in the learning process. Wilcoxon Signed Rank test was used as a statistical procedure to analyze the participants’ scores on the post-test, and the Greenhouse-Geisser test was applied to investigate the differences between groups. The results of the study showed that the difference in performance between students taught using self-regulated jigsaw task and those taught using traditional tasks was statistically significant. Further, the participants in the experimental group perceived that using the jigsaw task had a positive effect on the learning process, enhanced their relations with other learners, and increased their motivation in learning. It is hoped that this study could encourage university instructors to design and implement jigsaw tasks into different courses in higher education.

Keywords: academic achievement, curriculum reading in English, female students, jigsaw task, self-regulated

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Introduction

In higher education, learners need to master the learning process and take a role in constructing knowledge with instructors and with other learners. Many researchers have stated that teaching methods could reflect negatively on learners when they passively receive the required knowledge. The individualized methods of teaching would not help learners improve the intellectual abilities they need for higher education. The teaching methods in higher education should be improved by implementing more innovative techniques to help learners enhance their learning and communicate with others. These methods could prepare learners for social communication and could help them to be active participants in the community.

In cooperative learning, students together are responsible for their achievement in the task, while in individual learning, each student is responsible for his/her learning (Arslan, 2011). Cooperative learning could result in a positive result for learners, whereby they cooperate and share knowledge together. On the other hand, individual learning could have a positive result, in which learners would be responsible for their learning and depend more on themselves rather than on groups. Thus, in higher education, learners need a self-regulated task to help them be responsible for their learning as well as a technique to help them cooperate and share their knowledge with others. Therefore, jigsaw task could be an effective technique to help learners be responsible and tackle their learning.

Developing a self-regulated jigsaw task would help learners to advance their learning and reflect positively on independent learning. Further, it could help learners in cooperative learning, since the jigsaw would require that learners work on some parts individually and then work on it together in groups. The importance of the current study is that it is based on the theory of constructivism, which is the most common theory that is effective in developing learning and improving student achievement. The problem in teaching students in higher education in Saudi Arabia is that when the instructor applies cooperative learning strategies, there is some dependency among students. For example, if some of them are not sure how to complete the task, other expert members could complete it for the group. Therefore, the instructor would not be able to assess the individual learner when they apply cooperative learning strategies without specifying a particular procedure. Thus, I hope in this study to find out the effect of applying self-regulated jigsaw task, which combines individual responsibility and the sharing of knowledge in cooperative learning.

Previous researchers have stated many benefits of jigsaw techniques and clarified how it related to constructivism (Tewksbury, 2000). Jigsaw technique would create a chance for students to teach themselves rather than depend on the teacher to present the knowledge to them. It could help learners to improve their in-depth knowledge. Helping students to learn by themselves would reflect positively on all other important skills in the learning process. It would also help learners to contribute something that is not easy for them to achieve in large group discussion, since each student needs to explain in depth the part that they have worked on. Working on jigsaw task would help learners to develop all learning skills, since it requires them to listen, read, comprehend, write, summarize, and present. Thus, the purpose of the study is to find out the effect of using self-regulated jigsaw task to enhance learners’ performance. Another objective is to find out the learners’ perceptions of using the self-regulated jigsaw task in regard to the learning aspects...
The Effect of Using a Self-Regulated Jigsaw Task on Female Students’ (academic performance) and social aspects (their relationships to other learners). Accordingly, this study aims to answer the following research questions:

1- Are there any significant differences among the pre-test and post-test score averages of the experimental group (students using self-regulated jigsaw task) and control group (those taught using traditional tasks)?

2- How do the Saudi female learners perceive using the jigsaw task affects their learning and their relationships to other learners?

3-

Literature Review

**Self-Regulated Learning and Jigsaw Task**

The self-regulated skills include good use of time, increased confidence, and ability to make connections between all the information in the process of learning (Eker, 2014). In the self-regulation process, students are responsible for their own learning. Zimmerman (1989) stated that self-regulated learning could reflect the self-controlled method where students were able to transform their intellectual skills in tasks that focused on academic skills (Zimmerman, 2001). The meaning of self-regulated learning is the continued participation and interaction, which reflect metacognitive learning (Zimmerman, 1989).

In previous studies, researchers tried to identify the suitable process and stages that students could go through in self-regulated learning (Montalvo & Torres, 2004). Zimmerman (2008) identified three stages of the self-regulation process: forethought, performance, and then self-reflection. Students could go through these stages when they completed the task. The first stage was forethought, in which students could set the goal of learning, the suitable strategy to use in learning, and identify the task value. In this stage, students intended to plan their learning (Alderman, 2004). In the second stage: performance, students would be able to have self-instruction as well as use metacognitive skills, which would help them to monitor their learning. In this stage, students would be able to develop appropriate strategies in their learning, while they completed the task. In the last stage, self-reflection, consistent with self-evaluation, students reacted to the self-regulated skills through evaluation of their own learning (Barnard-Brak et al., 2010).

Cooperative learning could activate self-regulated skills for learners. This is because during cooperative learning, learners divide the responsibilities between them, and they share and discuss the productive knowledge (Olukayode & Salako, 2014). Sharing the responsibilities could promote self-regulation skills. Learners would be able to take decisions to use suitable strategies in cooperative learning. Thus, they manage their learning themselves and through their cooperation with other learners. Cooperative learning tasks could be reflected in learners’ systematic interactions, individual accountability, and group dynamic (Berger and Hens, 2017; Sudrajat et al. 2019).

Therefore, there is a clear link between self-regulated and cooperative learning, and the jigsaw technique could be an ideal way of connecting them. This is because working on the jigsaw task would be reflected in learners’ self-regulated skills. Further, Jacobs (1998) stated that the Jigsaw Strategy could also be related to the Cooperative Learning and was initially established in the 1970s by Elliot Aronson. The Jigsaw Strategy comprises cycle stages of activities that contain first
reading, then grouping, and finally regrouping. After that comes expert group discussion, then stating, and finally team acknowledgment. Thus, the stages of self-regulated learning and jigsaw techniques are similar.

Moreover, Rolheiser and Stevahn (1998) correlate both the Jigsaw Strategy with Wittrok’s theory of cognitive restructuring, which highlights the significance of practicing, explaining, and expanding on reading material to connect information into existing cognitive constructions for time retention (Millis & Cottell, 1998). In the Jigsaw Strategy, each individual in a group has part of the task to research well and every student is accountable for teaching their part to the other students in the group. When all the pieces are combined, the students should have the full image of the completed work.

In more detail, the Jigsaw Strategy includes the following processes next: splitting the group into a home team, and splitting the reading activities into a number of sub-themes or subjects based on the number of students in the home group. Then, the members of the groups in each home group who are sharing or learning the same part join together to develop an expert group to discuss and study their part, and gain deep knowledge and become experts in that part of task. Expert groups then return to the home groups to teach their part to other members in home group (Thompson & Pledger, 1998).

Additionally, the self-regulated task would help students to organize and use effective learning strategies in order to achieve the task. Arslan (2011) claimed that there was a positive effect of using Jigsaw IV on self-regulating students’ learning because students were better at planning in both situations: individually and in groups. They used the strategies of learning well, received feedback, and gave peer feedback to each other. Arslan (2011) claimed that the result of his study discovered that the Jigsaw IV method helped increase the self-efficacy beliefs for students in comparison to traditional methods. In cooperative learning, when students support and encourage each other, they are helped to reflect positively on self-regulation skills (Arslan, 2011).

The jigsaw technique could help the instructor give an equal chance to all learners, since the task should be divided between group’s members. This behavior would be reflected in students’ feeling that all learners are equal in the provided content and in being capable of working on achieving the target knowledge, particularly if leaners are from different ethnic groups (Olukayode & Salako, 2014). Further, the jigsaw task could help learners that they have difficulties in speaking in front of others; they could practice speaking, presenting, and teaching other members in groups. So, it could help learners to practice the required skills in a more flexible and comfortable environment (Olukayode & Salako, 2014).

Azmin (2016) claimed that learners need an assistant to resolve academic problems in an effective way. She suggested that to help them get an assistant, we need to implement more student-centered methods rather than teacher-centered methods, and the cooperative jigsaw technique is an example of that. She said that learners need support in some of the difficult tasks, such as writing, since they need to be more confident and enjoy their learning in order to be creative and productive in achieving the written task (Azmin, 2016; Gull & Shehzad, 2015; Hamadneh, 2017).
Researchers (Berger and Hens, 2017; Sudrajat et al. 2019) also recommended using the jigsaw task for many purposes. It could help improve the learners’ intrinsic motivation, since it could help them enjoy the learning so it reflects positively on their abilities. Sudrajat et al. (2019) said that the jigsaw task could help improve learners’ autonomy, which would help them enhance their competence in learning. The jigsaw task requires learners to structure the process and be an expert in part of the task, then act as a teacher for the others. All these skills could enhance learners’ autonomy and experiences in learning. Furthermore, using the jigsaw task could help learners to enhance their community in a class (Samuel, 2018; Sudrajat, Iasha & Femayati, 2019; Suresh & Reddy, 2017). So, learners might have good relationships, helping them to share knowledge and exchange experiences Ayden & Biyikli, 2017; Baroody, Clements & Sarama, 2019; Evcim & İpek, 2013).

On the other hand, there are many challenges involved in using the jigsaw technique. The most challenging is that it is time consuming, as learners need to work on the task in different stages with different students. Particularly in the last part, there would be not enough time for presentations from all groups. Another challenging factor is the students’ behavior of domination (Aronson, 2008).

Previous studies have been conducted to explore the effect of the Jigsaw Strategy in language classrooms. Sami Ali (2001) conducted an experimental research to investigate the result of applying the jigsaw method in reading EFL pre-service. His study focused on using the Jigsaw Strategy for reading passages. The control group in his study read the same text but individually. He used the test of English as foreign language (TOEFL) to check students’ two comprehensions, as well as a questionnaire used to check students’ anxiety. The findings showed that the experimental group had lower anxiety than the control group, which reflected positively on their performance.

Another study, carried out by Badawi (2008), investigated the improvements in the relationship between reading achievement and motivation when using the jigsaw technique. The findings showed that there were no differences between the experimental and control groups with regard to reading accomplishment; however, there were significant effects for the students’ motivation.

Furthermore, several previous studies have been conducted to find out the effects of using the jigsaw technique in different subjects (Artut & Tarim, 2007; Doymus, 2008; Gömleksiz, 2007; Mari & Gumel, 2015; Mengduo & Xiaoling, 2010; Olukayode & Salako, 2014; Şahin, 2011; Tarhan, Ayyıldız, Ogunc & Sesen, 2013), and they concluded that jigsaw techniques had a positive effect on the learners’ performance and positively affected different learning skills.

**Methods**

**Participants**

The study sample consisted of 40 (two classes) female students studying the course of curriculum reading in English in the Master’s Program of curriculum and instructions at Umm Al-Qura University. The study was conducted in the first term of 2020. The two classes were allocated to the experimental group (n=21 students), which was taught using the self-regulated jigsaw task, and the control group (n=19 students), which was taught with traditional tasks. Pre-and post-tests
have been conducted to find out the statistical differences before the jigsaw technique was practiced.

The reason for choosing the course of curriculum reading in English was because the research involved teaching this course to two groups, so it would be a chance for me to be the instructor in both groups. The main objective of the course of curriculum reading in English is to help students be aware of common educational terminologies in the English language as well as to be able to understand in English the academic articles in curriculum fields. The instructor, the classroom environment, and the educational learning environment in the University were the same for both groups. Also, the numbers of students in each group were similar.

**Instruments and Procedures**

Pre- and post-tests have been designed by the researcher. The question in the test covered all the content related to the course. The test was based on reading comprehension and identifying the meaning of educational terminologies. The instruments used were previously tested by different experts in the field to ensure their validity and reliability. In order to achieve high quality in the reliability of the instruments used in this study, the researcher designed the pre and post-test based on the content of the course, trying to cover all related knowledge to the course of curriculum reading in English. The researcher designed a pilot project to ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument.

In the first stage of my study, a pre-test of reading comprehension was conducted, and then jigsaw practice activities were performed with the students in the experimental group. In the jigsaw technique, group members shared information with each other. Students began in their home group, then worked individually on their own part, before working with the expert group. The last stage saw them return to the home group to teach their parts.

The researcher introduced the reading text for the experimental groups, and then divided the text into four different parts. Every member of the group obtained a different part and worked on it individually. Then, after they had completed their work, each member of the group found those with the matching part and formed expert groups, sharing information and solving problems together, if they were in any confusion. Learners returned to their groups, and then swapped their information and finalized their ideas about the topic of the full text. The researcher monitored the work and assisted students in their development. In the last session, the researcher gave a test to assess learners’ progress in the course of curriculum reading in English.

Further, at the end of the term, the researcher gave them an open-ended questionnaire to explore their perceptions regarding using the jigsaw in learning. The questionnaire consisted of four questions focusing on finding out learners’ perceptions about how the jigsaw task affected their learning and their relation to other learners. The questions of the questionnaire were as follows:

1- Do you like using the jigsaw task in the course of curriculum reading in English, and why?
2- What are the benefits, if there are any, that you received from working on the jigsaw task in the course of curriculum reading in English?
3- How does the jigsaw task affect your relationship with your colleagues in the classroom?
4- How does the jigsaw task affect your motivation to learn the course of curriculum reading in English?

In the control group, the participants received the same reading text, but no self-regulated jigsaw technique was used. The students worked individually at the same time. Then the researcher asked the learners questions to check their comprehension of the text, before starting to familiarize the students with important words and structures in the text. Learners read the passages individually and then they had to answer the comprehension questions as well as identify the new terminology. Finally a post-test of reading comprehension was administered to the control group.

Results

Quantitative Results

This research sought to establish whether there was a statistically significant difference in achievement between students taught using the self-regulated jigsaw task, which was the experimental group, and those taught using traditional tasks (the control group). To achieve this objective, I will first present the key descriptive statistics, then complete the general comparison of the significance of the difference between the two groups, and lastly present the comparison of the difference between the groups.

Descriptive Statistics

Both the pre-test and the post-test results were quantitative and, in this respect, according to Field (2016), the suitable summarization of the statistics would be the mean and the measures of central tendency, that is, the standard deviation beside skewness and kurtosis. The results are presented in the Table one below.

Table 1. Summary statistics

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</tbody>
</table>

For the experimental group, the mean pre-test performance was 55.05 (SD = 19.138), while the mean post-test performance was 67.43 (SD = 17.628). This shows that the performance developed after the intermediation. However, for the control group, the mean pre-test performance was 56.63 (SD = 20.012), while the mean post-test was 61.53 (SD = 18.228). Once again, a development in the performance was observed. Generally, the experimental group had the highest skewness as compared with the control group, while the kurtosis for all the groups was consistently negative, indicative of platykurtic distributions (Technik & Fidela, 2012).

Comparing Pre-and Post-Test Performance

Because of the small sample size for both groups, and in order to test whether the differences in the pre-test and post-test were statistically significant or not, the non-parametric Wilcoxon Signed Rank test was carried out, instead of the parametric paired-samples t-test as prescribed by
O’Dwyer and Bernard (2013) as well as Kent (2015). They argue that t-test assumes normality of the data and in that respect, according to the central limit theorem, the minimum sample would be 30. However, in this study, we had two independent groups, the highest having a sample of 21 and the other 19, and hence the t-test was not the optimal test. The respective hypotheses were:

\[ H_0: \text{There is no difference in the performance between the experimental pre-test and post-test} \]
\[ H_1: \text{There is a difference in the performance between the experimental pre-test and post-test} \]
\[ H_0: \text{There is no difference in the performance between the control pre-test and post-test} \]
\[ H_1: \text{There is a difference in the performance between the control pre-test and post-test} \]

The results showing the mean ranks and sum of ranks are presented in the Table two.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Post-test Result – Pre-test Result</th>
<th>Negative Ranks</th>
<th>Positive Ranks</th>
<th>Ties</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimenta</td>
<td>Post-test Result – Pre-test Result</td>
<td>1(^a)</td>
<td>18(^b)</td>
<td>2(^c)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Post-test Result – Pre-test Result</td>
<td>3(^a)</td>
<td>16(^b)</td>
<td>0(^c)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean pre-test positive rank was the highest for the experimental group (M = 10.19) as compared with the control group (M = 9.50). However, for the negative ranks, the highest was for the control group (M = 12.67) and the least was the experimental group (M = 6.50). The overall Wilcoxon Signed Rank test statistic results are presented in Table three:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Post-Pre-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimenta</td>
<td>3.574(^b)-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>000.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>2.304(^b)-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>021.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
b. Based on negative ranks
For the experimental group, \( Z = -3.574 \) (\( p = 0.000 \)), and because the \( p \)-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. For the control group, \( Z = -2.304 \) (\( p = 0.021 \)) and again, the \( p \)-value was less than 0.05. The null hypothesis, is again, rejected. From the findings, it can be stated that there was enough statistical evidence at alpha 0.05 to conclude that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test performance for both the experimental and control groups. However, because the \( Z \)-statistic was higher in magnitude for the experimental group than for the control group, it meant that the magnitude of the difference was higher for the experimental group than for the control group.

**Comparing Experimental and Control Group for Pre-and Post-Test Performance**

Having tested the differences in the pre-test and post-test across the two groups, the third research hypothesis tested whether the magnitude of the change in the experimental group was statistically different between the pre-test and the post-test. This entailed the between-groups testing, and according to Oakshott (2012), Warner (2012), and Wywial (2015), the ideal test was the repeated measures mixed effects model, or simply, mixed model ANOVA. The tests of the within-subjects effects are presented in Table four.

**Table 4. Tests of Within-Subjects Effects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exp</td>
<td>1557.613</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1557.61</td>
<td>22.38</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sphericity Assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse-Geisser</td>
<td>1557.613</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1557.61</td>
<td>22.38</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huynh-Feldt</td>
<td>1557.613</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1557.61</td>
<td>22.38</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-bound</td>
<td>1557.613</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1557.61</td>
<td>22.38</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error(Exp)</td>
<td>2713.887</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>69.587</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sphericity Assumed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenhouse-Geisser</td>
<td>2713.887</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>69.587</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huynh-Feldt</td>
<td>2713.887</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>69.587</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower-bound</td>
<td>2713.887</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>69.587</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Mauchly’s test of sphericity was not computed since there were only two groups, and in this respect the Greenhouse-Geisser test was considered. From the findings above, \( F(1, 39) = 22.384 \) (\( p = 0.000, \eta^2 = 0.365 \)). Because the \( p \)-value was less than 0.05, it follows that, considering both the experimental and control groups, overall the post-test performance was statistically different from the pre-test performance. This was an overall confirmation of the results presented above. However, the third hypothesis focused on the comparison between the experimental group and the control group and in this regard, the between-subjects effects was to be considered (Judd, McClelland & Ryan, 2008; Bartolucci, Bacci Gnadi, 2016). The corresponding hypothesis is presented below, and the results are presented in Table five.
The Effect of Using a Self-Regulated Jigsaw Task on Female Students’

Table 5. Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>290043.612</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>290043.612</td>
<td>463.825</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>24387.887</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>625.330</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the outcome, \( F(1, 39) = 463.825 \) \((p = 0.000, \eta^2 = 0.922)\). In this regard, because the p-value was less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. It follows, therefore, that there was enough statistical evidence at the 5% significance level that the performance improved significantly for the experimental group than the control group. The difference in the performance between students taught using the self-regulated jigsaw task and those taught using traditional tasks was statistically significant. In other words, teaching using the self-regulated jigsaw task results in better performance than using the traditional task does.

**Qualitative Result**

To analyze the open-ended questionnaire data, the researcher used a thematic analysis by identifying a theme for each question in the questionnaire. For example, the second question is: *What are the benefits, if there are any, that you received from working on the jigsaw task in the course of curriculum reading in English?* The suitable theme for this question is the benefits and difficulties of using the self-regulated jigsaw task. Therefore, I identified three themes from the questionnaire data.

**Perceived Academic Benefits and Difficulties of Using the Self-Regulated Jigsaw Task**

Most of the participants stated that using the self-regulated jigsaw task helped them to increase their cooperation, interaction, and communication in order to complete the task. They also stated that the jigsaw task helped them to exchange knowledge to reach suitable answers to complete the task. Most of the students claimed that the self-regulated jigsaw task helped them to deepen their knowledge in the subject, so they were able to improve their comprehension of the reading.

Many of the participants claimed that the self-regulated jigsaw task helped in exchanging experiences and receiving feedback from each other. Therefore, it helped them to complete all stages and steps of the required task appropriately. It also helped them to remember the new knowledge on the long run.

Students said that working with other learners on the self-regulated jigsaw task gave them the chance to ask other students in case they needed help. Students claimed that, with the jigsaw task, the process of receiving knowledge and getting was easier, meaning they understood more than in the traditional way. Also, some of them stated that it helped in saving time than working on the task individually.

However, some learners stated a difficulty of working on self-regulated jigsaw task, which is the size of the classroom, was not suitable, and it is not big enough in order to move smoothly and
exchange groups between home and expert groups.

**Perceived Effect of Self-Regulated Jigsaw Task on Students’ Relationship**

All participant students claimed that working together on the self-regulated jigsaw task helped to strengthen the relationship between all students in the classroom. This was because they had a chance to work with more than one group during the lesson: the home group and expert group. Also, some of them stated that the strong relationship between students helped them become aware of the importance of working with others, as well as helping them to work with all students, even those in different subjects and lessons.

Good relationships between students enhanced their cooperation and interactions in order to complete the task and present it in the best way. Further, some students stated that strengthening the relationship between all students in the classroom helped their team-working skills to improve. Further, some students stated that these relations between students helped remove the barriers and difficulties when working in groups as well as helping their thinking skills to improve.

Many of the participants stated that working with more than one group in a class helped them to understand different characteristics from different learners. Therefore, students respected each other’s opinions and listened to different perspectives in the class.

**Perceived Effect of Self-Regulated Jigsaw Task on Students’ Motivation to Learn**

Many of the participants stated that the self-regulated jigsaw task helped them to learn in a fun atmosphere, helping them to enjoy their learning. This atmosphere helped learners to increase their interactions and activity in the class, and participate in completing the task. Some of students stated that they perceived the positive effect of the self-regulated jigsaw task on facilitating the learning process. Thus, students stated that the self-regulated jigsaw task helped their motivation in the course of curriculum reading in English to improve their levels of achievement.

**Discussion**

In the present study, the result of using the self-regulated jigsaw task was investigated. The findings stated that there was a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in favor of the experimental group. The findings of this study seem to be in line with previous research (Artut & Tarım, 2007; Doymus, 2008; Gömleksiz, 2007; Mari & Gumel, 2015; Mengduo & Xiaoling, 2010; Olukayode & Salako, 2014; Şahin, 2011; Tarhan, Ayyıldız, Ogunc & Sesen, 2013).

In the study, it can be seen in the post-test that the self-regulated jigsaw task technique was more effective than the traditional task technique. Therefore, it found that the self-regulated jigsaw technique was more effective. The self-regulated jigsaw task increases students’ interest, motivation, and confidence in discussing the work with other learners. Previous studies found that working on the jigsaw task would create an exciting environment in the class, which in turn could reflect positively on learners’ performance (Azmin, 2016; Gull & Shehzad, 2015; Hamadneh, 2017). Further, students working with others in the jigsaw group shared knowledge, engaged in critical discussion, and interacted with others, which helped them to improve and learn more effectively (Aydin & Biyikli, 2017; Baroody, Clements & Sarama, 2019; Evcim & İpek, 2013).
The findings of this research seem to be in line with previous studies (Samuel, 2018; Sudrajat et al., 2019; Suresh & Reddy, 2017), as they found some benefits of using the jigsaw task. It could help learners to enhance the sense of community in a class. The jigsaw technique would help to develop learning, increasing cooperation, enhancing confidence, and helping learners to be more active. Also, it could help learners to improve or build good relationships in large classes; sometimes students can spend all year studying with the same people in a large class without getting to know them well. This is because they do not have a chance to work with them. Therefore, the jigsaw technique would help all learners in the same class to communicate with each other, teach each other, and share knowledge.

On the other hand, a few studies, such as Berger and Hänze (2007), claimed that using the jigsaw technique would not be more effective than the traditional methods. This is because they conducted a study investigating the effect of the jigsaw technique for students in 12th-grade physics classes and compared it with the traditional, direct instruction methods.

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

The focus of the current study was to explore the effect of using the self-regulated jigsaw task to improve students’ performance in the course of curriculum reading in English. The findings of this study revealed that the self-regulated jigsaw task was more effective. The findings showed that the self-regulated jigsaw task can help increase students’ interest, motivation, and confidence in discussing subjects with other learners. Another main finding is that the self-regulated jigsaw task can help learners to enhance their relationships with colleagues in the class. This is because learners have a chance to engage with each other, in a setting that is very effective for communication, in order to complete the task. Thus, the jigsaw technique can help increase learners’ cooperation and make them more active. However, there are many aspects to be applied by the instructor if the jigsaw task is used in the classroom. Learners need to be aware of the purpose and benefits of using the technique. This recommendation could help students to be aware of the benefits, and it could enhance their cooperation in learning. Another recommendation is that the instructors need to set aside suitable time to apply the technique in the lesson, since there needs to be sufficient time to help learners work properly in the class, and to benefit all the processes they go through when completing the task. A further recommendation is that the space of the classroom needs to be suitable for the number of students, because they need to change their groups from home to expert and thus need a suitable space that enables them to move smoothly between groups.

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**Declaration of conflicting interests**

The author has no conflicts of interest to declare

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An Evaluation of the Algerian EFL Baccalaureate Exam under the Cognitive Domains of Bloom’s Taxonomy

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Abstract:
The Algerian English foreign language (EFL) baccalaureate is a high stake exam that assesses both students’ learning and their critical thinking skills. Thus, devising appropriate and effective exam questions may be a problematic issue for tests designers. Under the requirements of the current Algerian English curriculum, the exam questions must cover the lower and higher-order thinking skills of Bloom’s taxonomy. On this basis, this research paper seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the EFL baccalaureate exam papers, and aims to answer the research question: ‘To what extent does the Algerian EFL Baccalaureate exam paper cover the lower and higher-order thinking skills of Bloom’s taxonomy?’ This research is a descriptive content analysis; the researcher analyzed the exam questions of the Algerian EFL Baccalaureate under the cognitive domains of Bloom’s taxonomy. This study is significant as it helps tests’ designers to design practical EFL exams that develop students’ thinking skills and language competencies. The findings of this study revealed that the EFL baccalaureate exam does not establish the students’ higher-order thinking skills and does not assess their communicative abilities. Accordingly, some recommendations are suggested to hopefully help test designers to improve the quality of the EFL Baccalaureate questions.

Keywords: Algerian EFL baccalaureate exam, Bloom’s taxonomy, cognitive domains, practical exam

Introduction

The Algerian schools adopted English as a second foreign language. It is stated in the national curriculum that English teaching aims to help students harmonize into modernity by fully participating in the linguistic society which uses this language for all types of interaction (3AS curriculum, 2011, p. 04). Accordingly, the 3AS students must leave the secondary school with a specific exit profile as follows: “In a communicative situation and based on oral or written support, the student must produce a written message of about twenty lines in a chosen type of written speech (descriptive, narrative, argumentative, expository, injunctive) correctly and legibly.” (3AS curriculum, 2011, p06).

In other words, the students must develop their language competencies such as interaction, interpretation, and production to be communicatively competent. To test the students’ exit profile, 3AS students fit for a high-stakes exam, which is the baccalaureate exam, to check if they reached the final integration objectives. The baccalaureate exam is a challenging test that must measure the students’ target goals and critical thinking skills. The type of EFL exam paper is a traditional way of assessing students’ mastery of what they studied chosen by most test designers. Koksal, D.and Ulum, Ö.G, mention that “An exam paper is a traditional way of assessment− being the common choice of teachers evaluating the learners’ degree of success in a particular lesson in which the necessary cognitive ability of students is determined through the exam scores.” (2018, p2). The baccalaureate exam determines the students’ cognitive abilities through their scores and grades. Therefore, a good EFL exam must assess the students’ lower and higher-order critical thinking skills, which are a set to confirm the learners’ understanding level (Haris & Omar, 2015); and to accommodate the students’ diverse abilities (John, Harland, Reid & Bartlett, 2009). Thus, it is necessary to promote a practical EFL baccalaureate exam to assess the students’ learning and critical thinking skills. With all that had been stated, several issues related to the Algerian EFL Baccalaureate exam keep ongoing unexplored and unresolved and make the literary gap. Since the quality of educational programs is strongly related to the evaluation’s quality, especially for the 3AS students, the EFL Baccalaureate exam plays a critical role in learning for acting as a university entrance exam. Each question of the EFL exam is significant because it tests the learners’ cognitive levels (Omar et al., 2012). Previous research revealed that difficult questions could be unfamiliar to the learners, as they require answering through reasoning, decision-making, analysis, synthesis, and critical thinking (Zoller & Tsaparlis, 1997; Ordem, 2016). In the same regard, adapting exam papers to assess both higher and lower-order thinking skills allows considering the nature of the relationship between low and high-level questions. Questions that assess lower-order cognitive skills improve the acquisition of the knowledge and pave the way to acquire higher-order cognitive skills; while, questions that assess higher-order cognitive skills are practical assessment tools for enhancing the students’ critical thinking skills (Freahat & Smadi, 2014). Thus, composing an appropriate EFL exam paper in the Algerian context may be problematic for tests’ designers because they must take into consideration: the measurement of students’ critical thinking skills and language communicative abilities, the scoring and time consuming of each question is an intricate part in constructing an exam paper.
This study examines to what extent the Algerian EFL Baccalaureate exam paper covers the cognitive domains of Bloom’s taxonomy. It aims to answer the research question ‘To what extent does the Algerian EFL Baccalaureate exam paper cover the lower and higher-order thinking skills of Bloom’s taxonomy?’ and tries to confirm the hypothesis claiming that ‘The Algerian EFL Baccalaureate exam does little in advancing the students’ higher-order thinking skills.’

This study is significant because it aims to investigate the extent of the cognitive domains of Bloom’s taxonomy in the Algerian EFL baccalaureate exam paper to suggest ways that may help the test designers to construct effective, appropriate and creative EFL baccalaureate exam questions that measure the students both learning and critical thinking skills under Bloom’s taxonomy. The results and suggestions of this research can help test designers to construct a useful baccalaureate exam that is worth measuring the students’ language competencies and critical thinking skills.

**Literature Review**

**Bloom’s Taxonomy**

Bloom et al, (1956)’s book introduced a framework that is known as “Bloom’s Taxonomy.” It provides a way to categorize educational goals. It is useful for teachers, instructors, courses, tests, and curricula designers; it is also helpful to plan lessons and construct assessment tools. Bloom’s taxonomy makes sure that Students have clear, measurable instructional objectives, indicating disparities between what teachers teach and what they assess. Bloom’s taxonomy plays the role of a guide for learning development and assessment construction by providing a concrete consciousness to balance between teaching and testing, which educationalists consider essential in the development of the students’ cognition (Kastberg, 2003). The American heritage dictionary (2016, p 1528) defines cognition or understanding as “the mental process of knowing, including aspects such as awareness, perception, reasoning, and judgment, or that which comes to be known, as through perception, reasoning, or intuition; knowledge.”

Bloom’s taxonomy is composed of six levels that are called the cognitive domains; which are divided into two parts: three lower-order thinking skills and three higher-order thinking skills (Eber & Parker, 2007). They are ordered as illustrated in figure1:

- **Knowledge**: refers to the act of recalling necessary information in long-term memory.
- **Comprehension**: refers to the students’ understanding of what they learned.
- **Application**: refers to the use of what students learned.
- **Analysis**: refers to the breaking down the knowledge into parts and understanding how these parts are related.
Synthesis: refers to building structures or patterns from different elements.

Evaluation: refers to the highest level of thinking and the most demanding mental process.

**Figure 1.** Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives (Bloom et al. 1956)

**The Algerian EFL Baccalaureate Exam**

The baccalaureate is a high stake exam took by third year secondary school students. It takes place by the end of the academic year, and it is a university entrance exam. The EFL Baccalaureate exam consists of two parts. The first part is “Reading Comprehension,” which in turn consists of two parts “Comprehension” and “Text exploration.” The second part is “writing expression.” It is mentioned in the Algerian “examiner guide” (National Office for Examinations and Competitions, 2019, p03), that the EFL Baccalaureate exam paper aims at evaluating the students’ ability of understanding a text in connection with reading and their ability to express themselves correctly and reasonably.

**EFL in Algerian Secondary Schools**

Algeria adopted English as a foreign language on its educational institutions. English takes a part of the Algerian curriculum and it is taught in secondary and middle schools since independence. Both scientific and literary streams in secondary school study English as a subject along with other matters of the curriculum. English coefficient differs for both streams; also, the time devoted to study English per week is different for these streams. The
The approach adopted to teach English is the “Competency Based Approach.” This research is concerned with the Analysis of the EFL Baccalaureate exam, which is taken by the students of the third year in secondary school by the end of the academic year.

Methodology

This research study is a “descriptive content analysis” design. Descriptive content analysis is defined as “content analysis are careful to identify appropriate categories and units of analysis, both of which will reflect the nature of the document being analyzed and the purpose of the research.” (Cohen et al. 2007, p 164). The researcher analyzed each question of the Algerian EFL exam paper to check which level of the cognitive domains it belongs. In other words, the study identifies the employment of Bloom’s taxonomy in constructing the EFL exam questions. The exam sample used for this research is one of the two topics of the EFL baccalaureate exam (2019, TOPIC 1) (see appendix) of foreign languages stream students. Each question of the exam papers is analyzed solely under Bloom’s taxonomy to see which thinking level it covers to answer the research problem stated before.

Data Analysis and Results

The researcher analyzed each question in the “Reading” piece and “written expression” part in the EFL baccalaureate exam paper according to the cognitive domains of Bloom’s Taxonomy to see which thinking order skill it covers. The results are as illustrated below:

Comprehension

Write the letter that corresponds to the right answer.

1. Fighting corruption should be the duty of  
   a. all partners  b. the government  c. businesses.
2. The government is responsible for dealing with …
   a. corrupt civil servants b. individuals who offer bribes  c. both of them.
3. Eradicating corruption is 
   a. easily achievable b. hard to achieve c. prohibited
4. Preventing corruption depends primarily upon
   a. weak auditing systems  b. public mobilization  c. inefficient laws

The question presented above of the EFL baccalaureate exam topics (June, 2019) is not challenging nor reliable because the students can guess the correct answers quickly. In other words, the question above does not require any effort of the mental process; students answer just through guessing. Therefore, these exam questions are missing construct validity and reliability in terms of consistency of measurement and accuracy of measurement. They do not fulfill the learning of English to be used in real-life situations or a communicative case. The typology of the “True-False” question does not exist in the 3AS textbook, which means students are faced with it the first time in their academic year. As a result, this type of activity covers the “knowledge” level of bloom’s taxonomy.
In which paragraph is it mentioned that
a. actual benefits result from the combination of social and economic efforts?
b. promoting ethical principles is a critical way to reduce corruption?

The question illustrated above requires the students to answer according to the text given. This question does not need a complex mental process; the students can answer just by reading and checking words in the text to find the appropriate answer. As a result, this type of question belongs to the “Knowledge” level of bloom’s taxonomy.

Answer the following questions according to the text:
a. Why do some companies and individuals get involved in bribery?
b. From a political point of view, who is in able to lead the fight against corruption?
c. What measures can prevent corrosion?

The question illustrated above is a ‘WH’ question, which requires the students to construct answers themselves relying on the text. This type of activity is more reliable than the questions stated before. These questions require more mental processes; they need the students to understand the text’s meaning to write the appropriate answers. As a result, these types of tests belong to the “Comprehension” level of bloom’s taxonomy, as it demands more mental process and push students to think.

WHO or WHAT do the underlined words refer to in the text?
a. who (§1) b. this (§4)

The question above requires the students to guess the appropriate answer from the text. Therefore, to answer this question, students do not use a complex mental process; they just need to read and understand the meaning in the text than copy the right answer. As a result, this question belongs to the “comprehension “level of bloom’s taxonomy.

Choose the correct answer. The text is…

The question above requires students to guess the correct answer, which is the given text; students can find it through guessing, which is not a very demanding mental process. In other words, this type of question is not challenging. It requires the students to read, understand, and respond. This question belongs to the “Comprehension” level of bloom’s taxonomy.

Text Exploration
Find in the text words or phrases that are opposite in meaning to:
a. drawbacks (§1) ≠………… b. legal (§3) ≠…………

The task below requires the students to find out the synonyms and antonyms of the words in the text through understanding the meaning of the words in the text. This activity is a more reliable and more mental process demanding. Still, it should considered that students may already know the word before and its’ synonym or antonym. Thus, this question belongs to the “knowledge” level of bloom’s taxonomy.
Complete the chart as shown in the example.

Table 1. Activity from the baccalaureate exam

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>legislation</td>
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The question presented above belongs to the Second part of “Reading,” which is “Text exploration”; this question is reliable and challenging. It is about lexis and word-formation. This type of problem requires the students’ recall of knowledge because the students who can construct the appropriate answer can claim the ability of the correct item and language structure. Therefore, this type of activity covers the “knowledge” level of bloom’s taxonomy.

Combine each pair of sentences with the connectors given between brackets. Make changes where necessary.

a. Corruption is a widespread problem. All parts of society must fight corruption. (such that)
b. Governments are making efforts to eradicate corruption. It is still prevalent in our community. (despite)

The activity above requires the students to restate the sentences and rewrite them into one compound and complex sentences. This activity needs the students’ understanding of the clauses meaning to know how to relate them. Thus, it covers the Synthesis level as it consists of the production of a unique communication level of bloom’s taxonomy.

4. Circle or write the silent letter in each of the following words:
   honesty – campaign – while – fight

   The activity above requires the students to answer based on their knowledge of the given items. In other words, they need to recall the experience of terms uses to remember which letter is silent. This type of activity covers the “knowledge” level of Bloom’s Taxonomy.

Reorder the following sentences to get a coherent passage:

a. That's why since the dawn of human civilization.
b. Ethics is vital to every society.
c. Men have sought to keep human conduct in check to preserve the peace of the community.
d. As it plays a critical role in shaping the individuals' behaviors.

   The question above requires the students to reorder the sentences to get a meaningfully coherent passage, which is for ordering. This activity type does not require any students’
knowledge, which means they are unreliable and unchallenging. These activities cover the “synthesis” level of bloom’s taxonomy, but it seems that the students can answer quickly through guessing without using their thinking skills.

**Part two: Written Expression**

-Choose ONE of the following topics: (BAC, 2019, topic1)

**Topic one:**
You have heard that someone asked a friend of yours to give a bribe to get a job that he/she is really in need. Due to his/her difficult situation, he/she accepted this offer. Write a letter of about 80 to 100 words to convince him/her not to commit such an offense.

The following notes may help you:
Bribery is unethical – an act of dishonesty – have a guilty conscience – illegal and punishable – life to be ruined – favors corrupt people – contribution to mediocrity.

N.B. sign as Ali.

**Topic two:**
You are a freelance reporter interested in the phenomenon of illegal emigration. You decided to embark with illegal emigrants to experience the challenging conditions of their crossing of the Mediterranean Sea and discover the reasons behind this risky adventure. Write a web article of about 80 to 120 words to sensitize future adventurers about the dangers of illegal emigration.

In the second part of the EFL baccalaureate exam paper, the students must choose one topic, as illustrated above. One of these topics has relation to the given text, which means that students are psychologically prepared to answer this topic. This second part assesses the students’ writing performance, i.e. it is a performance assessment. This type of activity requires the students to express their ideas in correct and legible English. They must respect the structure of the composition. These activities inform the testers about the students’ ability to combine the language elements to have a coherent paragraph. These activities cover the “synthesis” level of Bloom’s Taxonomy. It also should be stated that the topics where students are given hints to follow in writing their compositions are more comfortable and less challenging.

**Discussion**
Even though many studies, such as (Scott, 2003; Thompson et al., 2008; Jones, Harland, Reid, & Barlett, 2009; Chang & Chung, 2009; Swart, 2010; Omar et al., 2012), have been conducted to check the classification of exam questions according to the cognitive domains of Bloom’s taxonomy, a few of them attempted to categorize the exam questions in different fields. This study reveals that among the activities within the “Reading” part of the Algerian EFL baccalaureate exam, there are “True-False” questions, multiple-choice questions, discrete-point tests, or “close-ended” questions which the testers themselves did not construct the answer. These types of tests are scored quickly and objectively. Besides,
the discrete-point activities stimulate the students to guess rather than developing their communicative abilities as they focus on the language structure and lexis. “Restricted-response items” is another type of activity found in the Algerian EFL Baccalaureate exam, requiring the students to construct short answers themselves such as “filling the gap” activities unlike close-ended tests. “Restricted-response items” type of tests are more reliable than discrete point tests. Still, there are some “Restricted-response items” in the Algerian EFL Baccalaureate exam, which lack reliability and validity.

Within the second part of the Algerian EFL Baccalaureate exam, which is “written expression,” the test in an “open-ended item”. It requires the students to write long answers to write an essay. They must communicatively express their ideas. On the other hand, the topics that guide the students to write put stress on them as they are not free to express their ideas about the subject. Most of the activities within the Algerian EFL Baccalaureate exam are practical, but they lack reliability and validity. Speaking about the reliability criterion, most of the activities are guessing actions except for the “written expression.” Coming up to the validity criterion, first, as the activities occurring in the EFL Baccalaureate exam exist already with the 3AS textbook, it can be assumed that the EFL Baccalaureate exam claims content validity. Second, there are no activities within EFL Baccalaureate exam that measure the students’ pronunciation and speaking skills, thus; the EFL Baccalaureate exam doesn’t claim face validity. Lastly, the EFL Baccalaureate exam as a whole doesn’t measure the students’ communicative abilities. Therefore, it doesn’t claim to construct validity.

Furthermore, the EFL baccalaureate exam activities belong to the “knowledge” or “comprehension” level of Bloom’s taxonomy, except the second part activity, “written expression,” which belongs to the “synthesis” level of Bloom’s taxonomy. Koksal D. and Ulum, Ö.G. (2018)’s study also revealed the exam questions lack of higher-order thinking skills; and exam papers are commonly used in the educational institutions; the study showed that the implementation of the high-order thinking skills questions enhances interaction between teachers and learners. The activities focus on the recall of information rather than stimulating students to think critically. Hence, the Algerian EFL baccalaureate exam covers the lower-order thinking skills in the hierarchy of the Cognitive domains, and does not cover the higher-order thinking skills such as “application,” “synthesis,” and “evaluation.” Additionally, the EFL Baccalaureate exam kept the same format for many years despite the educational reforms. Indeed, the EFL Baccalaureate exam 1999 has the same design as the one of 2019; what is additional in the EFL Baccalaureate exams after 2002 is the pronunciation activities. To sum up, the Algerian EFL Baccalaureate exam has its strengths and weaknesses. The EFL Baccalaureate exam contains 11 questions; 5 of them belong to the “Knowledge” level,” three questions belong to the “Comprehension” level” and three belong to the “Synthesis” level. This means that about 45% of the questions belong to the “knowledge,” approximately 27% of the questions belong to the “comprehension” and the rest belongs to the “synthesis”.
Conclusions

This paper helps teachers and tests designers to build a practical EFL Baccalaureate exam that tests the students’ cognitive domains and their communicative abilities. According to the results, the EFL Baccalaureate exam shows a must to be improved by respecting the criteria of a good test, using challenging activities that stimulate students to use their higher-order thinking skills. Additionally, to claim “construct validity,” the students’ communicative abilities must also be tested. Communicative languages tests will, in turn, motivate them to learn English to be used in real-life situations as mentioned in the exit profile (achievement of learning objectives) in the 3AS curriculum: learners should be able to use the language both orally (listening and speaking) and in writing to express themselves. Accordingly, there is a mismatch between the EFL Baccalaureate Format and the exit profiles of each stream. Nevertheless, the two skills are neglected in the BAC. Thus, the aim is to design practical tests to measure the students’ abilities, language skills, and competencies.

The EFL Baccalaureate activities should be under another format that assesses the students’ critical thinking skills and “reasoning strategies.” To reach these objectives, the activities should ask the students for their interpretation, in-depth understanding, reasoning, explanations and justifications. As Gray D. (1996). Mentions that challenging activities are the best for students because they enhance them to interpret, analyze, or manipulate information in response to a question rather than just recalling knowledge. The tests, that require students only guessing, must be omitted or at least minimized, and as the “open-ended” and “discrete point” questions indicate the students’ weaknesses and strengths, tests’ designers can keep them.

The EFL Baccalaureate exam must stress the development of the students’ communicative abilities and language use in real-life situations rather than sticking to the focus of writing in the classroom context. The rationale behind designing the EFL Baccalaureate exam in this way is to fit the national curriculum objectives and the competency-based-approach to language teaching whose aim is to shape students’ communicative competence. Additionally, if there will be an oral baccalaureate test, teachers will not neglect the speaking and listening skills.

What is more, the questions should be clear and concise to enable the students to have time to answer, rather than waste it to think about what the question is requiring. In the second part, “writing expression,” it is preferable that students will be tested by only one topic rather than making than losing time on choosing which case they should take. All in all, the study confirmed the research hypothesis, and the EFL Baccalaureate exam can be well designed by keeping in mind the EFL Instructional goals are to prepare students who are competent performers, critical thinkers, and efficient learners, not students who are interested in getting high scores and grading without being communicatively competent.
Recommendations:
In light of finding solutions to the research problem, the present research paper puts some suggestions:

- The EFL Baccalaureate exam should cover the low and high-order thinking skills by designing more challenging exam questions that advance the students’ cognitive domains.
- Decision-makers must reinforce the implementation of Bloom’s Taxonomy in the EFL Pre-service training and in the teaching/learning process.
- Some changes must occur on the EFL Baccalaureate exam question; and add some tasks to test the students’ communicative abilities.

Limitations of the Study
Among the limitations of this study is that the researcher intended to analyze more than one EFL baccalaureate topic. The Algerian EFL Baccalaureate is designed under the same format for many years; therefore, the researcher analyzed only one subject (see in the appendix).

Note: 3AS means third of year secondary school

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References
Appendix
The EFL Baccalaureate exam 2019

Read the text carefully then do the following activities:

Ultimately, all parts of society must share the responsibility for containing corruption because all are willing or unwilling participants as each corrupt transaction requires a “buyer” and a “seller.” The government is responsible for dealing with civil servants who engage in extortion and bribery, but it is businesses and individuals who offer bribes to civil servants to obtain certain advantages. An active, involved, and empowered citizenry is indeed essential to any anti-corruption campaign. Economic reformers can only achieve real gains when a society works firmly and assumes a shared responsibility in combatting corrupt practices, be it collective or individual.

For their part, government institutions, politicians, and bureaucrats must provide the political will to address all such unlawful practices. While all those who are part of the problem must be part of the solution, it would be unrealistic and cost-prohibitive to attempt to eliminate corruption completely. The aim, therefore, is to attain a fundamental increase in honesty, efficiency and fairness.

In this regard, educating and involving the public is a key in preventing corruption; and this can take a variety of ways such as awareness campaigns led by the media, nation-wide integrity workshops that discuss and collaborate against corruption, and the introduction of appropriate legislation put into effect by a powerful and integral auditing system.
4. **WHO or WHAT do the underlined words refer to in the text?**
   a. who (§1)  
   b. this (§4)

5. **Choose the correct answer. The text is…**
   a. Narrative  
   b. Descriptive  
   c. Expository  
   d. Argumentative

**B. Text Exploration (07 points)**

1. **Find in the text words or phrases that are opposite in meaning to:**
   a. drawbacks (§1) ≠……………….  
   b. legal (§3) ≠……………….

2. **Complete the chart as shown in the example.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
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<tr>
<td>to corrupt</td>
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<td>to assume</td>
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<td>………………</td>
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<td>legislation</td>
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3. **Combine each pair of sentences with the connectors given between brackets. Make changes where necessary.**
   a. Corruption is a widespread problem. All parts of society must fight corruption. *(such…that)*
   b. Governments are making efforts to eradicate corruption. It is still prevalent in our society. *(despite)*

4. **Circle or write the silent letter in each of the following words:**
   honesty – campaign – while – fight

5. **Reorder the following sentences to get a coherent passage:**
   a. That's why since the dawn of human civilization.
   b. Ethics is important to every society.
   c. men have sought to keep the human conduct in check to preserve the peace of society.
   d. as it plays a critical role in shaping the individuals' behaviours.

**Part two: Written Expression (06 points)**

**Choose ONE of the following topics:**

**Topic one:**
You have heard that a friend of yours was asked to give a bribe in order to get a job that he/she is really in need for. Due to his/her difficult situation, he/she was tempted by this offer. Write a letter of about 80 to 100 words to convince him/her not to commit such an offence.

**The following notes may help you:**
Bribery is unethical – act of dishonesty – have a guilty conscience – illegal and punishable – life to be ruined – favours corrupt people – contribution to mediocrity.
N.B. sign as Ali.

**Topic two:**
You are a freelance reporter interested in the phenomenon of illegal emigration. You decided to embark with illegal emigrants to experience the hard conditions of their crossing of the Mediterranean Sea and to find out the reasons behind this risky adventure. Write a web article of about 80 to 120 words to sensitise future adventurers about the dangers of illegal emigration.

اتنهى الموضوع الأول
Student Teachers’ Development of Reflective Practice concerning Teaching Philosophy and Peer Observations

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Abstract
This study examined the effect of utilizing e-portfolio reflection-enhancing tasks in a practicum course on developing student teachers' level of reflection. It sought to answer how engaging EFL student teachers in writing a teaching philosophy and peer observation affect their understanding of and appreciation for reflective practice and its influence on developing their reflection level and teaching performance. A mixed-methods study design was implemented where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected within this study. Eight female Saudi student teachers enrolled in a teacher education program at a public university in Saudi Arabia participated in this study while completing an 11-week teaching practicum course at a public secondary school in Riyadh. Each participant was tasked with completing a teaching philosophy and six peer observations with other participants within the study. Each task was analyzed for its reflection level based on a rubric developed by El-Okda (2009). Data were also collected through a semi-structured interview with each of the participants. This study demonstrated that while the participants struggled throughout the practicum to develop a cogent teaching philosophy, their level of reflection for the peer observation tasks improved throughout the teaching practice. Their enthusiasm for these tasks and the process of reflection itself was very positive. The results of this study will help teacher educators to create an informative account of reflection in teaching practice programs in ways that encourage reflective practice among student teachers. Future research could continue to explore more reflective tasks that encourage reflection among student teachers.

Keywords: peer observations, reflection, reflection-enhancing tasks, reflective teaching, teaching philosophy

Introduction

Theories of teacher learning and studies of teaching expertise are two main sources for providing information about how teachers learn how to teach and grow professionally. In both theories, teachers’ learning is considered a life-long process. Teachers are expected to act as active consumers of received academic research and theories. They are required to be responsible for their own professional growth. According to the transformative learning theory that was originally proposed by Mezirow (1991, 1997), teachers’ practice in class is determined by a set of tacit beliefs and values about what constitute effective foreign language teaching and learning. Such beliefs and values are shaped by a teacher’s previous experience both as a learner and as a teacher. Those tacit beliefs act as a filter for received theory and prevent teachers/student teachers from discovering alternative routes that are available during class time. To grow professionally, teachers should be engaged in some kind of reflection that allows them to uncover and transform such assumptions and perspectives. Self-evaluation of one’s beliefs, values, and experiences is essential for change. Mezirow (1997) states that “becoming critically reflective of one’s own assumptions is the key to transforming one’s taken-for-granted frames of reference, an indispensable dimension of learning for adapting to change” (p. 9). This means that being aware of such beliefs and how we behave in class can bridge the gap between what we actually do and what we think we do. Such awareness is a necessary starting point in reflection.

Reflective practice is generally defined as looking back to one’s teaching and its consequences in an attempt to understand why one behaves in a particular way. This systematic exploration of instruction is vital in providing teachers the opportunity to learn more about their teaching and uncover hidden beliefs (Brooksfield, 1995; Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Loughran, 2002; Shulman & Colbert, 1987). Student teachers need guidance in the development of their reflective skills to become reflective practitioners and life-long learners. Even though research has recognized the significance of reflective practice in teacher preparation and teacher education programs, it is still not given its due care in the Saudi Arabian educational context.

As an educational regulation at some colleges in Saudi Arabia, EFL student teachers must complete a practicum course during the last semester of their undergraduate program. The underlying assumption is that EFL student teachers attend selected public schools to apply the received theory and the pedagogical practices they have studied in their methods courses. From the researcher’s own experience, discussions with colleagues and faculty members who supervise teaching practice, and informal chats with a few student teachers, this is not always the case. There is still a gap between theory and practice. To bridge the gap between theory and practice, teachers should examine their teaching behaviors through reflective practice and teaching exploration.

Another problem is that student teachers in the researcher’s context are rarely exposed to authentic experiences. Typically, they are asked to follow the information provided and complete the templates needed to pass the teaching practice course. This expectation encourages them to develop behavior patterns that work in certain situations and repeat them until they become automatic. Such a practice prevents student teachers from trying out innovative ideas and taking risks to better understand the teaching profession. Student teachers should be encouraged to become active initiators and shoulder the responsibility for their growth during their training period.
Studies of expertise as a process and teacher learning theories have yielded enough evidence to support the idea that teachers and student teachers learn how to teach through reflection. A significant amount of research has been conducted on the importance of reflection; still, there is limited research addressing how reflection can be implemented in a teaching practice course. Time spent at school during the practicum might be too short for practicing reflection. Therefore, the practicum should incorporate an e-learning component specially designed in such a way to provide ample opportunities for reflection.

This study sought to answer the following research questions:
1. How does engaging EFL student teachers in e-portfolio-based reflection-enhancing tasks affect their reflection level as it pertains to teaching philosophy?
2. How does engaging EFL student teachers in e-portfolio-based reflection-enhancing tasks affect their reflection level as it pertains to peer observations?
3. How does engaging in e-portfolio reflection-enhancing tasks affect EFL student teachers’ understanding of and appreciation for reflective practice and its influence on their teaching performance?

Thus, the present study aims at understanding the benefits of using e-portfolios during the practicum to enable student teachers to practice reflection. This study intends to contribute to the research about student teachers’ attitudes, perceptions, and experiences, with reflection enhancing tasks in teaching practice courses. It is hoped that the results of this study will help teacher educators to create an informative account of reflection in teaching practice programs in ways that encourage reflective practice among student teachers.

Literature Review
Reflection Defined

Historically, reflective teaching is traced back to the 1930s when Dewey (1933) defined reflective thinking as an “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends” (p. 118). Unfortunately, this spark of reflection was not given its due attention until the beginning of the 1980s with the significant contributions of Schon (1983) and (1987). He described reflection as the knowledge gained from experience and conceptualized teachers as reflective practitioners. Since then, reflection has received noticeable attention in teacher education and is considered a key component in teachers’ professional development (Clarke & Otaky, 2006; Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Richards & Farrell, 2005).

Reflection “... simply means thinking about something,” but for some, “it is a well-defined and crafted practice that carries a very specific meaning and associated action” (Loughran, 2002, p. 33). This means that a well-defined reflective practice involves deep thinking, leading to improvement and professional development. Farrell (2015) defined the reflective practice as "a cognitive process accompanied by a set of attitudes in which teachers systematically collect data about their practice, and while engaging in a dialogue with others use the data to make informed decisions about their practice" (p. 123). According to El-Okda (2009), reflection is associated with
professional action involving deroutinization of professional performance, problematizing routinized practices, and uncovering their tacit beliefs and assumptions. In other words, Moghaddam, Davoudi, Adel, & Amirian (2020) indicated that "adopting reflective practice requires teachers to collect data and think over their actions to enhance their teaching practices" (p.279). Most of the definitions of reflection found in the literature agree upon common elements: reflection is a process (Bean & Stevens, 2002; Farrell, 2015; Nagle, 2008; Norsworthy, 2009), it can be taught (Jay & Johnson, 2002; Nagle, 2008; Russell, 2005; Weber, 2013), it involves making decisions (Larrivee, 2008; Rosen, 2008), and it can positively impact professional growth (Corrigan & Loughran, 2008; Farrell, 2015; Richards & Farrell, 2005).

**Developing as a Reflective Practitioner**

Becoming a reflective practitioner is not an easy task (Nagle, 2008). It is a process that should be developed and taught through explicit instruction (Bean & Stevens, 2002; Cattaneo & Motta, 2020; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Kaywork, 2013; Nagle, 2008; Roessger, 2015; Russell, 2005; Weber, 2013). Therefore, student teachers should be encouraged to start forming the habit of making reflections by performing generic reflection-enhancing tasks. Kagan (1992) argued that it is unlikely for teachers to become reflective practitioners unless guided to reflect on their experience. Kagan reviewed several empirical research studies on learning-to-teach and concluded that preservice and novice teachers need to be trained to reflect on their beliefs, behaviors, and image as teachers. Furthermore, Bourner (2003) stated that “developing students’ capacity for reflective learning is part of developing their capacity to learn how to learn” (p. 267). Student teachers need guidance in the development of their reflective skills to become reflective practitioners and life-long learners. According to Norsworthy (2009), reflection is a process that “preservice teachers need to experience” (p. 107) so that they can begin to bridge the gap between theory and practice (Brooksfield, 1995; Farrell, 2015; Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Thompson & Thompson, 2008; Ulmer & Timothy, 2001).

**Teaching Philosophy**

A teaching philosophy is a brief personal statement about what constitutes effective teaching. It offers insight into a teacher’s stated beliefs about teaching because such beliefs will be mostly derived from received theory. Basically, it is the “why, what, and how” of one’s teaching. The teaching philosophy’s value lies in taking time to think and reflect upon one’s teaching, clarify beliefs, and reveal inconsistencies. Farrell (2015) pointed out that when teachers are given a chance to articulate their beliefs, they can examine the sources of such beliefs and better understand their meanings. Such understanding leads to change, improvement, and a teacher’s professional growth (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Kaplan, Meizlish, O’Neal, & Wright, 2008; Kearns & Sullivan, 2010). Furthermore, Farrell indicated that beliefs change over time, and sometimes they are an unreliable guide to the reality of actual classroom practice. Therefore, he suggested that “when beliefs have been stated, teachers should monitor their classroom practice to see if there is evidence of these beliefs in classroom practice” (p. 57).

Research has indicated that writing a teaching philosophy is an essential reflective practice, yet there is a gap in the literature investigating students’ and teachers’ perceptions towards writing
one. Moreover, to the researcher’s knowledge, no research considered ways of implementing it as a reflective task during the practicum course. Ma and Rada (2005) maintained that reflective portfolios allow and encourage student teachers to develop their teaching philosophy. McNair and Galanouli (2002) pointed out that reflective portfolios are essential in bridging the gap between theory and practice. They allow student teachers to make connections between university-based learning and classroom context.

**Peer Observations**

Observing a teacher’s class is a threatening experience. However, this sense of threat is minimized if there is an agreement among two or more teachers to collaborate and observe each other’s classes for the sake of learning and improving practice. Peer observation is a form of professional development that offers teachers an opportunity to have a direct experience of another teacher’s classroom and a chance to learn from that experience. Cosh (1999) indicated that the purpose of peer observation is, most often, appraisal or judgment of the observed individual, which might have a detrimental effect on that person’s confidence and, therefore, not support the learning/teaching environment. Therefore, Cosh recommended that peer observation “should not be a vehicle for the evaluation of others on the basis of our assumptions, but a reassessment of those assumptions on the basis of their teaching” (p. 22). He argued that, in a reflective context, peer observation is carried out to encourage self-reflection and self-awareness about one’s teaching. Researchers have reported positive effects of peer observation without evaluating or judging the person being observed (Berenson, 2017; Mueller & Schroeder, 2018; Thomson, Bell, & Hendry 2015).

There has been a significant amount of research conducted on the importance of peer observation in improving the quality of teaching and developing teachers’ and student teachers’ learning (Bell, 2001; Bennett & Barp, 2008; Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2004, 2005; Shortland, 2004; Tenenberg, 2014; Torres et al., 2017). Richards and Farrell (2005) stated that peer observation “provides an opportunity for the teacher to see how someone else deals with many of the same problems teachers face on a daily basis” (p. 86), and “can also help narrow the gap between one’s imagined view of teaching and what actually occurs in the classroom” (p. 94). Reflective conversations can be defined as “a discussion between peers that allows the other to explicitly articulate, appreciate and extend their understanding of practice” (Nsibande, 2007, p. 4). Cochran-Smith (2003) pointed out that a reflective dialogue makes possible “the learning of new knowledge, questions and practices and, at the same time, the unlearning of some long-held and often difficult to uproot ideas, beliefs, and practices” (p. 9, emphasis in original). In the same line of thought, Donovan, Meyer, and Fitzgerald (2007) indicated that a “dialogue coupled with reflection and moved to action creates the conditions for transformative learning” (p. 11). Most reflective learning models propose that reflective discourse is an essential component of transformative learning (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985; Mezirow, 1991; Moon, 2004; Schon, 1983).

Peer observation is more successful when the teacher and the observer come together and reflect on their practice together. Having the chance to talk about observed teaching practices is highly valuable. Haigh (2005) noted that conversation among teachers “involves participants in exploration and critique of the reasons and assumptions associated with their positions” (p. 8).
has been realized that reflection and practical reasoning enhanced by dialogue with colleagues are central to peer observation (Farrell & Kennedy, 2019; Feiman-Nemser, 2001; Hammersley-Fletcher & Orsmond, 2005). Peer observation motivates one to reflect on his/her practice and, more importantly, share reflections with other colleagues.

Method
Research Design
To examine the impact of e-portfolio reflection-enhancing tasks on the development of one’s teaching philosophy and the use of peer observations, a mixed-methods study design was implemented. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected within this study. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), “the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone” (p. 5). For this study, the quantitative and qualitative data were used to complement each other to provide a comprehensive picture of the participants’ use of reflective practice and its impact on their teaching philosophy and growth through peer observations.

Participants
Participant of this study were selected using purposeful random sampling. A purposeful sampling is a technique that is widely used in qualitative research (Patton, 2014). Such sampling involves selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are associated with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). This research sample included eight Saudi female student teachers enrolled in a teacher education program at a Saudi public university. The researcher was responsible for supervising these participants in a practicum course in the last semester before graduation. The participants’ practice teaching experience existed within an English class at a Saudi public secondary school in Riyadh and lasted 11 weeks.

Procedures
Using Moodle, an open-source learning management source, the researcher created an e-portfolio used by the participants throughout the study. A 1-day workshop was organized to familiarize the participants with the use of the e-portfolio. The e-portfolio site contained all of the participants’ information to use the reflection-enhancing tasks associated with developing a teaching philosophy and conducting peer observations.

Each participant was required to write a teaching philosophy and conduct six peer-observations. For the development of the teaching philosophy, the participants were asked to write a teaching philosophy in terms of several justifiable and illustrated principles. Then, provide a rationale for including such principles and examples of teaching behaviors. As an example, one of the principles of teaching the English language can be: Make most of your learning experiences communicative tasks. The rationale for considering such a principle is that, according to Krashen (1982), acquisition-rich classrooms are those in which most learning experiences are communicative tasks in that they trigger a lot of negotiation, which is thought to be the necessary condition for language acquisition. This principle entails attempts by the teacher to modify learning experiences that are not communicative tasks into well-designed communicative tasks.
Concerning the peer observation tasks, pairs of participants were required to collaboratively work together to design a descriptive observation sheet that encouraged practical reasoning and consisted of alternative descriptors of commonly used teaching behaviors as well as those entailed by relevant principles in their teaching philosophies. Each participant was next expected to have a short dialogue with her observed peer before and after observing the class based on a positive, non-judgmental attitude that elicits practical reasoning. Finally, each participant was required to help the observed peer consider the consistency/inconsistency between beliefs embodied in practical reasoning and her teaching philosophy principles.

There seems to be a consensus that the assessment of reflection should be in terms of hierarchical levels (Weber, 2013). A rubric designed by El-Okda (2009) was used to analyze the e-portfolio data according to the following three levels of reflection found in the:

1. Low level: Inadequate description of puzzles of practice, their alternatives, rationale, and their possible consequences.
3. High level: In addition to B, attempting to infer tacit beliefs and assumptions embedded in practices and practical reasons and ability to weigh those tacit beliefs against principles of current stage teaching philosophy. This may also include moral implications. (p. 6)

Collected data of the assigned reflection enhancing tasks will be ranked with 0 if low, 1 if it is moderate, and 3 if high. Scores obtained are going to be analyzed based on descriptive statistics using SPSS. Each task was rated on this rubric by the researcher and an education colleague within the university. A kappa value of .79, calculated using Cohen’s Kappa, was found between the two raters to measure interrater reliability. This score borders on the low end of a strong level of agreement.

Semi-structured interviews with participants at the end of the teaching practice course also supplied data for this study. The questions within the interview protocol, which was created by the researcher and validated by several of her teacher education colleagues, focused on the participants’ views on reflective practice, the value of and issues related to the creation of a teaching philosophy, and their perceptions of the peer observation activity. The participants were also interrogated about any perceived changes in their teaching behavior that resulted from the reflection-enhancing tasks within which they were engaged. All interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was considered the best approach for this research because, as indicated by Braun and Clarke (2006), it is beneficial for “identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes your data sets in (rich) detail. However, it goes further than this and interprets various aspects of the research topic” (p. 79). NVivo 11 was utilized to organize, manage, and track the data. All themes generated from the data by the researcher were examined by two Ph.D. education graduates who were familiar with the researcher’s work and had completed the same doctoral program. A high level of consistency was found among the thematic analysis conducted by these three individuals.
Results  

Analysis of Teaching Philosophy

Developing a teaching philosophy was the most challenging task for the participants of this study. The researcher devoted much time explaining what a teaching philosophy is and how to develop one. A teaching philosophy model was uploaded to Moodle, where participants could both see and download it. Such a model was discussed along with the process of analyzing a principle into appropriate teaching behaviors. Still, participants found it extremely difficult to develop a good teaching philosophy.

As table one shows, the teaching philosophy’s calculated mean was 1.5, which indicates a low level of reflection. Only one participant reached the highest level of reflection when she successfully wrote three essential principles that she thought were effective in EFL teaching and mentioned many teaching behaviors entailed by the written principles. The principles she wrote helped her to weigh her tacit beliefs. One example of a well-written principle was “good teachers always give effective feedback.” Her rationale for this principle was that “research has shown that effective feedback helps learners get better at learning in general.” The participant who wrote this principle also added, “As a learner, teachers who provided me with feedback helped me to develop and learn unlike those who just marked my work without providing any positive or negative feedback.” She wrote the following as teaching behaviors for that principle:

1. Help students by giving them important information they need.
2. Inform students of their progress during the semester.
3. Inform the students with detailed weekly updates.
4. Provide tips on what they can do in the future.
5. Help students assess their performance.
6. Use different types of feedback to address different needs.

Table 1. Frequency, percent, and mean reflection level for teaching philosophy task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two other participants were able to reach a moderate level of reflection by being able to articulate and justify possible alternative behaviors of some principles of EFL teaching. The remaining five participants were unable to justify the EFL teaching principles they wrote, nor were they able to consider all possible teaching behaviors entailed by each principle.
Because this was the first time the participants had been asked to write a teaching philosophy, it was not easy. They were asked to start writing their teaching philosophy from the first week of the teaching practice. However, they did not post them on Moodle until the end of the third week. They took so much time to write them, and some were just copied from different sources. The researcher asked the participants who copied principles to change them and write ones using their own words. The researcher also asked them to modify their philosophies and add more important principles as they continued to teach. The participants did add more principles, but the researcher noted that they rarely modified it once they wrote a principle. It seems that they needed more time to be able to write a good philosophy of teaching. Participants admitted that writing a teaching philosophy was the most challenging task for them.

**Analysis of Peer Observation Sheets**

Participants came together and focused on two aspects of teaching, which were classroom interaction and classroom management. They worked collaboratively and wrote the descriptors from the peer observation sheet based on their past experience as language learners and relevant principles from their teaching philosophy. Even though most participants did not write a good teaching philosophy, they did very well writing descriptors for the peer observation sheets. This may have resulted from them working collaboratively, thereby removing the stress of trying to impress their supervisor (the researcher) and write things that were too good to be true. Working collaboratively may have allowed them to think of who they are as teachers and what they should do. It certainly provided them with the chance to discuss why things were the way they were as well as possible alternatives. For example, some of the written descriptors of classroom interaction were the use of positive feedback, the use of negative feedback, the ratio of teacher/student talk, the use of referential questions, the use of display questions, and the use of tasks that encourage students to interact.

Peer observation was not evaluative in nature. Participants did not evaluate each other in terms of strengths and weaknesses. They used the observation sheet to provide practical reasoning during their dialogue before the observation took place and during feedback meetings. They asked each other to describe what they planned to do in class and why before the class took place. Later, when the class was over, they asked each other to describe what happened in the class and why they behaved the way they did. The researcher guided feedback meetings. The researcher acted as a coach to facilitate collaborative dialogues. The participants reported that feedback meetings were of great benefit to them.

Table two illustrates that the total number of 48 classes were peer observed. Each participant observed six classes for three different colleagues. Participants were asked to write a report for each class based on the written descriptors and their dialogue before and after the observed class. Unfortunately, they did not write much. However, because the researcher coached feedback meetings, such meetings were recorded and transcribed. Participants reached a high level of reflection in such meetings. It appeared to the researcher that the participants preferred oral reflections over written reflections.
Table 2. Frequency, percent, and mean reflection level for peer observation task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
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<td>14.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>2.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table two also shows that the mean of the collaborative peer observation was 2.04. This means that the participants could collaboratively design a reasonable observation sheet that captured many alternative descriptors with real justification. It can be seen that high levels of reflection were identified more often than low ones. Nine reports showed evidence of a high level of reflection, while only seven reports out of 48 were considered low.

Analyzing the transcripts of the feedback meetings showed that how student teachers were taught strongly affects how they teach. Even though a few of the participants criticized some of their previous teachers for traditionally doing things, they ended up teaching in the same way. They were not aware of this flaw until they attended peer observation feedback meetings. Many of their tacit beliefs were revealed in those meetings. Some of those tacit beliefs included using translation to explain difficult words and structures, the importance of encouraging most students to read aloud, and the importance of drilling in teaching grammatical rules. These beliefs were not stated until the participants were involved in before-and-after peer observation dialogues. Such dialogues were based on practical reasoning. The participants not only conducted themselves well and benefited greatly from peer observation, but they also enjoyed working together. They reported positive feelings and many benefits from participating in the peer observation tasks.

Understanding of and Appreciation for Reflective Practice

The participants were asked what they thought reflection means and what it involves before and after their involvement in reflection-enhancing tasks. They all stated that they had never heard of the term reflective practice until the researcher had introduced it to them. In the beginning, some of the participants thought it was a new teaching method and some thought it only involved knowing the strength and weakness in one’s teaching. However, such misunderstanding was overcome. Almost all participants were able to define reflection after several meetings with their supervisor (the researcher) when she explained what reflection is and how to develop it.

According to all of the participants, being involved in reflection-enhancing tasks allowed them to experience reflection and provided interesting reflection definitions. One participant defined reflection as “looking back at what you have done in class and thinking about what you liked and disliked.” Another mentioned that reflection is thinking about one’s teaching and trying...
to change it to become better. Other participants provided similar definitions, such as “figuring out new different ways of teaching to develop my teaching,” “thinking about what is good for you and trying many things until you know what is best for you,” and “understanding who we are as teachers.” One of the participants mentioned that reflection is all about “self-questioning and self-analysis.” She indicated that reflection is asking yourself so many questions and trying to answer those questions to analyze your behavior. Likewise, three other participants said that thinking about their class behaviors allowed them to self-evaluate themselves as teachers. They pointed out that they knew how well they did in class. They knew most of the comments their supervisor would provide after observing their classes before telling them these comments. This was true. After attending each participant’s class, the supervisor (the researcher) asked them these questions: What do you think of your class? Did it go as planned? What went wrong? What did you do about it? Almost all participants answered these questions correctly, figuring out what went wrong and what should be done. Sometimes they mentioned things about which the supervisor was not aware. This indicates that when teachers reflect upon their actions, they do not need someone to tell them what to do. They can figure out what is best for their situation by exploring their teaching context.

An analysis of the interviews illustrated that the participants reflected on different aspects of their teaching practice. These aspects included teaching approaches, learning experiences, classroom interaction, class management, and time management. The participants reflected most frequently on classroom learning experiences. Choosing the perfect learning experiences for each lesson was found to be of great importance to all participants. They reflected upon many issues related to their choice of the learning experience, the rationale behind their choice, how to modify exercises to become well-designed tasks, and the effect of the selected/modified tasks on students’ learning. Participants also reflected on the various possible ways to teach different skills. They reported that they tried different methods that they had studied to explore what was best for their students. One participant said, “In writing classes, I sometimes let them write individually, sometimes in pairs, and other times in groups. Sometimes, I let them write on paper, and in other times, I let them write on the blackboard or the smartboard.” Another participant gave the following example:

Like in reading class, I try my best to make it enjoyable. Sometimes I ask my students to read; other times, I ask them to summarize in groups or ask them to story map the comprehension text (using templates and graphics). At other times, I ask them questions as (Is there … in the text? How many … do you find in the text?) and in some situations, I read a part of the reading text and directly explain it to them.

At the beginning of the teaching practice course, the participants focused mostly on themselves as teachers. They were concerned about managing their classes, introducing a lesson, how to teach something effectively, and how to manage time. They paid great attention to their teaching behaviors in class without much thinking about the consequences of students’ behavior. However, at some point during the practicum, the participants began to think of their students. They were much concerned about attracting students’ attention and getting them involved in classwork. In the beginning, participants were concerned much about the following questions: What did I say? How did I explain something? What did I do wrong? What are the alternatives available for teaching something? How can I devote my attention to all students? However,
towards the end of the teaching practice course, most participants figured out that focusing on students is as essential as focusing on themselves as teachers. They began questioning: Did my students understand what I said? Is what I explained clear to all the students? Do they find it interesting? How can I make them want to learn? What kinds of activities or topics attract their attention? What do they love to do?

Discussion

This study generated several significant findings that relate well to previous educational research and are discussed below.

Reflection Can Be Taught and Developed

One of the findings from this study was that reflection could be taught, consistent with the literature (Bean & Stevens, 2002; Cattaneo & Motta, 2020; Jay & Johnson, 2002; Nagle, 2008; Roessger, 2015; Russell, 2005). Involving participants in reflection-enhancing tasks and providing them with guidance encouraged them to become reflective practitioners. Even though this study’s participants had never heard of the term reflective practice, they could define reflection in a simple way that showed that they understood what reflection is and what it involves. Generally, they viewed reflection as a systematic process of understanding their teaching behaviors and classroom routines and figuring out different possible alternatives to develop their own teaching. Almost all participants reported that reflection involved regular thinking, analyzing, investigating, and evaluating. All participants agreed that reflection could make them grow professionally and become better teachers in the future. Participants’ definitions of reflection go in line with the common elements of reflection that are agreed upon in the literature, which are as follows: reflection is a process (Bean & Stevens, 2002; Farrell, 2015; Nagle, 2008; Norsworthy, 2009), it is a skill that needs to be taught (Jay & Johnson, 2002; Nagle, 2008; Russell, 2005), it involves making decisions (Larrivee, 2008; Rosen, 2008), and it can positively impact students teachers’ professional growth (Farrell, 2015; Richards & Farrell, 2005).

The findings also imply that reflection can be developed. The participants’ level of reflection gradually developed in this study. Analyzing the reflection-enhancing tasks showed that most of the tasks submitted at the beginning of the teaching practice course were marked low. Most of the ones submitted towards the end of the teaching practice course were marked as moderate or high. This showed that with time and practice, the participants of this study developed their level of reflection. Such a finding is consistent with the findings of Weber’s (2013) study, which concluded that participants could develop an understanding of reflection and how to employ it effectively if exposed to explicit instruction and modeling.

Reflection Should Be Undertaken Through Various Modes of Communication

The participants indicated that they appreciated reflection through both written and oral forms of communication. This finding supports the results of Kaywork’s (2011) study, which concluded that our focus should not be on written reflections only. Some student teachers reflect more when engaged in oral discussions. The analysis of group discussions in Kaywork’s study revealed that oral reflections almost always extended written reflections. She concluded that while written reflections allowed student teachers to put their thoughts on paper, oral discussions allowed for a deeper reflection of such thoughts. This finding is consistent with the present study’s findings,
which illustrated that participants preferred to reflect orally and reached higher reflection levels in their peer observation feedback meetings. Such meetings allowed participants to expand their descriptions to include more profound reflections. Such result is in line with research that has recognized the importance of reflective dialogues in promoting reflection and professional growth (Cochran-Smith, 2003; Corrigan & Loughran, 2008; Haigh, 2005; Nsibande, 2007).

This study’s findings also revealed that collaboration created a supportive and interactive environment that motivated participants to become more reflective. Participants felt more confident while working with peers. They shared responsibilities and supported each other. Through discussion with peers, the participants were able to extract the underlying significance of their own experiences and learn from the experiences of others. According to Freeman and Richards (1996), collaboration can provide student teachers with rich opportunities to recognize and understand their tacit knowledge and give them further exploration to learn about teaching. The collaboration was considered by the participants of this study to be an essential aspect of learning in general and in developing reflection. Therefore, it is suggested to focus on various reflection-enhancing tasks that allow student teachers to be involved in collaborative and individual reflection through both written and oral reflection.

Reflection Can Improve Teaching Practice

All of the participants reported that there was an improvement in their teaching practice. As a result of their reflective practice, they mentioned that being involved in reflection-enhancing tasks encouraged them to question themselves regularly to identify improvement areas. All of the participants saw themselves as better teachers after this experience. This finding complements that of Loughran’s (2002) description of reflective practice, in which he stated that “reflective practice is a meaningful way of approaching learning and teaching so that a better understanding of teaching, and teaching about teaching, might develop” (p. 34).

Reflection Can Be an Important Means of Professional Development and Growth

This study revealed that the participants perceived reflection as an essential means of teacher development and professional growth. This finding is in line with Corrigan & Loughran (2008), Farrell (2015) and Richards & Farrell (2005) who argued that reflective practice improved professional behavior and stated that reflection encourages one to look at one’s professional behavior and practice to improve and develop it. This development and improvement include different aspects as knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Participants of this study found these reflection-enhancing tasks essential for preparing them to become better teachers and expand their teaching repertoire. Dewey (1933) indicated that reflection provides learners with the opportunity to “do something to prepare a person for later experiences of deeper and more expansive quality” (p. 47). Similarly, Richards and Farrell (2005) indicated that a better understanding of one’s teaching practices and routines through reflection leads to professional development for the language teacher.
Conclusion

Since ongoing teacher learning and development is a significant topic in language teaching, the need to develop a teacher’s professional skills, such as reflective practice, should begin during teacher training. Student teachers should be encouraged to become active initiators and shoulder the responsibility for their growth during their training period. Realizing the importance of being encouraged to engage in reflective practice, this study focused on the effect of writing a teaching philosophy and peer observation in a practicum on the professional development of female Saudi EFL student teachers. This study’s findings suggest that a reflection component with a framework of assessment should be incorporated into teaching methods courses and teaching practice programs. Reflection is considered essential in learning about teaching. The findings also suggest that reflection can be taught and developed, and therefore teaching practice supervisors need to provide explicit instruction on how to become reflective practitioners. For this development to occur in student teachers, teaching practice supervisors should be trained to implement, develop, and assess reflection. Finally, based on this study’s results, reflective dialogues are incredibly beneficial in developing reflection. Therefore, it is suggested that reflective dialogues between student teachers themselves and their supervisors should be developed and incorporated into the teaching practice course.

There are several limitations to this study. First, the present study was exploratory and qualitative, and therefore, only a limited number of participants were involved over a limited period. Therefore, there is a need for more longitudinal studies to provide more in-depth insight. Moreover, this research focused on two reflection enhancing tasks. Future research could continue to explore more reflective tasks that encourage reflection among student teachers. On this basis, it can be concluded that this study attempts to enrich our understanding of the importance of reflection with its developmental process. It specifically attempts to change the perception of the practicum and its role as the first step in a life-long process of professional growth rather than just an opportunity for student teachers to apply what they have studied in methods courses. It is hoped that the results of this study will help teacher educators to create an informative account of reflection in teaching practice programs that could lead to professional growth.

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