Team of this issue

Editor
Prof. Dr. Khairi Al-Zubaidi
Executive Director
Arab Society of English Language Studies

Associate Editor
Dr. Robert Arthur Coté
Center for English as Second Language
College of Humanities, University of Arizona, USA

Prof. Dr. Maha Rached Sourani
Department of English Language and Literature
Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences
Lebanese University, Lebanon

Dr. Tono Suwartono
Department of English Language Teaching
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education
Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Indonesia
Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article Titles &amp; authors</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is Foreign Language Teaching Possible Without School? Distance Learning Experiences of Foreign Language Students at Ataturk University During the Covid-19 Pandemic Ebubekir Bozavlı</td>
<td>3-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching English Speaking Online versus Face-to-Face: Saudi Students’ Experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic Abdulrahman Alzamil</td>
<td>19-27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Need for Translation in the Globalized World English Arabic Contact in the Algerian Academic Context Hicham BENMOKHTARI</td>
<td>28 -39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Parallel Corpora in the Translation Classroom: Moving towards a Corpus-driven Pedagogy for Omani Translation Major Students Awad Alhassan, Yasser Muhammad Naguib Sabtan &amp; Lamis Omar</td>
<td>40- 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interventions to Improve a Practicum Course for EFL Teachers in Saudi Arabia Khadija A. Alamoudi</td>
<td>59-70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boosting EFL Learners Critical Thinking through Guided Discovery: a Classroom-Oriented Research on First-Year Master Students Wahida YAICHE</td>
<td>71 -89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies on Second Language Vietnamese Undergraduates Hieu Manh Do &amp; Huong Le Thu Phan</td>
<td>90-112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Effect of Explicit Instruction of Requests on Saudi EFL learners using a pre-test, post-test Approach Israa A Qari</td>
<td>113-127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charting New Venues for Teaching Literary Texts through Black English Vernacular in EFL Context: Case of H.B. Stowe’s <em>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</em> Yamina ILES &amp; Amine BELMEKKI</td>
<td>128-138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation toward English Language Learning among Students of Different Fields of Study: A Case of Iraqi University Students Raed Latif Uglta</td>
<td>139-151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Causal Theory of Names: Between Theory and Practice Sa’ida Walid Al-Sayyed</td>
<td>152-164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to Present in English: Exploring the Voices of Preparatory-Year Female Undergraduates in Saudi Arabia Noura Ali Alghamdi</td>
<td>165-180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Effectiveness of Internet and Mobile Applications in English Language Learning for Health Sciences’ Students in a University in the United Arab Emirates Omnia Ibrahim Mohamed</td>
<td>181-197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Comparison between the Process-oriented Approach and the Product-oriented Approach in Teaching Writing The Case of Moroccan EFL Students in Preparatory Classes for the Grande Ecoles Mariam Kadmiry</td>
<td>198-214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL Learners’ and Teachers’ Perception toward the Use of Online Videos in EFL Classes Doniazad Sultan Alshraideh</td>
<td>215 -228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characterizing English Language Literacy among Famous English Language Educators in China</td>
<td>229-238</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jie Lin &amp; Chili Li</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doing Stylistic Versus Critical Stylistic: An Analysis of If by Rudyard Kipling</strong> Suadad Fadhill Kadhum Al-Janabi &amp; Nawar Hussein Rdhawi Al-Marsumi</td>
<td>239-252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Effects of Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy Instruction on Thai EFL Undergraduate Students’ Vocabulary Knowledge and Perceptions</strong> Nuntiporn Raunsawat &amp; Tipamas Chumworattee</td>
<td>253-269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structured Input vs. Structured Output Task’s Effects on the Acquisition of the English Causative Forms: Discourse-Level. Structured Input vs. Structured Output Task’s Effects on the Acquisition of the English Causative Forms: Discourse-Level.</strong> Najat Alabdullah</td>
<td>270-292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Effects of Situational and Perceived Interest on EFL Reading Comprehension: A Gender-Based Study at the University of Algiers 2</strong> Mohammed Akhib &amp; Fatma Zohra Mebtouche Nedjai</td>
<td>480-497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Latest Tools for the Formation of Foreign Language Communicative Competence of Students of Non-language Specialties</strong> Olha Turko, Tetiana Kravchuk, Oleksandra Kashuba, Halyna Navolska &amp; Ivan Kutsyi</td>
<td>443-457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Language Pronunciation Barriers Encountered by the Expatriate Students at King Saud University, Riyadh</strong> Kesavan Vadakalur Elumalai, Mohammad Sufian Abdullah, Jayendira P Sankar &amp; Kalaichelvi R</td>
<td>293-308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Impact of EMI on Omani Engineering Students’ Academic Performance</strong> Holi Ibrahim Holi Ali</td>
<td>309-324</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global Issues in ESP Classroom: Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education</strong> Yana Diachkova, Lilia Sazhko, Liudmyla Shevchenko &amp; Anastasiia Syzenko</td>
<td>388-400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Effects of Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy Instruction on Thai EFL Undergraduate Students’ Vocabulary Knowledge and Perceptions</strong> Nuntiporn Raunsawat &amp; Tipamas Chumworattee</td>
<td>253-269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Uncovering New Paths to Adaptation: A Case Study of Malaysian English as a Second Language Pre-service Teachers</strong> Taghreed El Masry &amp; Eman I Alzaanin</td>
<td>421-442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Latest Tools for the Formation of Foreign Language Communicative Competence of Students of Non-language Specialties</strong> Olha Turko, Tetiana Kravchuk, Oleksandra Kashuba, Halyna Navolska &amp; Ivan Kutsyi</td>
<td>443-457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Teachers’ Listening Fluency Interaction Patterns: The Use of Similar News Stories in Narrow Listening</strong> Refi Ranto Rozak, Mursid Saleh, Dwi Anggani Linggar Bharati &amp; Djoko Sutopo</td>
<td>458-479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Effects of Situational and Perceived Interest on EFL Reading Comprehension: A Gender-Based Study at the University of Algiers 2</strong> Mohammed Akhib &amp; Fatma Zohra Mebtouche Nedjai</td>
<td>480-497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Challenges and Strategies in Teaching Speaking Skills to the Yemeni EFL Learners at Aden University: A Case Study</strong> Abdulbari Mahboob Ahmed Al-Hassaani &amp; Abdulkarim Fadhil Mahmood Qaid</td>
<td>498-514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Comparative Study of Boosters between Genders in the Introduction Section</strong> Mazlin Mohamed Mokhtar, Harwati Hashim, Puteri Zarina Megat Khalid, Intan Safinas Mohd Ariff Albakri &amp; Norfaizah Abdul Jobar</td>
<td>515-526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proposed Model to Assist Saudi Postgraduate Students in their English Academic Writing</strong> Noof Saleh Alharbi</td>
<td>527-542</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Is Foreign Language Teaching Possible Without School? Distance Learning Experiences of Foreign Language Students at Ataturk University During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Ebubekir Bozavlı
Department of Foreign Language
Faculty of Education
Ataturk University, Erzurum, Turkey
Email: ebozavli@atauni.edu.tr

Received: 12/19/2020 Acceoted: 2/5/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
Covid-19 pandemic forced Turkey, like other countries, to give up face to face teaching in all educational institutions and to move toward distance education. This research aims to determine the learning experiences of foreign language students participating in distance education during the pandemic and their beliefs about whether it is possible to learn a foreign language without school. There were two problems that attempted to be answered; first, is it possible to learn a foreign language during and after the pandemic without being physically at school and second, what kinds of experiences do students gain in distance learning of foreign languages. The sample of the study consists of the students of department of foreign languages at Ataturk University, in Turkey. The study was carried out with a sample population composed of two hundred forty-two male and female students from German, French, and English Language Education Departments. A questionnaire consisting of thirteen close-ended questions created with a 5-Likert type developed by the researcher was applied. Participants answered the questionnaire online via Atatürk University Course Information System. The data were analyzed through the SPSS program to determine their frequency and descriptive analysis, and interpreted with content analysis and descriptive analysis. The results demonstrated that students believe that they can’t learn a foreign language without going to school. Additionally, the findings indicated that their digital literacy skills are insufficient in distance teaching, and students show low motivation in learning.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, de-schooling, digital literacy, distance learning, foreign language teaching, school, Turkey

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.1
Is Foreign Language Teaching Possible Without School?  

Bozavlı

Introduction

One of the most important features that distinguish man from other living things on earth is that he needs education. As soon as animals are born, they instinctively find themselves adapted to their living environment in a concise time. It is food and protection they usually need during their early years of life. Whereas man finds its essence through education, and it takes years to be educated by other people who were previously educated. Education starts in the family and continues at school with childhood. Within each nation's principles, school systematically provides education to the citizens. The process that starts with pre-school education focuses on teaching in later classes.

One of the first examples of the school system in history emerged during the Sumerians. The invention and development of cuneiform started in the Sumerian schools, and some of the first written documents were clay tablets prepared for practice and study purposes (Aydın, 2012). The transformation of the school into a bureaucratic structure started with the developed western countries from the 18th century. This transformation took its place in the systems of other countries over time. Many countries adopted the philosophy of John Dewey in the early 1900s, and added his contemporary understanding to the concepts of school. Dewey (1932), led the schools of various countries to implement educational reforms by giving seminars in countries like China, Japan, Russia, and Turkey. According to Dewey, education is not a preparation for the future but a lifestyle. School should be life itself, should not be where only information is given, and habits are formed. School should be seen as a human community, and its function should be to contribute to the development of character, temper, and virtues that every child can realize. In this way, with its unique structure and rules, a school should be seen as a human community, a learning place, a social institution, an organization, a bureaucratic and legal institution based on a hierarchy of authority (Şişman, 2007).

Although traditionally, school is defined as the place where all kinds of education and training are carried out collectively, it is possible to see also different understandings of school. The most important of these understandings are the definitions of "effective school" and "learning school" that emerged from today's information society. The concept of an effective school is related to the quality of education provided in schools. Some schools are more successful than other schools among school types. Effectiveness is measured by the knowledge, skills, and competencies that the school offers to its students. Further, “the learning school” refers to the continuous flow of information. In such an atmosphere where knowledge changes in concise periods, individuals have to learn to learn. Likewise, school institutions have to turn into learning organizations. The learning school is a school where students are active and where "learning" rather than "teaching" is at the forefront. The learning school tries to realize the change and restructuring within itself to the extent permitted by the central system in which it is located. There is no distinction between teacher and learner in this system. All the actors are in the position of learners (Töremen, 2011).

In recent years, the school has been criticized by many experts for failing to fulfill requirements of the age we are in. According to the critics, the school does not make necessary and useful contributions to the learner. On the contrary, the school takes away many existing things such as curiosity, determination, motivation, etc. (Giordan, 1998). Children are curious when they start school. They want to learn everything. They are hungry for knowledge. They
frequently ask questions to learn. By the age of 14-15, these children seem to despair, as if their lights are out. According to them, except for friendships, nothing in school is valuable. In their eyes, knowledge has lost its real value. They learn many formulas but do not know how they are used in daily life. Thus, the school becomes a worthless place for learners where only a diploma is awarded. (Giordano, 2002).

All these experienced lead individuals to seek different school conceptions or think of deschooling. Complaints and discomfort about traditional schools led both families and education authorities to seek new and alternative practices (Aydın, 2012). The concept of alternative school has been placed against the traditional school concept not only in underdeveloped or developing countries, and also in the United States. Alternative schools created with the name of “homeschools, Montessori schools, Waldorf schools, charter schools, small schools, magnet schools, paideia schools” have been seen as the solution to educational problems that cannot be overcome. While some of these schools are still valid today, some have lost their validity. Apart from these, the most interesting and destructive thought in school-related minds is the idea of deschooling. This idea resembles homeschooling and similar models practiced in some American states. The most important advocates of this trend are Gatto (2018), and Illich (2018). Although they criticize the American public education system in their works, they generally object to the world public education system. Gatto, who has been a teacher in Manhattan for more than thirty years, identifies the education given at school with boredom. Gatto reveals this determination due to his observation of the students in the school and questioning them. The lessons for students are insignificant and mostly about what they already know. Instead of sitting on desks and listening to lectures, they want to deal with real things. This negative situation felt by the students is also reflected in the teachers. Many teachers experience a lack of enthusiasm, low energy, whining, complaints, and demoralization. Teachers state that students only focus on the grades they will receive. Gatto, continues his statements about the school as follows:

“Do we need a school? Of course, I do not mean education. I'm talking about compulsory education in schools. I'm talking about 12 years of compulsory education, six hours a day, five days a week, nine months a year. Is this tedious routine vital? A considerable number of Americans had not passed twelve years that we and our children passed through. But everything went well for them; Take George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln. Sure, someone had taught them something, but the things they learned were not the product of the school. None had even finished secondary school. For most of American history, children generally did not attend high school, still those who were not in school were promoted to admirals like Farragut, inventors like Edison, industrial giants like Carnegie and Rockefeller, and writers like Melville and Twain” (2018, p.20).

Gatto thinks that the main purpose of modern public education consists of “aligning, integrating, defining and choosing” functions. The main goal of states is to make individuals as similar to education. In other words, it is to create a citizen profile that obeys the rules, can be restrained, submits, and does not create problems. Illich (2018), on the other hand, argues that the society as a whole should be de-schooled and that the school system leads to a monopoly in the distribution
of opportunities rather than giving people equal opportunities. Many people acquire most of their knowledge outside of school. Students learn most of what they learn without teacher’s help, or even despite the teachers. In reality, learning is a human activity that is least required to be directed by others. Most learning acts are not the result of teaching. Rather, this is a result of inheritance that is carried out without being prevented and with a meaningful approach. Therefore, de-schooling constitutes the basis of a movement that will lead to the emancipation of human beings. Really, the discourse of de-schooling of Gatto, and Illich seems to overturn or even destroy conventional social thought. No other perfect system to be placed in front of the public school system has yet to be discovered, and there are not enough individual or public resources to finance homeschooling and similar models. Hence the young people have to go to kindergarten and primary school. Besides, even most communities do not have the knowledge and experience to manage such an application without any problems.

However, de-schooling ideas seems applicable in certain disciplines such as foreign language learning and teaching, especially with adults. It is possible to learn a foreign language without a school, thanks to the development of technology, and the increase in the competence of today's individuals to use technology. As a matter of fact, some internet-based online applications and software have recently entered our lives in this field. For example, a Turkish foreign language student can learn online English, French, German, or any other language from a native speaker with active participation and interaction. Communications are carried out in mutual dialogues as in social life.

The rationale of the study
With the Covid-19 pandemic, the whole world was suddenly faced with Gatto and Illich's understanding of de-schooling education. Undoubtedly, if such a pandemic had not happened, no one would have witnessed a worldwide de-schooling society. In the spring of 2020, when the pandemic seriously threatened human health, almost all countries ended education in schools at all levels. After a short period of confusion, countries sought a solution to continue education without physically going to school. At this point, technology became a solution for humanity in the field of education. Thanks to the internet, lessons started to be given online. Houses turned into schools. Even formal education exams were conducted remotely online. The research aims to examine the experiences of students who participate in distance foreign languages learning during the Covid-19 pandemic and to determine whether they can learn a foreign language with technology without going to school. The understanding of teaching foreign languages without school is basically based on the principle of distance education. However, the principle of distance education does not question the existence of the school in general, nor ignores the school. Rather, it relates teaching to school. Face-to-face teaching and distance learning are complementary. However, the school has no place in distance foreign language teaching discussed in this study, and the idea is emphasized: “learners can learn a foreign language without ever going to school”. It is thought that the study, which is original in this respect, will create a completely new and different perspective in minds.

Research questions
The study has been framed around the following questions.
1- Is it possible to learn a foreign language without school during and after the pandemic?
2- What kinds of experiences do students gain in distance teaching and learning of foreign languages during the pandemic?

**Literature Review**

When traditional learning is defined as face-to-face instruction provided by an instructor physically present in the classroom with students, distance learning is defined as “the acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction (Bollinger, 2017). Distance learning is a method of education in which the learner is physically separate from the teacher. It may be used on its own, or in conjunction with other forms of education, including face to face. In this approach, learners are physically separated from the institution that sponsors the instruction (Simonson, Smaldino & Zvacek, 2015). In a general sense, distance learning mainly serves learners who cannot attend face-to-face courses or programs. Learners stay at home or office and follow the course, do the assignments, and interact with each other and the teacher via Internet (Ekmekeçi, 2014). With a conventional understanding, distance learning is associated with the school. Face-to-face teaching and distance learning are complementary and supportive of each other. Distance learning in Turkey is carried out by some well-established universities in higher education. Anadolu University in 1982, Istanbul University and Atatürk University in 2010 are those that started distance learning. In primary and secondary education, the Ministry of National Education asynchronously have been supporting formal education with radio and television programs conducted through state channels since the 1980s. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, by means of the Education Informatics Network (EBA) established in 2012, asynchronous and synchronous education is carried out during the period at all levels of school. Many public and private schools in Turkey have integrated distance teaching technology into training systems, and have made the students access to education through this technology.

The researches on distance learning concentrate generally on the philosophy of the method (Simonson et al. 2015), the theory (Moore, 1994) and the background (Simonson, 2013) and specifically on “foreign language anxiety, measuring oral proficiency (Lin & Warschauer, 2015) effectiveness of this approach to teaching and learning in distance learning and importance, impact of distance education (Anglin & Morrison, 2000; Simonson, 2002). Simonson et al. (2015) state that distance education is the best way to learn because it allows students to acquire knowledge when it is most relevant to them. Peters (1993) emphasizes student effectiveness in distance learning and supposes that the students assume more responsibility for his or her own learning than is possible in face-to-face situations. Another study conducted on learning motivations of students learning English by means of distance education (Fandino, Munoz & Velandia, 2019) alleges that students are strongly influenced by external factors. In addition, the relevant literature suggest works on distance learning curriculum, course syllabi and course activities. One of these researches is (Kılıçkaya, Krajka & Latoch-Zielinska, 2014), in which different models of distance learning courses and reflecting on their applicability for English language teaching in Turkey. Even though some of modes of learning at a distance might not be compatible with cultural conditions of Turkish students, the versatility of contemporary Learning Management Systems enables instructors to design their courses in such a way to address culturally conditioned preferences. As for the activities, O, Down (2007) reached that the use of online communicative activities gives learners more opportunities to interact together than would be possible within the time constraints of the traditional classroom.
Method

Research Design
The research has a quantitative value in terms of percentage and frequency, and it also has a qualitative value when interpreting it with the descriptive research (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2000; Giroux & Tremblay, 2002).

Participants
The sample consists of the students of Foreign Languages Department at Atatürk University. The study was carried out with a sample population composed of two hundred forty-two male and female students from German, French, and English Language Education Departments. Statistics about the sample are given in Table one.

Table 1. Percentages and Frequencies Regarding Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman</td>
<td>78,5</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Man</td>
<td>21,5</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Departments of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Teaching</td>
<td>38,8</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Language Teaching</td>
<td>16,5</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German Language Teaching</td>
<td>44,6</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Levels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory Class</td>
<td>26,4</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Grade</td>
<td>29,8</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Grade</td>
<td>14,0</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td>16,1</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>13,6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of 242 people, 190 women (78.5%) and 52 men (21.5%), participated in the study. 94 of the participants (38.8%) are English Language Education, 40 (16.5%) are French Language Education, 108 (44.6%) are German Language Education students. 64 of the participants (26.4%) are in Prep, 72 (29.8%) are in 1st grade, 34 (14.0%) are in 2nd grade, 39 (16.1%) are in 3rd grade., 33 (13.6%) are 4th grade students.

Research Instrument
A questionnaire consisting of thirteen closed-ended questions created with a 5-Likert Type developed by the researcher was applied. Participants answered the questionnaire via Distance Learning Information System of Atatürk University.

Data Analysis
SPSS Program Assistance was used to manage the data. The subsequent analysis is by identifying questions and analysis of frequency distribution. Data were interpreted with content analysis, and descriptive analysis among qualitative research methods.

Findings
The findings obtained from the questionnaire are presented in the tables below.

Table 2. Technological tools students use in distance teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


As seen in Table two, 31.4% of the students attend online classes with smartphones, 28.1% with personal computers, and 29.8% with both smartphones and personal computers. These results show that approximately 90% of the students have a technological device of their own.

Table 3. The ways students connect to distance lessons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I don't have internet access at home, I can't connect.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have my internet at home; I use the internet of my family members.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have internet access at home; I connect outside of the home (internet cafe etc.)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I connect with my phone at home.</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I connect via Wi-Fi at home.</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I connect with my phone and Wi-Fi at home</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table three reveals that 70.2% of the students attend the classes with Wi-Fi at home, 10.7% with the internet of their phones, and 9.9% with both Wi-Fi and the internet of their phones. Also, the findings reveal that there are students who want to attend online classes but cannot because they do not have an internet.

Table 4. Students' perceptions of school in distance foreign languages learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is no need for a school to learn a foreign language.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>40,5</td>
<td>40,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>36,4</td>
<td>36,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A foreign language can be learned through distance education.</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14,0</td>
<td>14,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4,1</td>
<td>4,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can improve my listening and speaking skills in foreign languages</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>30,6</td>
<td>30,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>through distance learning without going to school.</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>42,1</td>
<td>42,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14,0</td>
<td>14,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9,9</td>
<td>9,9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table four shows the results of the frequency test. They are related to students' school perceptions in distance learning of foreign languages. 76.9% of the students think that foreign language education is impossible without school. The mean rate of this item suggests a low value, as seen in table seven (mean=1.9587, st=1.05765). Only 9.1% of the students agree with this idea. The rate of those who think that listening and speaking skills can be improved online without going to school is 12.2%. 72.7% of the students believe that these skills can only be developed at school. It is seen that the percentage in the second item (72.7%) is partially lower than the rate in the first item (76.9%). The difference between two items reveals that basic skills in a foreign language can be taught independently. Students seem more dependent on school for teaching grammar, reading, and writing skills.

It is determined that the school’s limits are exceeded, even if a little, in the teaching of listening and speaking skills. This situation can be associated with the development of technology, and the naturalness of verbal communication. Individuals learn to speak in their mother tongue in social situations outside of school. Nowadays, verbal communication is quickly done as audio-visual with technological tools such as "zoom, Skype, WhatsApp" regardless of distance. On the other hand, foreign language students can access audio-visual materials more quickly with technology than previous years.

As seen in Table five, 88.4% of the students experience distance learning foreign languages for the first time. It is also understood that 60.3% of the students have technical problems attending the lessons, and 32.2% do not have any connection problems. The majority of the participants (73.6%) think distance foreign language teaching is not fruitful. The rate of those who are satisfied from distance education is only 13.2%. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is the first time I've had the experience of distance foreign language learning</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>56.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am having technical problems in foreign language virtual classroom applications.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>39.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think distance foreign language teaching with virtual classes is fruitful.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>37.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>73.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>86.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>96.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to use foreign language virtual classroom applications.</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>75.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. **Students' perceptions and competencies in distance foreign languages learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy distance foreign language learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>33,9</td>
<td>33,9</td>
<td>33,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>38,8</td>
<td>38,8</td>
<td>71,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>85,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9,9</td>
<td>9,9</td>
<td>95,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During distance foreign language learning, I spend less time studying than</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do at school</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>21,5</td>
<td>21,5</td>
<td>26,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14,0</td>
<td>14,0</td>
<td>40,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>41,3</td>
<td>41,3</td>
<td>81,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18,2</td>
<td>18,2</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance foreign language learning reduces my motivation to learn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8,3</td>
<td>8,3</td>
<td>8,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>21,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10,7</td>
<td>10,7</td>
<td>32,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>38,8</td>
<td>38,8</td>
<td>71,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>28,9</td>
<td>28,9</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance foreign language learning dulls my capacity to learn foreign</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>languages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
<td>5,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18,2</td>
<td>18,2</td>
<td>23,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14,0</td>
<td>14,0</td>
<td>37,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>43,8</td>
<td>43,8</td>
<td>81,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>19,0</td>
<td>19,0</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand and learn the lessons given in distance foreign language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9,9</td>
<td>9,9</td>
<td>9,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>31,4</td>
<td>31,4</td>
<td>41,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>41,3</td>
<td>41,3</td>
<td>82,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>14,0</td>
<td>14,0</td>
<td>96,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>96,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance foreign language teaching negatively affects my socialization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6,6</td>
<td>6,6</td>
<td>6,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>27,3</td>
<td>27,3</td>
<td>33,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>47,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>34,7</td>
<td>34,7</td>
<td>81,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>18,2</td>
<td>18,2</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have sufficient self-control in distance foreign language learning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know my responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>3,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>19,0</td>
<td>19,0</td>
<td>22,3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>26,4</td>
<td>26,4</td>
<td>48,8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>36,4</td>
<td>36,4</td>
<td>85,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>14,9</td>
<td>14,9</td>
<td>100,0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data in Table six, 72.7% of the students (mean = 2,1405, st = 1,14004) do not like distance foreign language teaching, 59.5% of them study less than face-to-face teaching during distance learning. While 67.7% of the students have motivation problems, 62.8% of the students (mean = 3,5372, st = 1,13811) have their foreign language learning capacities dulled with distance education. 17.3% of the students state that they understand the online lessons, and 41.3% state that they do not understand the lessons. Almost half of the students (41.3%) do not know whether they learn in online classes or not. On the other hand, 52.9% of the students think that distance teaching harms their socialization.

Students study less than usual time, have motivation problems, and do not like online teaching. They believe that their learning capacity is reduced because lessons are inefficient. Also they do not know whether they learn in lessons or not. This situation can be linked to the inadequacy of their soft technology skills. While “hard” technologies consist of electronic mail,
teleconferencing, fax, video conferencing and other electronic means of facilitating communication, soft skills have been defined by various authors as personal characteristics such as: work ethics, positive attitude, social grace, facility with language, friendliness, integrity and the willingness to learn (Harris & Rogers, 2008). Technologies are not equally malleable. They can be softer (implying greater malleability) or harder (implying less flexibility). Softer technologies require more effort, are less consistent, and are mostly slower to produce results than harder technologies, but they offer greater flexibility an opportunity for creativity, innovation and change (Dron, 2014).

**Discussion**

Through the analysis of the questionnaire, the findings demonstrate that foreign language students prefer face-to-face learning in school and classroom interaction more than distance learning. This result shows similarity with the findings of some scholars in Turkey and in other countries. The opinion of foreign language students about the school engaging in higher education at the University can also be seen in students at the secondary level in Turkey. It was determined that the highest arithmetic averages of the secondary school students in their attitudes towards school are as follows: "loving to go to school and being in school", "thinking that school is an important social structure" and "believing that there will be no society without schools (Adıgüzel & Karadaş, 2013). It is possible to encounter similar results in distance education at the international level during the pandemic period. For example, 70.1% of Greek university students show their preferences for traditional face-to-face teaching (Charissi, Tympa & Karavida, 2020). Similary, Al-Nofaie (2020) observed, in his article investigated the perceptions of Saudi University students towards distance learning, that they favored traditional in-class learning. Similar studies were conduced by Erdoğan, 2020; Maican & Cocorada, 2020). Erdogan's research on English preparatory class students concluded that Turkish students do not like learning English remotely because they do not find it useful, and they enjoy face-to-face learning more. Maican and Cocorada's research with Romanian language students also reveals that students think that going to school to learn a foreign language is the best method, and that the school will still maintain its importance after the pandemic. Although it is rare, it is possible to see studies reaching a different conclusion from these results. For example one of these studies (Fansury, Januarty & Syawal, 2020) alleges the advantages of using digital platforms learning English during the Covid-19 pandemic, having a positive effect on student motivation, giving authentic cultural information, exposing students to real language. Researchers associate these positive attitudes of Indonesian students with their being millennial generation, and excessive interest in technology.

Although students think differently, the idea of a de-schooling society seems to be an appropriate approach to language learning, especially to mother tongue acquisition. From the moment of birth, the child acquires the spoken language in a short period of two years in the society, without any linguistic background and experience and without the need for any experienced instructor. The child neither attends a school nor follows a method while learning the language. The child also does not have an unlimited number of resources. There are only individuals around the child who speak the native language. In this way, he learns to speak. Language acquisition occurs due to the child's cognitive features and environmental influences. In other words, the child has an innate ability to learn to speak and must be in a social environment. The child hears what is said around his for a certain period and collects what he
hears in his memory for later use. With his physiological and physical development, hearing what is spoken in the social environment is like an exercise phase for the child. Although he cannot produce the sounds of language, he perceives, internalizes and separates them from each other. In this way, the phenomenon of understanding is formed before production. In the natural environment, every person can quickly learn and speak their mother tongue.

There are two situations in foreign language learning. In the first, there is a natural environment with native speakers of the language, while in the second; there is a learning environment in institutions. In other words, in an unnatural environment like school, there are no speakers of that language. Learning and teaching a foreign language in an unnatural environment often arises. Many entrepreneurs demonstrate innovative thinking, and approach to eliminate this learning problem. One of these approaches aims to create a foreign language learning space in an unnatural environment where there is no school (Dergisi, 2019). Pioneers of this idea argue that language is learned in social environments, not in schools. They are against the idea of school in the usual sense. In these businesses called “language cafes”, people can improve their language as if they live abroad. Native English or French instructors work in these cafes, and they practice with individuals who want to improve their speaking skills. It is strictly forbidden to speak the mother tongue in such a social environment. An ambience is created through various games, activities, and movie watching and discussion activities. Participants can join conversation groups appropriate to their language level. Most importantly, there is no exam in such a learning environment. Participants are not subjected to any examination at the end of a certain education period. Entrepreneurs aim to contribute to Turkey’s problems about learning a foreign language with branches they open in different regions. Because, learning foreign language is still a major problem as a developing country in Turkey. There are no social environments where the foreign language learned sociologically is spoken.

At the end of the foreign language education, which starts in the second grade of primary school at an early age and continues until the university’s end, the learners fail to express themselves even at a basic level. After thousands of hours of teaching, learners are generally able to understand what they read, answer questions in exercise books, apply grammar rules on paper, but cannot speak. The failure of learners' verbal comprehension and expression capacity is due to the fact that foreign language teaching at school is grammatically based and teacher-centered. The teacher tells the grammar rules in the classroom, explains the meaning of the words, reads and translates the texts. Most importantly, the teacher does not use the foreign language effectively and communicates with the learners in their native language. English Proficiency Index, which aims to determine the international foreign language proficiency of countries, reveals that Turkey's level of English proficiency is very shallow, and Turkey takes place at the end of the success ranking (Bozavlı, 2017). For example, Turkey was ranked 41st among 60 countries in 2013, 47th among 63 countries in 2014, and 50th among 70 countries in 2015. 73rd among 88 countries in 2018, and 79th among 100 countries in 2019. The name of Turkey is mostly mentioned together with the countries such as Iraq, Azerbaijan and Venezuela, which are underdeveloped or developing countries. Unfortunately, over the years, the country's level of English remains very low. The country rank falls to a lower rank every year.

Despite this failure, it seems a paradox in the present study that the participants thought learning a foreign language would not be possible without school. Participants still trust and believe in the school in learning foreign languages. Participants’ beliefs about the school may be
Is Foreign Language Teaching Possible Without School?

Bozavlı

associated with social perception and social realities in the field of education in Turkey. Foreign language students must attend school and have a diploma to find a job. Socially, parents and people live in continue to attribute a positive value to the school. Parents encourage their children to go to school and learn there. For students, school is important because they don’t know how to use the technology in autonomous learning. However, humanity is evolving into a digital universe. Internet technology and humanoid robots seem to shape foreign language learning as in other learning areas. In the coming years, there will probably not be a foreign language class as we know and, also foreign language teachers. People will improve the language learned by speaking to native speakers online. Maybe each of them will have a humanoid robot speaking a foreign language or languages. Such robots are available today (Haydée, 2019), (Hoyau & Dechambenoï, 2015), (Liao, 2018). One of the most popular robots used in foreign language teaching and learning is Nao. This robot developed by SoftBank is used in sales, finance, public service, health, tourism, education and research. It can communicate verbally using gestures and even facial expressions. Nao was further developed by Finland, and this new model was described as the first social robot powered by artificial intelligence to help individuals learn foreign languages. While Nao is an ordinary robot, this robot understands the needs of students and, in a fun way, allows them to develop their verbal expression skills without fear of making mistakes. Undoubtedly, the future will spread such robots.

In recent years, the development of artificial intelligence has led to changes in the perception of foreign languages and the methods used in teaching foreign languages. Godwin-Jones states (2009) that three different scenarios stand out in foreign languages within the framework of technological developments. The first of these scenarios is that there is no longer a need to learn a foreign language because communication in a foreign language will take place with technological devices, human influence will remain in the background and a device will instantly transfer conversations between people from one language to another. The second scenario suggests that foreign language learning is needed, but the learning method is different. Foreign language will not be taught in educational institutions with a proper understanding and, it will be learned informally, just like native language acquisition. The last scenario is about learning a foreign language both formally and informally. The second reminds of the understanding of de-schooling foreign language learning, which is the subject of this study. Those who learn through autonomous learning will understand the foreign language they want to learn online without the need for a school. Undoubtedly, this type of learning method requires learners to have some competencies. Learners should have a developed sense of responsibility, self-control, questioning, interpreting, and testing their learning, making decisions, implementing and self-orientation. Because they no longer have planning, timing, and evaluation system as they find ready at school. Learners themselves must create all of these systems. It can be easily observed that these skills are not yet developed in today’s foreign language students. As Fu (2020) stated, the crises during the Covid-19 pandemic can provide learners with essential skills. Just as learners acquire some basic habits in face-to-face teaching over time, they will also gain some habits in distance teaching. The important thing is to know how to turn the crisis into an opportunity. Those who achieve this will gain in their education, those who fail will lag behind others. Daniel (2020) thinks that returning to daily life will not be simple at the end of the Covid-19 pandemic, and that educational institutions can adopt different understandings in methods and techniques when they start face-to-face teaching in classrooms or campuses.
Conclusion
The present study is to reveal the learning experiences of students who participate in distance foreign language learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, and to determine whether they can learn a foreign language with technology without going to school. The current study is limited to a small sample of learners from Atatürk University in Turkey. The findings reveal that the students think that it is not possible to learn a foreign language without school and that also listening and speaking skills in a foreign language cannot be improved online. Additionally, they do not believe that distance foreign language learning is fruitful. The findings of the study also show that the students experience distance foreign language learning for the first time and the vast majority of students show low motivation in learning, do not seem satisfied with distance learning and think lessons are inefficient, have problems in evaluating what they have learned, and spare less time than face-to-face learning. In addition, the students do not like distance foreign language learning because the model harms their socialization. Moreover, digital literacy training for foreign language students is insufficient. Distance learning in higher education will probably become more common. Institutions will pursue a technology-based education systematically, as they think it will be more useful than face-to-face education.

About the Author:
Ebubekir Bozavlı is an Associate Professor Doctor in the Department of Foreign Languages Department at Kazım Karabekir Faculty of Education Ataturk University in Erzurum, Turkey. The author has several national and international publications. His research interests include foreign language learning and teaching, early foreign language learning, linguistics, psycholinguistics. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4475-5777

References
Is Foreign Language Teaching Possible Without School? — Bozavlı


Is Foreign Language Teaching Possible Without School? Bozavlı


**Appendix**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7. Students’ overall level of agreement/disagreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1. I think there is no need for a school to learn a foreign language. A foreign language can be learned through distance education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2. I can improve my listening and speaking skills in foreign languages through distance learning without</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
going to school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Agree Percentage</th>
<th>Disagree Percentage</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Distance teaching of foreign languages reduces my motivation to learn.</td>
<td>38,8%</td>
<td>28,9%</td>
<td>3,66</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I have sufficient self-control in distance learning foreign languages. I know my responsibilities.</td>
<td>19,0%</td>
<td>26,4%</td>
<td>3,40</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I know how to use foreign language virtual classroom applications.</td>
<td>57,0%</td>
<td>24,8%</td>
<td>3,94</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am having technical problems in foreign language virtual classroom applications.</td>
<td>44,6%</td>
<td>15,7%</td>
<td>3,39</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>This is the first time I've had the experience of distance foreign language learning</td>
<td>44,6%</td>
<td>43,8%</td>
<td>4,16</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I think distance foreign language teaching with virtual classes is fruitful.</td>
<td>36,4%</td>
<td>9,9%</td>
<td>2,05</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I enjoy distance foreign language learning</td>
<td>38,8%</td>
<td>14,0%</td>
<td>2,14</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Distance foreign language teaching negatively affects my socialization.</td>
<td>34,7%</td>
<td>18,2%</td>
<td>3,30</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I understand and learn the lessons given in distance foreign language learning.</td>
<td>41,3%</td>
<td>14,0%</td>
<td>2,69</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>During distance foreign language learning, I spend less time studying than I do at school.</td>
<td>41,3%</td>
<td>18,2%</td>
<td>3,46</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Distance foreign language learning dulls my capacity to learn foreign languages.</td>
<td>43,8%</td>
<td>19,0%</td>
<td>3,53</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Mean score was used to determine students’ overall level of agreement/disagreement.
Teaching English Speaking Online versus Face-to-Face: Saudi Students’ Experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Abdulrahman Alzamil
Department of Foreign Languages
Taif University, Saudi Arabia
Email: dr.aa.alzamil@gmail.com

Received: 12/14/2020  Accepted: 2/25/2021  Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
In March 2020, schools in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia were suspended. Online learning became a substitute for traditional face-to-face learning. This study addresses the implications of this shift for the attitudes of university-level English majored Saudi students taking a listening and speaking course. The study investigated the students’ attitudes towards: a) the importance of speaking in English; b) teachers use of emails to communicate their feedback on students’ English-speaking tasks; c) online teaching of English speaking; and d) online learning and teaching of the English language. The data collection tool was a 21-item questionnaire. The participants were 18 second-year male Saudi students who were studying English at a Saudi university. The findings showed that the participants: a) had positive attitudes towards the importance of speaking English; b) appreciated the benefits that online learning offers, but felt it could not replace face-to-face learning.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face learning, online learning, Saudi EFL students, teaching speaking

Cite as: Alzamil, A. (2021). Teaching English Speaking Online versus Face-to-Face: Saudi Students’ Experience during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 19-27. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.2
Introduction

Of the four skills in English (reading, writing, listening and speaking), mastering speaking is a priority for most L2 learners. Saudi students learning English are no exception, and are aware of the importance of expressing themselves fluently in English. Since the world was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic in December 2019, the shape of learning and teaching has changed tremendously. Face-to-face learning was replaced by online learning in many parts of the world (Fansury, Januarty, & Rahman, 2020). Saudi Arabia suspended all schools and educational institutes in March 2020, replacing it with implemented online and distant learning for the duration of the suspension, thus altering the form of communication between teachers and students.

This study investigates students’ attitudes towards the shift from face-to-face learning to online learning in a Saudi university English department and whether this facilitates or hinders their ability to master L2 speaking. Examining this provides us with greater insight into: a) the online learning approach; b) its consequences for teaching and evaluating speaking skills; and c) students’ views on speaking in a virtual class versus speaking in an actual class. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What attitudes do university-level Saudi students who specialise in English have towards:
   a. the importance of speaking in English;
   b. teachers’ use of emails in communicating their feedback for students’ English-speaking tasks;
   c. online learning of English speaking; and
   d. online learning of the English language?

Literature Review

Teaching English in Saudi Arabia

According to Alhmadi (2014), the Saudi education system consists of three levels: a) primary (six years); b) intermediate (three years); and secondary (three years). The school year consists of two fifteen-week semesters. Students start learning English in the fourth year of the primary level. Students have four classes (45 minutes each) of English a week. Alhmadi (2014) has asserted that school students graduate with low levels of English proficiency because they do not get adequate exposure to the English language at secondary school. As a result, students who specialise in English at university-level struggle with English, especially at the beginning.

Teaching L2 English Speaking

Speaking is a means of expressing meaning in speech (Alsaedi, 2012; Fulcher, 2003). Speaking in L1 and L2 is a productive skill that is acquired unconsciously in L1 and consciously in L2. Conversely, writing and reading are learned consciously in both L1 and L2 (Sharma, 2015), and are learned later in life because they are skills that need to be taught.

In his investigation of factors affecting Saudi undergraduate students’ speaking skills, Hamad (2013) enrolled 150 female students, who then completed a questionnaire. He found that the main obstacle to speaking English was the students’ fear of speaking it, even in more private conditions such as making a phone call. The students attributed this to a lack of opportunities to
Teaching English Speaking Online versus Face-to-Face: Saudi Students’

Drawing on a sample of 90 students and 10 teachers, Al-Ahdal, Alfallaj, Al-Awaied, & Al-Hattami (2014) examined Saudi students’ L2 speaking and writing skills. Data was collected using a mixture of questionnaires, interviews and tests to compare both skills. It was found that participants’ writing skills were better than their speaking skills. The authors suggested that teachers should cooperate with students and their parents to create a suitable environment for them to practise speaking in English.

Another study was conducted by Ali, Shamsan, Guduru, & Yemmela (2019) with 100 Saudi undergraduates (50 males and 50 females) to investigate their attitudes towards English-speaking skills. A questionnaire was administered, and the findings revealed that both male and female students had the same positive attitudes towards speaking in English, and that it is a crucial skill.

It can be observed from the studies above that speaking in English is difficult for L2 learners of English and that this is an issue for both males and females. The reasons vary from not focusing enough on improving students’ speaking skills to other factors related to the learning environment and practicing speaking. The next section discusses the teaching of L2 speaking in an online learning environment.

Online Learning

Online or electronic learning (E-learning) has become an important aspect of the provision of education materials around the world. However, the extent to which it is used differs from place to place (Harandi, 2015). Using email in communication and E-books in teaching have become common practices in the vast majority of universities around the world (Harandi, 2015). However, technology has yet to replace the traditional teacher-classroom-student form of teaching. Saudi universities started to adopt online learning in their teaching plans by establishing institutes and colleges to work on transforming the form of learning (Al-Asmari & Khan, 2014), and implementing online learning has been the focus of the Saudi Ministry of Education since 2005 (Alhabeeb & Rowley, 2017). A number of studies have addressed the effectiveness of online learning and asked whether students prefer it to face-to-face learning. Three such studies are discussed below.

Paechter and Maier’s (2010) study aimed to investigate students’ attitudes towards online learning vs. face-to-face learning. They recruited 2196 Austrian undergraduates, whose opinions were collected by means of a questionnaire. Their results show that participants thought online learning was a clear and more organised approach to learning. They also preferred face-to-face learning when communication was required.

Gorra and Bhati (2016) examined the consequences of online learning for university-level students in the Philippines. Based on a sample of 221 students, the study used a questionnaire to
seek their opinions about the importance of online learning. They found that the students had positive attitudes to the use of technology in learning, and that it had positive effects on the learning experience. However, students had negative attitudes towards the use of social media in learning, as students may use social media to chat and play music and games, which may have negative consequences on learning outcomes.

A recent study carried out by Fansury et al. (2020) examined the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on learning. Interview data were collected from 50 students and 20 teachers in Indonesia, who were also asked to complete a questionnaire. The results showed that learning can take place digitally to overcome social distancing and the suspension of schools. Moreover, they found that students preferred online learning to traditional classroom learning. Nevertheless, both teachers and students complained about technical problems such as internet disconnection and the cost of internet data.

The online learning studies discussed above show that both students and teachers view online learning positively. However, it is not clear whether students prefer it simply because they are bored with traditional methods and it is a new form of teaching, or whether they like it because it is actually more effective.

Methods
To minimise bias and facilitate generalisation of the data (Larson-Hall, 2016), this study took a quantitative approach to data collection. There were 18 participants (mean age 20.5 years; SD=1.1) who were all second-year university-level students studying English at a Saudi university. There were intended to be 29 participants, but due to difficulty in reaching some students only 18 were recruited.

All participants were taking Listening and Speaking II (in addition to other courses). Given that the Saudi ministry of education suspended schools and universities on the 8th of March, participants attended eight weeks of traditional learning and about seven weeks of online learning. As part of the evaluation of their speaking skills in Listening and Speaking II, they were asked to give presentations roughly 2-5 minutes long. They were notified of each presentation topic one week in advance to give them time to prepare, and each student gave a total of eight presentations distributed throughout the semester (six face-to-face and two online presentations). The students had to stand in front of their classmates to deliver their presentations face-to-face, but to avoid any psychological pressure their teachers’ comments were provided to each student privately, and not in front of their classmates. The online presentations had to be recorded using a camera, and students were asked to stand during their delivery and pretend to be in a real classroom. The resulting videos were then sent to the teacher by email for assessment, with teachers’ comments on student presentations also sent by email.

Like previous studies that have examined online learning vs. face-to-face learning (e.g., Fansury et al., 2020; Hamad, 2013; Paechter & Maier, 2010), this study used a questionnaire to collect the data. Students were asked closed-ended questions, and had to choose their answer from a 5-point Likert scale in which the responses ranged from strongly disagree to disagree, uncertain, agree and strongly agree. The 21-item questionnaire consisted of four constructs designed to seek their attitudes towards: a) the importance of speaking in English; b) teachers’
use of email to communicate their feedback on students’ English-speaking tasks; c) online teaching of English speaking; and d) online learning and teaching of the English language. The goal of the questionnaire was explained to the participants before it was administered. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, the questionnaire was administered online.

Results
This section reports the results of the four parts and each part addresses one of the four questionnaire constructs. The participants’ responses are shown as numbers (frequency) and percentage scores.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the importance of speaking in English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. It is important to master speaking skills in English.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Being a fluent speaker improves my knowledge and understanding.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. It is not important for me to be fluent in speaking English.</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I don’t like it when teachers focus on improving my speaking skills.</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I would prefer the teacher to provide me with English speaking training so I improve my speaking skills.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. highlights that almost all the participants believe in the importance of speaking English fluently. Most participants also preferred that teachers should focus on improving their speaking skills.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for teachers’ feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. I prefer to receive my teacher’s comments for my speaking tasks by email rather than face-to-face.</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It is more beneficial if my teacher comments on my speaking tasks face-to-face.</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. It is good to receive my teacher’s comments by email as this allows me to keep his comments.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Online learning allows me to receive my teachers’ comments faster.</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants seemed to have different views concerning receiving teachers’ feedback. The majority of participants preferred to receive teachers’ feedback face-to-face rather than online.
However, they expressed positive attitudes towards receiving feedback by email, which allowed them to keep their teachers’ comments.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for online learning of English speaking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. Using technology to deliver my speaking tasks allows me to be a better speaker.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I prefer speaking skills to be taught online.</td>
<td>1 5.6%</td>
<td>4 22.2%</td>
<td>10 55.6%</td>
<td>1 5.6%</td>
<td>2 11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Videotaping my speaking tasks allows me to improve their quality as I have the opportunity to repeat them if I'm not happy.</td>
<td>2 5.6%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5 27.8%</td>
<td>10 55.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A large proportion of the participants expressed positive attitudes to using technology to deliver their speaking tasks. Yet a majority remained undecided about whether they preferred online to face-to-face learning.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for using technology in learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Online learning makes me more independent as a learner.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2 11.1%</td>
<td>8 44.4%</td>
<td>3 16.7%</td>
<td>5 27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I think that teaching courses online should continue even after the COVID-19 pandemic.</td>
<td>6 33.3%</td>
<td>6 33.3%</td>
<td>3 5.6%</td>
<td>3 16.7%</td>
<td>4 22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I like the flexibility that comes with online learning.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1 5.6%</td>
<td>6 33.3%</td>
<td>3 5.6%</td>
<td>10 55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Face-to-face learning is more effective than online learning.</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>5 27.8%</td>
<td>2 11.1%</td>
<td>3 16.7%</td>
<td>4 22.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Online learning allows me to review learning materials repeatedly.</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2 11.1%</td>
<td>6 33.3%</td>
<td>3 16.7%</td>
<td>2 11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Online learning is more enjoyable than face-to-face learning.</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>4 22.2%</td>
<td>9 50%</td>
<td>1 5.6%</td>
<td>2 11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Online learning helps students cheat.</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>5 27.8%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>8 44.4%</td>
<td>3 16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Online learning is boring.</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>4 22.2%</td>
<td>6 33.3%</td>
<td>3 16.7%</td>
<td>2 11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I look forward to online classes more than face-to-face classes.</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>4 44.4%</td>
<td>3 33.3%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants seemed to have positive attitudes to online learning. However, when it came to the question of whether they preferred online to face-to-face learning, participants seemed to believe that online learning is less effective than face-to-face learning.

Discussion

This section is organised according to the four constructs in the questionnaire that addressed the main research questions. These were as follows: a) the importance of speaking in English; b) teachers’ online feedback; c) online learning of English speaking; d) online learning of the English language.

In relation to the first construct, the participants either agreed or strongly agreed that mastering speaking was important for them. They also preferred their teachers to concentrate on improving their speaking skills. These findings support Ali et al.’s (2019) study.

With regard to the second construct, 50% of participants preferred to receive their teacher’s feedback on their speaking task face-to-face rather than online. This may be because face-to-face feedback allows for discussion which is not normally the case with email. However, they appreciated the fact that receiving the feedback by email allowed them potentially to keep their teacher’s comments for future use. Moreover, 33.3% of them appreciated the speed with which they received feedback by email. Yet, neither speed nor the ability to retain email made them prefer online feedback to face-to-face feedback.

With the third construct, the majority of participants (77.7%) felt that delivering their speaking tasks online improved their speaking skills. They (83.4%) also thought that videotaping their speaking tasks allowed them to edit and improve their quality. However, when it came to preferring online to face-to-face teaching of English speaking, they were divided about whether they agreed or disagreed, and 55.6% of the participants remained uncertain.

For question 1d, participants agreed or strongly agreed that online learning gave them greater independence and flexibility (44.5% and 61.1% respectively). However, a majority (66.6%) opposed the continuation of online learning after the pandemic ends, as most (61.1%) believe that face-to-face learning is superior to online learning. However, they were not as opposed, as discussed earlier, to statement 11, ‘I prefer speaking skills to be taught online’, where their views were split. It could be that their experience with regard to learning speaking online was different from their experience on other courses: for example, only 16.7% of participants looked forward to online classes whereas 60% looked forward to face-to-face learning. Many (61.1%) even reported that online learning facilitates students’ cheating. Participants were divided about whether online learning is boring, expressing views that ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. This can be explained by remembering that some students tend to consider all learning, of whatever type, boring.

The findings above support the findings by Paechter and Maier (2010) and Gorra and Bhati (2016) to the extent that the participants believe that online learning has its benefits and roles in L2 learning. However, the findings of the present study failed to show that participants preferred online over face-to-face learning altogether, as did the participants in, for example, Fansury et al.’s (2020) study.
Conclusion

This study was limited to a small number of participants because the COVID-19 pandemic meant that some potential participants could not be reached. It addressed the attitudes of university-level Saudi students towards: a) the importance of speaking English; and b) distance learning and teaching English speaking. Participants had positive views towards the use of distance learning and teaching and learning English. The findings showed that the participants: a) had positive attitudes to the importance of speaking English, and b) appreciated the benefits that online learning offers. Participants did not believe it could replace face-to-face learning.

These results are interesting, in spite of the study’s limitations in terms of the small number of participants. A larger study is needed to determine whether its outcomes can be reliably replicated.

About the Author:
Dr. Abdulrahman Alzamil is an associate professor of second language acquisition of syntax in the Department of Foreign Languages at Taif University in Saudi Arabia. His research interests lie primarily in the area of generative second language acquisition of morphosyntactic and semantic properties. ORCiD: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2462-3408

References


The Need for Translation in the Globalized World
English Arabic Contact in the Algerian Academic Context

Hicham BENMOKHTARI
Faculty of Foreign Languages
University of Oran 2-Mohammed Ben Ahmed, Algeria
E-mail: benmokhtari.hicham@gmail.com

Received: 12/29/2020         Accepted: 3/3/2021         Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
The neck-breaking changes imposed by the process of globalization demand a reconsideration of
the mundane scholarly dealings. The constant need for communication in a scientific area to keep
pace with the continuing advancements and the newly published research works, mainly in the
Speech-language Pathology branch, pushes the researcher to look for the appropriate tools which
bridge the gap and ease the task. The researcher tries to find out how translation can bridge the gap
between the technological improvements, anglicized data, and the actual context in which the
Algerian students and teachers work? This research paper aims, thus, at researching the
significance of translation from English to Arabic in an Algerian academic context (at the
University of Oran 2). To reach the predetermined objective, the researcher uses of descriptive
case study research in which a students’ questionnaire, a teachers’ interview, and program analysis
are used. The findings show that a total absence of both the English language and translation in
such a scientific discipline widens the gap between the requirements of the age and the actual
practice enormously. A set of recommendations, including insertion of a specialized translation
module, are suggested to help both the teachers and the students in this department.

Keywords: Algerian, academic, context, English, Arabic, language contact, globalized world,
Speech-Language Pathology, translation

Cite as: BENMOKHTARI, H. (2021). The Need for Translation in the Globalized World
English Arabic Contact in the Algerian Academic Context Arab World English Journal, 12 (1)
28 -39. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.3
Introduction

Globalization is a process driven by international communication in different domains, including commerce and investment. It started as an economic process and pervaded every sphere of human activity. A global interaction and integration among people who look for suitable ways to connect is a direct result of such a process. Owing to the quick improvements in technologies, an understanding of our global world is required to keep up with the forces that had thrust upon us. This impacts the environmental, cultural, political, economic, educational, academic as well as physical well-being in societies.

Translation is getting recognition due to its extreme importance in a globalized world. We as part of the globe must consider it as an ally that helps us keep pace with the development of globalization, in the age of globalized knowledge, which is limited neither by space nor by time. The de facto language chosen universally is English, and the best way to spread this knowledge is through this language.

In an academic context and for the speakers of the other languages, whether in the advanced or third world nations, the imperative need for translating the latest researches and books in different fields must be highlighted. In Algeria, for instance, university teachers and students find it challenging to access world knowledge due to the policies imposed in the educational landscape. Thus, how can translation bridge the gap between the technological improvements, anglicized data, and the actual context in which the Algerian students and teachers work? To what extent can translation from English to Arabic and vice versa help researchers access the main published scientific productions in the globalized world?

For this, we try through the current research to analyze language contact between English and Arabic in an Algerian academic context, and then to reveal the continuous importance of translation.

The rational of this study is to highlight the role of translation fostering language contact between Arabic and English and thereby improving the students’ understanding of the subject matter.

Literature Review

**English: An International Academic Language**

Besides its flexibility and easy grammar, nearly four to five million people used English during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603), it is now used by around 1.5 billion people to become a widely spoken language, (Crystal, 1999). After the Second World War USA purchased the world’s gold and the gifted spirits that migrated from Europe escaping wars there, these two powerful motives led to US dominance over the global economy and knowledge (Genç & Bada, 2010). Dieu (2005) states that exactly after the Treaty of Versailles, “English started being used in diplomacy and gradually in economic relations and the media”(p. 2). The huge American productions in different fields, including science, economy, art, and others, were exported to the outer world aided a great deal in the spread of English is chosen as the official language of business and science (Altbach, 2007).
English: The Language of Scholarly Communication

Larivièrè (2018), an associate professor of information science at Montréal University, has enquired how and why the wave of Anglicization is sweeping throughout the social sciences and humanities, through an analysis of a vast corpus of articles indexed in Thomson Reuters’ Web of Science database of more than 3,500 specialized journals. Larivièrè (2018, as quoted in the CAUT) asserted that publishing “in the natural and medical sciences field, the debate is a foregone conclusion. If we don’t publish in English, we are not even on the map as researchers” he adds “University rankings only take into account the number of articles published in the most prestigious journals, and these are all in English. That’s one of the main reasons why our universities are pushing us to publish in English.”(p. 1)

Within the last few decades, English has become one of the most important academic and professional tools. More than 90% of the indexed scientific productions are in the English language, for it is recognized as the essential language to learn by the international community. English is, in fact, the standard language in the international research community, especially in natural sciences (Bada & Genç, 2010, Di Bitetti & Ferreras, 2016).

English is thereby the language of scientific publication, considering the latest universities ranking. According to the three most reliable scientific institutions, including ARWU (Academic Ranking of World Universities) Shanghai ranking, Times Higher Education ranking, and QS World University Ranking, we can assume that the top ten universities are either from the USA or England where English is their publishing language.

English in Algeria

Algeria is a culturally and linguistically diverse North African country. Its population is around 42 million. There are two main linguistic communities in Algeria: Arab and Berbers. 70% of the Algerians speak different varieties known as colloquial or Algerian Arabic, while 30% consists of Berber including, the Chaoui, the Kabyles, the Mezab, and the Tuareg speak Berber variety (Chaker, 2007). Code-switching using a Berber variety and French or Algerian Arabic and French is common in Algeria.

English as a second foreign language is thought to have the potential to help raise the quality of education in Algeria and promote external mutual understanding and internal social progress since English was recognized as the language of science and technology. English in Algeria was supported by the British and the Americans in the 1980s by establishing the British Council and the American corner in Algiers, which also helped with teacher-training and provided scholarships for study in Britain. (Belmihoub, 2016)

The attempts of the ministry of national education in the mid-1990s to offer English as an option besides French in the fourth grade in primary schools, unfortunately, failed as most parents chose French over English for they thought French easier to acquire in Algeria. The government's move is because English is a tool to show solidarity with the Arabic-speaking Middle East (Belmihoub, 2018). The initially flourishing ELT industry and then its decline in Algeria in the 1900s ends in the actual resurrection of English reflects the competitive linguistic environment created by the cultural and academic programs which the British, French, and American embassies promote to
spread their languages. In other words, English teaching competes French teaching since 2000 (Miliani, 2000).

In universities, for instance, English was introduced as a module in many disciplines as a foreign language within the introduction of the LMD (Licence-Master-Doctorate) system. The programs focus on the students’ needs and the language for special purposes objectives.

The Place of Translation in the Algerian University in the Era of Globalization

The Mother Tongue as a Basis for Language Education

Atkinson (1987) provides three reasons for L1 use in ELT. First of all, the mother tongue is thought to be the learner’s preferred strategy, especially for beginners and intermediate students (as cited in Harbord, 1992). Translation and transfer are natural strategies and inevitable processes a student use to avoid some problems; therefore, teachers should find systematic ways to employ them rather than struggling to keep them away. L1 is also perceived as a time-saving technique when explaining certain aspects. Further, giving students a chance to use their mother tongue is humanistic in that it helps them to express themselves clearly and fuel their motivation to learning at the same time, it allows them to involve in the process of language construction.

Translation in the Algerian University

“Algeria was, in fact, one of the first Arab countries that started to deliver translation at university as a separate independent discipline at the Institute of Translation” (Goui, 2016). Translation was integrated in the Algerian university since 1943 at the faculty of arts human sciences in the University of Algiers. Due to the ministerial decree 73-139, an institute was created. Shortly after establishing of the institute an administrative change transformed it into an independent department in the faculty of foreign languages in the Algerian universities (Benouda, 2020). In 2010, all the translation departments were closed to become a module in the faculty of foreign languages except some universities where it remains a department (Batna, Constantine, Annaba, Tlemcen). Two national institutes were established in Algiers and Oran.

Translation in the Academic Context

In an Algerian context, we notice an absence of translation in most of the branches of human and social sciences except in the Arabic department and foreign languages department (French, English, Spanish) for 2nd and 3rd-year license degrees and some master degree specialties as an optional module with lower credits and coefficients. The main objective of translation here is to improve the language.

In medical, natural, and technical sciences, we note a total absence of translation. Here, the problem lies, the students’ mother tongue is Arabic, and he learns either in Arabic or in French. However, in the globalized world, the student researcher is in urgent need for translation as a key to access knowledge that is generally produced in the English language. The following sections will present the importance of such a discipline in bridging the gap between Arabic and English.

Methodology

The researcher used descriptive research to probe the status of the global language, English, and translation in an academic context. A case study was then conducted to find out whether the
hypothesis is true or not. Both quantitative as well as qualitative research tools were employed to ensure triangulation and thereby to seek reliable findings. The researcher has designed a students’ questionnaire, where 30 Master students from the Speech Language Pathology (SLP) branch at the University of Oran 2 in Algeria were questioned, and an interview for five (05) teachers in the same department. An analysis of the administered program followed to unveil reality.

Participants
The researcher has chosen second-year Masters from the department of psychology as a case study. Five teachers from the same department were interviewed to collect the raw data, as shown in the following table.

Table 1. Research Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instruments
The teachers’ interview and the students’ questionnaire included two main sections. The first one is composed of four questions aimed at probing the status of the English language in the Algerian university. The second section is devoted to find out the significance of translation to ease the mundane academic practices. The program imposed by the ministry of higher education was then analyzed to find out whether Arabic English contact is ensured or not.

Data Analysis

The status of the English language in Algerian universities
1. The language used in writing the latest researches in the SLP field

The result is as follows: 70% respond that Arabic is used most often to conduct studies, 23% answer: French, while the tiny minority represents 7% of the whole state that English is indeed the language of science and thereby of the newest researches. Accordingly, the majority of the students are not aware of the importance of English, which is the most widely used language in their field of interest, and they do not read in English; this is because they study either in Arabic or in French.

Figure 1. The use of the English language in conducting researches
According to the results, 7% of our respondents answer yes, while 93% state that they do not use English in researching. This confirms their tendency towards Arabic and French in the first question.

![Figure 2. The way English is used in researches](image)

The tiny minority that answered with yes most often reads articles in English or researches the important websites and, when needed, uses translation to understand better.

2. The students level in the English language

2% of the informants claim that their English level is good, 5% reckon that they are average, and 93% say that they are weak. The findings reflect that there is always a split between what to be taught or learned and how to approach or collect the latest data in the domain.

![Figure 3. The main tools which enable the student in their studies](image)

A. Translation: a handy tool in improving scholarly communication

According to this item, the majority of the students (67%) is opting for translation or seeks help from translators to find the exact equivalents for the concepts and terminology used in the field. 27% ask their teachers to understand better. 6% are not interested in improving their knowledge. The practical use of translation demonstrates its importance though not used officially in their studies.

1. Knowing the equivalent of the specialty in the English language

The majority of the students and who represent 73%, do not know the equivalent of their specialty in English, but they know it in Arabic and French that indicates their deep ignorance of an important concept in English, so what about the remaining concepts and terms. This indeed widens the gap between their actual knowledge and the significant novelties in their domain.
Translation here can play an essential role in bridging the gap and keeping pace with the quick advancements.

Figure 4. The translation of the references in the mother tongue

70% of the respondents are aware of the imperative need for intensifying the translation of the resources into Arabic, for they are very scarce. The students are in need of references in their mother tongue. Speech-Language Pathology is a relatively new branch of science which most of its researches are written in the first place in English than in French and some other languages. Table 2. The language of the Resources Students Read

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>References</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not available</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the students (80%) prefer reading the important references in their native language, while only 20% of the informants read them in French. This denotes that, first, they cannot use the English language, in the short and medium-term, as a tool to research and, second, they need a translated version of the latest studies into their mother tongue and then into French.

Figure 5. The Language Students Use

1. The Solution Students Resume to when they Encounter an Interesting English Resource

The majority of the respondents (77%) resort to Google Translate to read an important book or article in their area of interest in English, while, 6% of the questioned students ask the help of a
specialized translator. For this reason, we recognize the continuing importance of translation in their educational journey. The absence of translation and a systematized policy translation in the official program at university and the ministry drives backward results that are not pedagogical at all.

Table 3. Students’ Solutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The solution</th>
<th>Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I read it myself because I understand English</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I translate it myself using Google translate or other tools of automatic translation</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ask the help of a translator</td>
<td>06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The ways, according to the students, translation can be used to carry on studies

All the students agreed on the importance of translation and their need for necessary references to fulfill the Master dissertation. They indicate that translation into Arabic at the level of concepts and terminology is very important. Thus, they suggest the inclusion of translation modules in the License and Master programs and translating a larger number of resources into Arabic, the language that they prefer to read in.

The Teachers’ Interview

Two of the teachers state that the English language aids them a lot in carrying on their studies related to Speech-Language Pathology, for it was founded for the first time in the USA in 1932. Three of them affirm that, as Algerian teachers, they refer to French resources for their research is based on the French school, and they do not master the English language. Besides, all of the respondents that most of the important references are produced in English, especially in the field of language disorder, psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, and developmental psychology.

They also reckon that the English language, unfortunately, is not used in conducting scientific researches for the teachers and the students do not master the language. In the field of Language Pathology, for instance, most of the second-year master modules require the use of the latest resources that are written in the English language. The researchers are thus obliged to translate the French versions into Arabic as they understand it. The students cannot use English resources because they cannot understand and translate English texts. In their entire career, they rely on French as an intermediary for translation.

All of the respondents declare that there is no English Arabic dictionary specialized in Language Pathology to be used as pedagogical support. Two of the informants confirm that they generally translate texts and the most important terms and concepts from English to Arabic while the others use the French as an intermediary language to translate and understand the resources, and most often they use translation software such as deepl.com so, when asked about the solution that helps both the students and the teachers, our respondents suggest that implementing a module of specialized translation, particularly from English to Arabic, of the terminology or the concepts in the field aids a great deal.

Translation accordingly bridges the gap in our globalized atmosphere where researchers and specialists have to keep pace with the continuing scientific advancements in speech therapy and
language pathology. They suggest an urgent inclusion of a specialized translation in all the pedagogical research teams for master studies.

Program analysis

Through the analysis of the official program of the Language Pathology and Communication specialty Master 2, which spans for one semester composed of 16 weeks, an equivalent of 337.30 hours. The weekly volume of hours is divided into TD sessions (10.5 hours) and lectures (12 hours). We can observe a total absence of the English language, translation, or even a module to teach the main terminology and concepts or their translations. We recognize only a module in the transversal unit, which is French as a foreign language taught 22, 30 hours per semester, around 6.5% of the total. This semester is a primary preparation for a dissertation that the students are supposed to be produced by the end of their Master studies.

It can be seen that Arabic is the language of scholarly dealings in all the modules. There is an ignorance of the importance of the English language and translation. They are the basis for the preparation and training of the enthusiastic students’ researchers to their scientific journey. The students are deprived of the most essential tools for scientific research in the era of globalized thoughts, science, and knowledge.

Discussion of the Results

The data collected show that there is a great gap between the real academic context where French pervades all the student-teacher contact and the required methods to ensure an up-to-date understanding of the major findings in the domain of Speech-Language Pathology. The researcher, thus, should highlight the necessary requirements to aid students and teachers keep pace with the constant improvements.

Conclusion

The study probed primarily the relevance of translation in strengthening English-Arabic language contact in a globalized world where science is continuously evolving. The findings of the students’ questionnaire, the teachers’ interview, and the program analysis pulled up that the gap between English, the language of knowledge, and scientific research, and Arabic, their native language, is so deep. Both of the students and teachers agreed upon the significance of translation to approach the latest findings and data in their area of interest. They are deeply aware of the impact of the absence of translation as a governmental and a pedagogical policy in the Algerian university in general and in their specialty in particular.

Accordingly, the researcher suggests the following recommendations:
1. The foundation of a national center for academic translation belongs to the ministry of higher education.
2. The integration of translation modules in the Master degree program to translate the important concepts and terminology from English to Arabic.
3. Editing specialized bilingual dictionaries in the Language pathology domain.
4. It is time to reactivate the role of translation in an academic context as a research tool, especially in the field of Language pathology.
The Need for Translation in the Globalized World

About the Author;
Dr. BENMOKHTARI, Ph.D. He had got his doctorate degree in translation studies 2014-2018 from the University of Tlemcen. Algeria. BENMOKHTARI is now a lecturer at Oran 2 university. He teaches a wide variety of courses including introduction to translation studies and specialized translation. ORCiD: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9792-7894

References
Di Bitetti, M. S., & Ferreras, J. A. (2017). Publish (in English) or Perish: The Effect on Citation Rate of Using Languages other Than English in Scientific Publications. Ambio, 46, 121–127. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13280-016-0820-7
Appendices

Appendix A: Students’ Questionnaire
The following questionnaire is designed to find out the importance of translation in the academic context and the urgent need for such a process to successfully write and communicate in a scholarly community successfully. I will be grateful if you accept to answer these questions.

A. The status of the English language in Algerian universities
1. What is the language that is mostly used in writing the latest researches in your field of interest?
   a. English
   b. Arabic
   c. French

2. Do you use English in preparing your courses or conducting your researches?
   a. Yes
   b. No

3. If yes, in what ways?

4. What do you think of your level in English?

5. What are the tools that enable you to access the latest productions in your field?

B. Translation: a handy tool in improving scholarly communication
1. Do you know the equivalent of your specialty in English? Name it?
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. What do you think of translating the significant references to your mother tongue?
   a. Not available
   b. Available

3. In which language do you prefer reading resources?
   a. Arabic
   b. French
   c. English

4. In case you encounter an interesting book written in English, what do you do?
   a. You translate it yourself
   b. You use Google translate or other tools of automatic translation
   c. Or you ask help of a translator

5. According to you, in what ways can translation help you carry on your studies?

Appendix B: Teachers’ Interview

A. The status of the English language in Algerian universities
1. What is the role of the English language in your knowledge construction in your field of interest?
2. In which language are the latest and important researches written?
3. How do you perceive English as a language of research in the Algerian university in general and in the language pathology specialty in particular?
4. Do you recommend to your students to read resources in the English language?

B. Translation: a Handy Tool in Improving Scholarly Communication
1. Are there any specialized bilingual dictionaries (eng-ar) in SLP?
2. Do you use translation from English to Arabic at a terminological and conceptual level?
3. In case you need translation in your teaching, what are the tools that you use?
4. What do you think of the integration of translation modules in the Master degree?
5. What is the significance of translation in bridging the gap between English and Arabic for your students the continuing scientific improvements in the globalized world?
Using Parallel Corpora in the Translation Classroom: Moving towards a Corpus-driven Pedagogy for Omani Translation Major Students

Awad Alhassan
Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts and Applied Sciences, Dhofar University, Salalah, Oman
Correspondent Author: awad_alhassan@hotmail.com

Yasser Muhammad Naguib Sabtan
Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts and Applied Sciences, Dhofar University, Salalah, Oman
&
Department of English, Faculty of Languages and Translation, Al-Azhar University, Cairo, Egypt

Lamis Omar
Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts and Applied Sciences, Dhofar University, Salalah, Oman

Received: 12/29/2020 Accepted: 1/30/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
Research has shown that parallel corpora have potential benefits for translator training and education. Most of the current available Arabic corpora, modern standard or dialectical, are monolingual in nature and there is an apparent lack in the Arabic-English parallel corpora for translation classroom. The present study was aimed to investigate the translation problems encountered by Omani translation major students when translating from Arabic into English with a view to proposing some corpus-informed pedagogy approach for training student translators to overcome these challenges by looking at some model samples of professional translation. Thirty students voluntarily took part in the investigation. The study adopted a combination of both corpus and qualitative methodology whereby some typical problems students would encounter when translating from Arabic-into-English were selected along with some specific Arabic texts involving these problems were prepared and the participants were asked to translate them into English. The participants were provided with some samples of the parallel English translated texts and were asked to compare and contrast their translations with these samples and reflect on the overall experience. They were then interviewed to explore their impressions about and the extent to which they think that parallel corpora would help them improve their translation. Results of data analysis indicated that the participants experienced several translation challenges. They, however, showed an overall positive attitude towards parallel Arabic-English corpora as they reportedly found them very helpful in improving their translation. Pedagogical implications for corpus-informed translation teaching, training and materials design and development are presented and discussed.

Keywords: Arabic-English translation, Omani translation major students, parallel corpora, translation challenges, translation classroom, translator education

Introduction

Recent developments in corpus linguistics have provided a range of implications for language research and pedagogy (Kennedy, 2014). The building and designing of large computer-processed corpora have provided many pedagogical opportunities for translation teaching and the translator education and professional development. Research on corpora in translation (e.g., Alhassan, 2015; Baker, 1993; Baker, 1995; Bernardini, 2004; Bernardini, Stewart, & Zanettin, 2003; Fantinuoli & Zanettin, 2015; Frankenberg-Garcia, 2005; Olohan, 2004; Varantola, 2003) has shown potential benefits for parallel corpora bi- or multilingual in the translation classrooms. Teachers can use such corpora in the classroom to expose students to a range of parallel texts involving instances from both source and target languages. This could help students raise their awareness and enhance their translation skills by studying and reflecting on how professional translators would achieve various types of translation (Alhassan, 2015). Corpora, particularly the monolingual, such as the British National Corpus (BNC) have already been well in use in the language teaching and learning classroom (Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1998; Gabrielatos, 2005; Sinclair, 2004). Language teachers use target language monolingual corpora to expose students to various patterns of the target language and to encourage them to explore, observe and notice how the target language is authentically used by native speakers. This would in turn help learners to strengthen their autonomy and become more explorative and independent learners. However, the use of corpora seems scarce in the translation classrooms. Put simply, we need to know the extent to which corpora can be used in the translation classroom and the benefits and challenges on the side of both translation teachers and students. We, therefore, need more empirical research to systematically explore the use of parallel corpora in the translation classroom. More specifically, we need more studies to explore the use of parallel Arabic-English-Arabic corpora in relation to student translators’ education and training. While we have some scattered attempts to build Arabic monolingual corpora for Arabic language teaching and research, we do not seem to have attempts to build and systematise Arabic-English parallel corpora for translation teaching and research. We also need more research not only to introduce corpora in the translation classroom but also to explore students’ attitudes, benefits, challenges and their overall experience with the use of corpora in their translation learning and training process.

The present study duly strives to contribute to the research that is intended to fill this gap. The overarching objective of the study is twofold. It tries to investigate and map out the translation students’ various challenges when translating from the source (Arabic) language to the target (English) language. It also attempts to explore the potential use of parallel corpora in training students to overcome such challenges.

The study was conducted in an Omani private higher education context where a translation major is offered as stand-alone speciality. Corpora were not used in this context as part of the translation curriculum nor are they used by teachers as ad hoc supplementary materials. The significance of the present study stems from the fact that it is the first of its kind in Oman as to the best of our knowledge there has no research thus far been conducted on this topic in this particular context. The study, as mentioned earlier, will also have a significant contribution to the advancement of research in corpus linguistics and use of corpora in translation and translator education in its ecological context and beyond. Given this backdrop, the present study strives to address the following research questions:
1. What problems and challenges do Omani translation major students experience when translating from Arabic into English?
2. How can parallel corpora help them overcome these challenges and problems?
3. How do they view the relevance of parallel corpora to their translation training and education?

Literature Review

Translation Challenges

Despite the recent advancements in translation as an academic discipline and professional activity going in tandem with the continuous progress of the technological revolution, a myriad of translation issues in any language combination still pose challenges for human translators and machine translation software alike. Certainly, the technological revolution has left an everlasting positive impact on Translation Studies (O’Hagan, 2019) just like it did on any other field of knowledge, yet impediments that translators encounter, regardless of their academic and professional background and experience, continue to pose a threat to the success of translation processes. In fact, it was the need to discuss translation issues and address them that triggered the academic interest in translation as an independent discipline.

Translators spot different types of problems while looking for ‘equivalences’ between a Source Language (SL) and a Target Language (TL). The concept of ‘equivalence’ was introduced to Translation Studies (TS) by Jakobson (1959), and then it was elaborated by scholars like Nida (1964), Nida and Taber (1982), Baker (2018) and others (see Kenny, 2008). Nida (1964) and Nida and Taber (1982) elaborated on the concepts of formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence (cultural equivalence). Bell (1991) distinguished two types of equivalence: semantic equivalence and stylistic equivalence. Baker (2018) discussed “translation problems arising from the lack of equivalence at the level of the word and beyond the level of the word in relation to collocation, idioms and fixed expressions” (Baker, 1992, as cited in Lahlali & Abu Hatab, 2014, p. 109).

Apart from the unpublished MA and PhD research on translation problems, studies on the challenges of translation in Arabic-English language pair seem to be scarce and only appear in guidebooks with some translated examples accompanied by some translation strategies (Almanna, 2016; Almanna, 2018; Dickins, Hervey & Higgins, 2017; Lahlali & Abu Hatab, 2014). For instance, Almanna (2016) provided a manual coursebook on annotating translation strategies in texts translated between English and Arabic. In the same vein, Lahlali and Abu Hatab (2014) dealt with samples translated between English and Arabic in different text types including literary texts, economic texts, scientific texts, media texts, administrative texts as well as legal texts with a limited academic discussion of the sources and natures of the problems of translation between these two languages.

Additionally, Dickins et al. (2017) explored diverse translation problems on the lexical, linguistic, stylistic, conceptual, as well as dialectical levels. The authors also tackled far-reaching problems that originate beyond the source text (ST) such as intertextual components and “genre-related problems in translating between the two languages” (p. 187), focusing mainly on the translation of technical texts and pointing out that “lexical problems” that originate in translating
technical texts as a result of a gap in the knowledge of the translator are “the most dangerous” (p. 234), as explained in the following passage:

“conceptual problems are the most intractable of all those that face the technical translator. Non-specialists are always likely to reach a conceptual impasse from which no amount of attention to syntax or vocabulary can rescue them. In that case, they have only two options: to learn the concepts of the field in which they wish to translate or to work in close consultation with experts. In practice, trainee translators generally do both of these, quickly becoming experts themselves with the help of specialist supervisors.” (p. 238)

At the heart of the concept of equivalence in TS lies the concept of meaning (Krzeszowski, 2012; Van Leuven-Zwart, 1990) as languages differ in the meanings they assign to different lexical items, hence the issue of non-equivalence. According to translation theories, the point of departure in identifying translation problems happens to be ‘meaning’. The concept of meaning is wider than to be covered in a single study on meaning-related problems of translation, yet it is considered to be the benchmark against which one can measure how far the translation has succeeded in representing the original. When a translation is evaluated by a publishing house, client, reader, or instructor, it tends to be judged vis-à-vis the effectiveness of the target text (TT) in communicating the meanings of the ST. Baker (2018) reviewed scholarly research on the concept of meaning to use it as a foundation for an elaborate discussion of translation problems with a special reference to translation between English and Arabic. Baker (2018) suggested four levels of meaning that a lexical item might have: “propositional meaning, expressive meaning, presupposed meaning and evoked meaning” (p. 12).

In principle, a word has a direct meaning which is called lexical or denotative meaning (Murphy, 2010; Dickins et al., 2017) and which also corresponds to dictionary meaning. The main problem with denotative meaning is that it is polysemous (Riemer, 2005), which leads to some translation issues and accentuates the importance of exploring deeper levels of meaning when translating or examining a translation. The first level of meaning which was discussed by some linguists and translation scholars in relation to translation problems is propositional meaning. According to Baker (2018), propositional meaning embodies the relation between a lexical item and what it actually describes when used in a certain context (real or imaginary context). This level of meaning is the key to selecting one of the different senses that a word/lexical unit has in the lexicon, which is why it can be considered as the borderline between right or wrong in judging a translation work. Baker (2018) stated that “When a translation is described as ‘inaccurate’, it is often the propositional meaning that is being called into question” (p. 12). In other words, propositional meaning can be considered as a yardstick for judging the correctness or incorrectness of a translated item since it is the minimum level that needs to be satisfied to disambiguate the basic level of meaning. Without observing this level of meaning, a translator risks producing a meaningless or incongruous TT. Normally, translation problems related to propositional meaning are less common compared to problems encountered by translators in processing more advanced levels of meaning simply because there are always cues that disambiguate the subtle differences between the different senses/denotations of a word.
The second level of meaning to be discussed in this account is presupposed meaning. From the perspective of a translation process, presupposed meaning can be considered second important to propositional meaning. Baker (2018) defined presupposed meaning as a type of meaning which “arises from co-occurrence restrictions, that is restrictions on what other words or expressions we expect to see before or after a particular lexical unit” (p. 13). An example of presupposed meaning is “Collocational restrictions” which are defined as “semantically arbitrary restrictions which do not follow logically from the propositional meaning of a word” (Baker, 2018, p. 14). The main issue with presupposed meaning is how it influences the naturalness of a lexical item in a certain linguistic system. Accordingly, a misrepresentation of presupposed meaning does not infringe on the basic level of meaning (the propositional meaning). Rather, it leaves an impact on how well-received the end result of the translation process is by the readers/recipient.

This problem becomes prominent when a translator uses the technique of calque in translating collocations or similar lexical sequences and patterns (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995). Calque is a translation technique which involves borrowing a certain sequence and translating it literally, in which case the result will be intelligible for the reader, but at the same time it may impress the translator as unnatural or “awkward” (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995, p. 33). Newman and Husni (2015) discussed presupposed meaning under their account on phraseology in which they dealt with lexical sequences such as collocations, compounds and idiomatic expressions. According to Newman and Husni (2015), collocations:

“occupy the biggest field in terms of number and incidence, and are thus most often encountered by the translator and language-learner alike, to whom they pose a formidable obstacle. Correct use of collocations… is one of the key features of idiomatic, i.e., natural native, language use” (p. 1).

The third level of meaning, a source of greater challenges for both professional and student translators, is connotative or expressive meaning. Like presupposed meaning, “Expressive meaning cannot be judged as true or false. This is because it relates to the speaker’s feelings or attitudes rather than to what words and utterances refer to” (Baker, 2018, p. 12). The fourth level of meaning discussed by Baker is evoked meaning which “arises from dialect and register variation…within a specific community or groups of speakers” (p. 14). The last two levels of meaning are highly advanced and hardly noticed when discussing translation problems from a pedagogical perspective as they require a very strong command of both SL and TL. By and large, the first and second levels of meaning, propositional meaning and presupposed meaning, are given priority in judging on the quality of a translation as they are used as criteria to decide whether a translation is correct and/or natural or not, respectively. On the other hand, translation issues related to expressive meaning and evoked meaning are observed more clearly in advanced levels of translation as they are embedded and not communicated directly. In general, all four levels of meaning are a source of challenge for translating in any language combination. They would lead to different types of translation issues if the translator does not recognize any of them or fails to identify an appropriate strategy to deal with such issues.
Corpora in Translation and Translator Education

The unprecedented progress in information technology gave birth to corpus-based studies which led to a paradigm shift in all disciplines including linguistics (Kennedy, 2014), and TS (e.g., Baker, 1993; Baker, 1995; Bernardini, 2004; Bernardini et al., 2003; Fantinuoli & Zanettin, 2015; Frankenberg-Garcia, 2005; Olohan, 2004; Varantola, 2003). Corpora are principled and systematic collection of electronic texts which are analysed automatically or semi-automatically.). The use of corpora in TS is a relatively recent trend (Marco, 2019).

Originally, corpora were used in Machine Translation (MT) and building databases for scientific terminology (Baker, 1995). Baker (1995) developed a taxonomy that could be used in TS based on “the range of languages involved” (p. 230). Accordingly, the author introduced three types of corpora: parallel, multilingual and comparable corpora. A parallel corpus is a group of source texts aligned against their translated versions in the form of textual “stretches”. Sabtan (2016) explained how parallel corpora became “a key resource as training data for statistical machine translation, and for building or extending bilingual lexicons and terminologies” (p. 318). Consequently, parallel corpora started to be used in several academic and educational activities including second language teaching and learning (e.g., Yahya, Alotaibi & El-Dakhs), teaching translation as well as training translators in view of their value and applications for an empirical field like TS (Doval & Nieto, 2019). Commenting on the pedagogical value of parallel corpora, Doval and Nieto (2019) stated:

“Even if their primary use is within linguistic and translation research, parallel corpora are also becoming increasingly present in foreign language and translation learning and teaching, providing plenty of translation suggestions through examples of real usage” (p. 4).

The second type of corpora discussed by Baker (1995) is the multilingual corpora which “refer to sets of two or more monolingual corpora in different languages, built up either in the same or different institutions on the basis of similar design criteria” (p. 232). Although this type of corpora can be used to train human and machine translators, they fall short of solving diverse translation problems as they are built on the assumption that there is always a way of expressing a certain point naturally, and multilingual corpora can illuminate translators about these natural ways of representing ideas in the TL, which is partially true and quite limiting. The third type of corpora is comparable corpora which fall in the middle between parallel and multilingual corpora. In comparable corpora there are “two separate collections of texts in the same language” (Baker, 1995, p. 234): one for SL texts and the other for TL texts. The SL collection is a corpus of monolingual texts that have been collected over a period of time, and the TL collection may comprise any available monolingual corpus in the TL “provided it is similar in design to the translation corpus” (Baker, 1995, p. 234). In other words, the monolingual texts used in the two sets of comparable corpora are “matched as far as possible in terms of text type, subject matter and communicative function” (Altenberg & Granger, 2002, as cited in Hareide, 2019, p. 20).

Compared with multilingual corpora, parallel corpora provide several opportunities to professional and academic translation bodies/individuals as they have two functions “the first is descriptive and the second applied, whether parallel corpora are used by professional or trainee translators” (Marco, 2019, p. 43). One of the main applications of parallel corpora is to find fast
and tested solutions to certain translation issues and to generally see how professional translators handle various translation problems. Marco (2019) succinctly explained the potential advantages of parallel corpora for translation:

“they provide a wealth of actual translation solutions at the touch of a button. The advantages of parallel corpora over bilingual dictionaries are obvious: the translation equivalents they offer have actually been used by someone (usually a professional translator) in a specific context, and there are as many of them as matches for a given query. Not for nothing are parallel corpora also known as translation corpora in the literature” (p. 40).

However, using parallel corpora in translation tasks has potential challenges. The main limitations are associated with the corpus design in terms of representativeness, typicality and size (Kennedy, 2014). Despite the exponential improvement in the quantity and quality of parallel corpora available electronically, they are still not popular as a tool in the translation process or L2 classroom for a number of reasons. First, there is a general assumption that the linguistic content of corpora is beyond the ability of learners to process or use effectively. Second, “even if the language were of an appropriate level, the tools for searching parallel corpora are not learner-friendly, as they are designed with researchers and not language learners in mind” (Doval & Nieto, 2019, p. 10). Other issues include the lack of awareness about the importance and uses of corpora among instructors and the lack of tools available for accessing parallel corpora.

The most recent approaches to corpora as research and pedagogical tools, however, highlighted the importance of both parallel and comparable corpora in teaching translation and translation research. For example, Doval and Nieto (2019) remarked that both types of corpora “provide essential training data for statistical translation models, translation memories, or lexical and terminological extraction” (p. 3) and help trainers and researchers “observe decision-making processes performed by real translators” (p. 4). Alhassan (2015) maintained that the three types of corpora provide translation teachers and learners with “insights into dealing with and observing how and what strategies expert/professional translators adopt to overcome typical translation problems” (p. 34). According to Marco (2019), using a combination of “comparable and parallel corpora enables the researchers to triangulate and therefore to provide at least one kind of explanation for the patterns observed in comparable corpora” (p. 54).

The fact that parallel corpora is in the process of inevitable and imperative development in different language combinations becomes more protruding in language combinations that involve an electronically under-resourced language such as Arabic because originally there is an entrenched, palpable shortage of Arabic language digital corpus (Bakari, Bellot & Neji, 2016; Saad & Ashour, 2010), which reflects directly on parallel corpora available in Arabic and any other language. Therefore, translators and translation academics working in the English/Arabic language combination face significant challenges when it comes to the availability of parallel corpora, particularly so in the case of Arabic-English corpora. First and foremost, recent research suggests that the available resources are restricted both in scope and domain. Second, Arabic-English parallel corpora are not popular among translators, linguists and academics in the Arab world (Alhassan, 2015; Alotaibi, 2016; Alotaibi, 2017).
There is a reported scarcity in Arabic parallel corpora for translation purposes. Moreover, Alotaibi (2016) pointed out the scarcity of Arabic English parallel corpora clarifying that “Arabic is a relatively under-resourced language when compared to English” (p. 1). The author attributed this lack of Arabic-English parallel corpora to their high cost in terms of time, money and the efforts needed to build them, refine them and update them continuously.

Alotaibi (2017) provided a substantial review of “the value of integrating parallel corpora into translator training and their positive impact on translator’s performance” (p. 325) while highlighting the lack of related studies that address this timely topic “in the Arab world and among Arabic translators” (p. 325). For instance, parallel corpora may unveil translation strategies used in dealing with certain translation issues in the lexical components of the translated text including synonymy, idioms, collocational patterns and other lexical sequences, not to mention their role in detecting various distinctive features in different text types such as syntactic features, semantic features, communicative features, etc.

Furthermore, Alhassan (2015) explored the use of parallel corpora for pedagogical purposes in the classroom focusing mainly on “Arabic into English translation tasks as the difficulty is relatively more when it comes to translation into the second language” (p. 32). The researcher explored the advantages associated with adopting an integrated approach to the use of monolingual corpora, parallel corpora as well as comparable corpora in “teaching translation from Arabic into English” (P. 33), underlining the challenges encountered by teachers and students alike throughout this practice.

Alhassan (2015) discussed interesting examples about the role of parallel corpora in unveiling contextual cues that can help students and teachers identify “the appropriate equivalent in the target language” (p. 37). On the other hand, the author explained how comparable corpora can be equally important in that it raises students’ awareness about the communicative function of words by detecting differences in “comparable texts from Arabic and English that share the same kind of topic”, particularly texts available on “Web and the media which cover the same topic, news story, extracted from two well-known Arabic and English channels” (p. 41).

Collecting corpora manually or electronically is a tedious process which requires sound background knowledge and professional experience about their uses and functions besides “a set of criteria for selecting and describing them” (Doval & Nieto, 2019, p. 3). By and large, there is a noticeable shortage of research which is dedicated to investigating possible methods on collecting corpora for the purpose of pedagogical translation activities. Recent research on the topic underscored the significance of representativeness as an indispensable criterion that parallel corpora need to fulfil (Alhassan, 2015; Alotaibi, 2016; Alotaibi, 2017; Baker, 1995). According to Baker (1995), in order to guarantee that the collected corpus is representative it needs to have a clear purpose and fulfil certain criteria. This becomes even much more significant when collecting corpora for pedagogical purposes. Alotaibi (2016) listed the factors needed to build a quality parallel corpus project including representativeness, regular updating, as well as alignment (manually or automatically) at the phrase level, sentence level, and other levels. In fact, alignment is an indispensable component in collecting parallel corpora. Doval and Nieto (2019) confirmed that “alignment is a crucial task in the construction of parallel corpora and an initial step for any exploitation thereof” (p. 6).
To sum up, there is no doubt that adopting a corpus-oriented approach to teaching translation in the classroom is a burdensome task as it requires the necessary background knowledge, both academically and professionally, the determination to invest in the scarce available resources as well as a robust methodology to identify the learners’ cognitive and training needs, build a relevant corpus and know how to use it in a sound pedagogic manner.

Methodology and Research Design

The study used a combination of both corpus and qualitative methods to explore the potential of using parallel corpora for training student translators as to how they can better translate from the source language into the target language.

Participants

Thirty translation major students in the third year of their study at an Omani private university participated in the present study. All participants, who are native speakers of Arabic, were enrolled in a BA translation programme and the study data was collected during the academic year 2018-2019. Their English proficiency level ranges from intermediate to upper intermediate. They take several theoretical and practical courses in translation as part of their BA in Translation major. They have not been exposed to any corpus-based teaching and training in their study programme.

Data Collection Procedures

Based on our experience as translation teachers, the researchers first classified the various translation problems and also validated them from the literature that Omani translation major students typically face when translating from Arabic into English. They then selected and designed some specific Arabic texts that involved such challenges and asked our participants to translate them into English. The researchers, as translation instructors, translated the selected Arabic texts into English and showed them to the students immediately after they had finished their translation of the Arabic texts. The participants were then asked to compare and contrast their translation with the English translated texts in the parallel corpus and reflect on the experience. They were then interviewed (open-ended written format) to explore their impressions about and the extent to which they think that the parallel corpus could help them improve their translation skills.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data from the participants in the first phase (the translation of Arabic texts into English) and the second phase (the semi-structured interviews in written format), the researchers then examined the students’ translations as well as their opinions and reflections on the potential benefits of the parallel corpus in helping them to deal with the challenges they encounter and thus improving their translation skills. The translation problems were classified based on Baker’s (2018) model of translation equivalence in relation to the study first research question. As for the second part relating to the retrospective interviews, the students’ responses were coded thematically and inductively and the most representative themes were incorporated in the analysis with regard to the second and third research questions.
Results and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings of the study with the relevant literature. The first part is devoted to the translation problems and the second part focuses on the participants’ views, reflections and experiences with the use of corpora in translator training and education.

Translation Problems

Participants have encountered a number of both lexical and grammatical problems in their English translations of the Arabic sentences that were given to them. The lexical problems will be presented and discussed first and will be followed by the presentation and discussion of grammatical problems.

Lexical Problems

The lexical problems can be classified into a number of types.

Calque

Participants have been found to use calque in rendering some Arabic lexical items into English. These are words or word combinations. The following table sheds light on this specific translation problem in a number of examples translated by the participants. The words that have been translated using calque are underlined within the SL sentences as well as the students’ translation and the TL parallel translation that was given later to students to reflect on their translation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL words</th>
<th>Students’ Translation</th>
<th>Parallel Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) لقد حظيت الثروة السمكية بقدر كبير من اهتمام الدولة.</td>
<td>Fish wealth has received a great deal of state attention.</td>
<td>Fisheries have received much support from the state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) يرى دعاة حقوق الحيوان أن استخدام الحيوانات في البحوث العلمية مناف للأخلاق.</td>
<td>Animal rights activists see that animal research is contrary to morality</td>
<td>Animal rights activists believe that using animals as research subjects is immoral</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is apparent that some students used calque to render the underlined Arabic words, translating literally each part of it into English and thus failed to produce an accurate translation for each one of them. The first example is the word combination الثروة السمكية. It has been found that many students translated it as “fish wealth” while it is normally translated as “fisheries”. In fact, other students gave different inaccurate translations, but this one given here has the highest percentage among the students’ inaccurate translations. It is worth noting that many participants provided the accurate equivalent for the phrase in question. Finally, the phrase مناف للأخلاق is translated literally as “contrary to morality”, as students translated the negative adjective word for word, while it has an equivalent negative adjective “immoral”.

Problems with Propositional Meaning

Some students failed to give the appropriate contextual sense of some words in the example sentences. This is illustrated in table two below.
### Table 2. Propositional meaning problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL words</th>
<th>Students’ Translation</th>
<th>Parallel Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) بعد إسحاق نيوتن العلم الأبرز من بين أعلام الثورة العلمية في القرن السابع عشر.</td>
<td>Isaac Newton is the most prominent science among the flags of the scientific revolution in the seventeenth century.</td>
<td>Sir Isaac Newton was the most prominent figure of the scientific revolution in the seventeenth century.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) فهذا الفيزيائي والرياضي هو من اكتشف قانون الجاذبية.</td>
<td>This is physician and mathematician who discovered the law of attraction.</td>
<td>He was a physicist and mathematician, who discovered the law of gravitation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be noticed, the students made mistakes in translating the Arabic words علم and جاذبية into English. The two words have been translated inaccurately as “science” and “attraction”. The appropriate equivalents are “prominent figure” and “gravitation” respectively. The Arabic word علم is described as a homograph. According to Jackson (1988), a homograph is a word that has the same spelling form but different pronunciation and meaning. In fact, the modern form of Arabic, which is normally referred to as Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), is full of homographs, as words written in MSA are undiacritized and so have different senses. Thus, the current word علم can be diacritized to mean “science”, which is not meant here, or be diacritized in another way to mean either “flag” or “prominent figure”. In fact, this is a case of polysemy where the word with the same spelling and pronunciation has two different senses or meanings; the first sense is the one wrongly rendered by the students as “flags” in the translation of the plural form أعلام and the other one, which is meant here, is the plural of the word “prominent figure”. The students interpreted the word علم as referring to the sense of “science”, while it refers to the sense of “prominent figure”. As for the word جاذبية, it has two senses, the first one, which was chosen by the students, is “attraction” and the other one which is the right equivalent in the current example is “gravitation” or “gravity”.

In fact, a word that is polysemous, i.e., having more than one sense, most often causes problems for student translators, as shown in the previous examples. The problem of not conveying the right equivalent for one of the senses of a SL word is very common. This has to do with the propositional meaning of a word, as stated by Baker (2018) or denotative meaning as used by Dickins et al., 2017). Propositional meaning, according to Baker (2018) embodies the relation between a lexical item and what it actually refers to when used in a real or imaginary context.

### Problems with Presupposed Meaning

This part deals with the problems encountered by the participants in translating the presupposed meaning which, according to Baker (2018), arises from co-occurrence restrictions. One type of these restrictions is the collocational restrictions. The students in the current study faced difficulties in giving the right English collocations for some Arabic collocations, as shown in table three.
Using Parallel Corpora in the Translation Classroom

Table 3. Presupposed meaning problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL words</th>
<th>Students’ Translation</th>
<th>Parallel Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) قاطعت بعض الشركات عابرات القارات البضائع الأمريكية</td>
<td>Some transcontinental companies cut American goods.</td>
<td>Some multinational corporations have boycotted the American goods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) أطلقت الحكومة حملة لتوعية السائقين بمخاطر خلاف قانون المرور.</td>
<td>The government has launched a campaign to educate drivers about traffic violation risks.</td>
<td>The government has launched a campaign to raise drivers’ awareness of the dangers of breaking the traffic rules.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be noticed, the SL Arabic collocation يقاطع بضاعة was inaccurately translated by the students as "cut goods", while it has the TL equivalent collocation “boycott goods”. Similarly, the collocation يخالف قانون المرور is inappropriately translated by the students as “traffic violation” while it has the English collocation “break traffic rule/law”. However, the students managed to accurately translate the SL collocation يطلق حملة into the target language as “launch a campaign”.

Problems with Expressive or Connotative Meaning

Some words have connotative or expressive meaning which is not conveyed by the students in their translation. This produces inaccurate equivalents of SL words, as shown in the following table.

Table 4. Expressive meaning problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL words</th>
<th>Students’ Translation</th>
<th>Parallel Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) اتهمت قوى المعارضة الحكومة بالفساد والمحسوبية</td>
<td>Opposition forces accused the government of corruption and nepotism.</td>
<td>Opposition forces accused the regime of corruption and nepotism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) لم أعد أطيق رؤية وجه هذا الرجل فكلما لقيته وجدته يشتكى من سوء أحواله المادية.</td>
<td>I can no longer see the face of this man. Whenever I find him he complain about his poor financial conditions.</td>
<td>I can no longer stand this man as whenever I meet him I find him whinging about his worse financial circumstances</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the first example, the word “الحكومة” is used in the negative context, since the words “accuse”, “corruption” and “nepotism” create a negative contextual environment and so the accurate translation would be “regime”. In another context, the word “الحكومة” has been accurately translated by the students as “government” since it is used in a positive context. This is a case of semantic prosody (Alhassan, 2015). As for the second example, the word "يشتكي" can be used in its propositional or expressive meaning.

Grammatical Problems

The following table presents a range of grammatical problems that have been observed in the students’ translation.
In the first example of the grammatical errors, it can be noticed that the noun “fishery” is used in the singular form and is followed by the verb “have” and so the noun must be in the plural form to be in agreement with the verb “have”. This is referred to as “subject-verb” agreement. In example two the underlined relative clause “that violate their rights” is wrongly used here as it refers back to animals which is not meant here. The SL relative clause actually refers to the “experiments conducted on animals” and not to “animals” themselves. As for example three, the verb form for “complain” is wrongly used as “complains” in the third person singular form. It can be used in the current context as “complaining or “complain”. In example four there are two errors; the first is concerned with the use of the wrong tense where the verb in the SL sentence is in the past tense and the verb is used in the continuous present tense in the student translation. The second error is about the wrong use of the verb complement, which gives a wrong meaning of the SL sentence. In fact, the meaning of the SL sentence indicates that some citizens complained that they were not consulted by the municipality about its recent decision. The student translation, on the other hand, inaccurately means that some citizens complain that they (themselves) have not consulted with the municipality about its recent decision, which is not the right meaning. Example five shows two types of error; the first one is about the unnecessary insertion of the preposition ‘about’ between the verb “announce” and the object “plan”. The second error is about the wrong use of the part-of-speech, where the noun ‘employment’ is wrongly used in place of the verb ‘employ’. The final example includes a case of wrong use of

### Table 5. Grammatical problems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL words</th>
<th>Students’ Translation</th>
<th>Parallel Translation</th>
<th>Type of Grammatical Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) لقد حظيت الثروة السمكية بقدر كبير من اهتمام الدولة.</td>
<td>The fishery have a huge care from the country.</td>
<td>Fisheries have received much support from the state.</td>
<td>Subject-Verb Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) وكثيرًا ما يقولون إن أمثل هذه البحوث تسبب في ألم مزمن وأن حوادث التجارب تنهاك حقوقها.</td>
<td>A lot of them say that researches cause a lot of pain for animals that violate their rights.</td>
<td>They often assert that the experiments that are run on animals cause severe pain which is a violation for animal rights.</td>
<td>Relative Clause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) لم أعد أطيق رؤية وجه هذا الرجل فكلما لقيته وجدته يشتكى من سوء إحواله المادية.</td>
<td>I can no longer see the face of this man. Whenever I meet him I find him complaining about his poor financial conditions</td>
<td>I can no longer stand this man as whenever I meet him I find him whinging about his worse financial circumstances</td>
<td>Verb Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) اشتكي بعض المواطنين من عدم استشارة البلدية لهم بشان قرارها الأخير بتحويل مبنى بيت الشباب إلى فندق سياحي.</td>
<td>Some people are complaining of not consulting with the municipality the last decision to transfer youth hostel to a tourist hotel.</td>
<td>Some citizens complained that the municipality had not consulted them in its recent decision of transferring the youth hostel into a tourist hotel.</td>
<td>(1) Tense (2) Verb Complement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) ستستعلم الحكومة قريبًا عن خطة توظيف كل الخريجين.</td>
<td>The government will announce about a plan to employment all graduates.</td>
<td>The government will soon announce its plan for employing all graduates.</td>
<td>(1) Preposition (2) Part-of-Speech</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) قالت القيادة المعارضة إن الحكومة بالسماحة والمحسوبة</td>
<td>The opposition forces accused the government with corruption and nepotism</td>
<td>Opposition forces accused the regime of corruption and nepotism.</td>
<td>Preposition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
preposition. In the student translation the verb ‘accuse’ is wrongly followed by the preposition ‘with’, whereas the right preposition after this verb is ‘of’.

**Students’ Experience with the Parallel Corpus**

Participants were asked to reflect on the errors they made in their translation and compare between their translation and the parallel translation. The students were asked whether there were differences between their translation and the reference translation in the corpus. Most students indicated that there were differences between their translation and the translation in the corpus, specifically with regard to the sentences they had translated inaccurately as discussed above. They pointed out that they had problems in both vocabulary and grammar, with most of them expressing their opinion that the differences between their translation and the reference translation were basically concerned with vocabulary, whereas other participants indicated that the differences were related to grammar. It is worth noting that students’ responses were elicited in Arabic and the relevant extracted examples used in the analysis were translated into English by the researchers. Below are some representative samples of the participants’ responses:

Table 6. Students’ responses about the difference between their own translation and the parallel translation

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There are many differences in the vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>There are differences in sentence structure, grammar, and word order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Differences in use of terms and lexical choice (words in context)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I found difficulty in translating long sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Reference translation uses some formal words while I used some informal words.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All participants pointed out that the parallel translations they were given were useful and helpful, as they helped them to identify their errors so that they could avoid them in the future. Below are further samples of the students’ responses about the usefulness of the parallel corpus.

Table 7. Samples of the students’ views about the usefulness of the parallel corpus

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>It was a great and useful experience, especially that most students find difficulty in translating sentences from Arabic into English because it is not our native language. So, we make many mistakes and I think that such experiences helped us learn how to avoid our mistakes in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The parallel corpus helped me a lot to understand translation in a simplified way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Such activities helped us and trained us on translation. It also helped students to know their mistakes so as to avoid them in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>One should not translate word by word. They should look at the context of the whole sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>It was good. It provided us with some new terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>It guided me to avoid literal translation in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>The list helped me to translate in a better way, because I face difficulty in translating from Arabic into English and this list showed me how to translate from Arabic into English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>It helped me to recognize the appropriate way to translate some complex sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>It helped me to identify my mistakes so as to avoid them in the future.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I need to improve my vocabulary because it is more useful to know more about the text to be translated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I learned a lot from the list to avoid my mistakes. The list also helped me to discover my weaknesses and this will help me as well as other students to develop our translation skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I feel comfortable to see this list because it gives me a positive impression about translation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>It was a good experience.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is clear that the participants showed an overall positive attitude towards the parallel Arabic-English corpora and they reportedly found them very helpful and promising in improving their translation. The students were finally asked what they would do if they were given the chance to translate the same texts again after being exposed to the parallel translation. Below are samples of their responses:

Table 8. Students’ views on their future translation strategies following their experience with the parallel corpus

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I will avoid literal translation and will take care of grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>After looking at the parallel texts I will totally change my translation and try to make it better and work on the long words and complex sentences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I will try to avoid the mistakes I made, especially in grammar, as I made many grammatical mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I will correct my mistakes and use words appropriately in their context and consider also word order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I would change the way I translated because Arab students normally use literal translation when translating from Arabic into English.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that corpora have been used in translation training in the classroom in different European language pairs and the translation quality has reportedly improved after using these resources (Bowker, 1998; Gallego-Hernández, 2015; Varantola, 2003; Zanettin 2002). However, there are scarce studies on exploring the usefulness of using corpora in training Arab student translators on how to translate well from their native Arabic language to English. Alotaibi (2016, 2017) are one of those few studies in the Arabic-English language pair. Alotaibi (2017) described a project at King Saud University to compile a 10-million Arabic-English parallel corpus to be used as a resource for language teaching and translation training. It was stated that the parallel corpus was intended to be used as a resource in translation training and language teaching but there were no studies attempted to practically apply this corpus for the purpose of student translator training. The current study, has duly attempted to fill this gap and by attempting to apply Arabic-English corpus in the classroom with the view of enhancing students’ translation skills as future professional translators. By doing so, we believe that the study has charted the terrain for more future pedagogical studies applying Arabic-English parallel corpora in the translator training and education.

Conclusion

This is a small-scale qualitative study attempted to explore the potentials of parallel corpus with regard to student translator education and professional development. The study attempted to investigate the translation problems Omani translation major students experience when translating from the source (Arabic) to target (English) language. The aim of the study was to come up with some corpus-informed pedagogy approach for educating and training the students to help them overcome such challenges and generally become better translators. The study first classified the various translation problems based on our experience from teaching those students and also validated them. Students were asked to translate some texts including several problems and then were asked to compare their translations with the mini Arabic-English parallel corpus. They were then interviewed about their views and reflections on the potential benefits that the parallel corpus can provide for them to improve their translation skills and to develop their identity as future professional translators.
Based on the analysis of the data with regard to the study first research question, it turned out that the participants face a number of challenges when translating from the source (Arabic) to target (English) language. These challenges were observed on both the lexical and grammatical levels. The lexical problems are basically related to the wrong choice of lexical items in the target language, giving the wrong meaning which has been classified into various types: propositional, presupposed and expressive or connotative meaning. Additionally, several grammatical problems were also noticed in the participants’ translations, e.g., use of wrong subject-verb agreement, wrong preposition, wrong tense, wrong part of speech, wrong verb form...etc. as was shown above. As for the study second and third research questions, the participants reported that the parallel Arabic-English corpus was helpful and useful as it helped them identify their translation errors so that they could avoid them in the future. In fact, the participants showed an overall positive attitude towards the parallel corpus and they reportedly found it very helpful and promising in improving their translation.

As with the case with any research, there are some limitations that need to be acknowledged. The study was confined to a single context with relatively limited number of participants. Multiple contexts with large number of participants could have provided more insights and perspectives on the issues under investigation. The mini parallel corpus developed by the researchers for the purpose of the present study is very small and ad hoc in nature. The researchers validated, among themselves, the translation of the examples in the mini corpus to ensure the best professional translation accuracy. However, they do not claim that the corpus is perfect. Future studies could expand the scope and design a more professional, comprehensive, representative, typical and computer-processed Arabic-English corpus including various genres and text types to allow for more exploration and solid corpus-based pedagogy. Translation teachers were not involved in the present study but their involvement in future studies could provide another perspective on the opportunities and challenges of the use of corpus-driven approaches for teaching and training student translators. Despite these limitations, we believe that the insights gained from the findings of the present study are illuminating in showing us the potential of parallel corpora in enhancing the training and translation skills of the student translators.

Implications and Recommendations

In light of the study findings, several recommendations can be made for translation teachers, educators, trainers, translation teaching and materials developers and designers. First, corpus-driven translation pedagogy should be at the heart of translation curriculum reforms and innovation process. Both teachers and students should be made aware of the potential use of corpus-driven approaches for translation teaching and training. Students, as the core element of the translation teaching and learning process, should be made part of any attempt to explore or introduce corpus-driven pedagogy to teaching translation. Second, given the reported potential benefits of the parallel corpus, students should be exposed to more explicit corpus-based translation teaching and training. Teachers could use concordance lines in the classrooms to raise students’ awareness about the typical translation challenges and show them how typically professional translators would solve such problems. Third, given the lack of established, well-designed and multi-generic Arabic-English professional corpora, translation teachers could try and develop their own ad hoc parallel corpus for the purpose of their day-to-day classroom teaching activities. Fourth, translation teachers could also seek out collaboration with other
colleagues within or outside their educational institution to exchange the good practices in corpus-driven translation teaching. They could also engage into potential research projects for building an Arabic-English parallel corpus for translation teaching and training. Fifth, both translation teachers and students should be trained on the use of corpora in translation and translator education. Students, in particular, need more hands-on training on how to explore and make use of parallel corpora in enhancing their translation skills and generally explore how professional translators would handle various source-to-target language translation problems. Equally, translation teachers should also be trained on the effective use of corpus-driven materials and classroom activities. Sixth, translation course designers and developers should incorporate corpus-driven activities in translation teaching materials and textbooks. Finally, we believe that more communication and coordination is needed among translation teachers, professional translators, translation researchers and translation teaching and training materials developers and designers in order to bridge the gap between research, practice and pedagogy.

About the authors
Dr. Awad Alhassan is an Assistant Professor of applied linguistics & TESOL at Dhofar University, Oman. He is also affiliated to Khartoum University in Sudan. He has a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Essex, UK. His teaching and research interests include EAP, corpora in translation & translator education and English-medium instruction in higher education. He has presented at national and international conferences and published extensively in peer-reviewed journals. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1147-0919

Dr. Yasser Sabtan is an Assistant Professor of Linguistics and Translation at Dhofar University, Oman. He is also affiliated to Al-Azhar University, Egypt. He has a PhD in Computational Linguistics from the University of Manchester, UK. His teaching and research interests include translation studies, corpus linguistics, machine translation, Arabic computational linguistics and EFL. He has presented at several national and international conferences and published extensively in peer-reviewed journals. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4389-285X

Dr. Lamis Omar is an Assistant Professor of Translation and EFL at Dhofar University, Oman. She holds a doctorate in Translation Studies from Durham University, United Kingdom. She taught translation, conference interpreting, EFL and literary criticism at Damascus University, and she also has a long professional experience in English/Arabic translation and conference interpreting. Her research interests include translation and simultaneous interpreting, the conceptual theory of metaphor, Shakespeare’s metaphors as well as teaching English as a Foreign Language. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0246-5613

References


Interventions to Improve a Practicum Course for EFL Teachers in Saudi Arabia

Khadija A. Alamoudi
English Language Institute, King Abdulaziz University
Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Email: khaalamoudi@kau.edu.sa

Received: 11/9/2020   Accepted: 1/22/2021   Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
Although the Teaching Practicum (TP) course makes a significant contribution in preparing teachers, it remains lacking in many essential aspects. To fill in the gaps regarding literature, this research paper was designed to explore the views of three Master of Art (MA) TESOL student-teachers on the advantages they gained and challenges they faced during their TP course at a Saudi university. Participants were interviewed, observed, and the two reflective assignments of the course were analyzed to find answers to the research questions. The research questions focused on the instructional benefits of the TP course and the interventions needed to enhance the effectiveness of the course. The findings revealed that the practical teaching component was the most helpful part of the course and the peer-observation report was the most appropriate evaluation method. Moreover, the study found that the limitedness of the teaching timeframe poses a significant challenge, and hence increasing the teaching practice time was the most significant change the participants suggested. Finally, the study recommends interventions that will help improve the quality of the TP course.

Keywords: English language teaching in Saudi Arabia, Saudi EFL teachers, student-teachers, teaching practicum (TP), qualitative research

Cite as: Alamoudi, K. A. (2021). Interventions to Improve a Practicum Course for EFL Teachers in Saudi Arabia Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 59-70.
DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.5
Introduction

As a significant part of English language teachers education, teaching practicum (TP) received considerable attention from educators and researchers (Köksal & Genç, 2019). It is well established that teacher education programs provide student-teachers with a quality education that positively contributes to their future careers. Besides imparting the student-teachers’ theoretical knowledge about teaching, these programs help them to develop their skills on a pedagogical and practical level. This development occurs because those students are likely to be exposed to various teaching aspects.

According to Haigh, Ell, and Mackisack (2013), the success of a TP course is an indicator for the success of teacher education programs. Besides linking related theories to the required practical knowledge about teaching, TP courses provide student-teachers with an opportunity to become familiar with the profession of teaching (Furlong, Hirst, & Pocklington, 1988). TP should focus on helping student-teachers gain first-hand experience in different teaching aspects. Student-teachers might have some challenges in knowing the nature of their duties as teachers, comprehending the learner aspirations, and acquiring the critical analysis skills that will allow them to deal with different problems related to teaching. Thus, one may anticipate that TP should provide students with various opportunities to develop competencies in teaching and the required social/academic skills.

After reviewing the relevant literature, the author found that researchers have not given sufficient attention to TP in Saudi universities. Thus, to fill in this gap, the author conducted this study to explore the strengths and weaknesses of the pedagogical knowledge and practical aspects of the MA TESOL TP course at a Saudi university. It aims to find answers to the following questions:

1. How was the course helpful for student-teachers to develop their teaching skills? And which part was more helpful?
2. What were the instructional benefits they gained?
3. Do student-teachers think the evaluation methods used in the course were appropriate?
4. What were the challenges they faced during the course?
5. What are the interventions needed to enhance the effectiveness of the course?

Literature Review

Many studies have focused on TP as a significant part of teacher education programs. For instance, Ulla (2016) explored the practicum experience of 21 English language student-teachers from a private university in the Philippines. Ulla study revealed that student-teachers faced difficulties with teaching confidence, lack of teaching resources, and classroom management. Gujjar, Ramzan, and Bajwa (2011) conducted a study to examine a course that 650 student-teachers receive as part of their education. They randomly selected 25 student-teachers from 26 teacher training institutions in Pakistan to answer a 22-item questionnaire. Their study reported that the challenges are lack of demonstration lessons, the duration was insufficient to develop their teaching skills, and the evaluation methods were inappropriate. Yuan and Lee (2014) carried out a study to explore the cognitive change process of second language teachers and to improve the practicum course. They investigated the process of belief change during a TP course among three student-teachers in one of China’s universities. Their study recommended that
student-teachers need a supportive and open environment to maximize their learning during the course. They believe this would help promote the cognitive development of student-teachers and facilitate the change process of their belief.

In a more recent study, Köksal and Genç (2019) investigated what eight student-teachers in a Turkish university thought they learned during a TP course and the challenges they faced. Using qualitative methodology, they collected data using two methods: semi-structured questionnaires and reflective journals. The findings revealed that student-teachers typically learn “pedagogical strategies, developing professional identity, and developing positive feelings” (Köksal & Genç, 2019, p. 895). The main challenges were “classroom management, time management, mixed-ability classes and difficulties in using technology” (p. 895). An interesting finding they reported was that the process helped student-teachers to raise their awareness about their actual strengths and weaknesses. Finally, participants showed progress in their instructional practice and teaching skills through in-class discussions and classroom observation sessions. Merç (2015) examined the satisfaction of 117 student-teachers in a Turkish university with the evaluation methods. The study found that the most effective measures were planning-preparation, general organization, and assessment by university supervisors. Furthermore, Çapan (2014) examined the changes in student-teachers beliefs about grammar instruction through the TP course. The examination revealed that the TP did not affect their beliefs about grammar instruction.

In the context of ELT in Saudi Arabia, Alamri (2018) used mixed method action research to examine 35 Saudi female student-teachers on the challenges they face when teaching during the TP course at Taibah University. The findings indicated that the observation period was moderately to extremely beneficial to the participants. As for challenges, the study found classroom-teaching skills to be moderately to low challenging to them. Alnajami (2018), in another research, attempted to assess the TP effectiveness in the University of Jeddah. By interviewing four school mentors, two university mentors, and 16 student-teachers teaching the English language, Alnajami collected data. The results showed that English language teaching pedagogical and contextual knowledge improved during the TP course. According to the study, the participants placed “importance on pedagogical knowledge and contextual knowledge as well as subject matter knowledge” (Alnajami, 2018, p. 47). The study also found that through teaching practice, the methodologies of English language teaching taught in a university course before the TP was reinforced during the TP. In the context of this university in Saudi Arabia and to the best of the author knowledge, no research has been done on TP. Thus, this study is one of the first studies that will help filling in this gap in the literature.

Methodology

Given its exploratory nature, the interpretive paradigm informed the philosophical assumptions underpinning this research. Creswell and Poth (2017) state that the most significant characteristic of the interpretive approach is that individuals attach different meanings to actions. Those meanings are primarily grounded in their knowledge. Thus, what an interpretive researcher mainly looks for are the different ways individuals understand a phenomenon and the subjective meaning they attach to it. As Neuman (2007) confirms, the most noticeable interest of interpretivism is the “systematic analysis of socially meaningful action” (p. 62). Therefore, interpretive researchers perceive reality as socially constructed (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). On
an epistemological level, constructivism assumes that the objective truth is not merely waiting out there for researchers to uncover it. Instead, when individuals engage with the realities in their world, truth exists (Crotty, 1998). It is the interpretive researcher task to explore the different realities individuals hold. Interpretive researchers also try to find the various meanings individuals attach to these realities and interpret them.

**Methods (Instruments)**

Considering all that is thus far discussed, tools used to collect qualitative data seem to be fitting well to answer the research questions. These tools allow researchers to collect the abundant information needed and the profundity of thought required to satisfy the exploratory demands that help understand the explored phenomena. To gather data for this research, the researcher utilized five qualitative data collection methods: semi-structured interviews, reflective portfolios, peer observation reports, classroom observations, and students evaluation form of the course. One-to-one semi-structured interviews were arranged, carried out, and recorded with all three participants. Classroom observation for student-teachers while practicing teaching done by the researcher was also one of the data collection methods. Likewise, student-teachers peer observation reports, their reflective portfolio, and evaluation form were among the sources. As for data management and analysis, the researcher transcribed the interview records. Then, she entered the data from all the five sources into MAXQDA 2020. The researcher thematically analyzed the data by extracting themes and subthemes inside the software. She then grouped similar subthemes and initiated the main themes. The researcher calculated frequencies of subtheme and used diagrams to help readers visualize the results.

**Participants and Setting**

The participants of this research were three students doing a TESOL Master in a Saudi university. They were female Saudis and aged 24 to 32 with a different range of teaching experience. While one of the participants had five-year language teaching to young learner experience, another had taught English to adults for two years, and the third had no chance to teach at all. To avoid revealing their identity, the researcher referred to them using pseudonyms. This sample represents the whole population of one section that took the TP course. Students who joined the MA TESOL program are either previous English language teachers or planning to become so upon completing the course. They were in the first semester of the second year of the program. The TP course theoretically examines current debates revolved around language teaching methodology. It also develops an understanding of language teaching as a profession employing readings, classroom discussions, and course assignments with an emphasis on reflecting on language teaching. It offers student-teachers an opportunity to teach a short session, generally 20 minutes, to foundation year program students. The course had three assignments: six hours of observed teaching practice where students observe other experienced teachers, peer observation report where students reflect on their colleagues teaching, and reflective practice-based teaching portfolio where students reflect on a minimum of 30 hours of their teaching.

**Finding**

This section presents the main findings of the research resulted from the analysis of the data.

*Ways in Which the Course Was Helpful*
Regarding the first research question: how the course was helpful to develop the student-teachers teaching skills, eight themes emerged. The following chart presents the themes and their frequency:

**Figure 1. Ways in Which the Course Was Helpful**

Sharing experience through classroom discussion is the most frequent theme amongst all the eight emerged themes (36.4%), followed by adding other people perspectives through peer observation (21.2%), making plans for professional development (12.1%), and having first teaching experience (9.1%). Getting a gradual approach to teaching, learning essential aspects, and developing knowledge and skills show the same frequency level (6.1%). Finally, reflecting on their own experience is the least frequent theme (3%). One of the participants, Haifa, reported the importance of classroom discussions in the interview:

> like just the small discussions we had during lectures that are related to how we taught or what was different, sharing our experiences and thoughts and techniques … something getting me to know more. This part really helped each one of us to say I used to do this to enhance the students’ practice.

May, in her portfolio, expressed a similar opinion:

> Through our many discussions in the teaching practice class, my instructor talked about her way of teaching grammar inductively, which we found useful.

The participants emphasized that peer observation helped them and enhanced their practice. For instance, Yara, in the interview, said:

> I really liked the peer observation assignment as it gave me insights on certain things that I was doing while teaching and I wasn't really aware of; so, having someone to critically look at my teaching was really helpful.

In the same vein, May mentioned in the peer observation report how peer observation is significant for her:

> This short experience with the observer’s comments improved my awareness of different points.

**Parts of the Course That Was Helpful**

The chart in figure two shows how practical teaching is the most helpful part of the course (46.2%), followed by observation (34.6%), and finally assignments as the least helpful part (19.2%).
When the researcher asked Yara in the interview about the most helpful part of the course, she enthusiastically confirmed:

the practical aspect of it! Of course! Especially teaching the 20 minutes, because I've got the opportunity to put what I've learned into practice.

In the peer-observation report, May explained some of the reasons for her perception that classroom observation is the most helpful part in enhancing teaching:

Observation was incredibly beneficial for me; the observer’s feedback enlightened me regarding many of my mistakes. I was surprised by her comment on the use of colors on the board. I did not give much attention while I was teaching to use different colors.

The Instructional Benefits

As figure three shows, ten themes that show the instructional benefits the student-teachers gained from the course emerged.

One of the practical teaching tips was using technology inside the classroom. As part of the classroom observation practice and when Yara gave the twenty-minute practical teaching session, her peers observed that she used technology efficiently to deliver the lesson. Using technology was also discussed during the feedback session and highlighted in the collected documents as a significant teaching aid. As for the second theme, engaging learners, May reported in her reflective portfolio that:
One way of motivating students to learn is to link their learning with their personal lives. Thus, I asked my students what their life goals were. I also encouraged them to set academic goals.

Concerning the third theme and as feedback to a colleague, Haifa wrote the following on her peer-observation report:

My colleague showed good class management and monitoring during activities. She was observing and moving around the class during the time of the activities.

**Appropriateness of the Evaluation Methods**

Analysis of the data shows that participants perceived peer-observation report as the most appropriate evaluation method. The chart in figure four displays that the peer-observation report received a 62.5 percent preference rate, followed by the reflective portfolio with 25 percent. Some participants suggested adding classroom discussion as a method of evaluation, which received 12.5 per cent.

![Figure 4. Appropriateness of Evaluation Methods](image)

In her peer-observation report, Haifa indicated:

peer observation assignment provided me with an opportunity to look at areas of good practice and areas for improvement from another perspective.

Yara, in the interview, emphasized that the reflective portfolio was beneficial:

I really liked reflection assignments, especially the third assignment, because it was a new thing for me to reflect on my teaching practice. I just think about it but never really wrote about it this way.

Remarkably, May suggested a new evaluation method during the interview:

add like five or ten grades for classroom discussions to encourage students to discuss.

**Challenges Student-Teachers Faced during the Course**

Nine themes emerged from the data were related to the challenges the participants faced during the course. The most dominant theme was the limited teaching time, with 61.9 percent of the total data. The following chart illustrates all of them:
The participants, in three different sources of the data, repeatedly stated that the course provided them with a limited teaching time opportunity. In the anonymous course evaluation form, for instance, a participant wrote:

It gives me a few opportunities to practice teaching and learn how to apply the teaching methods and approaches.

Moreover, during the interview, Yara said:

One of the challenges and actually it's the only challenge … that we were given only 20 minutes for teaching. Since it's a practicum course, I would expect longer time than this, especially with the fact that it's a teaching program. So, even though I have teaching experience, I would love to put the things that newly added to my knowledge into practice.

Haifa, however, believes that the real challenge is the policy itself, as she expressed during the interview:

I know it's the policy that restricted it to only 20 minutes, but I think that policy should be revised because even in my BA course, which was three years ago in this university and my practice was in the institute, we had the chance to teach for one complete hour.

A participant in the evaluation form indicated that the reflective portfolio as a compulsory assignment required them to reflect on 30 hours of teaching without providing them a chance to teach for that length of time. When the form asked her about what she perceives as a drawback about the course, she wrote:

No opportunity to actually teach for 30 hours in the institute’s classes.

Changes Needed to Enhance the Effectiveness of the Course

The participants suggested several changes to enhance the effectiveness of the course. They believe that increasing the teaching practice time is the most critically needed change (42.9%). The following chart shows all the suggested changes.
The participants strongly called for increasing the permissible teaching practice time. For instance, in one of the course evaluation forms, a participant reported:

I believe that a practicum course should solely rely on practice. So, what I would change about it would be the work the students need to do. It should involve more practice of teaching and less paperwork.

Yara, in the interview, brought up another suggestion, which is discussing challenging teaching scenarios in class:

maybe thinking of really difficult or challenging teaching scenarios that might actually happen in actual classrooms and finding solutions around being in this challenge by brainstorming or creating solutions for it.

Discussion

TP courses can be very beneficial to student-teachers. Being in line with many of the previous studies (Köksal & Genç, 2019; Ulla, 2016; etc.), the results of this study highlighted the significance of TP in helping student-teachers to develop their teaching skills. Classroom discussions were the most prominent helpful aspects in the course for the participants of this study. Köksal and Genç (2019) study confirmed that TP raises student-teachers awareness about their strengths and weaknesses. The researcher believes that student-teachers could reach that awareness through both discussion and observation as the findings indicated. A possible explanation for this might be that student-teachers interact efficiently and freely with their peers in both situations.

Regarding the instructional benefits, three of them show alignment with findings from previous studies. For instance, (Alamri, 2018) reported selecting appropriate teaching methods as one of the skills related to classroom teaching experience. In this study, being introduced to practical teaching tips and techniques was the main gained instructional benefit. This finding might be factual because TP affords a good chance for student-teachers to have real teaching situations where they can experiment with different instructional approaches. Knowing classroom management techniques and designing proper activities were also found in both this and Alamri study. That can be expected as these are two of the main practical aspects of TP, where student-teachers are exposed to actual classroom teaching experience. Interestingly, participants in Alamri study reported improving four different school environment skills: dealing with teaching load and school administrative staff, compatibility with classroom’s teacher, and commitment to the school system. In contrast, this study participants mentioned only one aspect related to school environment skills, which is dealing with technology. This difference in the reported results might be resulting from the difference in the teaching practice duration in both situations.

The findings showed that peer observation report is the most effective evaluation method as perceived by the participants. However, this finding contradicts results from previous studies. For example, Merç (2015) found that writing observation and reflection reports from the student-teachers perspective is among the less effective performance measures. The participants believe that observation reports can be a powerful tool for professional development purposes only. While reflective portfolio comes second in this study, it is the most effective measure in Merç’s followed by the university’s supervisor visit and evaluation by peer teachers. Participants of this study suggested classroom discussion to be one of the evaluation methods. This suggestion might
sound valid because the reflective teaching portfolio has most of the weight of the grades (40) while the other two methods have less weight (30 for each). As stated in the analysis section, teaching practice time is limited to 20 minutes, whereas student-teachers must reflect upon 30 hours. Therefore, students believe that changing grades distribution might be a sound solution. According to the participants, the reflective portfolio should have less marks and classroom discussion must have some grades.

Concerning the challenges to the course, as we mentioned earlier, the participants emphasized the shortness of teaching timescale. This is in line with findings from Ulla (2016) study, which claimed that EFL student-teachers do not have enough time to practice teaching. Having enough time to practice teaching for student-teachers can be essential. As stated in Çağan (2014), student-teachers must have sufficient opportunities to practice teaching before becoming qualified teachers. However, Alamri (2018) reported different results. Alamri found the following challenges: preparing daily lesson planning, presenting the lessons, and preparing quizzes. These differences in findings might be resulting from the variance of both TP courses’ length. Participants in Alamri study practiced teaching for four days weekly throughout the semester. In contrast, participants of this study had 20 minutes to practice teaching. Hence different findings occurred in terms of the course challenges.

It might be apparent that the participants suggested the changes above to overcome the challenges they reported. Increasing the teaching practice time was frequently mentioned in all data sources for this study. That might be rational given that student-teachers must reflect upon 30 hours of teaching in the primary assignment when they had only 20 minutes to practice teaching in the university classes. Considering that some students did not have previous teaching experience, allocating 40% percent of the marks to an assignment that required 30 hours of teaching was challenging to them. What made it more challenging is that they only had a chance to teach for a short amount of time. Similarly, participants in Ulla (2016) research also suggested decision-makers to consider giving more time to practice teaching. However, Alamri (2018) study revealed different suggestions for changes, given Alamri participants stated other challenges. Issues like preparing daily lesson planning, presenting the lessons, preparing quizzes, dealing with the teaching load, and dealing with the school administration staff. It is worth mentioning that in the TP course in Alamri (2018) study, students spend four days weekly in schools teaching from 7:00 AM to 1:00 PM, then, they continue their afternoon study classes from 4:00 PM to 9:45 PM. Despite the course layout differences in Alamri study and this study, participants reported adding challenging teaching situations as a needed change in both studies.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study explored the perspective of student-teachers in a Saudi university about the benefits and challenges of a TP course to help enrich the literature on TP in TESOL. Practical teaching was the most helpful part of the course, and the most appropriate evaluation method was peer-observation reports. Besides, the limitedness of the teaching timeframe was the major challenge and hence the main suggested change was increasing the teaching practice time. As presented in the previous sections, there are several instructional benefits for this TP course that teacher educators worldwide find relevant and useful. It is worth mentioning that the most frequently repeated challenge, which is limited teaching time, can be dealt with through adapting some of the following recommendations. Firstly, the program management team may think about
Interventions to Improve a Practicum Course for EFL Teachers

Alamoudi

increasing the teaching practice time to satisfy the required 30 hours of teaching to reflect upon by offering ten-hour direct contact with students. These ten hours require 20 hours of preparation, which is a total of 30 hours that are needed in the reflective portfolio assignment. Secondly, the introduction of a parallel practicum course in the following semester to have two practicum courses might be a good solution too. The program management team can structure these two courses in a way that one of them focuses on the theoretical aspects of language teaching and the other one on the teaching practices. Thirdly, imposing a pre-requisite of having at least a full semester teaching experience in the five years before enrolment as an acceptance criterion on the course.

In conclusion, TESOL researchers needs to conduct further research on the importance of peer observation reports due to the contradicting results of this research and previous studies. Investigating the rationale behind this contradiction and the significance of peer observation, seems to be needed. Finally, TP trainers and institutional management can participate in future research so that better and more effective plans are put in place to overcome challenges and improve practicum training quality.

About the author
Dr. Khadija A. Alamoudi is a full-time assistant professor at the ELI, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She specializes in educational evaluation, EFL teacher evaluation, and EFL teacher professional development. Her research focuses on different aspects related to ELT teacher such as: performance evaluation, identity, and professional development. She also had some works on both theoretical and applied linguistics. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8466-0967

References


Critical thinking is widely recognized as a necessary skill for growth and intellectual development due to a variety of factors, including globalization, the revolution of information technology, modernity, and connectivity. EFL teachers can lay the groundwork for their students to attain critical thinking through various methods, models, and strategies. The present investigation suggests that the teacher could promote EFL learners’ critical thinking through guided discovery model of instruction. Henceforth, the current paper endeavors to enlighten the adequacy of applying guided discovery for developing learners’ critical thinking skills. It is an experimental research that investigates: how may guided discovery contribute to the development of EFL learners’ critical thinking? It attempts to examine the utility of discovery learning in teaching students how to process and think critically about the education they receive where information has become readily available and accessible. To this aim, 40 EFL Master students who took educational psychology courses were nominated from the university center of Naama, Algeria. The researcher selected Peter Honey Critical Thinking test and focus group discussions to attain data on students’ critical thinking skills. The test results demonstrated that the experimental group outperformed the control group. The students become more autonomous, reflect on their learning experiences, and identify the most useful strategies. Furthermore, the analysis of focus group interviews revealed that the experimental group participants hold positive attitudes toward discovery learning. They perceive it as a precious method that can enhance their awareness about the value of thinking critically.

Keywords: Classroom-oriented research, critical thinking, EFL learners’ at Naama University Center, discovery learning, guided discovery, reflection

Cite as: YAICHE, W. (2021). Boosting EFL Learners Critical Thinking through Guided Discovery: a Classroom-Oriented Research on First-Year Master Students. Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 71-89. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.6
Introduction

In higher education, the process of teaching English as a foreign language aims to prepare students for the requirements of the professional career and the social life. Of the various requests, that are generally acknowledged, is the need for developing critical thinking skills in learners. Indeed, higher education research has extensively scrutinized critical thinking. Scholars have thrown substantial attention to the significance of reflective thinking (Lizarraga, Baquedano & Oliver, 2010; Marin & Halpern, 2011; Swartz, 2003). Typically, teaching practitioners believe that critical thinking skills are vital to the students’ success, especially in nowadays’ society that is featured by diversity and an immense amount of information (Moreno, 2010). Learning to think critically is helpful in a variety of ways. It aids EFL learners to choose the useful information relevant to them. It supports them to monitor the information received and decide on the appropriate strategies for achieving their selected goals. Accordingly, critical thinking skills are vital to become self-directed learners able to make decisions and solve problems.

Considerably, teaching critical thinking does not necessarily mean presenting it as a concept or an interest area in philosophy. The purpose of dealing with critical thinking in classes is to “teach for and about it” (Facione, 2000, p. 80). To teach about it, teachers train students to use related skills for solving problems. Whereas, the main objective of ‘teaching for’ is to engage students in critical thinking through offering opportunities, instigating relevant perceptions, and boosting their disposition to apply those skills (Lin, 2018). Accordingly, teachers can make critical thinking an integral part of instruction with careful planning of problem-solving environments that allow for experiment, engagement, reasoning, and decision-making (Eggen & Kauchak, 2010). Deriving from the theory of constructivism, discovery learning is assumed as a tool for enhancing critical thinking.

According to (Salkind, 2009), discovery learning encourages learners’ mindful involvement and active inquiry in the acquisition of knowledge. There are two models of discovery learning. First is the pure discovery or the unstructured discovery. This form of education involves learning experiences in which learners receive minimal scaffolding. Using this model, teachers provide relevant materials and ask learners to discover concepts, solutions, and strategies. Whereas the second model, guided discovery, entails teachers’ scaffolding of students learning development. Through guided discovery, teachers highlight the learning objectives, classify the information, and monitor the discovery process. Thus, the main goal of the present research work is to assess the role of guided discovery in promoting EFL learners’ critical thinking. The study aims to scrutinize the question of how may guided discovery be useful to enhance EFL learners’ critical thinking skills?

Substantially, the interest of the present research is in two folds: it anticipates to demonstrate that the skill of critical thinking as a practical dimension of EFL learning entails a place in the curriculum. Besides, it tends to prove that guided discovery can promote learners critical thinking. Unfortunately, higher education in Algeria gives little attention to the relevance of developing critical thinking skills in learners. Mainly, the English section’s pedagogical team at Naama University Center instructs learners for three years to get the ‘Licence Degree’ or ‘B.A’ in the Anglo-Saxon educational system. Throughout the three years, English learners study the essential skills required for learning the target language. Indeed, teachers receive the content of
teaching in the form of limited guidelines. According to the provided guidelines, the teacher develops the instructional points. Hence, the curriculum does not consider critical thinking as a skill. Thus, guided discovery dynamics to support EFL learners’ critical thinking is placed at the heart of research for the present investigation. Such a puzzling discussion between guided discovery and reflective learning constitutes a motive towards conducting this inquiry.

As a classroom-oriented experiment, the current study has significant benefits in terms of exploring guided discovery as a model of instruction that may enhance critical thinking skills. It aims to provide EFL teachers with valuable and evident data based on experimental results. Moreover, the study theorizes that a better understanding of critical thinking offers teachers a better procedure to cope with this skill. It struggles, then, to raise the issue of critical thinking in Algerian higher education, use guided discovery as a model of instruction instead of direct instruction, to introduce a valuable contribution to the development English language teaching profession.

To this end, the present research work tries to investigate and analyze the learners’ critical thinking levels before and after applying guided discovery, the degree to which guided discovery promotes high levels of learners’ critical thinking, and the factors that may encourage the learners’ cognitive involvement. It also aims to scrutinize learners’ perceptions of guided discovery as a model of instruction. In this respect, the study sets around the following research questions:

- Can critical thinking be taught in the classroom?
- What might be the effect of guided discovery on EFL learners’ critical thinking skills?
- To what extend do EFL learners show evidence of thinking critically while experiencing guided discovery?
- Are EFL learners conscious about the value of developing critical thinking qualities?

Indeed, the use of guided discovery model, in EFL classroom-based instruction, is still not being examined. Moreover, the use of models and strategies to develop learners’ critical thinking still needs more recommendations. According to Gibson (2012), “the assimilation of higher-order thinking skill in L2 classroom has been marginal. This is surprising given the growing body of empirical evidence there is to support the effectiveness of such a model” (p. 127).

To investigate the raised questions, the researcher puts forward a number of objectives. First, the present study intends to argue that critical thinking needs to be associated with the teaching of any material. In this vein, Lin (2018) maintained that teachers have to deal with essential thinking skills, as they are crucial for meaningful learning. Second, the study recommends guided discovery to develop a high-order thinking in EFL learners. According to Sukartiningisih and Jacky (2019), learners show higher-order thinking while experiencing learning through discovery-based activities. Third, the study anticipates that learners, who study through methods supporting their cognitive components, are more likely to develop critical thinking abilities. Thus, it endeavors to show that learners do not tend to think critically without receiving appropriate instruction.
To probe the potential advantages of guided discovery on critical thinking, the researcher has opted for a particular methodology to discover answers to the research questions. The selected methodology relied on classroom-oriented experiment to contend systematically that critical thinking is teachable through guided discovery. The latter inclines to promote skills such as observing, inferring, generalizing, reasoning, evaluating, and transferring. The study also tends to argue for the practical effect of guided discovery on raising EFL learners’ awareness about the significance of being critical thinkers able to seek answers to probing and stimulating questions.

**Literature Review**

**Critical Thinking**

Whether it is a problem with a course, an assignment, or a project, experiences in learning a foreign language present challenges that demand learners’ critical thinking to analyze the situation and formulate a solution prudently. Rote learning does not prepare learners for these problems. Learners need to experiment high-level thinking tasks that prepare them for the professional life. According to Lin (2018), “Thinking skills are essential skills if students are to achieve academic success at college and in their professional careers and social lives” (p.1). Therefore, critical thinking requires integration into everyday education.

Scholars defined critical thinking in various ways, but most of the definitions argue on the individual’s skill to generate and evaluate deductions based on evidence. Essentially, critical thinking is an interrogative, stimulating process of knowledge. It encompasses analyzing ideas or information from an objective stand and then examining it based on personal values and attitudes. To do so, individuals need to develop specific skills necessary to represent thinking in an expanded form ((Butler et al., 2012; Ennis, 1985; Facione, 1990; Halpern, 2003).

As a compound skill, critical thinking involves thought processes, abilities, affective variables, and intellectual principles. Vardi (2013) defined it as “a process of reasoning aimed at coming to a sound, justifiable decision, conclusion or judgment” (p.1). Given that, critical thinking is a cognitive process allied to the mind’s use. Cottrell (2005) contended that thinking in a critical, analytical, and evaluative manner is based on mental operations, including attention, categorization, selection, and judgment. This process aids in making informed decisions about whether something is credible to be accurate, operative, or productive. According to Chaffee (1988), critical thinking refers to “our active, purposeful, and organized effort to make sense of our world by carefully examining our thinking, and the thinking of others, in order to clarify and improve our understanding” (p. 29).

As a process, critical thinking encompasses a variety of skills and attitudes. As far as the skills are concerned, critical thinking involves the ability to evaluate reasons appropriately, to assess pertinent evidence, or to determine misleading arguments. Alternatively, some argue that it is an attitude or a disposition, such as the desire to seek probing questions, a critical alignment, or an attribute intrinsic to the individual. Instead, Mason (2008) stated that critical thinking might be established by dispositional knowledge in the sense of a set of principles that persuades the act of thinking.
Academic Models to Critical Thinking

Starting from the 1950s, many schools of thought appeared to explain the nature of critical thinking. Bloom (1956) created a hierarchical taxonomy with “knowledge” at the bottom and “evaluation” at the top. The taxonomy included six levels: knowledge, comprehension, and application as the foundation, and analysis, synthesis, and evaluation are said to signify critical thinking. Though criticized for lacking the precision necessary to guide instruction, Bloom’s taxonomy is probably the most cited source in teaching and assessing higher-order thinking researches (Sternberg, 1986).

In the same line of thought, Facione (1998) defended the conception of critical thinking as a set of cognitive skills and affective dispositions. Along with forty-six experts, Facione (1990) defined six fundamental dimensions of critical thinking, including interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. In this sense, critical thinking is considered as an automated process that entails the use of cognitive skills to make judgments. According to Facione (2000), the possession of skills leads to better performance, “Skills are manifest in performance. Persons with stronger skills tend to be able to perform a range of tasks requiring those skills with fewer mistakes” (p. 72). Henceforth, Facione (2000) suggested that critical thinking education should develop to offer students with possibilities to practice relevant skills.

As a prominent researcher in critical thinking, Halpern (2003) described it as a purposeful, reasoned, and goal-directed process. Halpern’s approach to critical thinking defended the term ‘critical’ that implies evaluation and judgment. It is the kind of thinking that involves decision-making, problem-solving, verbal reasoning, argument analysis, assessing likelihood and uncertainty, and hypothesis testing.

More recently, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2011) has notified four areas of critical thinking skills: (1) reasoning effectively, (2) using systems thinking, (3) making judgments and decisions, and (4) solving problems. These areas entail the students’ inquiry for information to ascertain its applicability to the task. In this sense, critical thinking is systematic and cautious, involving original reflection. It denotes the individual’s aptitude to deeply process knowledge for determining relations across disciplines and finding solutions to problems. Critical thinkers often employ thoughtful decision-making and insightful problem solving to examine situations, assess arguments, and draw reasonable inferences (Stobaugh, 2013).

Consequently, critical thinking is significant in education, as it is a crucial way of inquiry for solving problems and making appropriate decisions (Simpson & Courtney, 2002). In this manner Shirkhani and Fahim (2011) stated, “Language development and thinking are closely related and the teaching of higher-order thinking skills should be an integral part of an L2 curriculum” (p. 111). Thus, students need a dynamic engagement in the learning process to put on their knowledge for solving learning problems, and analyzing information so they can make formative decisions. Furthermore, through critical thinking, students can develop to be open-minded and creative in selecting the suitable learning strategy and the appropriate technique of solving problems (Tiwari, Lai & So, 2006).
Teaching for Critical Thinking

Besides the debate on its definition, the discussion about critical thinking in the present research work extends to whether or not it can be taught in the classroom, and if so, how can it be taught to EFL learners in Algerian Higher Education. To answer this question, Ennis (1992) determined three different ways of teaching critical thinking. First, there is the general approach, which endeavors to devote separate courses for teaching critical thinking. In this case, essential courses of thinking are presented independently without using school subjects. The second is infusion and immersion. Infusion of critical thinking entails developing the essential abilities of thinking through the teaching of a subject matter. In this approach, the teacher explicitly teaches students to think critically on the subject. Parallel to infusion, immersion is based on a thought-provoking approach to teaching a subject matter; however, critical thinking skills are implicitly taught. Lastly, the mixed approach merges the general approach with the infusion approach. It teaches critical thinking in a separate course while students are engaged in the learning of a subject matter.

Moreover, several researchers have contended that critical-thinking skills cannot develop without explicit instruction (Abrami et al., 2008 and Facione, 1990). Halpern (1998), for instance, affirmed that there are various, qualitatively dissimilar sorts of evidence viewing that students can turn out to be improved thinkers as a result of a proper education. She suggested that instruction in critical thinking requires responses to particular questions. The basic principles to answer these questions derive from cognitive psychology, the empirical branch of psychology that investigates issues like how people think, learn, and remember, or more precisely, how people tend to acquire, use, organize, and recall knowledge. She further asserts,

It is clear that a successful pedagogy that can serve as a basis for the enhancement of thinking will have to incorporate ideas about the way in which learners organize knowledge and internally represent it and the way these representations change and resist change when new information is encountered. (p. 45)

Therefore, this research considers that one possible way to build critical thinking in EFL learners is through discovery learning. At a first sight, it deliberates discovery learning as a crucial model that cultivates knowledge construction and higher-order thinking. Second, this model encourages the discovery of authentic and meaningful questions and problems. According to Sukartiningsih and Jackey (2019):

Critical thinking is a form of high-level thinking that involves all thought processes such as how to obtain information, understand information, analyze, correlate, interpret, evaluate, make judgments, and make judgments about good and bad or right and wrong. This is synergistic with discovery learning models. (p.88)

Additionally, Henson (1996) believed that when the teacher applies discovery learning in the classroom, his/her role entails asking thought-provoking questions, permitting sufficient time for students to think on the possible answers to the raised questions, and directing students’ knowledge construction using appropriate questioning. In the same line of thought, Tiwari et al. (2006) argued that the students’ active participation in the learning process could add to their critical thinking development, “Where active participation is encouraged, as in problem-based learning, critical thinking is enhanced”. (p. 584)
To scrutinize the purposes of the study, the teacher-researcher has used an infusion approach. That is to say, the teacher encouraged critical thinking through discovery learning in the context of educational psychology courses. The scope of the present paper does not test the effectiveness of the infusion approach. However, it aims to prove that encouraging EFL learners’ critical thinking through discovery learning is more effective than non-interventions.

**Discovery Learning**

Cognitive constructivist learning implicates engaging the student actively in a research process to cultivate meaningful understandings. Subsequently, cognitive constructivists favor inductive learning approaches such as discovery and inquiry-based learning. Often contrasted with direct instruction or expository learning, discovery learning is a student-centered approach that assists engaged and long-lasting understanding (Salkind, 2009). Bruner (1961) recommended the discovery learning method in his paper “The Act of Discovery,” representing a form of the curriculum that fortifies the students to dynamically explore and figure out solutions for given problems rather than memorizing rules and instructions offered by the teacher (Moreno, 2010).

Kirschner, Sweller and Clark (2006) refer to discovery learning is also referred to as problem-based, inquiry, experiential, and constructivist learning. In this vein, Schunk (2012) stated, “discovery involves constructing and testing hypotheses rather than simply reading or listening to teacher presentations. Discovery is a type of inductive reasoning, because students move from studying specific examples to formulating general rules, concepts, and principles”. (p. 266)

Based on constructivism, the discovery learning method allows students to construct knowledge structures that would lead to intellectual ingenuity, persistence, and increased motivation. Nevertheless, learning by discovery does not mean permitting students to do what they want; it implicates direction. Teachers arrange experiences that allow students to search, explore, and investigate. Accordingly, Safrida, Anidalia and Zulfajri (2019) stated, “The discovery learning model is a component of educational practice including a teaching method to promote active learning and process-oriented” (p. 14). For instance, the teacher presents a discovery situation, and then enthusing students learn new knowledge pertinent to the domain and exercise problem-solving skills such as developing rules, testing hypotheses, and collecting information (Bruner, 1961). In a common view, Fahmi, Elmawati and Sunardi (2019) proclaimed, “In applying the discovery learning method the teacher acts as a mentor by providing opportunities for students to learn actively, the teacher must be able to guide and direct the learning activities of students in accordance with the objectives”. (p. 348)

Therefore, teaching for discovery entails presenting questions, problems, or puzzling situations to search for a solution. Besides, it boosts learners to make spontaneous predictions when they are not foolproof. Depending upon the complexity and level of the course, students may require minimal or significant guidance. That is either pure discovery or guided discovery. Nonetheless, Mayer (2004) upheld that when students experience learning through pure discovery methods, they often become lost and frustrated, and this confusion sometimes results in misunderstandings. Thus, the study suggests guided discovery as a suitable model for developing EFL learners’ critical thinking skills.
Guided Discovery for Promoting Critical Thinking

Various studies conducted on learners’ critical thinking skills revealed that higher-order thinking required the teachers’ careful planning and consideration (Fahmi et al., 2019; Gibson, 2012; Shirkhani & Fahmi, 2011; Tiwari et al., 2006). In this context, Rahman (2017) and Wahyudi, Rukmini and Bharati (2019) confirmed that discovery learning is operative to stimulate the students’ critical thinking and creativity. Likewise, Kusumawardani, Malya and Faizah (2019) claimed that guided discovery learning-based activities promote learners’ critical thinking skills. As a model of instruction, guided discovery is the form of discovery that requires the teacher to afford clues and tips about the way to solve a problem or answer a question. This way keeps the students on the path. For instance, the teacher poses a question and prompts students to elucidate their thinking. Afterward, he/she guides the class debate until the students realize the right answer to the problem.

Moreno (2010) considered guided discovery as a very useful learning method. Though teachers’ direct instruction may take less time than guided discovery, recent research finds that guided discovery endorses deeper learning than giving students the selected information to be learned. Purely transferring novel information is unsuccessful in supporting learners to create their understandings dynamically. Alternatively, encouraging student research only is not satisfactory to produce thoughtful knowledge construction. Research requires to be complemented by suitable guidance to assist students’ learning.

Commonly, Eggen and Kauchak (2010) asserted that effective discovery learning should be highly scaffolded, and the teacher has a critical role in managing the students’ actions, examinations, and forming of conceptions. According to Mayer (2002), “Guided discovery may take more or less time than expository instruction, depending on the task, but tends to result in better long-term retention and transfer than expository instruction” (p. 68).

When applying guided discovery in the classroom, teachers would devote minimal time clarifying and extra time asking questions. This way, the students would have further opportunities to share thinking with the teacher and peers. They also transform their developing understanding into words (Dean & Kuhn, 2007). Besides, Lutz, Guthrie, and Davis (2006) maintained that guided discovery endorses high student cognitive involvement; thus, it is disposed to raise students’ intrinsic interest and motivation to learn.

As a form of learning, guided discovery belongs to the cognitive theories of learning, namely the human memory model and social constructivism. The teacher-researcher lessons on educational psychology were applying a guided discovery model adopted from Eggen and Kauchak (2010), aiming primarily at developing learners’ critical thinking. The following table sketches the steps of guided discovery and their corresponding cognitive learning components.
Table 1. The relationships between phases and cognitive learning components in guided discovery

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Cognitive Learning Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Review:</td>
<td>• Attract attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Activate prior knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Open-Ended Phase:</td>
<td>• Provide experiences from which learners will construct knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promote social interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Convergent Phase:</td>
<td>• Begin schema production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Promote social interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closure:</td>
<td>• Complete schema production.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application:</td>
<td>• Promote transfer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1. Adapted from Eggen and Kauchak, (2010, p. 418)

Accordingly, teaching for critical thinking through discovery, the teacher-researcher presented questions, problems, or wondering situations to seek solutions and motivated learners to utter both their certain and uncertain suggested answers. Throughout class discussions, the teacher asked new questions that did not have readily available answers. This strategy aimed at forcing students’ thinking to construct knowledge. Furthermore, discoveries were not restricted to classroom accomplishments. After a lesson on behaviouristic learning, the teacher encouraged students to discover how experiments on animals are relevant to human education. Students might look for answers in classroom workplaces, in the university library or media center, and on or off the university grounds. Extensive teacher scaffolding was offered at the beginning of the academic year when students were not accustomed to the discovery method and needed thorough contextual knowledge. Thus, the teacher provided structure by asking questions and providing proposals on how to inquire for answers and solutions.

Researchers conducted few studies on the utility of guided discovery model to enhance EFL learners’ critical thinking. Wale and Bishaw (2020) maintained that inquiry-based instruction improved EFL students’ critical thinking skills. They justified that the inquiry process incorporated activity-oriented method and collaboration. Similarly, Ghaemi and Misaeed (2017) also posited that the participation in inquiry-based learning class had a vital influence on EFL learners’ critical thinking skills. Wahyudi et al. (2019) found improvements in the students’ scores after learning through the discovery-based speaking assessments module. Although there are studies on the use of discovery learning in the EFL context, the use of guided discovery in particular still needs investigation. Definitely, most of the investigations focused on discovery learning in general.

Methods
The current investigation centers on the classroom-oriented approach to research relying on experimental methodology. The goal of selecting this approach is to establish a ‘cause-and-effect’ relationship between two different incidents. It aims to prove that a definite set of actions or situations (guided discovery) causes modifications in a specific outcome (critical thinking). Thus, an experimental research design, with an experimental and control groups of subjects, is devoted
to scrutinizing guided discovery effects on learners’ critical thinking skills. The experimental group received the content of learning through the guided discovery model of instruction. On the other hand, the control group learners received the same instruction without guided discovery. The two groups filled out the pretest and posttest to check the possible effects of the intervention on the experimental group. Throughout the experiment, the teacher-researcher scrutinized both groups to see their progress. Moreover, the researcher used the paired sample t-test to see the effect of the treatment.

**Participants**

The participants were 40 Master one EFL learners of different genders, learning linguistics as a branch at Salhi Ahmed University Center of Naama, Algeria. They belonged to the same academic background and had approximately the same level of proficiency in English. Their ages range from 21 to 28. The subjects were enrolled in Semester one and experimented while taking the course of educational psychology during the academic year of 2019-2020. To ensure probability, the researcher randomly selected the participants from three available groups. In fact, simple random selection entails that each participant has an equal probability to be part of the study. Thus, the investigator has chosen this type to get a representative sample.

After selecting two groups randomly from the entire Master one population, the researcher considered the total number of students in each group. Nonetheless, researcher disqualified a number of them for missing more than four courses or failing to take one of the designed tests. In this sense, the number of participant students (N = 40) was equally divided into two groups, with 20 students in each group. The participants’ average age was 23.52.

**Instruments**

The researcher adopted Peter Honey Critical Thinking test to measure the level of EFL learners’ critical thinking skills in the two groups before and after the treatment. This questionnaire is created by Honey (2005) for the sake of assessing the related skills of analysis, inference, evaluation, and reasoning. The questionnaire contains 30 Likert-type items, each has five choices, including Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), and Always (5). Henceforth, each student’s score could range from 30 to 150. Besides, focus group interviews were conducted as a final phase to inquire about the last research question. 14 participants were selected randomly from both groups to play a part in four focus groups. The arranged focus groups followed a semi-structured guide that contains four broad open questions followed by two closed questions. The opened questions addressed the critical thinking-related components. Whereas, the closed questions sought for possible issues or concerns that require further discussion.

**Procedures**

The data attainment in the current investigation followed three main stages. Before the experiment, the researcher distributed Peter Honey’s critical thinking test to measure the participants’ critical thinking skills in both groups. Throughout the experiment, the participants received the same content of learning, but through different methods of instruction. Regarding the experimental group, the teacher-researcher explicitly integrated critical thinking skills in the designed courses. That is to say, the teacher taught lessons of educational psychology through the guided discovery model to address the cognitive learning components related to critical thinking.
Adopting the infusion approach, the teacher explicitly stressed learners’ critical thinking in addition to the content knowledge. The students knew that they would develop critical thinking skills through the discovery process. The addressed thinking skills revolved around the components of: attracting attention, reasoning, evaluating prior knowledge, experiencing problem-solving, detecting misconceptions, encouraging social interaction, constructing knowledge, and promoting transfer.

On the contrary, the teacher-researcher, in the control group, taught the content of instruction with no reference to the critical thinking skills. The control group participants did not receive any training in critical thinking. After the treatment process, the researcher administered Peter Honey’s Critical Thinking questionnaire as a posttest to both control and experimental groups. The objective was to identify whether EFL learners show evidence of thinking critically after the treatment they received throughout the semester. It also aimed at measuring the potential effect of guided discovery on learners’ critical thinking.

To assess their awareness of developing critical thinking skills, seven participant students from each group (control and experimental groups) participated in four focus group interviews. In this phase, the heterogeneous sample that consists of dissimilar participants intended to provide varied and rich data that show the possible effect of the instructional approach.

Results

Peter Honey Critical Thinking Questionnaire

To investigate the hypothesized effect of guided discovery as a model of instruction on boosting EFL learners’ critical thinking skills, the researcher administered Peter Honey Critical Thinking Questionnaire as a pretest and posttest to the experimental group and control group. Also, the researcher processed the participants’ scores through the Paired Samples t-test.

Sample characteristics

Before running the paired samples t-test, it is significant to look at the descriptive statistics. Tables two and three allocate the means and standard deviations among the two groups in the pretest and posttest, correspondingly.

Table 2. Pretest scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>64.65</td>
<td>10.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>11.39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table demonstrates that learners exhibit almost similar critical thinking skills at the beginning of the semester. Before the treatment, the participants in the experimental group obtained a mean score of (62.4). Meanwhile, the control group scored a mean of (64.65). The noted difference was only (2.25). Moreover, the standard deviation of the experimental group (SD=11.39) and the control group (SD=10.77) was relatively small relating to the mean scores of the corresponding groups indicating the homogeneity of the studied population. As a result, the pretest scores...
indicated low-level critical thinking, because the two groups were not able to reach the average (≥75) in Peter Honey Critical thinking Questionnaire.

**Table 3. Posttest scores**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>125.5</td>
<td>16.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>12.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistics in the table reveal that the scores of learners’ critical thinking skills are above the average, and the group is homogeneous. In the posttest, the experimental group achieved a mean score of (125.5) which was higher than the one recorded in the pretest. Regarding the control group, the participants reached a mean of (62.5) which is only (0.1) higher than the mean recorded in the pretest.

The analysis of the inferential statistics attained through the procedure of the Paired Samples t-test is used to determine whether the differences between the means recorded in the pretest and posttest are statistically significant.

**Normality Assumption**

Considerably, analyzing the assumption of the normal distribution is fundamental before running the Paired Samples t-test. The researcher tested the normal distribution of the two groups' scores in terms of skewness and kurtosis.

**Table 4. Normality tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>0.5504</td>
<td>-0.5124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>0.0247</td>
<td>-0.4550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>Experimental group</td>
<td>-0.9713</td>
<td>0.5588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>-0.2277</td>
<td>-0.1857</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistics in the table affirm that the assumption of the normal distribution is realized, because the Skewness and Kurtosis levels are less than the maximum acceptable values for a t-test (i.e., Skewness and Kurtosis are in the range of -2 to +2). Consequently, the results of the Paired Samples t-test can be considered as the scores are normally distributed.

**The Effect of Guided Discovery on EFL Learners’ Critical Thinking Skills**

**Table 5. Paired samples correlations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimental group (pretest to posttest)</td>
<td>0.5474</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group (pretest to posttest)</td>
<td>0.5046</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Correspondingly, the correlation between the pretest and posttest scores in both groups is valued at (.54) and (.50) that are incredibly significant at (.00) and (.00). These correlations advocate that
the participants are disposed to have the same ranking in the pretest and posttest. That is to say, higher scores in the pretest are associated with higher scores in the posttest.

Table 6. Paired-samples t-test on experimental group’s pretest and posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experimental Group’s Pretest and Posttest</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-60.85</td>
<td>-5.95</td>
<td>-18.82</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistics of the experimental group indicate a t-value (-18.82) that is extremely significant at (0.05). As a result, the posttest mean is statistically higher than the pretest mean.

Table 7. Paired-samples t-test on control group’s pretest and posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Control Group’s Pretest and Posttest</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-1.26</td>
<td>-0.36</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the table, the posttest mean is approximately similar to the pretest mean. The control group participants’ scores from the pretest to the posttest point to a t-value (-0.36) that is extremely not significant at (0.05). Since they did not receive the instructional treatment, learners in the control group did not show evidence of thinking critically.

The findings revealed that teaching through guided discovery helped EFL learners develop their critical thinking ability in reasoning, evaluating, problem-solving, and constructing knowledge. The students who benefited from the instructional treatment outperformed the students who learnt the same content of instruction without any reference to critical thinking skills.

**Focus Group Interviews**

The researcher conducted four focus groups comprising seven students from each group. The focus groups aimed to identify significant differences among the students and explore their awareness towards developing critical thinking qualities. Throughout the focus groups, the researcher arranged the participants to form a circle. However, the interviewer intentionally asked the control group students to join each other forming half a circle being completed by the students of the experimental group. Having the moderator at the middle, this arrangement targeted to answer the fourth research question and assess the role of fitting instruction on developing learners’ awareness to think critically.

The focus interviews revealed diverse perspectives on how learners addressed problems and issues while learning. The results also indicated different views on the importance of looking for appropriate ways to solve problems in the classrooms. Throughout the focus interviews, the researcher noticed that experimental group participants were the first to answer questions and discuss the raised points. On the contrary, the control group participants were passive listeners who speak only when personally asked, giving short answers that were not subject to further discussion. For instance, when asked about the desirable way for long-lasting learning, one control group participant voiced that memorization of content instruction is useful for better learning. Moreover, their answers to the core discussion concerning the importance of developing critical thinking were not surprising, because the related questions did not attract their attention. Most of
the control group participants reported that they had not discussed content instruction thoughtfully with teachers before. The instruction they received in higher education embodied either presented or printed courses, which they had to memorize for exams. Furthermore, their answers to probes were in terms of yes/no answers.

Quite the opposite, the experimental group participants stated that the problem-solving environment that allowed for questioning, exploring, and experimenting was fitting for meaningful and long-lasting learning. Most of the experimental group participants reported that they have not thought critically before experiencing the discovery learning method in the classroom. When learning through this method, they have developed their critical thinking skills, including interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and explanation. For example, one of the participants reported that his critical thinking skills developed after learning through the guided discovery process. He further stated that he has learned the techniques to interpret, analyze, and evaluate information. According to him, these techniques are significant to form meaning and construct knowledge without rote memorization.

In another focus group discussion, an experimental group participant expressed that the learning method allowed her to be aware of critical thinking skills in learning. The same participant added that her knowledge was based only on memorization before learning through discovery. After taking the intervention lessons, she recognized that it is crucial to reflect on the presented information. Similarly, another participant also reported that learning through guided discovery helped her to cope with anxiety and encouraged her to negotiate meaning. She developed personal perspectives, searched for evidence, and evaluated information. She further clarified that her critical thinking improved because of the instruction given through guided discovery.

Another respondent said that the discovery-based activities stimulated his awareness to develop critical thinking. He further elucidated that he could analyze and evaluate information either individually or cooperatively. While using this method, he tried to find solutions for problems and immediately engaged in a discussion with the group partners. Furthermore, the majority of the experimental group participants reported that they developed critical thinking skills while learning through discovery. This development was relevant not only to better and meaningful learning, but to their real-life experiences as well.

The focus interviews’ results indicated that learners’ awareness of developing critical thinking is dependent on appropriate instruction. Being aware of thinking critically, learners can operate cognitive learning components for evaluating content learning, making relevant decisions and creating meaning. The focus group discussions revealed vast differences between the experimental group participants and their control group counterparts. Most of the experimental group participants believed that their critical thinking abilities improved definitely. Consequently, it is worth mentioning that there should be opportunities for EFL learners to have enough exposure to discovery learning.

Discussion

Notwithstanding the existence of empirical evidence supporting the significance of critical thinking, ELT professionals in Algerian Higher education do not consider its planning in the
designed curricula. The results of the current study have significant benefits in terms of directing attention towards the efficiency of applying guided discovery to develop EFL learners’ critical thinking skills. The research data involved the scores of critical thinking tests and focus group interviews. The Critical Thinking test results showed significant differences between the students’ critical thinking scores before and after the instructional treatment. As the researcher assigned the participants in the two groups randomly, the final considerable differences are potential effects of the treatment the experimental group received. This result had a strong effect size and power.

Considerably, the experimental group achieved (125.5) as the posttest mean score. The latter is extremely higher than the mean recorded in the pretest (64.65). In contrast, the mean score of the control group posttest (62.5) did not reveal significant development in comparison with the posttest mean (62.4). These results may answer the first research question, “Can critical thinking be taught in the classroom”. Indeed, learners in the experimental group developed critical thinking qualities because they received an instructional treatment. Thus, critical thinking can be taught. In this vein, Shirkhani and Fahim (2011) revealed that promoting critical thinking skills is the teachers’ task through selecting suitable materials and activities. These activities, according to Gibson (2012) and Tiwari et al. (2006), careful organization to result in the acquisition of content material and critical thinking skills. Lin (2018) found that the infusion lessons helped EFL students in improving their critical thinking ability and encouraged them to use the target language to express their ideas.

The results also demonstrated that guided discovery has a prospective effect on the experimental group critical thinking skills. The experimental group statistics indicated a t-test value (-18.82) that is extremely significant at (0.05). On the contrary, the statistics of the control group participants from the pretest to the posttest show a t-value (-0.36) that is not significant at (0.05). These results may answer the second question, “What might be the effect of guided discovery on EFL learners’ critical thinking skills?” One explanation for the results is the guided discovery nature of discussions. This explanation is in line with what Safrida et al. (2019) found. Their research findings revealed that during the discovery process, the students became more active, creative and confident as the teacher offered them with incentives in the form of problems correlated with subject area knowledge. According to them, these problems can help the students to think, question and create solutions. In this context, various other studies support the efficacy of discovery learning as an instructional approach. In a theoretical study, Fahmi et al. (2019) contended that learning through the method of discovery is significant to train students’ critical thinking skills. They further claim that the method of discovery allows learners to recognize essential structures or concepts for a discipline through active cognitive involvement. Besides, Wale and Bishaw (2020) maintained that ELT material developers need to consider the discovery approach to design inquiry-based learning activities so that students develop critical thinking skills.

The experimental group participants have shown high-levels of critical thinking after the guided discovery treatment. Presenting materials in the form of problem-solving situations is useful for students to attain knowledge that they have not recognized through given reports, but through self-discovery. This result may answer the third research question, “To what extend do EFL learners show evidence of thinking critically while experiencing guided discovery?” In this context, Wahyudi et al. (2019) found significant improvements in the students’ speaking skill,
critical thinking, and creative thinking as the results of the discovery-based assessment module. Similarly, Kusumawardini et al. (2019) specified that guided discovery activities assist the teacher to build the teaching learning activities. In an experimental study, Ghaemi and Miesaeed (2017) proved that inquiry-based learning, as an approach that encourages students’ discovery, engaged the students in the learning process, activated their creative thinking, and inspired them to develop positive attitudes towards the inquiry process.

As far as the last research question is concerned, “Are EFL learners conscious about the value of developing critical thinking qualities?” the focus group interviews indicated positive responses toward the instructional approach on the part of the experimental group participants. They believed that they had developed much in subject area knowledge, thinking skills, and most essential of all, awareness to improve critical thinking qualities. These findings extend the previous empirical research documenting the significant role of discovery learning in growing learners’ critical thinking skills. For instance, Sukartiningsih and Jacky (2019) contended that discovery learning offers learners with the choice to learn for finding their own notions. For them, this model activates the students’ thought processes. Furthermore, Rahman (2017) noticed that the use of discovery learning provides learners with the possibilities to develop creative thinking abilities.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the degree to which guided discovery model could promote EFL learners’ critical thinking. It attempted to offer a suggestion to develop learners’ critical thinking in Algerian Higher Education. The researcher took the English section of the foreign languages department at Naama University Center as case to apply the instructional treatment. The findings of this study unveiled that the learners who did not have the chance to learn how to think critically (e.g., learners in the control groups) performed less than the ones who benefited from the instructional treatment. Consequently, guided discovery as a model of instruction directs students to think critically about the information they receive. It motivates the students to cooperate with the teacher and peers. Also, guided discovery inspires the students to analyze the reliability of presented information and encourages them to check alternate standpoints. The advantageous results achieved from critical thinking instruction fortified the researcher to assume that guided discovery will generate extensive outcomes if teachers apply it for more extended periods.

An additional assumption that the current study recommends is that critical thinking skills are teachable in higher education through the guided discovery model. However, the present study did not experiment the significance of this model to infuse critical thinking within the teaching of linguistic skills. Thus, this field requires further investigations. Moreover, it is vital to scrutinize whether learners would be able to transfer critical thinking skills across the curriculum.

About the Author

Wahida Yaiche is a lecturer at Salhi Ahmed University Center of Naama, Algeria. She holds a Magister in Educational Psychology from the University of Tlemcen and a PhD in Linguistic Studies from the Department of English, Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages of Tlemcen University, Algeria. Her research interest includes Reflective Teaching Practice, Action Research in ELT contexts, and Reflective Learning. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1285-5757
References
experiential, and inquiry-based teaching. *Educational Psychologist, 41*(2), 75–86. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15326985ep4102_1


Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies on Second Language Vietnamese Undergraduates

Hieu Manh Do
Department of English Language, Hong Bang International University
Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam
Correspondent Author: domanhieuabc@gmail.com

Huong Le Thu Phan
Department of English Language, Hong Bang International University
Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

Received: 12/17/2020   Accepted: 2/13/2021   published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
Metacognitive awareness is considered a crucial factor in reading comprehension. In the present study, the quantitative research method was applied using descriptive statistics, T-test, and ANOVA to identify: (1) What is second language (L2) Vietnamese students’ metacognitive awareness of reading strategies? (2) Are there any significant differences between male and female L2 Vietnamese students in metacognitive awareness of reading strategies? (3) Are there any significant differences between good, medium, and poor L2 Vietnamese readers in metacognitive awareness of reading strategies? One hundred and twenty-three English-majored undergraduates of Hong Bang International University completed an online survey which discovers their frequencies of using problem-solving, global, and support reading strategies. They next took a comprehension test on the TOEIC format test, whose results were adopted to classify students into three levels, namely good, medium, and poor readers. Reading strategies usage mean scores were compared across three strategy types and these scores were collated between groups. Results showed; first, reading strategies were used in academic texts at medium frequency level with the high usage of problem-solving strategies, followed by medium usage of support and global reading strategies. Second, female readers showed a higher frequency of using support strategies than males did. Third, learners’ proficiency levels were found to predict the levels of metacognitive awareness in reading with high-reading-ability students applying reading strategies more frequently than poor-reading-ability ones. This is significant to indicate that instructors should integrate all three reading strategies in their teaching, especially, raising awareness of global and support reading strategies among Vietnamese learners.

Keywords: Metacognitive awareness, reading strategies, second language, Vietnamese undergraduates, reading comprehension, Survey of Reading Strategies

Introduction
Reading is “an interactive cognitive process” (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2012, p.894), including planned steps taken to make sense of what to read (Sheorey & Baboczky, 2008). Successful readers usually use different strategies while reading, such as using their knowledge or reading carefully to understand the written materials (Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001). Besides, reading strategies are one of the effective solutions for poor readers to improve their reading comprehension and aid them to become strategic readers (Meniado, 2016; Temur & Bahar, 2011). In other words, reading strategies play a vital role in academic contexts and reading comprehension. Thus, educating metacognitive strategies might lead to an enhancement in reading comprehension as reading strategies are used by readers’ metacognitive awareness (Temur & Bahar, 2011).

Considering the importance of metacognitive awareness of reading strategies (MARS) in accelerating reading comprehension, numerous studies have adapted both original of MARS developed by Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) (e.g., Arrastia, Zayed, & Elnagar, 2016; Fitrisia, Tan, & Yusuf, 2015; Mokhtari, Dimitrov, & Reichard, 2018; Pammu, Amir, & Maasum, 2014; Wu, Valcke, & Van Keer, 2012) and a second version of Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) like Temur and Bahar (2011) to investigate students’ awareness of reading strategies. These studies showed that among three factors of reading strategies, problem-solving strategies were utilized more frequently than global and supporting reading strategies. Moreover, they concluded that reading strategies and reading comprehension are closely related.

However, it is worth considering that individual’s awareness of applying reading strategies might be varied across languages (Arrastia et al., 2016). Similarly, other factors, including proficiency levels, learners, genders, and educational background might also affect students’ awareness of reading strategies (Mokhtari et al., 2018). In terms of research instrument, the three-factor model of MARSI (used for L1 learners) and Survey of Reading Strategies - SORS (used for ESL learners) are reasonable to adapt to investigate learners’ metacognitive awareness of reading strategies (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002; Wu et al., 2012). According to this knowledge, therefore, the present study aims to address how often Vietnamese undergraduates apply different types of reading strategies in academic texts by adapting the SORS developed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002). Thus, it is hoped that the findings could be useful to ESL/EFL instructors when they design reading course syllabus for L2 learners to develop the habit of using reading strategies, especially for EFL Vietnamese students. Three research questions guided this study:

1. What is L2 Vietnamese students’ metacognitive awareness of reading strategies?
2. Are there any significant differences between male and female L2 Vietnamese students in metacognitive awareness of reading strategies?
3. Are there any significant differences between good, medium, and poor L2 Vietnamese readers in metacognitive awareness of reading strategies?

Literature Review
Metacognitive Awareness
According to Flavell (1976), metacognition refers “to one’ knowledge concerning one’ own cognitive processes and products or anything related to them” (p.232). To be specific, it is individuals’ awareness of their responsibility to monitor, regulate, and control their learning
activities (Livingston, 1997; Wilson, 1998; Wu et al., 2012). Accordingly, learners manage their learning process, plan their thinking before finishing the task, control, and regulate their thinking by making arrangements (Scott, 2008). Thus, metacognition is essential to acknowledge how the task is accomplished (Schraw, 2001).

There are three types of metacognitive awareness, namely declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge (Brown, 1987; Jacobs & Paris, 1987; Schraw & Moshman, 1995). Based on the definitions of Schraw (2001), declarative knowledge is to know about things and factors affecting an individual’s performance, for example, learners know about their memory. Procedural knowledge is defined as to know how to do things. A good example is that learners apply different strategies to deal with problems like looking up unfamiliar vocabulary during their reading process. Finally, conditional knowledge is to know why and what strategies are chosen to use.

To sum up, metacognitive awareness entails knowledge of what strategies to use, how to manage the comprehension, and which appropriate strategies are necessary for the task (Auerbach & Paxton, 1997).

**Reading Strategies**

Rajoo and Selvaraj (2020) defined reading strategies as “how readers interact with the written texts and how these strategies help to enhance text comprehension which includes mental plans” (p. 1301). The interaction between learners and written texts includes acknowledging the aim for reading, which parts of the text they focus, and how they solve problems to understand the text while reading (Block, 1986). To be specific, Iwai (2011) emphasized three important processes of reading strategies: planning, monitoring, and evaluating strategies. Planning strategies are used before reading like previewing the text. By looking at pictures and headings, readers could guess the meaning of the reading text. During the reading process, readers could use monitoring strategies such as checking unfamiliar words or choosing which reading parts to pay attention. After reading, learners might ask themselves about knowledge they gain from the reading and they might use the information from the text in other situations.

It can be recognized that reading strategies take more time for readers; however, these aforementioned processes may assist them perform effectively in their reading comprehension (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2012). Being aware of these processes is defined as metacognitive awareness of reading strategies, so learners should practice these strategies regularly and it gradually becomes a natural part of their reading (McNamara, 2007).

**Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS)**

Based on the relationship between metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and reading comprehension, we found that the content of Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (Marsi) Version 1.0 developed by Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) supports three learning activities (monitoring, regulating, and controlling) mentioned by Livingston (1997) and Wilson (1998). Nevertheless, Marsi was “originally designed for students who are native English speakers, it was inappropriate for use with non-native speakers” (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002, p. 3). Thus, the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) was developed by Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) which is more suitable for ESL learners. This instrument is helpful for ESL/EFL students
to discover their reading strengths and weaknesses. In particular, there are three factors of metacognitive awareness consisting of Global Reading Strategies (GLOB), Problem Solving Strategies (PROB), and Support Reading Strategies (SUP). GLOB contains 13 items that refer to techniques that learners manage their reading (e.g., having a purpose in mind when reading or deciding what to read and what to ignore). PROB comprises eight items regarding actions used while reading (e.g., reading slowly to make sure what reading or paying closer attention to what reading). SUP contains nine items related to tools that students can use to better comprehend the reading text (e.g., translating from English into native language or paraphrasing to better understand what reading). The detail of these three main categories of SORS is presented in Appendix B.

Studies Related to Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies

As mentioned above, the first and second versions of the MARSI and SORS were adapted by numerous researchers. There are four highlighted issues related to MARSI and SORS raised from these studies. First, students’ proficiency is one of the key factors affecting students’ metacognitive awareness of reading strategies (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). Second, female learners used more reading strategies than male learners did (Arrastia et al., 2016; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002; Temur & Bahar, 2011). Third, problem-solving strategies were the most popular strategies among three types, compared to global and supporting strategies (Pammu et al., 2014; Fitrisia et al., 2015; Temur & Bahar, 2011; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2012). Finally, there was a close relationship between metacognitive awareness of reading strategies and reading comprehension ability, which should go hand in hand (Fitrisia et al., 2015; Wu et al., 2012). To be specific, the following section reviews these studies from the earliest to most recent.

Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) carried out SORS on 152 ESL and 150 L1 US learners from high school, college, and university with the purpose of raising students’ awareness of reading strategies. The study found that low-ability students seemed to have lower levels of awareness than those of high-ability. Thus, students who had low metacognitive awareness usually had difficulties in terms of reading materials, for instance, they felt that they struggled with unfamiliar words from the text. As for gender, American female students used reading strategies more frequently than male students.

Temur and Bahar (2011) investigated Turkish university students’ metacognitive awareness strategies. All participants are freshmen studying English Language Education. The finding showed that gender was one of the key elements that affected students’ reading strategies. In fact, female students’ scores were higher than males’ in all three categories of reading strategies, which is in line with Mokhtari and Sheorey’s (2002) finding. In terms of three factors of reading strategies, Turkish students used problem strategies most frequently, followed by global and supporting strategies. Similarly, Yüksel and Yüksel (2012) found the same preference in applying three reading strategies by 16 EFL undergraduate Turkish students. It can be concluded that Turkish students had high awareness of reading strategies, especially they often utilized problem-solving strategies to solve reading comprehension problems.

In another context, Wu et al. (2012) validated the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies inventory on 2119 high school Chinese students. There are two main results figured out
by the researchers. First, students monitored and controlled their reading strategies in reading comprehension. Second, metacognitive awareness of reading strategies of Chinese students and reading comprehension ability were closely correlated. It means that understanding and using the three terms of reading strategies frequently benefit students’ reading performance. Thus, students are encouraged to apply all these groups of strategies to perform well in their reading.

In Indonesia, Pammu et al. (2014) explored the awareness of reading strategies on 40 low proficiency learners. The results indicated that participants applied the reading strategies in their reading; however, the frequent usage was varied among three types of reading strategies, which was the same as Temur and Bahar’s (2011) and Yüksel and Yüksel’s (2012) findings. For problem-solving strategies, students usually applied strategy of “reading slowly but carefully to be sure what to read” at high level. In terms of global support strategies, “setting purpose for reading, previewing text, determining what to read, resolving conflicting information, and confirming prediction” were indicated as high-frequency usage group. For support reading strategies, underlining or circling information in the text to help comprehension and using reference materials to improve comprehension were also reported at high level. In the same context, Fitrisia et al. (2015) also found that problem solving strategies were popular than global and support reading strategies.

Regarding the effect of gender on adopting reading strategies, Arrastia et al. (2016) explored 160 males and females L2 Egyptian university students’ metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. By applying a series of t-test comparing the mean scores on the three terms of reading strategies, the researchers found that females used strategies more frequently than males did in all three categories, which is consistent with the findings of Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) and Temur and Bahar (2011).

Last but not least, Mokhtari et al. (2018) invited 1,164 students in grades 6-12 with different groups (Caucasian, Hispanic, & African-American) to participate in their study with the purpose of testing factorial invariance. Accordingly, they found evidence that there is uniformity in students’ awareness on reading strategies across gender and ethnic groups. It means that it is possible to use the survey of MARSI to compare between genders and ethnic groups, and across student populations in order to explore students’ awareness of reading strategies. Then the researchers encourage future research to apply MARSI to figure out students’ level of metacognitive reading strategies.

Based on the above studies, some research gaps are worth noting. First, most studies seemed to focus on high school students (e.g., Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002; Mokhtari et al., 2018; Wu et al., 2012); and undergraduates in different majors (e.g., Arrastia et al., 2016; Fitrisia et al., 2015; Temur & Bahar, 2011; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2012). Gaining insights into English reading language of L2 Vietnamese learners majoring in English is crucial since it may provide us with closer perspectives regarding obstacles encountered in English reading texts, compared to those reported by other majors and educational levels.

Second, as the suggestions from previous researchers that promoting metacognition starting with building an awareness among students will facilitate academic success, especially it
is important for learners to be aware of the reading strategies for their reading comprehension (Mokhtari et al., 2018; Schraw, 2001; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2012). Thus, the current study should be carried out to raise the awareness of reading strategies on Vietnamese students to enhance their reading comprehension.

Finally, among the above studies, metacognitive awareness of reading strategies has been conducted in different Asian contexts. However, it has been scarce in Vietnamese context. Thus far, to the best of our knowledge, Nguyen and Trinh (2011) adapted the survey of reading strategies from Mokhrari and Sheorey (2002). They explored metacognitive strategies using by 84 Vietnamese students in grade 11. By applying mixed research methods, the researchers found that students most used problem-solving strategies in academic texts, which means that students are insufficient of global and support reading strategies knowledge. This supports the findings of Fitrisia et al.’s (2015), Pammu et al.’s (2014), Temur and Bahar’s (2011), Yüksel and Yüksel’s (2012) studies. Besides, there is a strong connection between three reading strategies types and learners’ reading comprehension which is in line with the findings of Fitrisia et al.’s (2015) and Wu et al.’s (2012) studies. According to these results, the authors recommended that teachers should put reading strategies into consideration when designing curriculum of reading course and create more activities related to these strategies during class as being suggested by Mokhtari et al. (2018).

Taking into account the context in Vietnam and above research gaps, it is necessary to investigate metacognitive awareness of reading strategies on L2 Vietnamese undergraduates majoring in English language. It is hoped that instructors might design effective curriculum in specific context and situation.

Research Methods

Participants

Convenient sampling was recruited to enter the present study in September 2020, which were 123 EFL Vietnamese undergraduates at Hong Bang International University in Vietnam (41 males and 82 females), aged from 17 to 28 ($M = 19.18; SD = 2.69$). Participants were selected based on two criteria. First, their major is Teaching English; in other words, they will be ESL/ EFL teachers in the future. It is necessary to investigate teachers’ metacognitive awareness since Arrastia et al. (2016) mentioned that “EFL teachers without metacognitive awareness of their reading strategies may not able to effectively facilitate the development of such strategies among their prospective students” (p.46). Second, first-year students were chosen to join this study because after testing their metacognitive reading strategies, there will be various implications in training them in the following reading courses. For example, teachers might acknowledge their students’ reading awareness and adjust a suitable curriculum for their target learners. A vast majority of them reported that they had not got any proficiency certificate (87%) while 16 participants have got International English Language Testing System (IELTS with no more than 6.5) or Key English Test (KET). In terms of reading strategies, 73% of them revealed that they have never been taught. When it comes to self-rating of their reading proficiency based on 5-point Likert scale, they reported a mean of 2.51 ($SD =1.05$).
Materials
To answer the research questions, a demographic information survey, a metacognitive reading strategies survey, and a reading comprehension test were employed in this study. To elicit basic background information, part one of the survey, including short-answer questions and scaling questions, asks information of age, gender, English certificate, self-rating on reading skill, and whether participants have learned reading strategies (see Appendix A). Part II of the survey consisting of 30 5-point Likert scale questions examines participants’ metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. They ask learners to rate how frequently they used three types of reading strategies (global, problem-solving, and supporting strategies). The questionnaire was adapted from Mokhrari and Sheorey (2002) (Appendix B) because it was designed for L2 learners. Based on this purpose of the study, the researchers used this survey as the primary method because a questionnaire is the most suitable tool to measure metacognition and evaluate huge student groups in terms of data collection effectively and reliably (Pintrich & DeGroot, 1990; Tobias & Everson, 1996).

As for the reading comprehension test, there are 50 questions carried out after completing the questionnaire to understand participants’ proficiency because “reading difficulties are closely associated with L2 readers’ level of proficiency in the target language” (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002, p.3). The test is designed based on reading test format of TOEIC because Vietnamese learners at the university level are familiar with this kind of test.

Research Procedures
First, learners were asked to complete the questionnaire on Google form in a lab-based setting with instructors’ assistance. Learners have informed the aim of the study and the fact that there were no right or wrong responses in the SORS. They were asked to express their opinions honestly by tick the box of appropriate scale that they used. To ensure the reliability of the survey, the first author showed the questionnaire on the screen and gave the explanation in each part; then students followed the instruction. The first author explained the questions in Vietnamese to make sure that students understood every single question, participants then completed the questionnaire in around 10 to 15 minutes. Second, participants were requested to do the paper comprehension test within 50 minutes under teacher’s supervision. After collecting data, incomplete questionnaires were discarded, 123 appropriate questionnaires were coded for analysis.

Coding and Analysis
To examine reading strategy use, mean scores of three types of strategies were calculated, and descriptive statistics were analyzed. The frequency of strategy usage was categorized based on three groups of general language learning strategy proposed by Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995): high (mean of 3.5 or higher), medium (mean of 2.5-3.4), and low (mean of lower than 2.5). These usage levels provided a criterion to compare between different groups. In order to investigate any significant differences between groups based on gender, mean values of each strategies were counted for males and females; an independent sample T-test was then conducted to compare the mean scores of individual strategies and different groups between males and females.

The reading comprehension test was marked in scale of 100 points and the scores were then categorized into three groups. Participants who scored over 70 were grouped into good
readers, those whose scores were 31 to 69 were categorized as medium readers and learners scoring under 30 were classified as poor readers. Their proficiency levels were ranked as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scores</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥70</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-69</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤30</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to test significant differences between good, medium, and poor readers, means on each strategy type of different ability readers were calculated and compared using one-way ANOVA.

**Results**

**Participants’ Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies**

To answer the first research question, the mean scores indicating frequency of strategy use (from never to always) were calculated and interpreted. The overall mean score of thirty strategies in SORS was 3.38, SD=.68 which suggested medium usage of reading strategies or participants sometimes used them. To explain how learners rated strategy items, the proportion of each frequency was calculated and reported in Figure one.

---

**Figure 1. Participants’ overall of using reading strategies**

Figure one shows that more than a half of learners reported that they *often* or *always* apply reading strategies when they read academic texts. Moreover, a modest percentage (8%) of students revealed that they never adopt these strategies. These findings implied that participants were aware of utilizing different reading strategies when it comes to academic texts. In order to investigate learner’s preference in different types of reading strategies, the mean values of three strategy categories, namely global, problem-solving, and support reading strategies were separately counted and analyzed as shown in Table two.
Table 2. *The distribution of participants’ metacognitive awareness in terms of strategy categories*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metacognitive Awareness</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global reading strategies</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem solving strategies</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support strategies</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total reading strategies</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table three indicates that six of eight strategies (75%) were reported to be applied with high frequency (mean scores of 3.5 or above) while two remaining strategies types fell in the medium usage group with their mean scores ranged from 2.50 and 3.49 (M= 3.34 and M=3.41). None of problem-solving strategies has mean scores below 2.4, which indicates low frequency of usage. In
other words, learners reported high metacognitive awareness of using problem-solving strategies in academic reading. Specifically, learners revealed that they preferred to adapt strategies of “trying to keep focused after distractions” and “focusing closely on the content of the text” with mean value of 3.97 indicating high frequency usage of these strategies (SD=1.15 and SD=1.09, respectively).

**Global Reading Strategies**

As for global strategies, twelve were reported with mean values ranging from 2.73 to 3.76 in which two of them (15%) fell in the high usage category and the rest belongs to medium usage group. In particular, learners most frequently adopted strategies of “guessing the meaning of the text” (Glob12) (M= 3.76, SD=1.09) and “using prior knowledge” in academic reading. By contrast, utilizing typographical features (M=2.75, SD=1.40) and analyzing what they read (M=2.73, SD=1.15) were revealed as least frequent global strategies which learners *sometimes* used when they read academic texts as shown in Table four.

Table 4. **Descriptive statistics for various global reading strategies**

| Glob1 (Q1) | Setting purpose for reading | 3.49 | 1.05 |
| Glob2 (Q3) | Adopting prior knowledge | 3.66 | 1.09 |
| Glob3 (Q4) | Previewing text before reading | 3.46 | 1.26 |
| Glob4 (Q6) | Checking whether the content matches reading purpose | 3.07 | 1.36 |
| Glob5 (Q8) | Skimming through text characteristics | 3.29 | 1.22 |
| Glob6 (Q12) | Deciding what to read | 3.14 | 1.20 |
| Glob7 (Q15) | Taking advantages of text features (tables) | 3.36 | 1.28 |
| Glob8 (Q17) | Using context clues | 3.48 | 1.26 |
| Glob9 (Q20) | Using typographical features | 2.75 | 1.40 |
| Glob10 (Q21) | Analyzing and evaluating what is read | 2.73 | 1.15 |
| Glob11 (Q23) | Checking understanding of new information | 3.26 | 1.25 |
| Glob12 (Q24) | Guessing the meaning of the text | 3.76 | 1.09 |
| Glob13 (Q27) | Confirming predictions about the text | 3.04 | 1.26 |

**Support Reading Strategies**

Table five demonstrates the number of strategies in this group in detail. Interestingly, the ranging intervals between various strategies in this category are big with mean values ranging from 2.24 to 4.04. They suggested that participants showed high frequency usage to a few strategies in this group while there are some support strategies which they hardly adopted.
Table 5. Descriptive statistics for various support strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Support Reading Strategies</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supp1 (Q2)</td>
<td>Taking notes while reading</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp2 (Q5)</td>
<td>Reading aloud for better understanding</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp3 (Q10)</td>
<td>Underlining and circling information in the text</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp4 (Q13)</td>
<td>Adopting reference materials</td>
<td><strong>4.04</strong></td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp5 (Q18)</td>
<td>Paraphrasing for better understanding</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp6 (Q22)</td>
<td>Going back and forth to find associations between ideas</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp7 (Q26)</td>
<td>Asking oneself questions</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp8 (Q29)</td>
<td>Translating into Vietnamese while reading</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp9 (Q30)</td>
<td>Thinking of information in both languages</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table five reveals that while “adopting reference materials” was reported as the most frequent strategy (M=4.04, SD=1.15) among all strategies, fell into the high usage group, participants occasionally read aloud to understand the text better (M=2.24, SD=1.21) or reading aloud was used with low frequency.

Metacognitive Awareness of Males and Females

To answer the second research question which investigates whether there is a significant difference between level of metacognitive awareness between male and female participants, the mean scores of overall reading strategies usage and each type of strategies were calculated and presented in Table six.

Table 6. Comparison of mean ratings for three different strategy categories by males and females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall reading strategies</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>-.669</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global reading strategies</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.524</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solving strategies</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>-.888</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support strategies</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>-1.975</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>.05*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * = significant at the level of .05

In terms of the descriptive statistics, females and males reported a medium usage of reading strategies in which female students rated slightly higher than male did (M=3.41, SD=.67 and
M=3.33, SD=.70, respectively). Both female and male readers revealed a medium strategy usage of global and support reading strategies (means between 2.50 and 3.49) while they reported high frequency usage of problem-solving strategies (M>3.5). Interestingly, females reported higher mean scores in overall reading, problem-solving, and support strategies than those of males; meanwhile male readers revealed that they used global reading strategies more frequently than female readers did. Using an adjusted alpha level, the independent sample T-test reported a statistically significant difference in the means of support reading strategies usage for males and females; meanwhile no significant differences were found in other types of reading strategies (p>.05). In other words, males were not aware of using support strategies while reading. To gain insight into three SORS subscales, a series of T-tests comparing mean scores of males and females on each strategy was conducted as shown in Table seven (see Appendix C).

As for individual strategy usage, there were some significant differences found between males and females in one global strategy (guessing the meaning of the text), one problem-solving strategy (pausing and thinking about what is read) and three support strategies (underlining and circling information in the text; adopting reference materials and translating into Vietnamese while reading) (p<0.05). Specifically, female students showed high frequency usage of all these strategies since females’ mean values were significantly higher than those of males. This finding emphasized that females hold higher awareness of some reading strategies than males did.

**Metacognitive Awareness of Good, Medium, and Poor Readers**

To answer the third research question, ratings on reading strategies of good, medium, and poor readers were calculated and presented in Table eight.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reader level</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean (Overall metacognitive strategies)</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>123</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table eight shows that good readers reported that they adopted reading strategies with high frequency (M=3.64, SD=.39) while medium and poor readers had mean values of 3.37 and 2.93, respectively which indicate medium usage of reading strategies. The mean of good learners in using reading strategies was significantly higher than that of poor learners. However, the standard deviation in the table recommended that the amount of spread among different level of learners was not wide. Moreover, mean ratings on three subscales among readers were compared using ANOVA as shown in Table nine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good readers</th>
<th>Medium readers</th>
<th>Poor readers</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>df</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>η²</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Arab World English Journal
www.awej.org
ISSN: 2229-9327
Table nine suggests that there was a statistically significant relationship between learners’ reading comprehension scores and their ratings on reading strategies (p<0.05). There was also a statistically significant difference between learners’ levels in global reading strategies usage while no significant differences were found in problem-solving and support strategies. These findings indicate that the better readers, the higher metacognitive awareness of applying reading strategies in academic texts, especially global strategies.

Discussion

Reading Strategies Usage

In general, participants reported a medium frequency usage of different reading strategies in academic texts. This is in line with the finding of Meniado (2016) that EFL Saudi students moderately adopted reading strategies. According to him, teachers might not be aware of these important strategies so they may not present them in their teaching and reading instruction. However, ESL learners have higher awareness of reading strategies as reported by Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001). It could be explained that English is considered as a foreign language in Vietnam; therefore, they are limited to use English outside classrooms. Students; hence, have less opportunities to practice English in daily lives.

Among three types of reading strategies, the majority of participants preferred to use problem-solving strategies in reading academic texts at high level. As the explanation of Meniado (2016), this might be related to linguistics challenges, students find these strategies to help them deal with reading comprehension problems. Similarly, students’ proficiency is one of the reasons that lead to aforementioned order of three reading strategies (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002). In fact, poor or medium readers seem to use POB strategies to better understand the reading texts. This result is consistent with the findings of Fitrisia et al. (2015), Pammu et al. (2014), Temur and Bahar (2011), Yüksel and Yüksel (2012) having EFL students in Indonesia, Turkey, and Vietnam who applied PROB strategies frequently while reading. This indicates that problem-solving reading strategies were used widely by various students in different contexts, especially EFL learners.

To be specific, with regard to problem-solving reading strategies, “trying to keep focused after distractions” and “focusing closely on the content of the text” were rated at high level. In other words, the strategies of concentration were usually encouraged to apply when readers faced comprehension problems. However, the reading strategies like “pausing and thinking about what is read” and “visualizing information while reading to remember” showed least interest. It supports
Yüksel and Yüksel’s (2012) finding that students seldom utilized these strategies to improve their reading comprehension because these might take time and effort. Thus, teachers are encouraged to teach these in L2 classrooms. As for global reading strategies, EFL Vietnamese students rated highest for “guessing the meaning of the text” and “using prior knowledge”. This result is also in line with the finding of Yüksel and Yüksel’s (2012) that students favored these strategies. It is recognized that readers’ background knowledge plays an important role in understanding the reading texts because it assists readers to construct new information from the texts. In terms of support reading strategies, students adopted reference materials at the highest rate. It is underlined that they needed help from dictionaries to check new vocabulary to understand the texts. Meanwhile, EFL Vietnamese students occasionally read aloud to comprehend the text which might be time-consuming.

**Metacognitive Awareness of Males and Females**

Although, no significant differences between males and females when it comes to using reading strategies in general and global strategies, problem-solving strategies in specific, which is inconsistent with previous studies’ findings (Arrastia et al., 2016; Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002; Temur & Bahar, 2011). Females in the current study revealed a significantly higher frequency in applying support reading strategies than males’. These findings, thus, suggest that gender does not affect students’ usage of reading strategies except for the frequency of adopting support strategies. It could be the emphasis on examination of Vietnamese educational system, students are taught reading and writing as key skills in English with the negligence of Listening and Speaking skills. Vietnamese EFL students; therefore, get used to with various reading strategies to earn high scores and performed high frequency using of these reading strategies, especially problem solving strategies which are reported as the most favored ones. In other words, both girls and boys are aware of adopting numerous strategies in reading academic texts, especially when it comes to popular type like problem-solving strategies. In terms of support reading strategies, females used them more frequently than males did so that Vietnamese male learners have limited awareness of this strategy type. Additionally, there is another reason responsible for this result is the imbalance in the number of males (41) and females (82) in the current study.

**Proficiency Levels on Using Reading Strategies**

The results of the correlation between students’ frequencies of adopting reading strategies and their reading comprehension triangulates the findings of Fitrisia et al. (2015) and Wu et al. (2012) suggested that good readers showed higher awareness of using reading strategies than poor readers did. It means that successful readers usually apply reading strategies which might help them to lessen comprehension failure and low-ability readers are not familiar with those strategies. In short, this finding supports previous studies that metacognitive awareness in using reading strategies are closely related to reading comprehension.

**Research Implication**

According to the findings, this research offers some research limitations and suggestions for future researchers who are interested in this research area. The major limitation is related to research method since this study applied only quantitative method. Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002) emphasized that observation and in-depth interviews of qualitative methodology would be helpful to collect reliable results. For example, future researchers might interview students about
difficulties they encounter while reading to gain deeper understanding on their struggles and then apply suitable teaching methods to their specific learners. Besides, teaching experiment of reading strategies for students to practice was not carried out. Thus, future researchers should integrate those strategies into their lessons because “awareness of strategies does not guarantee that students actually use them” (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002, p. 255). By doing so, it can be sure that students are aware of reading strategies and apply them into actual practice. Then the researchers could see how effective applying reading strategies is. For instance, administering pretest and posttest after instructing students reading strategies might evaluate the effect of reading strategies in reading process. Thus, it is highly recommended that future researchers might employ multiple research methods in their studies.

Conclusion
The current study aimed to investigate the metacognitive awareness of reading strategies on L2 Vietnamese undergraduate students majoring in English language. Besides, the researchers wanted to explore whether or not genders and proficiency levels affect students’ awareness in using reading strategies. The results revealed three major findings as follows.

First, L2 Vietnamese students usually applied reading strategies in reading texts in which problem-solving strategies were their favorite strategies to deal with reading difficulties. In contrast, support reading and global strategies did not receive much attention. To be specific, “trying to keep focused after distractions”, “focusing closely on the content of the text” (PROB); “guessing the meaning of the text” (GLOB); and “adopting reference materials” (SOP) were the most frequent strategies used by readers. Meanwhile, “visualizing information while reading to remember” (PROB); “analyzing what they read” (GLOB); and “reading aloud for better understanding” were reported as the least frequent strategies.

Second, there is no statistically significant difference towards students’ metacognitive awareness of reading strategies in case of gender except for support reading strategies. It could be concluded that EFL Vietnamese learners are well equipped with strategies while reading and gender might not be a significant factor influencing learners’ metacognitive awareness.

Third, the results indicated that there was a relationship between reading comprehension and metacognitive awareness in reading. Since good readers reported their higher awareness of reading strategies than poor readers who showed low frequent strategies usage. Therefore, it is encouraged to apply reading strategies for teaching students in order to enhance their reading comprehension.

As for pedagogical implications for EFL teachers in terms of reading skills, it suggests that EFL teachers should integrate all three reading strategies into their reading curriculum over a period of time to train future ESL/ EFL teachers about metacognitive awareness of reading strategies. This could be helpful if they are aware of this important teaching method in reading comprehension before becoming English teachers. According to the results of this study, Vietnamese students usually used problem-solving reading strategies in their reading process and ignored global and support reading strategies. Thus, it is recommended that teachers should raise awareness of these two types of reading strategies by teaching why and how to apply them into
reading tasks (Fitrisia et al., 2015). As the suggestion of Mokhtari and Sheorey (2002), teachers can go along with following steps to teach the strategies of setting purpose for reading (GLOB): “(a) describe what the strategy is, (2) explain why the strategy should be learned and used, and (c) provide examples of the circumstances under which the strategies should be used” (p. 6). Therefore, enhancing students’ awareness of reading strategies by teaching and practicing reading strategies are significant steps that aid poor readers become strategic and successful readers (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002).

About the Authors:

Hieu Do is a Lecturer in the Department of English Language at Hong Bang International University, Vietnam. He got MA TEFL at National Chung Cheng University, Taiwan in 2019. His main interests include English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), Corpus Linguistics, and English language skills. https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7780-263X

Huong Phan is a lecturer in American and British literature in the Department of English Language at Hong Bang International University, Vietnam. She earned her MA in TESOL and Applied Linguistics from Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK. Her main research interests are in the area of second language acquisition (SLA), specifically metacognitive awareness, task-based interaction, collaborative writing and written corrective feedback. https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2859-3576

References


### Appendix A: Demographic information questionnaire

**Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies on L2 Vietnamese learners**

You are invited to participate in a study investigating metacognitive awareness of reading strategies of Vietnamese learners when they study English. You will be asked to rate various reading strategies, and to consider which strategies you often use. The questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete.

Your responses will remain confidential, will be stored safely and will be accessible only to the researcher. By submitting your responses to the questionnaire, you agree to them being included in the writing up of my study as part of my research. If you would like to withdraw from the study at any time, simply email us at hieu.dm@hieu.vn or huongpl@hieu.vn

Demographic information

1. Full name (Họ tên)

2. Sex (Giới tính)

   - Male
   - Female

3. Age (Tuổi)

4. Do you have certificates of English proficiency tests like IELTS, TOEFL, TOEIC or any local test? When was it taken? How was the result? (Bạn có bằng hay chứng chỉ tiếng anh nào không? Nơi là chứng chỉ gì? Bạn kiểm tra lúc nào? Kết quả như thế nào?)
Appendix B: Metacognitive Reading Strategies Survey

Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies on L2 Vietnamese learners

Listed below are statements about what people do when they read academic or school related materials such as textbooks, library books, etc. Five numbers follow each statement (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and each number means the following:
1 means "I never or almost never do this."
2 means "I occasionally do this." (About 30% of the time.)
3 means "I sometimes do this." (About 50% of the time.)
4 means "I often do this." (About 70% of the time.)
5 means "I always or almost always do this."

After reading each statement, tick in the box (1, 2, 3, 4, or 5) that applies to you using the scale provided. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to the statements in this inventory.

Đưới đây là các ý kiến về những gì mọi người thường làm khi đọc các tài liệu liên quan đến học tập hoặc trường hợp như sách giáo khoa, sách thư viện, v.v. Mỗi câu sẽ có hàng số năm số (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) và mỗi số có ý nghĩa như sau:
1 có nghĩa là "Tôi không bao giờ hoặc hầu như không bao giờ làm điều này."
2 có nghĩa là "Tôi Lưu lâm làm điều này." (Khoảng 30% thời gian.)
3 có nghĩa là "Tôi thường làm điều này." (Khoảng 50% thời gian.)
4 có nghĩa là "Tôi thường làm điều này." (Khoảng 70% thời gian.)
5 có nghĩa là "Tôi luôn luôn hoặc hầu như luôn luôn làm điều này."

Sau khi đọc từng câu lệnh, hãy đánh dấu vào ô đúng với bạn (từ 1 đến 5) bằng thang điểm đã cung cấp. Xin lưu ý rằng không có câu trả lời đúng hay sai cho các câu trong khảo sát không quảng cáo này.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 I have a purpose in mind when I read. (Tôi có mục đích khi tôi đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 I take notes while reading to help me understand what I read. (Tôi ghi chú trong khi đọc để giúp tôi hiểu điều tôi đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 I think about what I know to help me understand what I read. (Tôi nghĩ về những thứ tôi biết để giúp tôi hiểu những gì tôi đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 I take an overview of the text to see what it’s about before reading it. (Tôi xem tổng quát về văn bản để biết nội dung của nó trước khi đọc nó)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 When text becomes difficult, I read aloud to help me understand what I read. (Khi bài đọc khó, tôi đọc to để giúp tôi hiểu điều tôi đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose. (Tôi nghĩ xem nội dung của văn bản có phù hợp với mục đích đọc của tôi hay không)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 I read slowly and carefully to make sure I understand what I’m reading. (Tôi đọc chậm rãi và cẩn thận để chắc chắn tôi hiểu bài đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 I review the text first by noticing its characteristics like length or organization. (Tôi xem xét bài đọc trước bằng cách chú ý các đặc điểm như độ dài hoặc bố cục của bài đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 I try to get back on track when I lose concentration. (Tôi cố gắng đọc quay trở lại khi tôi mất tập trung)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 I underline or circle information in the text to help me remember it. (Tôi gạch chân hoặc khoanh vùng trong bài đọc để giúp tôi nhớ bài)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 I adjust my reading speed according to what I’m reading. (Tôi chỉnh sửa tốc độ đọc theo như điều tôi đang đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 When reading, I decide what to read closely and what to ignore. (Khi đọc, tôi quyết định cái tôi muốn đọc thật kĩ và cái tôi không muốn đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 I use reference materials such as dictionaries to help me understand what I read. (Tôi sử dụng từ điển để tra cứu và giúp tôi hiểu điều tôi đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 When text becomes difficult, I pay closer attention to what I’m reading. (Khi bài đọc nên khó hơn, tôi tập trung, chú ý vào điều tôi đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 I use tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase my understanding. (Tôi sử dụng các bảng, sơ lược và hình ảnh trong văn bản để tăng cường hiểu biết của mình)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 I stop from time to time and think about what I’m reading. (Thỉnh thoảng tôi dừng lại và nghĩ về cái mà tôi đang đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 I use context clues to help me better understand what I’m reading. (Tôi sử dụng các manh mối ngữ cảnh để giúp tôi hiểu rõ hơn cái mà tôi đang đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 I paraphrase (restate ideas in my own words) to better understand what I read. (Tôi diễn giải (trình bày ý, nói đúng lại bằng từ ngữ của tôi) để hiểu về bài đọc)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strategy Description</td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>I use typographical features like bold face and italics to identify key information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>I go back and forth in the text to find relationships among ideas in it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>I check my understanding when I come across new information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I try to guess what the content is about when I read.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>When text becomes difficult, I re-read to increase my understanding.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>I ask myself questions I like to have answered in the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>When I read, I guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>When reading, I translate from English into my native language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>When reading, I think about information in both English and my mother tongue.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix C: Table 7**

**Table 7. Comparison of individual strategies between males and females**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Male ($n=41$)</th>
<th>Females ($n=82$)</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glob1</td>
<td>Setting purpose for reading</td>
<td>3.78 .881</td>
<td>3.35 1.109</td>
<td>2.185</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glob2</td>
<td>Adopting prior knowledge</td>
<td>3.76 1.067</td>
<td>3.61 1.097</td>
<td>.704</td>
<td>.483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glob3</td>
<td>Previewing text before reading</td>
<td>3.73 1.184</td>
<td>3.32 1.275</td>
<td>1.740</td>
<td>.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glob4</td>
<td>Checking whether the content matches reading purpose</td>
<td>3.15 1.493</td>
<td>3.04 1.300</td>
<td>.420</td>
<td>.675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glob5</td>
<td>Skimming through text characteristics</td>
<td>3.39 1.243</td>
<td>3.24 1.213</td>
<td>.626</td>
<td>.533</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glob6</td>
<td>Deciding what to read</td>
<td>3.13 1.137</td>
<td>3.15 1.238</td>
<td>-.092</td>
<td>.927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glob7</td>
<td>Taking advantages of text features (tables)</td>
<td>3.27 1.225</td>
<td>3.40 1.313</td>
<td>-.546</td>
<td>.586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glob8</td>
<td>Using context clues</td>
<td>3.54 1.206</td>
<td>3.45 1.288</td>
<td>.354</td>
<td>.724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glob9</td>
<td>Using typographical features</td>
<td>2.76 1.410</td>
<td>2.74 1.404</td>
<td>.045</td>
<td>.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glob10</td>
<td>Analyzing and evaluating what is read</td>
<td>2.88 1.053</td>
<td>2.66 1.189</td>
<td>1.002</td>
<td>.318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glob11</td>
<td>Checking understanding of new information</td>
<td>3.41 1.072</td>
<td>3.19 1.324</td>
<td>.961</td>
<td>.338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glob12</td>
<td>Guessing the meaning of the text</td>
<td>3.44 1.119</td>
<td>3.91 1.045</td>
<td>-2.324</td>
<td>.022*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glob13</td>
<td>Confirming predictions about the text</td>
<td>2.95 1.182</td>
<td>3.09 1.307</td>
<td>-.553</td>
<td>.581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob1</td>
<td>Reading slowly and carefully</td>
<td>3.8 1.054</td>
<td>3.8 1.149</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob2</td>
<td>Trying to keep focused after distractions</td>
<td>3.85 1.152</td>
<td>4.02 1.154</td>
<td>-.774</td>
<td>.441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob3</td>
<td>Adjusting reading pace</td>
<td>3.49 1.003</td>
<td>3.54 1.102</td>
<td>-.238</td>
<td>.812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob4</td>
<td>Focusing closely on the content of the text</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>1.139</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>1.007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob5</td>
<td>Pausing and thinking about what is read</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.094</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>1.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob6</td>
<td>Visualizing information while reading to remember</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.146</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob7</td>
<td>Reading again for better understanding</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.411</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob8</td>
<td>Predicting the meaning of unfamiliar words</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.254</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp1</td>
<td>Taking notes while reading</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>1.336</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>1.147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp2</td>
<td>Reading aloud for better understanding</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.334</td>
<td>2.18</td>
<td>1.145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp3</td>
<td>Underlining and circling information in the text</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>1.361</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>1.138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp4</td>
<td>Adopting reference materials</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.227</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>1.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp5</td>
<td>Paraphrasing for better understanding</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>1.318</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp6</td>
<td>Going back and forth to find associations between ideas</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.216</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp7</td>
<td>Asking oneself questions</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.247</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp8</td>
<td>Translating into Vietnamese while reading</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>1.442</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supp9</td>
<td>Thinking of information in both languages</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1.247</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.295</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Abstract
The aim of the current study is to test whether explicit instruction of various L2 request forms can be a useful measure in developing Saudi learners’ linguistic and pragmatic competences. This study is based on the results obtained from a previous research investigating interlanguage requests. The findings in that study suggested that the second language learners were not aware of some of the request strategies which were exclusively employed by the British English native speakers. The aim and the question of this study is to find out whether explicit instruction of request strategies will be effective in helping Saudi EFL learners gain linguistic knowledge and achieve pragmatic appropriateness in making requests in L2. Thirty female foundation year students participated in this study. They were all EFL learners studying at King Abdul Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The group underwent three phases of instruction: pre-test, instruction/intervention, and post-test. The first and last phases consisted of written questionnaires which were distributed right before and after the instruction phase. The results showed that in the third phase, the students demonstrated great progress in their understanding of request forms in L2. Their improvement was manifested by the learners’ acknowledgement of these forms as proper employment of request strategies in English, recognition of request function names, ability to assign correct functions to linguistic realizations and their overall understanding of the appropriate use of these forms dictated by the weightiness of different request situations.

Keywords: explicit instruction, implicit instruction, metapragmatic information, pre-test post-test requests, Saudi EFL learners, requests, speech acts
Introduction
Recently, linguists have been attempting to make a shift in second language teaching methodology from a mere focus on sequential coverage of grammatical structures of the target language (linguistic competence) to the inclusion of teaching appropriate rules of L2 communication (pragmatic competence). One of the most essential components of pragmatic competence is illocutionary competence, that is, “knowledge of speech acts and speech functions” (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005, p. 200). Rueda (2006) holds the view that “pragmatic ability can be systematically developed through planned classroom activities” (p. 170). Rajabia, Azizifara, and Gowhary (2015) stress that teaching speech acts gives EFL students the opportunity to “become acquainted with sociolinguistic conventions of language use and cultural differences which form proper use in English as opposed to their first sociolinguistic system” (p. 233).

The positive correlation between pragmatic instruction and learners’ pragmatic development has already been established in the field of interlanguage research literature (for a complete review, see Plonsky & Zhuang, 2019). However, in practice, L2 explicit pragmatic instruction (providing metapragmatic information to the students) is seldom included as a component of teachers’ classroom lesson plans (Gu, 2011; Thomas, 1983; Vellenga, 2004). Reasons include difficulty of pragmatic teaching in terms of available resources and lack of sufficient pragmatic information in the textbooks. This is the main problem for which this study is attempting to find a solution. If the outcome of the explicit instruction of requests to Saudi students proves useful, this might suggest the necessity of incorporating teacher-led consciousness-raising and pragmatic-awareness activities in EFL classrooms.

In the context of the Saudi EFL learning system, Al-Asmari (2015) gathered evaluative data from 100 male and female teachers teaching EFL at Taif University in Saudi Arabia. The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges hindering a proper implementation of teaching pragmatics to EFL learners. The results showed that the main reasons confronting the teachers were lack of teacher training in the Saudi education system, problems in accessing resources, low-proficiency of students, lack of student motivation, difficulty of obtaining a concrete description of what teaching pragmatics entails, and finally and most importantly, the university’s main focus on exams and exam scores rather than the actual learning of the students. As an EFL teacher at a Saudi university myself, it can be concurred that the obstacles Al-Asmari mentioned are struggles that my colleagues and I face daily in our Saudi EFL classrooms.

Batawi (2006) suggests that “in the long run, Saudi teachers should establish their own research in order to develop language teaching methods that are more suitable to the Saudi context” (p. 4). Based on this observation, a speech act study was conducted to attain empirical data about Saudi EFL students’ pragmatic abilities and limitations. English request forms produced by British English Native speakers (BENs) were compared with requests made by Saudi English as Foreign Language Learners (SEFLLs). The two groups responded to a written Discourse Completion Test (DCT) questionnaire where they were asked to make a request to the hearer (H) in eight socially different situations. It was hoped that this research-based approach would provide me with evidence for particular problems arising in my classroom and ways to improve my pragmatic teaching skills in a professional manner.
Among the reasons requests were chosen in this study was that according to Gu (2011) “request is one of the most difficult speech acts to be acquired” (p. 105) since they are “face-threatening, and therefore call for considerable linguistic expertise on the part of the learner [and] differ cross-linguistically” (Ellis, 1994, p.168). “Requests are [also] particularly interesting because they are speech acts that learners cannot avoid making in the target language (…) and which learners are also exposed to on a regular basis” (Qari, 2017, p.82). Furthermore, requests are acts in which social relationships can be challenged as requesting the H to do something to benefit the speaker (S) requires the S to observe a number of social factors. These include the participants’ social statuses and distances, as well as imposition, obligation, and right. Requests also vary from culture to culture; therefore, they can be a rich source of information about the sociocultural rules embedded in different speech communities.

The data results of my study demonstrated that there was a total of 15 request forms which were employed only by the BENs and had zero incidence in the SEFLLs request productions. Not only will these forms have to be individually taught to the SEFLLs, their appropriate use according to the request contexts will need to be instructed as well. In other words, both linguistic and pragmatic understanding and use of English requests will have to be promoted inside SEFLL educational settings. According to El-Dakhs (2019, p. 297), “developing pragmatic competence is becoming a requirement for Saudi learners of English to advance a successful career, especially when most well-paying jobs require work in multi-cultural contexts where English is the main language for communication” (as cited in Alsmari, 2020, p. 5). As I am in agreement with El-Dakhs, I conducted the current study for my own EFL class. Consent forms were sent out and thirty out of the thirty five students in my class agreed to participate in this study. No extra credit of any kind was offered nor rewarded for participation.

Framed in Austin’s (1975) and Searle’s (1969) theory of speech acts, the present study looked into the effect of explicit pragmatic teaching on SEFLLs’ production and reception of L2 requests. Pre-test and post-test questionnaires were distributed to the students, right before and after the instruction phase, hoping to address the following research question (RQ):

RQ1: Will explicitly teaching SEFLLs request strategies help the students learn the names of these strategies?
RQ2: Will explicitly teaching SEFLLs request strategies help the students learn these strategies and their specific functions?

Literature Review

Recently, explicit instruction of requests to EFL learners for the purpose of improving their pragmatic competences has attracted some attention within the interlanguage field of linguistic research (Anani Sarab & Alikhani, 2015; Shokouhi, 2016; Gu, 2011). However, in the Saudi EFL context, most research studies seem to give more focus on investigating the linguistic strategies used in the production of the request speech act (e.g. Al-Otaibi, 2015; Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily, 2012) than concentrating on its continued pragmatic development. Furthermore, there is a dearth of research concerning the influence of introducing pragmatic instruction in the EFL classroom. Saudi research studies that examined the effect of teaching pragmatic aspects of requests on SEFLLs’ pragmatic development could not be found. This justifies the need for this study and identifies a gap in the
field. Subsequently, the literature review of studies involving Saudi learners will have to have a broader scope and include investigations of speech acts in addition to requests. It will also touch upon a variety of related topics such as the various factors, other than instruction, that are thought to have an impact on learners’ acquisition and development of L2 pragmatic competence. These include individual levels of language proficiency and length of residence in a target language country.

The influence of increased language proficiency on L2 pragmatic competence has somewhat triggered some interest. Alkahtani (2012) and El-Dakhs (2018) compared speech acts as produced by Saudi high and low level learners. Alkahtani’s (2012) investigation showed that there were minor insignificant differences between the high level and low level groups in terms of their request strategies, while El-Dakhs’ (2018) study pointed out effective and frequent native-like use of speech acts in favor of the high level Saudi learners. However, both studies agreed that in some instances both SEFLL groups deviated from the English native speakers, for example in their post-head request selections. This gives support to the traditional definition of interlanguage being a “system in its own right” (Selinker, 2014, p. 230) where the learners produce language which can “include features of L1/L2 as well as some of the learner’s creative innovations” (El-Dakhs, 2018, p. 614).

In order to determine the role of residence in countries with English as a first official language on learners’ pragmatic awareness, some researchers target population who are residents in English speaking countries and thus learn English as a second language (ESL). Two apology studies were among this body of research, Al-Ghamdi (2013) and Alhudhaif (2000). These studies targeted Saudi ESL students who were pursuing their higher education in the United States. The collective results of these examinations highlighted the positive correlation of prolonged stay in a target community with higher L2 pragmatic competence and lower levels of L1 pragmatic transfer. Nevertheless, it was shown that in some instances, even long term residents in English speaking countries had some cultural influences from L1’s apologetic behavior. For instance, a few participants were reported to address the offended party with terms borrowed directly from Arabic, e.g. ‘sorry sister’ addressed to a female stranger and ‘I apologize auntie’ to an elderly lady for abruptly bumping into her on the street.

Of more relevance to the current paper, a few research studies examined the effectiveness of various types of teaching methods on SEFLLs’ L2 acquisition and development. For example, in his research, Fattah (2018) recruited 32 fifth level SEFLLs studying English in Qassim Private Colleges (QPC) in Saudi Arabia. He compared his students’ understanding of semantic and pragmatic notions of L2 before implementing role plays and after. He concluded that role plays were able to develop the SEFLLs’ semantic and pragmatic competences, showing statistical differences between the students’ results before and after role play intervention.

Al-Kharrat (2000) examined ways to teach SEFLLs how adding “-ing” to an English word consisting of one syllable can change its spelling. The researcher administered two lessons made for the 30 participants, pre-prepared with the implementation of deductive (general to specific) and inductive (specific to general) teaching methods. He recommended the adoption of both methods in the classroom; however, he was in particular favor of the employment of the inductive technique as it was found to be highly engaging and mentally challenging for the students.
Exploring the teachability of the acquisition of structural discourse markers, Alraddadi (2019) enlisted 49 female SEFLls, divided them into groups and exposed them to three types of teaching styles: task-based, inductive and deductive. The findings demonstrated that although all three types yielded improved results in terms of L2 development, the group which received the inductive approach outperformed the other two groups. Consequently, the researcher suggested that it could be possible that the inductive approach can have greater effect on the learners’ acquisition and development than the other two methods.

Alsmari (2020) set out her research to establish the effect of metapragmatic instruction of the speech act of complaint on SEFLLs through the implementation of video-driven prompts. The results of the post-intervention treatment demonstrated significant improvement on SEFLLs’ pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic skills in the production of English complaints.

Employing a pre-test/post-test design, Rajabia et al. (2015) attempted to examine the impact of explicit metapragmatic instruction on learners’ comprehension of requests. Through thorough statistical analysis, findings revealed that Iranian EFL learners’ pragmatic knowledge of requests developed significantly post the instruction phase. It thus maintains the advantages of incorporating direct pragmatic instruction in EFL classrooms to foster learners’ pragmatic awareness. Similar findings were documented in related research studies (Farahian, Rezaee, & Gholami, 2012; Khodareza & Lotfi, 2013; Rafieyan et al., 2014). Collectively, the results indicated that students experienced significant increase in their pragmatic skills post the instruction phase, concluding that pragmatics is not effectively acquired without explicit direct instruction/intervention, which helps the learners process material on a conscious level. This conclusion gives support to Schmidt’s (1990, 2001) ‘noticing’ theory in which he advocates that “input does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed, that is, consciously registered” (Schmidt, 2012, p. 1).

The current study is closely related to the aforementioned research directions. However, its main focus is to examine the extent to which explicit instruction of various request forms can have on the pragmatic development of SEFLLs’ L2 requests. To the best of my knowledge, this study has not been done before in the Saudi EFL context. Hopefully, this research will fill in an important gap and contribute to the existing body of literature involving SEFLLs in pragmatics, speech act and classroom-based research.

Methods
Participants
This study is conducted with the participation of 30 Saudi females currently in their foundation/preparatory year at King Abdulaziz University (KAU) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The participants were systematically selected from level four English, which is the highest course level a student can reach at KAU foundation year. Their ages ranged between 18-25. The data was collected during the month of September 2020. The English Language Institute at KAU runs its preparatory year program courses to provide intensive instruction of English to its students in order to enhance their English language skills and facilitate their college entry. These courses are delivered by qualified teachers who are mostly also Saudi nationals. The program consists of four modules, lasting seven weeks each, and four levels of English proficiency, level one being the most basic and level four the most advanced. In each module, a textbook and workbook are used following a
specified weekly pacing guide. Ahead of enrolment, students are placed into their suitable levels according to their achievement in the Oxford Placement Test designed by University of Oxford. After completion of a module, students are promoted to a higher level until they successfully complete level four.

**Research Instruments**

The main data collection method used in this study is written questionnaires. Two questionnaires were used; one was distributed pre-instruction and the other was given post-instruction. The pre-instruction questionnaire was in a (Yes/No) form and requested the students to identify the formations which they thought were correct uses of requests in English. This step was done to inform the researcher about the students’ baseline knowledge and understanding of appropriate target-like requests in English, for further comparison with the post-test. The students had to fill in the same questionnaire again post-instruction. Moreover, they were asked to identify the request functions (e.g. willing, ability, permission, etc.) used for each request form. The 15 request forms, previously employed only by the BENs, were introduced in the pre-test questionnaires. The SEFLLs were supposed to check all of them off as correct in the form of a ’yes’ answer.

**Table 1. A script of the pre-instruction questionnaire, distributed again after treatment phase**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have a look at the following forms and decide which ones are correct uses of requests in English by native speakers. Please choose yes or no:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1- Would I be able to come to the party with you tomorrow? (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2- Would it be possible to come to the party with you tomorrow? (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3- Would it be OK if I came to the party with you tomorrow? (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4- Would it be OK if I could come to the party with you tomorrow? (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5- Can you let me know if it would be possible to come to the party with you tomorrow? (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6- Is there a chance I could come to the party with you tomorrow? (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7- Is there any way I would be able to come to the party with you tomorrow? (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8- Have you got a dress I could borrow for the party tomorrow? (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9- Is it OK if I could come to the party with you tomorrow? (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10- Do you think I could come to the party with you tomorrow? (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11- Do you think it would be possible if I could come to the party tomorrow? (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12- I wonder whether I could come with you to the party tomorrow. (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13- I am wondering if it's alright that I come with you to the party tomorrow. (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14- I don’t suppose I could come to the party tomorrow. (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15- You couldn’t take me to the party with you tomorrow, could you? (yes/no)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After submitting their answers for the pre-instruction questionnaire, the learners attended an online seminar with the researcher in which there was a discussion about their questionnaire results. Consequently, the learners were instructed with various valid request structures in English. They were also given details about how to individually categorize request sequences based on their functions, as demonstrated in Table two below. Color codes were used to distinguish between various request functions. A color was assigned to each request function along with its corresponding linguistic realization(s) so that learners can identify and match them quite easily. The categories are modified versions of the request query preparatory conditions (e.g. ability, willing, possibility) introduced by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain in their famous 1984 CCSARP project.
Table 2. A list of the request functions and their linguistic realizations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Linguistic realization(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willing</td>
<td>will/would</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>can/could/able to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possibility</td>
<td>possible/any chance/any way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permission</td>
<td>OK/ alright/let me/mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possession</td>
<td>do you have/have you got</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>do you think/reckon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wondering</td>
<td>wonder/wondering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>no/don’t/couldn’t/can’t/not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supposition</td>
<td>suppose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tag. Question</td>
<td>example: could you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After instructing the SEFLLs with the request functions and their corresponding linguistic realizations, they were further taught that some request functions can be used singularly (e.g. Would you help me?) [willing], or in tandem with other conditions (e.g. Would you be able to help me?) [willing, ability]. Below is an example of the ‘willing’ request function being used singularly and along with other request functions as follows:

**Willing: will/would**
- Used in a singular condition request form: (willing) Will you…? Would you…?
- Used in a double condition request form: (willing/permission) Would you mind…?
- Used in a double condition request form: (willing/permission/ability) Would it be ok if I could…?
- Used in a quadruple condition request form: (ability/permission/willing/possibility) Can you let me know if it would be possible to…?

Next, the SEFLLs were given linguistic examples of various appropriate request structures in English (see Table three) following the sequence of the functions for each request form strategy. They were also taught how to create and provide functional analysis of requests through identifying the conditions used per strategy and their sequential pattern as they appear in each request form.

Table 3. The fifteen request forms taught to the SEFLLs during the study’s instructional phase

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of request form strategy</th>
<th>Linguistic examples for each request form strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Willing, ability:</td>
<td>Would you be able to….? Would I be able to…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Willing, possibility:</td>
<td>Would it be possible to…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Willing, permission:</td>
<td>Would it be ok if I…? Would it be ok if you…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Willing, permission, ability:</td>
<td>Would it be ok if I could…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability, permission, willingness, possibility:</td>
<td>Can you let me know if it would be possible to…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Possibility, ability:</td>
<td>Is there any chance I could…? Is there any way I could…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Possibility, willingness, ability:</td>
<td>Is there any way I would be able to…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Possession, ability:</td>
<td>Do you have [a pen] I could [borrow]? Have you got [any money] I could use?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Permission, ability:</td>
<td>Is it be ok if I could…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Consultation, ability:</td>
<td>Do you think you could…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Consultation, willingness, possibility, ability:</td>
<td>Do you think it would be possible if I could…?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Finally, the researcher attempted to raise the SEFLLs’ pragmatic awareness through elaborating on the metapragmatic aspects of the request formulas, including the critical sociopragmatic elements associated with appropriate use of these request strategies regarding social power, distance, and level of imposition. Upon ending the seminar, the learners were asked to fill in the post-instruction questionnaires in order to assess the effectiveness of the treatment. Furthermore, they were asked to mark the functions (willing, ability, permission… etc.) present in each request strategy. The purpose of this exercise was to assess the SEFLLs’ understanding of the structure of the request sets that they had been taught and the sequence of the functions present in each request.

Results and Analysis
This study was set out to examine the impact of explicit instruction of request structures on the enhancement of SEFLLs’ pragmatic understanding of English requests. 30 female SEFLLs took part in this research. During the initial pre-instruction phase, the SEFLLs were provided with various linguistically correct and pragmatically appropriate request forms, used previously by native English speakers. The participants were supposed to acknowledge the accurateness of these forms and check all of them off as ‘correct’ in the form of a ‘yes’ answer. (See Table four).

Table 4. The difference in number and percentage of the participants’ data pre- and post-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of request form strategy</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Increase by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.Willing.ability</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.Willing.possibility</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.Willing.permission</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.Willing.permission.ability</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.Ability.permission.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>willing.possibility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.Possibility.ability</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.Possibility.willing.ability</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.Possession.ability</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>86.7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.Permission.ability</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>76.7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.Consultation.ability</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.Consultation.willing.</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56.7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>possibility.ability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.Wondering.ability</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>93.3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Table four pre-test data results, it was observed that the SEFLLs seemed to suffer from linguistic weaknesses and pragmatic deficiencies in their knowledge of the full extent of the possible forms available to realize requests in English. Succeeding instruction, however, there was a substantial increase in the SEFLLs’ scores as all thirty students identified the fifteen forms as correct request strategies in English. This goes to show that the pedagogical intervention might have had an overall positive effect on the pragmatic development of the SEFLLs’ L2 requests after being enrolled in the teaching experiment.

On closer inspection of the pre-test results, it was noticed that the SEFLLs specifically struggled to acknowledge the validity of quadruple function request strategies (QFRSs) (e.g. request strategies five and eleven). They also appeared to have a limited understanding of some of the request strategies which contained the ‘permission’ function (as in strategies three and thirteen). Moreover, in request strategy fourteen, they seemed quite novice to the notion of ‘negative supposition’ in making requests.

Following discussing these points with the students, the researcher was told that in all their years of EFL formal education, they had never been taught most of these requests before, particularly request strategy fourteen. They further complained that their English textbooks primarily focused on short affirmative common request strategies, none of which contained combined functions or negative supposition.

One final note concerning Table four is that in the pre-test data, out of thirty students, twenty seven were unable to recognize and validate all the fifteen request forms, and only three correctly verified the appropriateness of every request strategy. However, it is possible that even these three students ticked a random ‘yes’ to all the strategies just to be done with filling in the questionnaire quickly. It is highly unlikely that they had true previous knowledge of every request strategy present in the pre-test questionnaire. On the other hand, in the post-test results, it was shown that the thirty participants were aware of the new request forms they had just been taught, as they were able to verify and recognize them immediately after the intervention. This time it appears that the SEFLLs had better knowledge about forming different request strategies in L2 and the function sequences present in this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of request form strategy ↓</th>
<th>The number of uses per each request function (out of 30 students)</th>
<th>Wil</th>
<th>Ab</th>
<th>Pb</th>
<th>Per</th>
<th>Ps</th>
<th>Con</th>
<th>Won</th>
<th>Neg</th>
<th>-Sup</th>
<th>TQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.Willing.ability</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.Willing.possibility</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.Willing.permission</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.Willing.permission.ability</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.Ability.permission.</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Effect of Explicit Instruction of Requests on Saudi EFL learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of request form strategy</th>
<th>The percentage of uses per each request function (out of 100%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.Willing.ability</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.Willing.possibility</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.Willing.permission</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.Willing.permission.ability</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.Ability.permission.ability</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.Possibility.ability</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.Possibility.willing.ability</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.Possession.ability</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.Permission.ability</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.Consultation.ability</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.Consultation.willing.ability</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.Wondering.ability</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.Wondering.permission</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.Negative.supposition.ability</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.Negative.ability.tag.question</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*List of Table five contractions:*
- Willing = Wil
- Ability = Ab
- Possibility = Pb
- Permission = Per
- Possession = Ps
- Consultation = Con
- Wondering = Won
- Negative = Neg
- Supposition = Sup
- Tag.question = TQ

Table 6. The percentage of uses per each request function (out of 100%) on post-test
Based on Table 5 and Table 6 post-instruction data results, a number of generalizations can be derived. First, the overall majority of the SEFLLs picked the correct corresponding functions (highlighted in bold) for each request strategy; the rest of the functions (not in bold) had considerably lower incidence rates. Second, in terms of correct selections, eight strategies out of ten were appropriately chosen by nine or more of the SEFLLs, whereas only two strategies (namely - Sup and TQ) were chosen by a lesser number of students; six and four SEFLLs to be exact. Third, there was a high incidence rate of incorrect selections made in request strategies which consisted of QFRSs (strategies five and eleven), where eight and nine students respectively chose non-constituent functions. Fourth, the function ‘permission’ was wrongly chosen at a high rate (20% or more) by the SEFLLs in request strategies where it is also a non-constituent, such as in strategies six, fourteen, and fifteen. Fifth, the requests which the SEFLLs seemed to find particularly difficult were strategies that consisted of these functions: QFRSs, negative supposition, tag questions, and permission. Sixth and last, it can be concluded from the post-instruction results that the single teaching session the SEFLLs underwent was able to develop their L2 requests both strategically and functionally; albeit their strategy recognition seemed to surpass their functional analysis abilities.

Discussion
This study was set out to examine the extent at which explicit instruction of request forms can have on the pragmatic and linguistic developments of SEFLLs’ L2 requests. The research questions will be stated again here for the sake of convenience:
RQ1: Will explicitly teaching SEFLLs request strategies help the students learn the names of these strategies?
RQ2: Will explicitly teaching SEFLLs request strategies help the students learn these strategies and their specific functions?
Through the research data results, it is evident that explicit instruction of L2 requests facilitated learners’ interlanguage pragmatics development. By implementing direct explicit instruction of the speech act, the students were able to reassess and add to their previous knowledge of requests. They were also able to categorize requests based on their functions demonstrating advanced and improved pragmatic abilities.

On closer examination, the RQ makes a distinction between learning request forms (structural development) and request functions (functional analysis). In regards to learning new request forms, the SEFLLs’ responses in the post-test showed that they had successfully learned a wider range of L2 request structures in comparison with the limited accurate answers they gave in the pre-test questionnaires. In terms of learning request functions, the SEFLLs further demonstrated strengthened abilities in correctly pinpointing most of the functions present in the request strategies.

However, it is crucial to note that the SEFLLs seemed to have encountered some difficulties in identifying strategies which consisted of the following functions: QFRSs, negative supposition, tag questions, and permission. The SEFLLs admitted that they had never come across these functions in their EFL textbooks before. It can thus be proposed that explicit direct instruction of L2 speech acts can possibly facilitate EFL learners’ acquisition of new speech act strategies and functions on the pretext that acquiring the former might be faster than the latter. Derived from the above is the possible conclusion that linguistic realizations of whole request strategies might be easier to acquire than linguistic realizations of individual request functions.
In regards to assessment of the methodology, the post-test data results provided further evidence for pedagogical intervention being an effective tool in enhancing EFL learners’ pragmatic and speech act abilities and is consistent with previous interlanguage research studies (Eslami-Rasekh et al., 2004; Kerber, 2020; Nguyen, Pham, & Pham, 2012).

Furthermore, the teachability of pragmatic aspects of L2 through applying a ‘pre-test/post-test’ design is aligned with results from the following research (Alsuhaibani, 2020; Halenko & Jones, 2011; Khodareza & Lotfi, 2013; Rajabia et al. 2015, Shark, 2019; Yilmaz & Koc, 2020), in which learners were reported to have performed better in the post-test after the instruction phase. In addition, explicit instruction of requests to EFL learners was shown to be an effective tool in improving the students’ pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic skills as was role play intervention (Fattah, 2018) and video-driven intervention in Alsmari’s (2020) study of learner complaints.

Similar findings were documented in related research studies (Farahian et al., 2012; Khodareza & Lotfi, 2013; Rafieyan et al., 2014). Collectively, the results indicated that students experienced significant increase in their pragmatic skills post the instruction phase, concluding that pragmatics is not effectively acquired without explicit direct instruction/intervention, which helps the learners process material on a conscious level. This conclusion gives support to Schmidt’s (1990, 2001) ‘noticing’ theory in which he advocates that “input does not become intake for language learning unless it is noticed, that is, consciously registered” (Schmidt, 2012, p. 1).

Based on the study’s post-test data, the researcher recommends the adoption of both explicit (providing rules), as well as inductive (drawing from linguistic examples) designs of teaching when instructing pragmatic aspects of requests to EFL students. Employing inductive methods, as opposed to deductive methods, showed better results in interventional studies which compared between the two types of instruction (Al-Kharrat, 2000; Alraddadi, 2019). In fact, as Glaser (2014) asserts “in the wider area of SLA research, (…) studies investigating inductive and deductive instruction have found that inductively taught learners outperformed their deductively taught peers” (p. 154) Glaser further stipulates that “[it has been previously shown that] explicit-inductive designs were more beneficial than explicit-deductive ones” (ibid.). Therefore, implementing explicit-inductive means of teaching requests in the classroom can result in substantial improvements on the learners’ understanding of requests’ functions and uses.

An example of an explicit-inductive method of teaching requests can be manifested as follows: the teacher begins the lesson by inductively presenting new linguistic request examples to the students and later explicitly addresses the underlying rules pertaining to their appropriate uses and functions. This type of mixed explicit-inductive method of instruction can be very helpful where the instruction features activities during which the students actively engage in analyzing and discovering requests themselves, guided and helped, but not dominated, by the teacher.

Another finding surfaced from the data; it seems that the single instruction session the SEFLLs had was able to reinforce some of the previous knowledge they’d already had about forming requests in L2 but was not enough to establish completely novice request functions (e.g. QFRSs, Sup, TQ, and Per). The Students’ lack of previous knowledge of the correct uses of these functions correlates with their inaccurate answers presented in request strategies that consisted of one of these
functions. This conclusion provides considerable insight into the essential role of repetition to secure the new learning as a long-term memory (see Multiple-Trace Theory, Hintzman & Block, 1971). In fact, one of the limitations of this study is that the teaching session was only provided once. Had there been more sessions given to the SEFLLs, their data might have generated more accurate results as repeated exposure to a stimulus increases its likelihood of being recalled. This suggests that, within EFL classrooms, new learning material must be repeated and reinforced over time for it to form subsequent memory pathways that are truly remembered and thoroughly understood by the students.

**Conclusion:**
Requesting is perhaps the most important speech act to teach because it is used often and in different situations; it also varies from language to language. This paper examined the impact of explicit instruction of request structures on developing SEFLLs’ pragmatic understanding of English requests. Before the treatment intervention, the participants portrayed linguistic and pragmatic deficiencies in their understanding of English requests. When presented with some request forms previously produced by native speakers of English, most SEFLLs seemed completely unaware of them. Post-treatment intervention, however, there was a substantial improvement in the SEFLLs’ knowledge of the new request strategies. This may add insight into the significance of explicit pedagogical intervention in teaching L2 speech acts, and the overall positive impact the teaching experience might have on the learners, even after a single session.

The SEFLLs complained that in their years of formal English education at school, they have never been taught rich request forms that vary linguistically or pragmatically. Their English textbooks usually stuck to short direct requests, with the overuse of the politeness marker ‘please’. The learners mentioned that their frequent use of the request strategy (imperative + please) was probably due to the over-portrayal of this strategy in their English textbooks. It is therefore of utmost importance for English textbooks and EFL teachers to present different types of requests, which vary in their level of directness, so that learners can benefit from a larger and more diversified database of L2 request strategies.

**About the Author:**
Dr. Israa Qari is an assistant professor in Linguistics, currently teaching English in the ELI Preparatory year program, King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She obtained her Doctorate degree from University of Roehampton, London, U.K. in 2017. She specializes in Cross-Cultural Linguistics and politeness research. https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3753-3655

**References**


Charting New Venues for Teaching Literary Texts through Black English Vernacular in EFL Context: Case of H.B. Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin

Yamina ILES
Language Studies
English Department, FLPATP lab N°72,
Abou Bakr Belkaid University, Tlemcen, Algeria
Correspondent Author: amina.iles09@gmail.com

Amine BELMEKKI
Applied Linguistics & TEFL
English Department, FLPATP lab N°72,
Abou Bakr Belkaid University, Tlemcen, Algeria

Received: 12/29/2020    Accepted: 2/28/2021    Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract:
This research paper attempts at studying the operation of literary texts teaching through Black English Vernacular (BEV) in EFL context, selecting the American novel: Uncle Tom’s Cabin, henceforth (UTC), (1852) by Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896) as a parameter of research. Its main aim is to reveal and project the new venues for teaching literary texts through BEV in EFL classroom. The choice of this novel constitutes a luxuriant source of investigation. Additionally, it is abundant with various cultural elements used by its characters. The significance of the study relies on the examination and analysis of lexical items regarding the role of literature in the EFL context between the past and the present time. Also, with the difficulties of using literary texts as language tools in the EFL educational milieu. After implementing a stylistic analytical method on the selected novel, the results of the study end up by the selection of certain lexical entries from Black English that can be used as a reference in the teaching of literature in EFL contexts.

Keywords: Black English Vernacular, EFL context, H.B. Stowe, literary texts, Uncle Tom’s Cabin

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.9
Introduction

Various language teachers tend to disclose the potentiality of literary texts in terms of developing distinct features of a foreign language. Therefore, the importance of reading, mainly the task of culturally authentic texts, has become one of the central claims for syllabus restructuring in the EFL context. However, those syllabi are still in need of some teaching methods of literature especially with regard to American Literary dialect.

Many scholars, especially dialectologists, have been through time interested in studying dialect use since it is a very multifaceted linguistic performance spreading its roots not only to sociolinguistics but also to literature and EFL contexts. Like any other language, English has various non-standard forms, including Black English Vernacular. The latter, despite being informal, is the medium of many written American literary pieces where personal adventures and life experiences are the authors’ authentic touch that invites the involvement of readers.

The use of dialect in American literature renders it a more effervescent and attractive field of work. More to the point, it helps to portray the reality of American society. Through this dialect, readers in the EFL context experience all the pleasure when reading a literary work written in a Black Vernacular. Accordingly, the scope of the current research paper highlights the credibility of teaching literature through Black English Vernacular in EFL setting via the implementation of the dialectal characteristics associated with their social parameters. Therefore, this work contributes to enlightening the relationship of literature with EFL English teaching and hence it aims at answering the following questions:

1. Can Black English Vernacular be used in teaching literature for EFL students?
2. What are the contributive items for the success of this teaching in relation to the standard language?

Literature Review

Teachers of literature have been using texts from novels and books as their authors wrote them, an activity that makes the teaching process a bit difficult to grasp. Thence, using literary texts in EFL classrooms was not successful when taken literally, since literature in itself is challenging as a subject of study. For this reason, an approach to literature teaching can be proposed within this work.

The Use of Literature in EFL Context: between the Past and the Present

In the early 20th century, learning a foreign language through literature was a crucial element in the Grammar Translation Method. Literary texts in the target language are the use of the samples of good writing as Duff (1990) states, “illustrations of the grammatical rules” (p. 3). The focal point of this teaching method was on dominating language structures and jargon. Therefore, there was neither artistic interest nor interest in subjects.

Subsequently, the Grammar Translation Method fell in neglect in the mid-period of the 20th century, a constant refusal to the employment of literature in the EFL context became the rule. Therefore, the language teaching method centered on translating classic
literary texts was somewhat unproductive when teaching modern languages. Thus, the tendency was to eradicate literary texts from the EFL context to emphasize teaching language skills mainly. Furthermore, from the 40s to the 60s, literature vanished from the language learning syllabus. Accordingly, linguistics became the focal point of the language programs (Widdowson, 1982).

Yet, the operation of teaching has witnessed a change by the first half of the 60s, and matters, began to change. The subject of teaching the target language through literature was first at the King’s College conference on teaching held in Cambridge teaching in 1963. Hence, the significance of literary texts as a beneficial tool in the language teaching/learning process emphasized this seminar. Simultaneously, the traditional approach arrived for its inability to improve language skills and communicative abilities. Even though these trying, the use of literary texts in the EFL context has persisted disregarded for several years. Therefore, structural approaches to language teaching transferred literature to unconsciousness, like an unfashionable tool, while the functional-notional method ignored literature as far as it required a communicative function (Llach, 2007). Hence, Topping (1968) reinforced the complete elimination of literature from the foreign language syllabus, addressing its structural complexity and its originality to the standard grammar rules. As the author cites, “literature did not seem to contribute to foreign language students in their achievement of linguistic proficiency” (p. 97).

Currently, further research is absorbed in this section to determine the positive outcomes of employing literature in distinct EFL contexts. Accordingly, much research describes again the role of culture and literature in language learning for “the development of language materials, syllabi, and curriculum, as well as to describe the affective nature of the interaction between the language learner and the literature of the target language” (Liddicoat, 2000, p. 40). Henceforth, an essential area of research deals with the welfares of literary texts as a crucial part of integrative language teaching (Bagherkazemi & Alemi, 2010; Carroli, 2008; De Blasé, 2005). Furthermore, there are various scopes advantages of literature in evolving EFL skills, which are the discovery of Alderson (2000), Kern (2000), and Hur (2005), among others.

Despite all the efforts mentioned in the previous work towards the use of literature in the EFL context, there is still no agreement among language teachers and educators on literature integration into the EFL classroom. 

**Difficulties of Using Literature in EFL Classroom**

Despite some advantages of using literature in the EFL classroom, there are also some chief difficulties that require further concentration, such as literary dialect itself. Literary dialects, dialect used in literature, involve the insertion of non-standard forms into the writing of short stories and novels as well. Some scholars have provided various definitions for the term. For example, in a similar line of thought, the importance of literary dialect as being helpful to concretely picture the identity of the characters performing in the novel or short story. Hence, the literary dialect is *par excellence*, the interpretation of a personage’s speech conveyed specifically and meaningfully to the readership.
Including literary dialect in American literature makes a revolutionary element in the field. Ferguson (1959) advocates that using dialectal forms in novels can be problematic in its written techniques but is so expressive that authors cannot avoid it, nor can they control its unemployment.

Even though, the fact that using daily speech forms in literature allows authors to show lay people’s features of life, there are a lot of difficulties in linguistic choice. The author who inserts dialect in literature is the consideration of a writer who gives the real image of the story’s characters and sweeps himself out of both processes of thinking and talking, which are the job of the personages only. The dialect is but a reflection of their educational background and attitudinal viewpoint.

**Teaching Literary Dialect in EFL contexts: Some General Ideas**

All the general notice towards the insertion of literary texts in the EFL classroom is undisputable. Some investigators and educationalists like Carroli (2008) and Deblase (2005) are lastly approaching to reflect literature as an effective instrument that can offer EFL learners with chances to progress distinct features of the English language skill and to excavate their awareness and attentiveness of the language ethnography.

Moreover, the greeting of the worth of the implementation of literary texts in the EFL contexts does not mean that educators have attained a compromise in terms of how to use literature in their classrooms, what genre of texts they should practice, or when is the best instant to commence employing literary texts. Consequently, there is still a discussion regarding these problems between language instructors and educators. Therefore, the goal and the significance of literature in the EFL contexts are still a matter of debate by certain linguists in the present time.

**H.B. Stowe’s Biography**

The daughter of one of the most famous evangelical preachers of the pre-civil war era and an artist mother painting portraits on ivory, Stowe Harriet Beecher was born 14 June 1811 in Connecticut. Catharine Beecher became the most potent female influence in her sister Stowe’s life, after she lost her mother at the age of five years old. With a short memory and her brilliant attitude, Stowe could brighten even within the remarkable Beecher family. When she had eight years old, Beecher arrived in the Litchfield Female Academy, a school founded to vindicate the equality of female intellect. She was one of her teachers, with an eagerness for writing since her young age. Harriet Beecher volunteered to write weekly essays at the age of nine. Then, she won the honor of having her composition read aloud at the annual school exhibit at the age of thirteen. Her father presents there, set up and asked who the writer was when he had the answer ‘your daughter, sir’, this for Stowe was, as she described later, the proudest moment of her life.

Indeed Harriet Beecher Stowe was the spearhead of many groups to claim and demand the rights of others. In a society and an era where women had little power, she could influence and attract many people only by her voice, words, and her writings. Beecher worked to solve various social issues as fighting slavery and giving women their rights, such as being an individual while married or voting, rights seen today as standard
freedom. She was not, only a writer that fought in a time where literature was not as noted by D Hedrick (the writer of *Harriet Beecher Stowe: a life*), but she was also a philanthropist and an abolitionist.

**Summary of Uncle Tom’s Cabin**

In *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*’s novel, Stowe’s literary work is the primary chief novel written by a woman dealing with the beliefs of slavery. Therefore, Harriet Beecher Stowe puts her book in the antebellum period by the beginning of the Civil War and replied to the Fugitive Slave Act of state in 1850.

Moreover, the Mulatto relatives consist of George, Eliza, and Harry in Uncle Tom’s Cabin’s novel, *Life among the Lonely*. Therefore, Harriet Beecher Stowe seeks the heartlessness of slavery. For this account, Stowe’s novel occurs to be the top-selling abolitionist novel of the nineteenth century. Henceforth, Stowe captures a critical view at all individuals implicated in the slave commerce like abused slaves, cruel slave catchers, white slave-holders, religious Christians, and corrupt politicians.

Besides, the remaining characters in Uncle Tom’s Cabin like, Tom, George, and others, meet some of these individuals on their independence journeys. Therefore, we pursue the name Tom since he goes away down South, further into the rock bottom of slavery, to follow the mulattoes characters like George, Eliza, and their son Harry as they take a trip north to Canada. Stowe (1852) says that “Tom is an obedient and humble servant and Mr. Shelby’s, his master’s, “best hand” (p. 68).

Henceforth, Harriet Beecher Stowe portrays the distinctive experiences of black slaves as opposed to mulatto slaves. They are the consideration of the white individuals as slaves seeking their freedom. Therefore, she reveals the various elements that differ the mulatto from the black slaves as in describing their physical appearance in Uncle Tom’s Cabin.

**Analysis of the findings**

**Examples of Literary Dialect Used in Uncle Tom’s Cabin**

There is an immense number of forms of contractions employed in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*’s novel. Therefore, the following table depicts some of these contractions used by different characters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contractions’ Form</th>
<th>Standard Form</th>
<th>Page number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ha’nt</td>
<td>Have not</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t</td>
<td>Do not</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’cause</td>
<td>Because</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s going</td>
<td>That is going</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’ll let</td>
<td>You will let</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve got</td>
<td>I have got</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There’s been</td>
<td>There has been</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Therefore, Harriet Beecher Stowe’s book named *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* refers to a portrayal related to a vernacular variety called Black English Vernacular. Moreover, it is very significant to state that the whole story *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is full of contractions used by slave characters since it denotes the Non-Standard form of language.

Plenty of contractions’ forms finds in *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and as, the case with Uncle Tom, a slave character as shown in the following table:

**Table 2. Contracted words by Uncle Tom in the novel**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Contracted words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Hence, additional personalities in Beecher’s book, similarly implement contractions in their dialogue as revealed in the following table:
### Table 3. **Contracted words by other personalities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Contracted words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td>Extro’mary, fa’r, gen’ally, tryin’, t’ other, al’ays, mus’n’t, ’ll, ris, ’em, ha’nt,’Lizy, ’em, ’t .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topsy</td>
<td>Nothin’, ma’am, tellin’, you’s, it’s jist, ’t, ’fess, workin’, I’s used, n’t, Mas’r, know’d, you ’s all, ’pects, o’ har, ’bout, ’cause, han’t, ’long, tan’t, don’t</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* reveals the study of the data demonstrates that vowels and consonants have been sometimes deleted or added from words by characters as:

*Deleted vowels /a, e, o, i/ in:


* /i/ turns to /e/ in:

set, ef, tell.

* /e/ turns into /i/ in:

Git, yit, forgit.

* /o/ and /a/ turns to /e/ in:

yer, getherin’.

*Consonant

*Contracted /g/ from nouns and verbs in:

*Contracted /t/ in:


*Contracted /th/ from:

T’ other, ‘em,

/Consonant transformation:

/s/ and /d/ turns to /n/ in:

‘yourn’, ‘hearn’

/s/ turns to /x/ in: ‘axe’

/k/ turns to /t/ in: ‘ast’

Also, the novel obtains some other changes occur in pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, auxiliaries, verbs, and articles in terms of pronunciation used by Uncle Tom, as the following table discloses:

Table 4. Various dialectal utterances used by Uncle Tom in the Novel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialectal features</th>
<th>The standard form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dat</td>
<td>That</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>Them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We’s</td>
<td>We are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De</td>
<td>The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yer</td>
<td>You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunno</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Der</td>
<td>Their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dese</td>
<td>These</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dey</td>
<td>They</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gwine</td>
<td>Going</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the words transform entirely by Uncle Tom, as shown in table five totally.
Table 5. *Other dialectal terms used by Uncle Tom in the novel*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Dialectal words</th>
<th>Words in the Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncle Tom</td>
<td>Mas’r</td>
<td>Master</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ator</td>
<td>After</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nur</td>
<td>Nor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crittur</td>
<td>Creature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Al’yays</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ye</td>
<td>You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cum</td>
<td>Come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wal</td>
<td>Well</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, some alteration joined to certain dialect characters’ speech resembling Aunt Chloe and Topsy as presented in the next table:

Table 6. *Dialectal words used by Aunt Chloe and Topsy in Stowe’s Book*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialectal words</th>
<th>The words in the Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gal</td>
<td>Girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuther</td>
<td>Neither</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dun no</td>
<td>Don’t know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jist</td>
<td>Just</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spect</td>
<td>Expect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma’am</td>
<td>Madam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnit</td>
<td>Minute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La</td>
<td>Laws</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Furthermore, the research work spots light on other dialectal utterances that unveil the double negation, which is the consideration of certain features related to Non-standard language; some of these utterances are to portray in the following table:

Table 7. *Various utterances of double negation employed in Uncle Tom’s Cabin’s Novel*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Double negation</th>
<th>Standard form</th>
<th>Page number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I should n’t need no clothes</td>
<td>I should not need any clothes</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>’t would n’t do, no ways</td>
<td>It would not do, any ways</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t think nobody never made</td>
<td>Do not think anybody ever made</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I never tells no lies</td>
<td>I never tells any lies</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I an’t a proposin’ nothin’</td>
<td>I am not proposing anything</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wan’t spectin’ nothin’</td>
<td>I was not expecting anything</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But it did n’t do me no good!</td>
<td>But it did not do me any good</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunno nothing ’bout love</td>
<td>Do not know anything about love</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never had nothing nor nobody</td>
<td>Ever had anything nor anybody</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Could n’t never be nothin’ but a nigger</td>
<td>Could not ever be anything but a nigger</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Henceforth, the researcher can observe a vast range of dialectal utterances that contain the feature of double negation portrayed in Stowe’s novel.

The following table will reveal some dialectal grammatical utterances used in the novel.
Table 8. Deviant grammatical forms by Aunt Chloe in Uncle Tom’s Cabin’s Novel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Dialectal Grammatical Utterances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aunt Chloe</td>
<td>I likes, hev, I’s, I’s, I knows, gwyne, Dun no, I looks, I hear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We doesn’t, you telled, stories isn’t,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I grow’d, they was, I never tells.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>They’s burnt, dunno, I specs, I an’t used, I gets, does you know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You’s all, you is, white folks is, niggers is, I loves candy and sich, “there an’t nobody left now”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I’s so awful, other folks hires out der niggers, I’s a thinkin’, de boys is big enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He was gwine, I’s nothin’ but a nigger, “If they’s to pull every spear o’ har out o’ my head, it would n’t do no good, neither”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

To conclude, one may say that this research paper is simply a research work that would probably bring a further step in a scientific adventure to a very particular and fascinating field of investigation, namely Literary texts in the EFL context. This research scope is just an attempt to uncover the significance of Teaching Literary Texts through Black English Vernacular in EFL Context especially by the implementation of the proposed lexical entries from the selected novel.

The achievement in acquiring a language determines of the students’ attention and passion for the tools used in the EFL context. Hence, their willpower with the learning task, and the level of their focus and satisfaction. This type of learners’ connection might come from the tools and lectures employed in the EFL classroom. This paper attempts to demonstrate that literature, when used appropriately, can be an operative instrument for developing target language skills. Accordingly, it leads us to more easily disprove the arguments of those scholars against the use of literature as an instrument for language teaching like Edmondson (1997).

It tries at the same time to shed light on language as it empowers literary works in the interpretation of literary texts, and how it facilitates the communication of ideas, express feelings, persuade, and present matters to different audiences. It is mainly because, in current times, language scholars began to vary their minds by recognizing that folks can display varieties of distinctive sorts of language just by reading a piece of writing.

Besides, in any speech community, language carries many means of interaction and reveals our social behaviour. For this account, it is a fundamental element in any literary work used side by side with different forms of Non-Standard language.

**Conclusion**

As a result, some crucial issues still require part of this research scope. One always wants additional experimental research to confirm particular different methods to the incorporation of American novels in the EFL contexts. Yet, it is vibrant, that a literary text as the American book helps a lot to contribute in the language classroom. Thus, it offers an inspiring determination for language learning and teaching due to its remarkable characteristics not willingly present in any other writing form.
Consequently, the teaching of literary texts through Black English Vernacular, as the American novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe in the EFL contexts, may facilitate the task for language learners to acquire and memorize the Standard English. This latter, was initially written in a vernacular variety by various authors to portray an accurate picture of dialect personages. For this, it is highly recommended that researchers interested in literature can supplement this stylistic method by adding other lexical entries from other literary dialects which can be beneficial in the elaboration of syllabi designed for teaching English as a foreign language in general and teaching literature in particular.

About the authors

**Yamina ILES** is an assistant-professor at the Superior School of Management of Tlemcen, Algeria (ESMT). She is also a Ph.D. candidate in Language Studies and Sociolinguistic Variation at the University of Tlemcen. In addition, she is a member researcher in the FLPATP research laboratory under the supervision of Prof. Amine BELMEKKI. [https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6400-5634](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6400-5634)

**Prof. Amine BELMEKKI** is a full professor at the University of Tlemcen, Algeria. He is also the head of a research laboratory Foreign Languages Policy in Algeria and Teacher Professionalism (FLPATP). He is also the head of two national research projects (PNR & CNEPRU). His field of interest in mainly concerned with Applied Linguistics, TEFL, and Education Sciences as well. [https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3818-2826](https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3818-2826)

References


Motivation toward English Language Learning among Students of Different Fields of Study: A Case of Iraqi University Students

Raed Latif Ugla
Department of English Language
Al-Yarmouk University College, Baaqubq, Diyala, Iraq
Email: ali220497@gmail.com

Received : 12/10/2020         Accepted: 1/11/2021                 Published : 3/24/2021

Abstract
This study aims at identifying motivation toward English language learning among students of different fields of study. More specifically, it tries to identify the two types of motivation (integrative/ instrumental) among those students and also the preferred activities used by them. This study is qualitative and quantitative, which uses two types of instruments: a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. In the survey, there are 150 responses collected from the participants who answered the questionnaire questions. In the interview, the researcher interviewed three participants. The results of this study show that the students of different fields of study were motivated instrumentally rather than integratively. Finally, the results also indicate that the participants identified different learning activities.

Keywords: Different fields of study, Iraqi students, learning English, motivation

Cite as: Ugla, R. L. (2021). Motivation toward English Language Learning among Students of Different Fields of Study: A Case of Iraqi University Students. Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 139-151. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.10
Introduction

After the Iraq invasion by American forces in 2003, Iraq has increasingly opened up more upon the global community, more significantly, in the last ten years. Iraqi learners have joined many language-learning institutes for the purpose of learning English. Being motivated is very important in learning a foreign language (FL) and encouraging learners to learn and use English. Motivation plays a vital role in understanding the target language. According to Ellis (1994), the motivation role in learning a foreign language is significant. Binalet and Guerra (2014) identify the necessity of motivation in learning. Motivation cause, as many other factors such as age, personality, aptitude, will, and so on, directly affect the success of learning a foreign language. It is a critical factor that may affect the learning process (Ellis, 1994; McDonough, 1983; Mohd Redzuan, Anak Buda, & Abdullah, 2014). According to Horwitz (1990), motivation is the learner’s feelings toward a specific language and a culture of the community who uses this language. It is a learner's need for acquiring a foreign language and using it widely. Without motivation, learners will never learn the target language, and they will face difficulty to do (Gardner, 2007).

Iraqi students, like other Arab countries, have face difficulty using English as a means of communication other than in their everyday life or to communicate with foreigners. Although Iraqi learners spent years learning the target language (English), they still unable to use this language as a means of communicating effectively, and they are also suffering to be able to use English in the right. This may be related to their lack to be more motivated learners. According to Albodakh and Cinkara (2017), most Iraqi learners feel that it is challenging to acquire the English language because of their insufficient motivation. Without students’ motivation, learning activities will never be achieved. It is advisable to choose teaching materials relevant to the students’ motivation (Abdulrasoul, 2012). For these reasons, the current study will investigate students’ motivation toward learning English and the preferred activities used by them to do so.

The Research Objectives

The current study considers the following objectives:
1. To investigate the types of motivation (instrumental/integrative) towards learning the English language that Iraqi students of different fields of study have.
2. To identify the English language learning activities, which are preferred by Iraqi students of different fields of study.

Research Questions

This study will examine and answer the following questions:
1. What types of motivation (instrumental/integrative) towards learning the English language that Iraqi students of different fields of study have?
2. What are the English language-learning activities preferred by Iraqi students of different fields of study?

Significance of the Study

In this study, it is hoped that the implications of this study contribute to the pedagogy of English language learning. If this study proves to be effective in identifying the type of motivation, then the findings will promote and implement in the Iraqi EFL curriculum. The
results of this study are hoped to have necessary potential pedagogic implications in the local EFL context in particular and in the teaching and learning English context in general.

The results of this study may alert university teachers and students of different fields of study (non-departmental teachers and students) on how motivation is vital in improving the English learning process. Finally, the implications of this study may alert university teachers to be more creative in constructing interactive learning activities for Iraqi university students to help them build up their language competence, which finally leads to enhance their language learning.

Theoretically, it is hoped that this study could contribute to motivation in learning the English language. Finally, it is also expected that EFL researchers could continue looking into the matter of motivation from other aspects and conduct studies that could benefit university students in learning the target language.

Review of Literature

Gardner and Lambert (1959) were the first researchers who investigate the two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. Redzuan et al. (2014) stated that integrative motivation plays an essential role for those people who want to learn English to be able to integrate into their society in which English is the used language. On the other hand, instrumental motivation referring to the will of those who want to learn a target language for the purpose of getting a job or increase their salary (Carreira, 2005). Most previous studies have resulted that instrumental motivation was higher than integrative motivation in learning the target language (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2009; Jefiza, 2012; Vaezi, 2009; Wong, 2011).

There were two theories (drive and arousal) that identified that motivation connects with the concepts of drive and arousal. After that, psychology theories were developed to avoid restricting the behaviorist theories regarding learning and motivation. These theories showed that motivation is a process, which is affected by people’s thoughts and believes. Cognitive perspective was depended on when the researchers dealt with motivation. Gardner (1985) identified four aspects of motivation: “a goal, effortful behavior, a desire to attain the goal and favorable attitudes toward the activity” (p. 50). Social psychology could be a base to evolve the original impetus in second language motivation (Abdulrasoul, 2012). In 1963, Lambert proposed a social psychological model, in which some cognitive factors were emphasized. These factors are language aptitudes, intelligence, attitudes, and motivation.

The term motivation has been defined differently among many researchers. According to Gardner (1985), motivation to learn a language is “the extent to which an individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity” (p.10). Brown (1994) said that “Motivation is the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect” (p.152). According to Kumar (2005), “motivation” is derived from the Latin word “mover” which means that to put into action or to move. It is the process of putting the learner into physiological or psychological action by which she/ he can fulfill her/ his needs and desires (Abdulrasoul, 2012).
Learning English could be considered to be most important for all university students. To make the students more motivated in language learning, it is vital to consider the classroom activities that best fit them. Choosing more effective classroom activities may enable students to have more motivation to learn English. Qin (2012) maintained that learners prefer activities such as “reading aloud,” “doing listening exercises,” and “reciting tests,” while the teachers prefer communicative activities.

**Previous Studies on Motivation in Iraq**

Many researchers such as Bao, Abdilah, & Chowdhury (2012), Abdulrasoul (2012), Albodakh and Cinkara (2017), and Hussein and Al Bajalani (2019) conducted studies about Iraqi EFL motivation. These studies were varied among them regarding the types of motivation, the role of motivation in language learning, the instruments were used, and the participants.

Bao et al. (2012) investigated the factors influencing Iraqi’s second language (L2) learning in Australia. They found that the two types of motivation (instrumental and integrative) were positively correlated. Those two types motivate Iraqi learners towards English learning and communication. Their study also showed that women were poorly encouraged to learn English.

In her efforts to analyze the motivation of Iraqi students for joining departments of English, Abdulrasoul (2012) conducted a study to do so. The questionnaire was used as an instrument to elicit the data from the students. The findings showed that the students were motivated integratively more than instrumentally.

Additionally, their study (Albodakh & Cinkara, 2017) tried to find out the relationship between Iraqi EFL students’ motivation and vocabulary size. This study used two kinds of instruments (questionnaires regarding Motivation for Foreign Language Learning (MFLL) and Vocabulary Size Test). The findings showed that female students were motivated highly for the two types of motivation (extrinsic and intrinsic). Regarding the relationship between learner motivation and vocabulary size, the results neglected the relation between them.

Subsequently, in their study, Hussein and Al Bajalani (2019) tried to identify the role of motivation in promoting autonomy among Iraqi EFL university students in Kurdistan Region in Iraq. To collect the data, this study used a mixed-method approach, which used a questionnaire and an interview. The results showed that motivation has positive effects in developing the EFL students’ autonomy.

**Methodology**

**Participants**

The participants of the survey were 150 undergraduate students from departments of computer sciences, chemical, and biology available at the University of Diyala in Iraq. Those students were at first, second, third, and fourth year of study for the academic year 2018/2019. The following table one shows the background information of the participants.
Table 1. The background information of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Sciences</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To get more in-depth information about the types of motivation, the researcher asked three students to be interviewed in this study. Those students were the fourth year of study at three different departments. The following table two shows the background information of the interviewed participants at University of Diyala in Iraq.

Table2. The background information of the interviewed participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.1</td>
<td>Biotechnology</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.2</td>
<td>Medical Physics</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>22 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.3</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>22 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instrument

In this study, two types of instruments were used. The researcher used a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The questionnaire consists of four parts. The first part focuses on the students’ background information, the second part focuses on integrative motivation, the third focuses on instrumental motivation, and the fourth one focuses on preferred learning activities. The items of the questionnaire were adapted from Wimolmas’s Survey of Motivation (2013) and Redzuan et al. (2014). A five-point Likert scale was employed to rate the questions of this questionnaire ranging from ‘Strongly Agree’ to ‘Strongly Disagree.’ The questionnaire items were sent to the three experts to check their validity. They agreed on all of them except for some things that were needed to revise. On the other hand, the researchers assessed their reliability using Cronbach’s alpha scale. The value was 0.887, which was acceptable.

On the other hand, the interview consists of five questions. The interview questions were adapted from Wong (2011). These questions could be identified as follows:

1. Do you think that motivation plays a crucial role in learning a foreign language (English)? Why?
2. In your opinion, which type of motivation (integrative or instrumental) has a significant impact on learning English? Why?
3. Is an integratively motivated learner or an instrumentally one using English correctly? Why?
4. In your opinion, is it essential to make learners know about the two types of motivation (integrative/instrumental)? Why?
5. Do you think that the chosen activities by a teacher play an essential role in identifying or enhancing learners’ type of motivation? Why?

Research Procedures
The questionnaires were distributed to the 150 students during their regular class sessions. The researcher himself did that to avoid confusion if any. The students were provided with some explanations regarding the study’s purpose and with some instructions to respond to the questionnaire item. Those students were not informed about the types of motivation included in this questionnaire. The questionnaire was then collected upon completion.

On the other hand, the researcher interviewed three students. He interviewed each student face-to-face separately. Before interviewing the students, he explained the two types of motivation (integrative/instrumental). In this interview, each student was asked five questions mentioned earlier. This interview was audio recorded.

Data Analysis
This section is divided into two subsections. The first section focuses on analyzing the data elicited from the questionnaire, while the second focuses on analyzing the data produced from the semi-structured interview.

Data Elicited from the Questionnaire
The researcher used the ‘Statistical Package for the Social Sciences’ (SPSS) to analyze the data, which were obtained from the questionnaire. A descriptive analysis was used to get information about motivation and preferred activities.

Table 3. Descriptive Analysis of Instrumental Motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I only use English to do my assignments and exams.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I always copy sentences directly from books/articles even though I do not understand the meaning.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I only read English materials that are related to my assignments.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.70</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I learn English to pass my exams and to get an excellent job in the future.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I learn English because I am interested in furthering my higher education.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I learn English because it is crucial for traveling overseas.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I learn English to look more sophisticated and knowledgeable.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I learn English to have a better career in the future.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I learn English because it can lead to more success and achievements in life.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table three represents a descriptive analysis for instrumental motivation. Based on the students’ responses, most items regarding instrumental motivation got high mean scores. The mean scores in this table ranged from (M= 4.43 to M= 2.51) respectively.

Table four explains a descriptive analysis for integrative motivation. Based on the students’ responses, most items regarding integrative motivation got low mean scores. The mean score in this table ranged from (M= 3.01 to M= 1.44) respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I learn English because it can help me understand English books, movies, pop music, etc.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I learn English because I want to know and learn about native English speakers’ ways of life.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I learn English because it allows me to discuss exciting topics worldwide.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I learn English because I am very interested in joining activities organized by a local and international institution.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I learn English because it allows me to transfer my knowledge to other people. For example, I am giving directions to tourists.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I learn English because it makes me more open-minded and friendly like English native speakers.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I learn English because it allows me to behave like native English speakers. For example, the accent and using English expressions.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I learn English because I am interested in the culture of people around the world.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>1.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I learn English because I am interested in getting to know other people from other cultures.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I want to learn English as best as possible to have better proficiency and understanding of the language.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>11.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table five shows the descriptive statistics for the preferred activities included in the questionnaire. It also shows that the mean score for these activities was varied among the students. The action belongs to listening and copying notes got the highest mean score (M= 5.18). In contrast, the training that focuses on practicing speaking with friends inside the class got the lowest mean score (M= 1.34). As it is shown, the students preferred all other activities differently.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Preferred Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To learn English, I like to practice speaking with my friends in class.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To learn English, I like to listen and copy notes from the board.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>2.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To learn English, I like to play games in English.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To learn English, I like to read a lot of English materials.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>2.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To learn English, I like to do role-plays and dramas.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>To learn English, I like summarizing what I have learned in class.</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20.89</td>
<td>9.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Elicited from the Semi-structured Interview

To increase and validate the results of this study, three students were interviewed. Before starting the interview, the researcher explained with examples the two types of motivation (integrative/ instrumental) for each interviewee. Those interviewees (students) were required to answer five questions verbally. Their responses could be explained as follows:

Q1. Do you think that motivation plays a crucial role in learning a foreign language (English)? Why?

All interviewees agreed that motivation plays a crucial role in learning English. The following quotations are explaining the agreement as mentioned earlier.

Motivation is a base of every aspirant and a basis of every worldly goal desired by people from various fields and disciplines, it is a human instinct that varies from one person to another to reach a desire. As for the English language, like other new languages, concerning the mother tongue, it is necessary to have a motivation to learn, master, and understand what it is to benefit from it in various fields of life. Since the English language is the number one globally nowadays, we must have a particular motivation for keeping up to date with the importance of this language (Student No. 1).
“Yes, of course, if a person has his motivation or derived from his surroundings, then this is a good element for learning the English” (Student No. 2).

“I think that motivation is very important for learning the English language, but the type of motivation is different from one person to another” (Student No. 3).

Q2. In your opinion, which type of motivation (integrative or instrumental) has a significant impact on learning English? Why?

Regarding this question, the interviewees' responses did not become consistent. Student No. 1 mentioned that integrative motivation is better for learning English. While Student No. 2 did not decide which type of motivation has a significant impact on learning English. Finally, Student No. 3 said that the kind of motivation depends on the situation itself, whether a learner requires learning English for the purpose of getting a job or for integrating into an English community. The following direct quotes show this variation in their responses.

From my very humble point of view, being able to use English for the purpose of doing your assignments or find or a job could not be considered as a mastery of English in its real sense. It means that motivation will be unreal or temporary because you learned the language for a particular purpose. On the other hand, learning English to integrate with a community or a group of people is very important. Motivating integratively to learn the English language will enable you to be a more proficient English speaker that makes you able to communicate or interact with others and know about their traditions and cultures. It makes learners like English and increase the continuity of learning. For me, English is my love, and I will continue to learn this language and never give up (Student No. 1).

“I cannot decide, but I can say that learning English is very important” (Student No. 2).

Learning English depends on the situation itself. Sometimes, we need to learn English because we want to find a job. On the other hand, sometimes, we need to retain it for nothing to integrate into an English community. For me, I understand English to do my assignments and at the same time to communicate with others (foreigners) (Student No. 3).

Q3. In your opinion, is an integratively motivated learner or an instrumentally one using English correctly? Why?

In this question, the interviewees have to decide whether a learner who is motivated integratively or instrumentally uses English correctly. Two interviewees agreed that integratively motivated learner is using English entirely. On the other hand, the third interviewee disagreed with the response of the other two interviewees when he explained that an instrumentally motivated learner is using English better than an integratively one. These responses could be shown in the following quotes.

Based on my experience, a person who will be able to master the language increasingly, will master it gradually. He is the one who is keeping in touch with English speakers or watching foreign series or films. It will lead to an increase in his love and passion for this
language, and he will have a strong desire to learn it, to go into more in-depth details, and to acquire more challenging vocabulary.

While a person who is learning English for a specific goal, he will never continue learning” (Student No. 1).

I think a learner who is motivated integratively is issuing English perfectly. This kind of learner learned English by listening to songs, watching films, or chatting with foreigners. On the other hand, in our class, we miss being motivated because of the focus only on English grammar (Student No. 2).

“An instrumentally motivated learner is using English perfectly because he/ she needs this language in his/ her work and to use it proficiently” (Student No. 3).

Q4. In your opinion, is it essential to make learners know about the two types of motivation (integrative/instrumental)? Why?

By asking the interviewees about their opinions regarding the importance of making learners know the two types of motivation, one interviewee strongly agreed that learners should know about that. He insists on the lecturers’ role in enabling their learners to differentiate between integrative and instrumental motivation. On the other hand, the two other interviewees rejected this idea. The following direct quotes explain their responses.

Yes, of course, the professor has to develop this idea and to make the student able to distinguish between the two types. This will lead to an expansion of the learner’s thinking and widen his mind. As for our reality, professors are not cooperating in this field, and they do not motivate students to learn English as much. They use to complete their lectures, and they do not give the English language spiritual value; on the contrary, they use it for what is found in the "constitution," which is the textbook (Student No. 1).

“I do not think so. There is no need to make a learner knows about integrative and instrumental motivation” (Student No. 2).

“No, it is not necessary. Each one should learn English because it is the language of a new era” (Student No. 3).

Q5. Do you think that the chosen activities by a teacher play an essential role in identifying or enhancing learners’ type of motivation in learning English? Why?

In this question, the researcher is trying to know if interviewees have agreed that the activities play an essential role in identifying or enhancing learners’ kind of motivation and at the same time if they have any preferred activities. All interviewees agreed with this idea, but they did not mention or identify any activities. Their agreements on this could be shown in the following quotations.

“Yes, of course, it has a very great impact. But this thing is almost missing in our lectures. Most of the lecturers adhere to one or two activities no more, and they never renew or diversify them” (Student No. 1).
“Yes, of course, not only the activities inside the class but also the activities outside it. I think the activities have an important role in increasing the type of motivation in learning the English language” (Student No. 2).

“Yes, of course, because they can enhance a learner motivation towards learning English” (Student No. 3).

Discussion

The findings elicited from the participants show that most of the students motivated instrumentally rather than integratively. This is in contrast with the study of and Bao et al. (2012), which shows that the correlation between integrative and instrumental motivation is very high and motivates learners towards learning the English language. It also contrasts the study of Abdulrasoul (2012), which finds that Iraqi EFL learners are motivated integratively rather than instrumentally. Their responses explain that they think that this language is needed do their assignments and sometimes to pass their exams. On the other hand, they give less attention to the benefit of using the language in communicating with foreigners. Some of those students represent their desire to learn the target language of knowing and understanding the language of other people. This means that they have the will to use the English language to communicate with people from different cultures. This is in line with some researchers such as Gardner (2007) and Bao et al. (2012).

Regarding the preferred activities, the results show that the participants choose to listen and to copy notes from the board as the most preferred activity. They also select reading as a preferred activity to learn English. This means that those participants avoid speaking in English since they focus on listening and reading in their learning. On the other hand, they give or pay less attention to making summaries, playing games, doing role-play, and practicing speaking in the target language. This means that there is no will by them to use the English language as a means of communication or interact with foreigners using English.

Conclusion

Iraqi students have faced difficulty using English as means of communication in their everyday life. Although they spent years learning the English language, they lack to be motivated learners. To shed light on this, the current study tried to investigate students’ motivation towards learning English and the preferred activities used by them to do so.

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, it is concluded that most of the participants from different fields of study were motivated instrumentally to learn English. On the other hand, some of them were motivated integratively. This study proves that most participants from non-departmental (non-English) students do not care about English as means of communication with others from different areas around the world. Still, they focus on facilitating assignments or any other works related to their field of study.

Consequently, the preferred activities to learn English have no value since the participants pay more attention to those related to writing and reading and pay no attention to speaking activities. This may be related to their type of motivation (instrumental).
About the author
Dr. Raed Latif Ugla holds B.C. degree in English Language from College of Basic Education/University of Diyala. He also holds M.Ed. and Ph.D. in TESOL from School of Educational Studies, University of Science of Malaysia (USM). His areas of interest are communication strategies, English language teaching and learning, speaking, and motivation. He is currently working as head of English Language Department at Al-Yarmouk University College.

https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8468-3747

References


Motivation toward English Language Learning among Students


The Causal Theory of Names: Between Theory and Practice

Sa'ida Walid Al-Sayyed
Department of English Language and Translation
Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Al-Ahliyya Amman University
Amman, Jordan, Email: saida.sayyed@yahoo.com

Received: 11/18/2020 Accepted: 1/22/2021 published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
This study explores to what extent a personal name has a causal relationship with its usage. Data were collected by means of a survey in which demographic data were elicited from the participants. Furthermore, the participants, whose ages were above 18 years, were asked to write their first names and reasons behind being given such names. The sample comprised 400 subjects who participated in the online survey distributed through social media network groups. The results revealed that names and naming practices are not haphazard ones. By and large, there is a relationship between the name and its usage, as stated by the causal theory of names. Whenever people choose a name, they are under the influence of; naming after people who are admired for their virtues, the aesthetic taste of the name, parents’ and relatives' religious beliefs, maintaining rhyming names, circumstantial names, and respecting social and cultural traditions. Another striking finding is that nature and the environment are no longer rich resources for choosing names. Moreover, the analysis found evidence for the complete absence of names related to occupational and achievement names, death prevention and survival names, horrific names, and proverbial names. It is envisaged that the findings might be beneficial for sociolinguists, onomasticians, learners of Arabic as a foreign language, i.e. non-native speakers of Arabic. It might also help people working on language and culture and how culture affects naming traditions in the Arabic context.

Keywords: causal theory, first names, naming, onomastics, personal names

Introduction

Individuals’ needs are relatively unstable, i.e. people’s needs differ from one person to another, and from time to time. In the past, particularly in Jordanian society, people used to live in deserts, small villages, and very few of them in cities. By time and with the openness to the world, people’s thinking has gradually developed. Some of them decided to move and live permanently in cities where all public services are available, and a very small percentage is still living there. However, for villagers and Bedouins, very few of them prefer to keep their old houses and have another house in the city. They start moving from one place to another seeking either education or jobs. Jordanians living in remote areas used to send their sons, who wish to complete their education, to the city to receive higher education.

Today, people are living in a world that is changing rapidly, and nearly almost all people tend to cope with such acceleration in one way or another. Changes in the way people think, behave and the levels of education have left their influence on the language. Eventually, new linguistic items such as personal names have been introduced into the actual use as well as into lexicography.

Personal names are deemed part and parcel of any language in the world. Whenever a new baby is born, an urgent need appears to find a suitable name that will accompany him/her all his/her life. Thus, naming a newborn baby is a worldwide phenomenon in which parents have to make decisions to name them. Naming traditions vary from one society to another due to several factors, one of which is the cultural differences and the surrounding environments. However, Devitt and Sterenly (1987) have highlighted the idea of the causal theory of names. This theory states that names are socially inherited, or borrowed. That is to say, a name is given to a person during a formal ceremony, and there is a kind of causal relationship between the use of the name and the name itself. The idea of this paper is to examine whether names are haphazardly given to people, or there is a causal relationship as stated by scholars.

The topic of names and naming has garnered the interest of researchers. Thus, a myriad of semantic and sociolinguistic research has been undertaken in this area. Some of them have tackled Jordanian first names (Aljbour & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2019; Al-Momani, 2019; Al-Qawasmi & Al-Abed Al-Haq, 2016; Al-Quran & Al-Azzam, 2014; Salih & Bader, 1999; Zawaideh, 2006). Others have approached Arabic, non-Jordanian first names like Saudi, Iraqi, Yemini and Palestinian names (Al-Barany, Albamarini & Shareef, 2009; Alzamil, 2020; Al-zumor, 2009), as well as Tusheyeh, Lawson, and Rishmawi (1989). It is worth mentioning that some of these studies have covered a specific period of time and were conducted diachronically with special focus on tribal or Bedouin names viz., Aljbour & Al-Abed Al-Haq (2019), Al-Momani (2019), Salih and Bader (1999) and Zawaideh (2006). However, there is still an urgent need to examine personal names from a different perspective, namely the causal theory of names. Therefore, this study reignites the interest in names by examining the possible existence of a causal relationship between the use of the name and the name itself. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following question; “To what extent does a personal name have a causal relationship with its use?”
Review of Literature

Theoretical Literature

Naming newly born babies is a worldwide phenomenon in which parents have to make decisions to name their new babies with names that will accompany them throughout their life. Gerrig and Banaji (1991) have commented on names as being a template that develops a self-image of a person which indicates a person's position in status hierarchies of gender, his/her race, and social class. They add that a name might also affect the behavior of other people towards a person. Seeman (1972) has assured that the choice of a baby's name is a challenge that faces parents upon their newborns' delivery. Furthermore, personal names usually carry personal, societal, cultural, and religious connotations. Naming traditions differ from one society to another due to differences in cultures. Murray (2012) has asserted that:

although naming traditions vary from country to country and culture to culture, we're all united in our quest to find the right names for our children. A baby name has to last a lifetime, so it's important to get a perfect fit. (p.1)

However, people of different cultures and origins usually introduce themselves to each other by telling their first names, and sometimes their family names. Hussein (1997) has stressed that the inquiry about the family names is one of the favorite topics among two interlocutors in Jordan.

The importance of personal names is represented in the onomasticians’ efforts of highlighting the etymology of names, and the way they are used in different cultures as well as the reasons behind choosing some names and abandoning others. Moreover, further efforts are exerted by Rosenhouse (2002), who has asserted that “personal names are part of any language and obey most of its general rules, whether phonological, morphological, syntactic, orthographical or semantic” (p. 1).

However, Kalkanova (1999) adds that proper names are deemed a very vital and dynamic part of any language since they are introduced under specific circumstances and they are also influenced by various non-linguistic factors such as; “religious beliefs, cultural traditions, aesthetic taste, and the most important in the country event socio-political life during each historical period” (Kalkanova, p.83). Likewise, Al-Quran and Al-Azzam (2014) have reported that Arabic names are similar to those names in other languages in which they carry cultural connotations. They also added that these names might refer to historically important events, cultural metaphors in addition to different kinds of allusions. Moreover, internal and external borrowing is a prominent phenomenon among Arabic names. This borrowing is manifested by referring to a figure or a celebrity in history (Al-Quran & Al-Azzam, 2014). Regarding the choice of the names, Bush, Powell-Smith and Freeman (2018) have emphasized that this choice is not made in isolation and the trends found in names are understood better as a phenomenon at the group-level. In another direction, Bruhn, Huschka and Wagner (2012) have stressed that some names might be prominent due to the popularity they acquire during a certain period of time. This popularity is due to the high positive traits related to high-achieving figures at that time. By time, these names might fade due to the negative associations they gain by some actions of the bearers. To clarify, the name "Mu'ath Al-Kasasbeh", who was a Royal Jordanian Air Force pilot, has gained a positive association in Jordan in 2015. At that time, many newborn babies were named after him due to the high positive
traits as a martyr. Supposedly, this name is linked with a tyrant, it will automatically result in a fad.

Review of Empirical Studies

Tusheyeh, Lawson, and Rishmawi (1989) carried out their research on a sample of 768 first names of Palestinian schoolchildren from both Ramla-Jaffa within the Green Line and Ramallah. They set an inventory of names used at that time with their pronunciations as well as the frequency of use for each. The findings proved that among all-male Muslim names, “Ahmad” and “Ali” were at the forefront of other names. While “George” appeared to have the highest frequency among the male Christian names. Moreover, “Fatima” and “Salwa” were at the top of the ladder of female Muslims and “Samya” was at the top of the female Christian names. The findings also showed that nearly all Muslim names were reflected in some Muslim names while Christian names reflected the Western and European names.

In the Jordanian setting, Salih and Bader (1999) examined the socio-cultural implications of first names of Arab Christians. It was an attempt to unveil the implications of personal names. It focuses on their social, temporal, environmental and religious implications. The data were collected through; (1) names in obituaries published in Jordanian newspapers and magazines among three months, (2) telephone directories issued by the Ministry of Telecommunication and Yarmouk University which provided the researchers with a diversified sample of names from different places all over the Kingdom. But highly concentration was towards the males’ names since telephone numbers are usually listed under the father’s names. The researchers classified the names into Arabic or Arabicized names used by Christians only, foreign names used by Christians only, foreign names shared with non-Christians, doublets where a foreign name which has a corresponding name in Arabic is used, triplets and quadruplets in which an Arabic or Arabicized name has two or three corresponding foreign names. The findings suggested that various meanings and associations were really conveyed in Christians’ first names. These meanings involved values and concepts with attractive and social meanings like honor, chastity and courage. They also implied names of valuable stones and beautiful plants and flowers, names of strong beautiful animals and birds as well as names denoting religious feelings and sympathies. The findings also revealed that Christians maintained a balance between their loyalty to the Arab country of Jordan and their attachment to their faith and churches by sharing names with Arab Muslims.

In a different ethnolinguistic group, Agyekum (2006) investigated Akan personal names and uncovered that names were not arbitrary labels but also socio-cultural tags that had socio-cultural meanings. The data were obtained by writing names as far as 1994 through the court and people whom the researcher had met at school in addition to school registers and payrolls of teachers from education offices. Additionally, a list of graduate and undergraduate students was also compiled during 1994–2005. The results demonstrated that the typology of names includes names of days and family, circumstantial names, theophoric names, names related to flora and fauna, weird and reincarnate names, achievement names, stone names, religious, occupational, insinuating and proverbial names, bodily structure as well as kinship.

Zawaideh (2006) looked into personal names in Jordan diachronically by drawing a sample of 200 families. The findings revealed that a high percentage of personal names throughout the three generations persisted without change. Names that were given for religious reasons were the persisting ones. The change of names was manifested in the choice of more phone aesthetically
and semantically appropriate names. Changes in names were also attributed to the level of education as well as to the place of residence which started in urban places and spread through other areas.

As for the Yemeni context, Al-Zumor (2009) addressed the naming practices in some tribal regions of Yemen. The researcher studied female names which, as he stated, looked very striking for people who did not know about the culture of Yemen. Data were gathered through a questionnaire in which 300 female names were derived. The results indicated that the naming system belonged to social and cultural systems in which they were embedded. Moreover, naming systems offered indications on the type of social and cultural ethos within which they were used. They also reflected essential values and important traits in their respective social organization. The findings also indicated that names are loaded with informative implications about the history of a community. The study also concluded that names varied in terms of their linguistic structure across different age groups which might suggest that Arabic names are at risk of extinction.

Concerning the Iraqi setting, Al-Barany et al., (2009) focused on the Kurdish personal names in Iraq from a sociolinguistic viewpoint. Data were retrieved from primary and secondary school registers, Duhok University registers, and food ration records. They provided evidence that names were not arbitrary labels but socio-cultural tags with socio-cultural functions and meanings. The findings revealed that the typology of Kurdish names is influenced by the following factors; (1) family names, (2) rhyme and rhythmic names, (3) unique names,(4) death prevention and survival names, (5) nature and places names, (6) occupational and achievement names, (7) circumstantial names, (8) honorific names, (9) beauty names, (10) flora and fauna names and (11) non-Kurdish names.

Al-Quran and Al-Azzam (2014) attempted to study naming as a linguistics process aiming to identify social and cultural allusions found in Jordanian Arabic names. The study found out that people had various tendencies in naming their kids. Conservative parents showed a tendency to name their sons after their grandparents’ names. The analysis confirmed that some social, psychological as well as cultural factors played a role in choosing certain names associated with climatic, religious, political as romantic backgrounds.

Likewise, Al-Qawasmi and Al-Abed Al-Haq (2016) looked into the differences in naming traditions of newborns in Jordan. The researchers covered the period of the 1970s to 2015 since some historical, religious or social factors may have influenced naming in Jordan. A corpus of male and female personal names from the same family was gathered from both the Civil Status Department and the Department of Statistics. The results provided evidence for a clear change in the choice of new babies names whereby the names in the 1970s were strongly associated with culture, religious and social values people believed in. Although names during the 80s and 90s are linked to certain social values, some are influenced by urbanization or modernization. As for the period of 2000 up to 2015, names have changed due to the advent of globalization in addition to the influence of different cultures.

Within the U.K context and with a large sample, Bush et al., (2018) analyzed 22 million names from both England and Wales during 1838 and 2014. They explored the factors influencing the choices of names during this era. The sample also consisted of names registered between 1996 and 2016. The results demonstrated that some external social factors affected the choices like migration. The findings also suggested that naming traditions/vogues reflected some demographic
and social changes. Rare names have proved to be salient and more common since they have some perceived virtues. However, the perceived values these names carry might fade with the increase of their commonality. Moreover, the researchers concluded that the existence of social networks had increased the number of proper names used.

In the same direction, Al-Momani (2019) tackled the Bedouin first-names of Al-djiiza District in Jordan. Specifically, the researcher aimed at identifying the semantic meanings of those names and exploring the socio-cultural impact behind choosing those names. A total of 177 names was obtained from the Civil Status and Passport Department from 1950 to 1960. The finding showed that names were categorized under names taken from the surrounding environment, animals and birds, times of the day, plants, personality and body parts, weather, and traveling. Moreover, the results assured that Bedouin names are not arbitrary and carry semantic and sociolinguistic implications.

In a three-generation study, Aljbour & Al-Abed Al-Haq (2019) did sociolinguistic research to explore the implications of names and the different naming practices in personal names in the Beni Sakhr tribe. A sample of 300 female names in the elementary stage was obtained plus their mothers and grandmothers. The total number of the names is 900 divided equally among the three different generations. The results unveiled that the high number of grandmothers' names were Bedouin-exclusive names. They were derived from the needs of the desert's dwellers, the severe conditions they lived in plus the social values of the Jordanian nomadic tribes. The grandmothers' names have registered a very low percentage of names of religious background. Religious backgrounds have affected mostly mothers. The overall results proved that the change in the lifestyle of this tribe influenced the naming practices and traditions.

Through a sociolinguistic, qualitative study, Alzamil (2020) addressed Saudi female names. To help achieving the goals of the study, a stratified sample consisting of 280 names was elicited through oral interviews. The names were classified into categories related to religious backgrounds, Bedouin-bound names, kinship names, family names, circumstantial names, foreign names, etc. The findings reported the names were influenced by ideology, culture, religion, attitudes, as well as the social values of Saudi communities. The analysis also assured that the names were "not mere arbitrary tags, but socio-cultural labels that occupy socio-cultural meanings and functions" (Alzamil, p.127). The study confirmed that the Saudi names subsumed under eight categories viz., (1) names with religious backgrounds in which daughters were named after the wives of the most famous religious figures in Islam; (2) Bedouin-bound names for expressing the socio-cultural values and beliefs of the Saudi Bedouin tribes; (3) family names to trace the patrilineal clans of the fathers; (4) circumstantial names relating to the time period and occasions taking place at the time of birth; (5) kinship names, where family traditions have an important role to play in the selection of names, as granddaughters were named after their grandmothers; (6) names relating to nature and precious natural objects, as parents opt for elegant names that are attractive not only in sound but also in meaning; (7) names relating to favored social values of Saudi society; and (8) foreign names which the researcher interpreted as a manner of shifting away from one’s traditional values towards modernism.

Previous work has been limited to the categorization of personal/first names depending on the researchers' intuitions and linguistic backgrounds. On the contrary, the present study takes a little bit different direction by focusing on the causal theory and giving the respondents the chance to
write the real reasons freely, if exist, behind their parents'/relatives' choice of their names. Therefore, the current study will touch upon a neglected area in the field of naming. The results of the present study might be beneficial for sociolinguists, onomasticians, learners of Arabic as a foreign language, i.e. non-native speakers of Arabic. It might also help people working on language and culture and how it affects naming traditions in the Arabic context.

Methods

Population and Sample

The population of the current study comprises all Arab people living in Jordan whose ages are more than 18 years. The sample is chosen randomly in which each participant has the same chance to participate. Actually, the sample as shown in Table one comprises 400 male and female participants whose ages are more than 18 years. Most of them were born in the city and the rest are in the village except one in the desert. Almost all of them are educated except 15 participants whose education was only higher school. Regarding their parents’ educational levels, more than 50% of them are educated, and others are not.

Table 1. Demographic data of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Participant’s educational background</th>
<th>Kolmogorov-Smirnov test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49 Uneducated</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>351 Diploma</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>B.A</td>
<td>313</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-23</td>
<td>303 Higher diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-29</td>
<td>34 M.A</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>25 Ph.D</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-41</td>
<td>24 Father’s educational background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 and above</td>
<td>14 Uneducated</td>
<td>131 (32.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of birth</td>
<td></td>
<td>269 (67.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>380 Uneducated</td>
<td>269 (67.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td>19 Uneducated</td>
<td>161 (41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desert</td>
<td>1 Educated</td>
<td>239 (59%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Instruments

A survey was designed to collect names from the respondents. The survey comprises some demographic data as well as the participants’ first names and the reasons behind choosing their names, i.e. they were given the freedom to write reasons in detail for choosing their names. It is worth mentioning that the survey is designed through www.surveyplanet.com to be distributed online through a link sent to friends, relatives and acquaintances via social media groups.

Criteria of Analysis
Based on previously reviewed studies and according to the data collected from the respondents, the researcher adopted the following criteria in analyzing the reasons behind giving names of the respondents. The following is a brief description of these criteria along with examples.

**Naming after people who are admired for their virtues**
This criterion represents names given because parents admired virtues of famous people, companions of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, members of the Royal family and names of actors and actresses. This can be best exemplified by the name “Emad” from “Emad Addin Zengi,” a famous Muslim leader.

**Aesthetic taste of the name**
This means choosing names with beautiful implications and meanings such as “Shatha” which means aroma, good fragrance and smell.

**Parents' and relatives' religious beliefs**
This applies to names that appear in the Noble Quran and are chosen based on people’s religious beliefs such as “Afnan”.

**Maintaining rhyming names**
This criterion involves selecting names with either the same endings or beginnings such as “Nuha” and “Suha”.

**Circumstantial names**
This criterion applies to all names that appear at the time of birth which are linked with either an occasion, time of delivering the baby or sometimes linked with mother’s feeling after delivery such as “Farah” which means happiness.

**Respecting social and cultural traditions**
This category includes naming the baby after his grandfather’s or grandmother’s names.

**There is no specific reason**
This indicates that there is no specific reason for choosing the name.

**A new and unique name**
This category involves choosing a name that is unique at the time of naming.

**Chance and tossing**
This involves selecting a name by chance and sometimes by tossing since sometimes the parents are confused about which name to choose so they resort to tossing.

**Results and Discussion**
A quick look at Table two below shows that naming is not an arbitrary relation, and there are reasons and justifications for choosing names.

**Table 2. Results of reasons and occasions behind naming**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons and occasions behind naming</th>
<th>Fr.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naming after people who are admired for their virtues</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>24.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesthetic taste of the name</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents' and relatives' religious beliefs</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data extracted from Table two indicate that “naming after people who are admired for their virtues” has scored the highest percentage among other reasons. About 24.5% of the respondents reported that their names are chosen according to people whom their parents admired because of the good virtues and reputations they have. Some respondents are named after the prophets such as “Jacob”, “Muhammad”, “Ahmad”, “Moses” and “Daniel”. Others reported that their names are from the names of the companions of Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him, such as “Omar”. This finding matches those of Alzamil (2020) who found out that one of the naming traditions is naming after the wives of the most famous religious figures in Islam. Historical names seemed to be a rich resource for people to pick up names for children such as “Emad” taken from Emad Addin Zengi and “Ma’moun” from AL-Ma’moun. Interestingly, some females reported that their names were chosen from the Royal Family members’ names such as Queen “Nour”, Queen “Zein” and Princess “Haya”. Naming after people in the Royal family might be ascribed to the fact that parents would like to show their loyalty to the Royal family. This result is in partial agreement with those of Salih and Bader (1999) who stated that Christians tried to create a balance between their loyalty to the Arab country of Jordan and their attachment to their faith and churches by sharing names with Arab Muslims. Another resource for selecting names for people is choosing names of actors and actresses whose roles are positive and courageous. Furthermore, some families tend to name their babies from cartoon movies such as the name “Zeina” that appeared in “Zeina and Nahhoul” and the name “Leen” as well. The idea behind choosing names of people who have good virtues might be justified by the fact that parents usually pin hopes upon their children and they try to instill good virtues into their babies. They also look forward to having babies who are similar in good virtues as those people.

The results of the table illustrate that parents have had high sensitivity towards the aesthetic value of the names. They are careful enough to choose names that have beautiful implications and meanings. This aesthetic taste of the names has scored about 23% in comparison with the others. Some of the respondents state that their parents are very careful in picking a name that represents a high sense of beauty such as “Abeer” which means the beautiful fragrance of roses. This result might be ascribed to the fact that people follow Prophet Muhammad advice in choosing good names that imply positive associations. The parents’ educational background might also play a role in choosing names, i.e. the more educated you are, the more careful you will be in choosing suitable names for your baby. This result is in line with those of Kalkanova (1999) who stated that personal names are influenced by non-linguistic factors such as the aesthetic value. It also duplicates those of Al-Barany et al. (2009) who focused on the importance of beauty names as an influencing factor in the typology of Kurdish names. Moreover, the results of the current research go side by side with of Alzamil (2020) who assured that parents opt for elegant names that are attractive not only in sound but also in meaning.
Parents, in general, seemed to be highly tied to their religious beliefs in choosing names that appear in the Noble Quran such as “Afnan”, “Leena”, “Dhuha”, “Nour”, “Alaa” and “Huda”. Some reported that their mums only choose names from the Quran. This might stem from the strong religious beliefs as stated by Kalkanova (1999), Agyekum (2006), Al-Qawasmi and Al-Abed Al-Haq (2016), Al-Quran and Al-Azzam (2014), and Alzamil (2020). This result goes partially with those of Aljbour and Al-Abed Al-Haq (2019) who concluded that religious backgrounds have mostly influenced the mothers among the other investigated generations.

Surprisingly, rhyming names has scored a relatively high percentage of 9.75%. Name givers, i.e. parents seem to take care of choosing names that have the same endings or beginnings such as the names of “Farah” and “Marah”, “Ghayda” and “Maisa”, “Razan” and “Rawan”. This might be due to the high sense of music in which people choose names that are in complete harmony. This result is totally identical with those of Al-Barany et al., (2009) who stated that Kurdish names are influenced by rhyme and rhythmic names.

Circumstantial names are of great variation although they do not score a very high percentage. They appear at the time of delivering the baby. Since respondents are given a chance to write freely about the reasons behind choosing their names, a variation of incidents appeared while being given their names. One of the respondents reported that she was given the name “Shurooq” which means the sunrise because she was born as the sun was rising. Again, the name “Sabah”, which means morning, was also highly associated with the time of being born in the morning. The name “Nour” was also chosen because the baby was born in the morning when the daylight began to spread. The name “Wa’d”, which means promise, was given to a respondent as a promise to have the last baby. Moreover, the name “Wafà”, which means fulfillment of a promise, seemed to be given to the participant as a fulfillment of a promise they had given to somebody. One of the male respondents, whose name is “Shaker”, reported that his parents named him to thank Allah for the last son they had. Another interesting example of such naming tradition is that the respondent was as calm and beautiful as an angel that’s why her parents called her “Malak”. Sometimes parents express their feelings by giving names of happiness for their newly born child such as “Marah”. Additionally, the name “Hidaya”, which means the act of guiding someone to the right behavior and right way, was given to a female child. The respondent reported that she was given this name because since she was born, all family members were guided towards wearing Hijab and praying on time as well as her grandfather who went to pilgrimage. Two interesting cases seemed to be named after the name of the hospitals where they were born namely “Hiba” and “Amal”.

Another name “Hiba”, which means a gift, was also suggested by parents because their daughter was the first baby in the family and they considered it a gift from Allah. Sometimes, mums tend to express that some of their wishes are fulfilled by giving birth to a female baby such as “Amani” which means wishes. Moreover, some names are evoked by looking at the beauty of the baby at the time of birth such as the names “Zain” and “Aya”. The two respondents wrote that their parents chose their names because they were very beautiful. Apparently, some parents or relatives suggested names hoping that by the time a person might acquire some features from his/her name. Names like “Samah” and “Osama” are the best examples of this. The names mean respectively “to have the virtue of forgiveness” and “a name of a lion”.

Another interesting point that was highlighted by some respondents, that their names were highly attached to the political situation in the region. The name “Salam”, which means peace, was
given to the baby at that time because of the treaty of peace between Jordan and Israel. The name “Amal” was also given at the time of conflict wishing to have hope for a peaceful life. People, who are highly attached to Palestine as a Holy place, name their children as “Filastine”. Dreams also have their role in naming babies, i.e. some parents dream of the name of the baby before delivery and once the baby comes they make their dreams true and use the name they have dreamt of. These results regarding the circumstantial names are consistent with those of Alzamil (2002), Al-Barany et al. (2009), Agyekum (2006) and Kalkanova (1999) who all reported that circumstantial names are predominant. This also assured that personal names are not arbitrary labels.

Respecting cultural and social traditions is being followed while naming children but they seem to have a lower percentage in comparison with the previous ones. This category includes naming babies after their grandfathers’ or grandmothers’ names. This finding is similar to those of Al-Quraan and Al-Azzam (2014) who stated that some conservative families showed a tendency to name their sons and daughters after their grandparents’ names. This percentage might be due to the fact that parents may start to adopt new names instead of the grandmothers’ or grandfathers’ names. Since those parents may consider these names as old-fashioned not no suitable to this time.

Seemingly, a very low percentage of the respondents reported that there is no specific reason for choosing such names by their families. This low percentage attested that personal names are not arbitrary ones as reported by Agyekum (2006), Al-Barany et al., (2009), Al-Momani (2019) and Alzamil (2020). Moreover, choosing unique names and naming babies by chance are the least percentages among all others. That is to say, names are usually evoked by certain occasions and choices. The results of the circumstantial names are in parallel with the causal theory of names which states the existence of a relationship between the use of the name and what it means.

Moreover, the data revealed that names related to strong animals and birds have no presence which means that the beliefs people used have regarding these names have started to change. Another striking result is the fact that the sample of the study did not show any occurrence for names of flora and fauna. This could be due to the various resources available to people to choose names. This would also clarify the absence of other naming traditions related to occupational and achievement names, death prevention and survival names, horrific names, stone names, proverbial names, etc. This result stands in sharp contrast with those of Agyekum (2006), Al-Barany et al., (2009) and Al-Momani (2019).

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

According to the causal theory of names, names are socially inherited, or borrowed. To put it another way, a name is given to a person during a formal ceremony, and there is a kind of causal relationship between the use of the name and the name itself. Thus, the current study sought to find whether names are haphazardly given to people, or there is a causal relationship as stated by scholars.

The analysis of the overall results indicates that names and naming practices are not haphazard ones. That is to say, they are not arbitrary in nature. By and large, there is a relationship between the name and the use of the name as stated by the causal theory of names. Whenever people choose a name, they are under the influence of (1) naming after people whom they admire their virtues, (2) the aesthetic taste of the name, (3) parents’ and relatives’ religious beliefs, (4) maintaining rhyming names, (5) circumstantial names and (6) respecting social and cultural traditions. The researcher recommends a future study to be carried out covering a balanced sample of males and
females since the sample of the current study gives the lion’s share for female participants. Another future comparative research might be done on the typology of names in English and Arabic. The researcher concluded that nature and the environment are no longer rich resources for people to choose names. Furthermore, the analysis found evidence for the complete absence of names related to occupational and achievement names, death prevention and survival names, horrific names, and proverbial names.

About the Autor:
Sa'ida Sayyed got her Ph.D in Corpus Linguistics from the University of Jordan, Jordan in 2019. Currently, she is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Translation at Al-Ahliyya Amman University (AAU) - (Amman, Jordan). She used to be the Head of Journals' Division at AAU. Her research interests are ELT, corpus linguistics, translation, and linguistics. She has published papers in different journals. ORCiD ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0109-9092

References


Learning to Present in English: Exploring the Voices of Preparatory-Year Female Undergraduates in Saudi Arabia

Noura Ali Alghamdi
English Language Institute, University of Jeddah
Faysaleyya Campus, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
Email: naalghmadi@uj.edu.sa

Received: 10/28/2020 Acceoted: 1/27/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
This study examines how a group of students enrolled in preparatory year program at a Saudi university describe their experiences while engaging with a specific literacy event, i.e. oral presentations in an English as a Foreign Language classroom. It adopts a case study methodology that relies on qualitative data-collection techniques, including reflections written by female undergraduates, informal conversations with these undergraduates, observational fieldnotes of classroom activities and a research journal. Relying on a social understanding of literacy, collected data are thematically analysed to examine how students view their experiences in this academic literacy event. Three major themes are highlighted in this study in relation to students’ experiences with this event: topic choice, fear and anxiety and the gains and losses associated with learning to prepare and make short presentations in English. Discussion sheds light on the impact of these experiences on the identity positions that learners develop and negotiate to participate in this event. It also highlights some of the challenges that mediate students’ experiences in this event and how they recognize and address these challenges. The study draws attention to the need for more in-depth, qualitative research to examine academic literacy events in tertiary education in which learners’ voices are brought to light to explore the situated nature of learning and its impact on learners.

Keywords: EFL classrooms, oral presentations, preparatory year, qualitative case study, Saudi university students, social practices, speaking skill

1. Introduction

As “a university initial stage aimed at preparing students academically, socially, psychologically and culturally” (Alghamdi, 2015, p. 118), a preparatory year program (PYP) is offered to high-school graduates upon their joining the university. It is expected to bridge the gap between secondary school education and tertiary education and provide students with the necessary skills needed for university study. Most universities in Saudi Arabia adopt PYPs in which teaching English language represents a highly-prioritized component as in the university where this study takes place. While there is usually an extensive, year-long course that focuses on teaching English, other subjects are often taught in English as well, such as chemistry and physics. English is, furthermore, prioritized for undergraduate learners who intend to major in departments in which English is the main medium of instruction, such as medicine, engineering and computer sciences. In the context of this study, the use of an integrated-skill curriculum to teach English is supported by introducing students to various opportunities to learn about essential study skills. Among these skills comes the regular use of oral presentations to improve the speaking skill among students while training them to search for information, organize ideas and communicate effectively. This study explores university learners’ voices as they describe and reflect upon their experiences with oral presentations. These voices are investigated to consider how engaging with oral presentations in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom impacts learners and shape their views of language learning and themselves.

2. Literature Review

Oral presentations have not received adequate attention within research on English language teaching and learning, especially in relation to undergraduates in Saudi Arabia despite the fact that they represent a common academic genre whose value has been acknowledged among academic researchers. According to Morita (2000), oral presentations can be used as one of the tools to socialize learners into disciplinary knowledge and practices. The use of oral presentations can also offer significant opportunities to learners to represent and communicate their developing knowledge and expertise in tertiary education (Hyland, 2009). In relation to language learning, the use of oral presentations can help improve how oral communication is taught among graduate and undergraduate learners (Zareva, 2011).

With the growing reliance in Saudi universities on using English as the main medium of instruction, academic interests in researching English language use is growing rapidly. An increasingly growing body of research is directed towards oral communication (e.g., Al-Mohanna, 2011; Daif-Allah & Khan, 2016; Mousawa & Elyas, 2015). Available research tends to focus on examining problems that surround speaking. Al-Mohanna (2011), for example, examines aspects of classroom interaction which negatively impact the development of oral communication among university learners. Alqahtani (2015) investigates the difficulties faced by Saudi language learners that surrounds their willingness to learn English. Rafada and Madini (2017) study speaking-related anxiety in English language university classrooms. Abker (2020) uses oral recorded tests to examine the problems that university Saudi EFL learners face when pronouncing English morphemes. In addition, other studies seek to highlight language learners’ practices that underlie their speaking. Ababneh (2016), for example, uses survey data to investigate the literacy skills and practices in English and Arabic among female undergraduates through survey data. Gaffas (2019) explores the impact of specialized language teaching on academic language development.
In relation to research methodologies, quantitative methods which rely on questionnaires and surveys are commonly employed in language research within the Saudi context (e.g., Al-Khotaba, Alkhataba, Abdul-Hamid & Bashir, 2019; Alqahtani, 2015; Alrasheedi, 2020; Eissa, 2019; Javid, Al-Asmari, & Farooq, 2012, Soomro & Farooq, 2018). Qualitative methods, in contrast, do not seem to be similarly popular. Exceptions include Mahboob and Elyas (2014) who look for linguistic and visual indications of a Saudi variety of English and they support their textually-based analysis by consulting linguists and experienced Saudi teachers of English. Barnawi and Phan (2015) employ a qualitative case study approach to understand how two Western-trained Saudi TESOL male language teachers utilize their training to teach English and the effect of their use on issues related to knowledge construction and pedagogical practices. Ababneh (2016) uses research notes and observations in combination with two questionnaires to explore the literacy skills and practices of these undergraduates. Daif-Allah and Khan (2016) investigate the needs of language majors in a Saudi college through survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and a speaking test. Nazim and Hazarika (2017) use qualitative and quantitative methods to examine how 40 teachers in a Saudi university perceive learners’ linguistic proficiency in relation to ESP standards. Gaffas (2019) relies on a case study approach in which questionnaires, interviews and group discussions are employed to explore the development of academic language.

This over-reliance on quantitative methods has led to a situation in which in-depth examination of learners’ voices to highlight their experiences still remains an under-researched area in the Saudi context. This study attempts to address this gap through providing a platform for highlighting learners’ voices and experiences. It aims to answer the following research questions: 1- What are the social practices that surround female undergraduate students’ engagement in oral presentations in a preparatory-year English as a Foreign Language course? 2- How do these students describe their experiences with these practices and how they impact their views of themselves? 3- What are the challenges faced by these students and how do they address these challenges?

3. Theoretical Framework

A social account of literacy is adopted in this study to address the research questions and explore what literacy (or reading and writing) means for learners and how it is used (Barton, 1994; Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Street, 1984; Pahl & Rowsell, 2012). Social accounts of literacy, promoted by the New Literacy Studies (NLS) view literacy as “an activity, located in the space between thought and text” (Barton & Hamilton, 1998, p. 3). This understanding of literacy moves beyond the functional, decontextualized value of reading and writing to focus on what literacy means for people and how it is used. Investigating the situated nature of literacy is important because it allows researchers to explore relevant issues which shape and impact language learning. For this study, two issues are particularly significant: learning strategies and identity construction. Learning strategies refer to the actions which learners employ to facilitate their learning (Oxford, 1999). Issues of identity construction, on the other hand, are concerned with the identity positions which students negotiate while preparing and making their presentations. Identity is seen here as “how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future” (Norton, 2013, p. 4).
Two analytic concepts are frequently identified within NLS: literacy events and literacy practices. While literacy events refer to “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants’ interactions and their interpretative processes” (Heath, 1983, p. 50), literacy practices refer to “the general cultural ways of utilising written language which people draw upon in their lives” (Barton & Hamilton, 2005, p. 7). Literacy practices are inferred from the way people engage with these events as they “are shaped by social institutions and power structures, and influenced by nonvisible elements, including social relationships, values, ways of thinking, skills, and structured routines and pathways” (Matusiak, 2013, p. 1579). Literacy practices can be examined through the use of qualitative data collection techniques which include “observation of the practices surrounding the production of texts – rather than focusing solely on written texts – as well as participants’ perspectives on the texts and practices” (Lillis & Scott, 2008, p. 11).

4. Methods

4.1 Data Collection Tools

To conduct this study, an ethnographically-oriented qualitative research approach was used using reflections written by undergraduate students, informal conversations with these students, observational fieldnotes of classroom activities and a research journal. Although participants were asked to write their reflections, thoughts and views regarding specific points, such as how they chose their topics, how they prepared their presentations and the challenges they faced, these reflections are treated as diaries because of their revealing nature. According to Bailey (1991), a diary refers to “a first-person account of a language learning or teaching experience, documented through regular, candid entries in a personal journal and then analysed for recurring patterns or salient events” (p. 215). Written reflections and thoughts represent a significant research tool in language research because they provide room for learners’ voices and views (Nunan, 1992). In this study, students were invited to write down their thoughts and reflections after each presentation. Because participation was voluntary, only some of the thirty-six students enrolled in this course have chosen to participate and hand in their reflections which they were asked to write anonymously to encourage them to express their opinions freely. Students were asked to use the language they prefer. While some have chosen to rely on a mixture of Arabic and English, many seemed to prefer Arabic and only few relied totally on English to write their reflections. To gain further insight into students’ engagement with this task, observational fieldnotes of classroom activities related to this event and a research journal were used to maintain “ideas, reflections, thoughts, actions, reactions, conversations and so on” which are significant for this investigation (Thomas, 2011, p. 164). Short, informal conversations were also used throughout the academic semester to ask students about different aspects of their experiences with these presentations.

4.2 Participants

This study takes place in a university in which the English language curriculum represents a mandatory element in its PYP. The literacy event under investigation is concerned with short oral presentations (or speaking tasks as they are often called in this context) which represent an essential part of the portfolio assessment policy used in this EFL course. In these oral presentations, students are asked to give a small talk that ranges from 2 – 3 minutes discussing specific topics, assigned by the teacher. Students were expected to avoid repeating the specific details of their talks. For example, when they were asked to speak about their dream jobs, students were required
to ensure that they had chosen different jobs to speak about or that they had avoided repeating or sharing details from each other in their presentations.

For this event, there were three presentations, distributed in the second, fifth and eighth week in the academic semester that lasted for around fourteen weeks (Table one). While the first two presentations were carried out in regular face-to-face classes, the third task was carried out after the suspension of face-to-face education due to the coronavirus shut down. The third presentation was taught through Blackboard which was the established electronic system adopted in the university in which this study took place. As some students were still adapting to distant education and others were complaining of poor internet connections, many sent their recorded presentations to the teacher via WhatsApp.

Table one: Presentation topics and study participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Present a review of a popular performer.</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>What is your dream job?</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Prepare an oral news report about a fictional or real event.</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In relation to the speaking skill, students had other ungraded opportunities to practice this skill in the course. These opportunities appeared in different exercises included in their textbooks in which students were asked to speak about specific topics in their textbooks or construct dialogues to practice using assigned vocabulary items or grammatical rules.

4.3 Engaging with Oral Presentations

Each oral presentation was introduced through a PowerPoint slideshow with a discussion of what students needed to do and the timeframe that they needed to adhere to. Other significant issues were additionally highlighted in this introductory discussion such as, the assessment criteria, use of supporting materials, appropriate vocabulary and grammatical rules, good organization and effective presentation skills. Students were asked to coordinate with each other to ensure that no two students shared the same topic. If two students, however, chose one topic, each was expected to make her presentation different from the other. Considering the efforts needed to fulfil such expectation and the fact that many students worked in pairs or groups on their presentations, most students seemed to prefer to search for totally different topics to avoid the risk of not being able to fulfil that expectation.

Students usually discussed in pairs or groups their topics to start brainstorming for ideas. According to the official documents sent to teachers before each presentation, teachers were expected to spend 1–2 hours on explaining the presentation and guiding students in class. Students were usually given 2-3 days to prepare their presentations. Some students wrote down their ideas and asked for feedback from the teacher either in class, during office hours or via email while other
students appeared to prefer working individually on their presentations without seeking advice or help from the teacher. A specific day was usually assigned for these presentations and students were not usually given another opportunity to present if they missed presenting on the assigned day without an acceptable excuse.

5. Findings

This section considers some of the aspects that shaped students’ engagement with this literacy event and were highlighted within the collected data in general and participants’ reflections in specific. The analysis starts first by looking at how students approached oral presentations while preparing and making them. After that, three of the significant themes that were highlighted in learners’ reflections are discussed. These include topic choice, fear and anxiety and finally the gains and losses that students associated with participating in this event.

5.1 Approaching the task

When oral presentations were introduced, students were divided into groups to discuss how to prepare for their presentations, choose topics and search for ideas. Initial feelings among students in class appeared to be directly connected to how they described their English language skills. While some expressed their worries and concerns around their ability to present in English, others did not seem to be equally concerned. Few of these students even described how eager they were to present. There were many reasons for these positive feelings. Some, for example, described how they enjoyed speaking in English. Others described speaking tasks as a getaway from other classroom activities which they described as ‘boring’ such as grammar exercises and reading activities.

Despite repeated calls for learners to speak in English, discussions among students in class while brainstorming were often carried out in Arabic, i.e. learners’ first language. Arabic seemed to be used as a strategic technique to mitigate the difficulties learners faced, considering the limited time available to work on these presentations in class. This was specifically true for those struggling with communicating in English. For these students, English was a must during assessed activities while in-class, side discussions among each other were flexible because they were not always monitored by the teacher and they were not graded. Arabic, thus, appeared as a more convenient option for these students.

Use of Arabic surfaced repeatedly in students’ accounts of their experiences in different stages of preparation. The extent of relying on Arabic beyond those early discussions differed among students. Some students worked to search for specific words or sentences in Arabic first while few seemed to construct the whole speaking text in Arabic first before translating it into English using automated translation services, such as Google Translate. The practice of writing down the task in Arabic first was not evident in class during the first speaking task. It became clearly observable during the second task in which extra time was dedicated to work on the presentation in class to address learners’ questions and help them prepare. They asked about parts of their Arabic texts to check if the offered information was enough. They also asked how they could say a specific word or phrase in English. Despite repeated attempts to encourage students and assist them to divide the task into smaller segments and construct them in English immediately, many complained that they did not know how to construct a complete text in English. Though they
could manage individual exercises, they did not think that constructing a complete presentation on their own in English was an achievable task. These described the process of searching for the information and writing it down in Arabic first as a safe way to ensure their ability to make their presentations as required.

For these students, writing their work in Arabic first did not necessarily make the job easier despite their belief that Arabic offered them a way to manage and facilitate their work. These students were left with the responsibility of creating a complete Arabic text, changing the content into English and practicing it within 2-3 days. The change into English was not a smooth and straightforward process since students needed to ensure that their vocabulary choices and grammatical structures were accurate. This was specifically true for those who relied on online automated translation which was not always precise or accurate in relation to linguistic accuracy. They also needed to pay attention to issues, such as accurate pronunciation and effective presentation skills. One student complained after the first speaking task that

لا يوجد وقت كافي لكتابة الـ speaking و التحضير له لأنها تحتاج إلى قراءة و جمع المعلومات و ترتيب الأفكار و أيضا تسلسل الأحداث و صياغتها و تغيير اللغة مع مراعاة الجرامر
there is not enough time to write down the speaking and prepare for it because it requires reading and collecting information and organizing ideas and also sequencing the events and verbalizing them and changing the language while paying attention to grammar

Advanced speakers, on the other hand, faced a different challenge. Despite the fact that these students often seemed confident enough in class that they were able to speak successfully about any topic, their language skills did not always lead to the expected levels of performance that reflected their levels as their overall grades were not necessarily better than other students. As these students were sure that their linguistic skills gave them an advantage in this task, many of them did not seem to pay attention to the required instructions. Few even proudly spoke in class about how the tasks were too easy and did not need much preparation or practice at home. Common mistakes among these students included falling short of the required time, presenting without adequate practice ahead, performing with poor presentation skills or failing to discuss the required elements. Although their speaking abilities were usually impressive, such mistakes negatively impacted their assessment because they represented violations of the requirements and expectations explained to them earlier. These students seemed to rely on a socially common belief that advanced speaking skills in English represented a guarantee of their success in any language class. They believed that these abilities were sufficient enough to exempt them from the need to follow the task instructions as long as they were able to speak fluently in English.

In contrast, attention to instructions, expectations and requirements appeared to be a priority among other students whose language skills were not similarly advanced. To enhance their participation in these tasks and attain positive feedback and assessment, these students appeared to exert extra efforts to pay attention to all of these aspects. Many of these students, for example, talked about practicing their presentations repeatedly in front of their friends and family members or audio taping themselves while speaking to ensure that they covered the 2-3 minute timeframe and addressed all the necessary aspects. Many also described the efforts they exerted to make these
presentations through consulting the teacher, classmates and family members regarding issues such as, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and creating smooth presentations.

5.2 Topic Choice

Many factors appeared to shape how students chose their topics. Personal interests represented a major factor. Availability of information in relation to language demands was also important. If a topic seemed to be challenging to research and speak about, students often chose another topic that was easier to approach and manage. It was not uncommon to hear students in class asking if it was OK for two students to speak about the same topic. Because students were warned against copying details of their topics from each other, most students worked to coordinate with each other to ensure that different topics were chosen. While most students did not seem to be bothered by this requirement in class, especially those who managed to inform others of their choices early, topic choice, however, surfaced as a challenging aspect of this event for some students. Despite the fact that students appeared to had chosen the topics they wanted, few used their reflections to highlight their dissatisfaction with their choices.

These students complained that the topics they wanted to speak about were already taken. They highlighted their frustration that their presentations did not really reflect what they wanted to speak about and how they could not think of unique details to make their presentations different from each other. One student wrote

كنت أكتب عن الطب، الجراحة، لكن أخذتها واحدة قبلها فضطرت أختار شيء ثاني

I was going to write about medicine, surgery, but another student took the topic before me so I had to choose something else

Another student expressed her disappointment that she could not talk about what she considered to be her dream job:

قمت باختيار هذه المهنة لأنه لم يتبق وظائف أخرى لكنني أردت أن أصبح ممرضة. تحدثت عن وظيفة لم تخطر على بالي ولا مرة.

I chose this job because there were no other jobs left. I wanted to be a nurse. I spoke about a job that I have never thought about before, not even once.

This inability to choose the topics they wanted and their worries that they could risk their grades if they insisted on choosing similar topics appeared in their reflections as a considerably resentful attitude towards being forced to speak about topics that did not really reflect their dream jobs or favourite artists. For these students, the issue was not only about working on a task to improve their speaking in English. It was equally related to their personal interests and what they could share with others about themselves. One student considered that situation as one of the challenges that she faced while making her presentation because

لا يمكن تكرار الوظيفة التي أريدها حتى وإن كانت وظيفة أحلامي

repeating the job that I want is not permissible even if it is my dream job

Though these students generally managed to prepare and make their presentations, their inability to maintain control of their topics shaped their views of themselves as being caught in an unfair
situation in which, unlike their classmates, they spoke about topics that they did not willingly choose.

5.3 Fear and Anxiety

Fear and anxiety represented significant aspects of this event. In class, it was not uncommon to hear students expressing their fear of public speaking. While some asked questions, such as ‘do we have to present in front of everyone?’ or ‘do we have to come to the front of the class to make our presentations?’, others asked the teacher for advice regarding how to handle stage fright. In students’ reflections, fear and anxiety were mostly associated with common fears of public speaking which concerned students because of the impact it could play on their performance. One of the students, for example, described how stress and anxiety impacted her:

أنا أعاني جدا من الإلقاء أمام الجمهور و أحاول دائما التغلب على هذا الشي لأنني عندما أتوتر أفقد تركيزي و أشعر بالتشتت.

I really suffer because of having to present in front of an audience and I always try to overcome this because when I get stressed out, I lose my focus and feel confused.

While some students seemed to have accepted the inevitability of such struggle, their negative feelings extended beyond being confused to other aspects of this event. Students’ familiarity with each other, for example, affected these feelings. Most of the reflections written after the first task associated feelings of nervousness, anxiety and stress with the fact that it took place during the second week of the semester when students were not yet familiar with each other or the teacher. According to one of the students,

I felt nervous a little bit because it’s the first time and I didn’t know the girls and the teacher.

These feelings subsided slightly with the second and third task as students’ knowledge of each other improved.

Time represented another significant factor in this issue. Many students complained in class and in their reflections about the short time they had to prepare these presentations. One student described her experience with the second task in which they were given an extra day to prepare as

أفضل من التجربة الأولى، التوتر كان أقل، كان يوجد وقت كافي للحفظ.

better than the first task, the stress was less, there was enough time to learn it by heart.

The extra time presented an invaluable opportunity to practice and rehearse her presentation which improved the overall assessment of her experience.

Concerns about performing badly in front of their teacher and classmates represented another major factor impacting students’ feelings of fear and anxiety. One student listed the challenges she faced during the second task which included

تكرار رهبة المسرح والخوف من الوقوع في أخطاء النطق أمام الجميع. الخوف من عدم فهم الجميع للوظيفة.

و ذكر معلومات قليلة و غير كافية لهذه الوظيفة.
repeated stage fright and fear of making mistakes in pronunciation in front of everyone, fear that not everybody would understand the job and fear of mentioning too little information that is not enough for this job

These concerns, however, moved beyond common and expected concerns about grades and assessment.

Although attaining high grades and positive feedback from their teacher was important for students, many students were equally concerned about the image and status they created for themselves in this community every time they stood to present. These fears, however, became less dominant in students’ reflections after the third task as some students appreciated the opportunity to present remotely without having to face their classmates in class. As most students generally described presenting in an online platform as less stressful, few talked about how they missed the encouragement and support of their classmates. Although it was true that their earlier face-to-face presentations were associated with common fears of public speaking, it was the third online presentation which brought to students’ attention other aspects of their experiences beyond these negative feelings.

5.4 Gains and losses

Another significant theme in students’ accounts appeared in how they perceived the impact of these presentations on their language learning and academic development. Some students described these presentations as useful and beneficial while others expressed a more negative view of these presentations. For some, the presentations were appreciated because they helped them to learn new vocabulary, organize information, improve their pronunciation and develop presentational skills. One student pointed out after her third presentation that

I used to feel I was completely weak in the language, but now I feel I developed: I understand, I explain, and I can learn by heart new words and the experience was enjoyable.

Few also valued the opportunity this event provided for them to face and address their fears of public speaking.

It was good a little bit for me ……. regardless of how many times I felt nervous and spoke wrong but I’m proud of myself because I did it
Students also wrote about developing new learning strategies that helped them to address the tasks’ requirements and expectations. They particularly appeared to appreciate the benefits of practising and rehearsing their presentations individually and with their classmates. According to one student, recording her rehearsal a few times helped me because every time I recorded it, I listened to it to see if I made any mistakes or not, and so I paid attention to the words I was saying in a wrong way and how it was possible for me to say a specific sentence in a way suitable for the talk that I wrote before.

While students’ practice with classmates allowed them to give useful feedback to each other, recording their attempts developed their ability to recognize their weaknesses and work to address them.

Yet, that positive view and appreciation were not shared among all the students. Many described more negative views which were related to a variety of issues. For example, while most of them were able to bring in supporting materials, such as audios, videos and still images, few complained about their inability to prepare visuals that they were satisfied with because of the limited time they had, the strict demands and expectations that shaped these presentations and their need to focus on constructing their speech. Although some students did not seem to show any interests in supporting their presentations with extra materials, others complained in class about wishing to have been able to provide special visuals, make impressive collages or even create digital stories through which they could support their speech with impressive visuals.

Negative feelings among students extended to how engaging with these presentations impacted their views of themselves. Many students struggled with their negative views of their abilities and their image among their classmates which were brought to surface with every presentation.

These struggles and inner doubts did not only affect their feelings towards their participation in this event, but also reduced it from preparing an oral presentation on a specific topic to just giving a pre-prepared recitation. They also brought to light students’ awareness of the gap that separated them from other students who appeared to be more competent and their fear that such gap will not be put into consideration by the teacher. Despite providing students with an opportunity to work on their language, these presentations additionally appeared to serve as a reminder of their language current abilities.
Ironically, these negative views were not uncommon among students and they were not confined to those struggling with language use. One learner explained in her account after the first task that the language was not something she worried much about while participating in this event. It was rather her fear of public speaking that dominated her memories as she recalled her presentations in the past.

I've tried it before twice. I thought that I was good but actually it's not at all. My teacher told me that I have to practice more and I tried. I suffer from social dread! I really feel uncomfortable when I just stand on the stage. EXTRA NERVOUS (من رأيي مو كل الشخصيات يناسبها ذا الموضوع). To be honest, I'm struggling with this.

The Arabic sentence in the student’s writing can be translated as

in my opinion, this thing (oral presentation) is not suitable for all personalities

For this learner, the presentation brought to her mind the past, unhappy memories of a previous presentation in which her performance was badly affected by her anxiety and fear despite having excellent language skills. She listened to her teacher’s advice to practice and prepare herself for the task. Yet, her attitude towards this event did not change as her view of this experience was dominated by her overwhelming anxiety about speaking in front of others which she could not escape.

6. Discussion

This study investigated a literacy event in an EFL classroom in which students were required to give short oral presentations. Despite the short nature of these presentations, a number of significant issues were highlighted in the collected data. Students’ reflections in specific drew attention to the gap between the promoted aim of these presentations and the practices that learners engaged with and the impact of this gap on learners’ views of themselves and their investment in classroom activities. Although this academic event aimed at developing vital skills among university students, it did not always seem to be successful in maximizing this aim among students. Students described a number of practices that shaped how they engaged with these presentations. Some of these practices appeared to marginalize some students who talked about their struggle with different challenges, such as time, topic choice and feelings of fear and anxiety. These issues created considerable challenges to the extent that it transformed the event for some from an opportunity to develop their speaking to almost a test of their ability to catch up and recite a previously-made text in front of their classmates regardless of how that text was prepared.

In relation to topic choice, students’ reflections highlighted the marginalizing impact that one-size-fits-all policies and unified requirements and expectations in academic events can create for students. While these presentations appeared to offer a promise for students to develop their speaking skill and speak about topics that mattered to them, not all the students were equally given these opportunities. Their topics, for example, were mediated by a number of factors, such as how quick they were to pick a topic, how good their language was to discuss challenging ideas and how willing they were to take the risk of offering repeated information in their presentations. Anxiety was also a significant aspect in students’ reflections. In addition to the expected fears associated with public speaking, other factors intensified these feelings, including their familiarity with other members in their community and their fear of reflecting a negative image among their classmates.
These issues had the ability to “enable or constrain the range of identities that language learners can negotiate in their classrooms and communities” (Norton, 2013, p. 49). They shaped how students engaged with the practices, expectations and requirements in this event in which challenges moved beyond grades and assessment. Their impact appeared in the decisions that students took to participate in this event and maintain the identity of a successful language learner; a learner who was able to prepare and make an oral presentation in English in a way that demonstrated competence and proficiency. Consider, for example, students’ use of their local language. Though it did not seem to enhance the development of their speaking skill in English, it functioned as an effective coping strategy which facilitated learners’ ability to engage with the requirements of this event while working within a demanding timeframe, especially for those struggling with English language use. It, thus, allowed many to survive the demanding nature of this event and paved the way for learners to reframe their struggles and work to attain a more powerful identity, i.e. the identity of a language learner who was able to competently present in English (Norton, 2019).

As further investigation is needed to examine the complex relation between learners’ engagement with literacy events and improvement of the speaking skill in EFL classes, it is important for academic research to examine a variety of literacy events in tertiary education and explore the impact that social context has on developing learners’ language and identity. Such examination is important to recognize and address problematic issues while working to empower learners and pave the way for them to embrace more powerful identity positions as language users that allow them to participate more effectively in language classes. As Hyland (2015) puts it,

contemporary perspectives see identity as part of a social and collective endeavour created through participation in our social groups and the ways we are linked to situations, to relationships, and to the rhetorical positions we adopt in our routine interactions with others. (p. 36)

There is an urgent need for more in-depth examination of the complexity of the social nature of language learning and how learners perceive their experiences in language classrooms. This is especially important to move beyond commonly dominant calls in this context that tend to hold teachers who are often tied down by “the limitations of time and the obligation to finish certain materials” as the major factor that determines success and failure in language education (Daif-Allah & Khan, 2016, p. 119). Pedagogical plans should take into consideration the larger social context that surrounds language learning because success in language classroom represents “a process in which everybody is involved to achieve successful outcomes” (Gaffas, 2019, p. 11). Issues, such as variation of levels among language learners in class, academic and pedagogical expectations, local language use and personal tendencies should be taken into consideration when examining the situated nature of learning. This is especially important to improve pedagogical decisions, empower language learners and enhance their learning experiences.

7. Conclusion

This article describes an ethnographically-oriented case study that aims to explore how Saudi female undergraduates engage with oral presentations in an EFL classroom. Relying on data-collection techniques, such as reflections written by learners, observational fieldnotes, research
Learning to Present in English: Exploring the Voices

Alghamdi

journal and informal conversations, this study highlights some of the social practices that underlie how these students engage with oral presentations while preparing and making their presentations. Furthermore, the study sheds light on some of the challenges that students face, how they address these challenges and the impact of these challenges on students and their views of themselves and language learning. Despite the exploratory and small scale nature of this study, this case study provides a glimpse of some of the challenges that surround language teaching and learning in EFL classrooms. As this study explores some aspects of language learning in tertiary education among undergraduates in relation to the development of speaking-related skills in English, it draws attention to the need to create legitimate space in academic research to explore learners’ voices, views and feelings in different literacy events through qualitative methods which bring to surface hidden aspects of learners’ experiences that may not be easily accessible otherwise. In contrast to the considerable focus on quantitative methods in academic research in language classrooms, this study attempts to provide in-depth investigation of significant aspects of the situated nature of learning in this context. Such aspects can be used to inform educational practices and pave the way for better pedagogical plans.

About the Author
Dr. Noura Ali Alghamdi is an assistant professor at the English Language Institute, University of Jeddah, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Her research interests include qualitative research methodology, literacy studies, multimodality, identity and computer assisted language learning. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9294-1443

References


The Effectiveness of Internet and Mobile Applications in English Language Learning for Health Sciences’ Students in a University in the United Arab Emirates

Omnia Ibrahim Mohamed
RAK Medical and Health Sciences University, Ras Al-Khaimah, United Arab Emirates
&
Faculty of Languages and Translation, Sadat Academy for Management Sciences, Cairo, Egypt

Received : 12/15/2020 Accepted 1/23/2021 Published :3/24/2021

Abstract
This study investigates the impact of internet and mobile applications on enhancing students' language skills. It examines the students' opinion regarding English online learning using the different internet or mobile applications. The participants were approximately 80 students from RAK Medical and Health Sciences University located in Ras Al Khaimah in The United Arab Emirates. A closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from the participants. The results revealed that internet applications have a positive impact on learning English as a foreign language. Students’ attitudes towards using internet applications for learning English scored very high in certain areas, while the impact was lower in some other areas that is related to speaking, listening or to group discussions. Based on these results, the researcher suggests that internet applications can be activated at all stages of English language learning and teaching. The implementation of mobile and internet applications is recommended together with the face-to-face learning as a sort of blended learning. It can be budget friendly for universities and at the same time effortless for the students as long as it gives the same impact as face-to-face learning. Therefore, the significance of the study is to try to utilize the best online technological method for teaching and learning English Language that is useful to instructors, institutions as well as students.

Keywords: Blended learning, English language teaching/learning, Google Classroom, Google Meet, Internet applications, online learning, WhatsApp, Health sciences students

Cite as: Mohamed , O. I. (2021). The Effectiveness of Internet and Mobile Applications in English Language Learning for Health Sciences’ Students in a University in the United Arab Emirates. Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 181-197.
DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.13
Introduction

Internet and mobile technology has invaded nearly all aspects of our lives. Everyone is either viewing their mobile phones, tablets, or laptops especially students at the tertiary level. Technology has conquered the field of education a long time ago. Universities communicate with their students via emails, university management systems (UMS) and via WhatsApp. There are WhatsApp groups either for every subject or for students of the same academic year. Sometimes instructors also join these groups for ease of communication with their students. Nowadays, learners are exposed to information technology that shapes their learning styles and learning methods. Net Generation students consider that using technology in the learning environment is essential. Most of them have experience in using online tools in their education (Roberts, 2005).

At the beginning of 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, all educational organizations realized that everything was different than it used to be. The advantages of digital learning have come on top. Everyone was working remotely suddenly without warning. People involved in training, teaching, and higher education had to access materials that they did not create to use remotely. They started figuring out how to communicate even though they may all be in the same geographic location. All students, all over the world, were mandatorily exposed to online learning. Students, as well as instructors, had to adapt in the absence of live face-to-face lectures. They were all rapidly trained to online learning methods, like Google Classroom, Google Meet, Google Docs, Google Forms, plus the previously used communication methods like email and WhatsApp. As a result, the higher educational climate has shifted significantly; it was not local or national; it was a global phenomenon. Some subjects were a challenge to the students and the instructors because they were hard to teach without classroom interaction. One of these subjects was English, although many English courses were given online before, like the IGCSE, SAT, or even general English language courses. However, there are certain aspects in online teaching and learning that has to be evaluated and studied further to be able to decide the effectiveness of some online methods.

In this study, the curriculum delivered included Health Sciences Communication English, teaching the four skills (Reading, writing, listening, and speaking), English for specific purposes, and presentations. The methods used in teaching and communicating with students were WhatsApp, email, and mainly Google applications of education. Each one of these education applications has a fundamental function in the process of online teaching of English. Besides WhatsApp, email, and phone calls, the role of Google applications was the most prominent of all.

Google Docs is one of Google’s applications used for education. It is free and can be easily accessed. They are secure web applications that save data automatically with minimal chances of losing them. It allows students to access, create, write, collaborate, and edit their documents from their computers, tablets, or smartphones. Moreover, students can add links, insert images and drawings, and then share their Google Document or save it as a Microsoft Word or a PDF file. With Google Docs, students can work together in the same document at the same time. Therefore, it is an easy way for communication (Zhou, Simpson, & Domizi, 2012).

With Google Forms, instructors can gather and organize material easily and can have various choices to design their forms, surveys, and quizzes. Once learners have responded to
Google form, their responses appear as a summary or in a separate spreadsheet to show details. Google forms and spreadsheets are always up-to-date and saved on the web.

Google applications comprise of other applications that benefit the teaching and learning processes. They offer a channel for sharing teachers’ modules and activities. Google Drive is one of Google’s essential applications for education. The teacher can upload large-sized files and insert links to be shared by the students. Teachers can also create a list of their students and distribute them into groups. Thus, Google Drive is an online storage device where learners and teachers can create folders to upload files and documents to view, comment, or edit with others. Besides, it saves all Google Docs created by them. Furthermore, all access to Google Docs and applications take place through Google Drive (Lamont, 2015).

The Google application that was of great importance in teaching was the Google Meet. This application opens a live channel between the teacher and the students. The instructors can meet the students in a live session and share a computer screen with them to see presentations, videos, files, pictures, etc. They can also record the session for the students to see later according to their preference. Once the recording is over, the instructors can easily share the recorded session in Google Drive with the students.

Google Classroom is also an educational application, which helps in online teaching. Instructors can create classes and invite students to join. After forming the class, the instructors can upload quizzes, assignments, and lectures in any format, like PowerPoint, an audio, or a video format. Automatically, when the instructor creates a class, a class Drive folder is also created to receive students’ files. Instructors can also communicate with their students through the “stream”, where they can share posts and schedule messages. Heggart and Yoo (2018), in a research, concluded that Google classroom improved students’ participation and learning.

The participants of this study were approximately 80 students from RAK Medical and Health Sciences University located in The United Arab Emirates. A closed-ended questionnaire was used to collect data from them. The research questions can be summarized as follows:

1. Were the academic staff ready and able to use the online methods efficiently?
2. What are the attitudes of students towards specific internet applications used as a learning instrument?
3. What are the advantages and the difficulties encountered by English learners when using internet applications and online learning in general?
4. What are the skills that achieved their learning outcome and others that did not achieve their learning outcome?
5. What is the best medium for online teaching and communication that the instructor and the students frequently used and preferred?

The objectives of the study are to:
1. Investigate the impact of mobile/internet applications in teaching and learning English.
2. Identify students’ attitudes towards some mobile/internet applications used as a learning tool.
3. Examine the advantages and the difficulties encountered when using mobile/internet applications.
4. Examine the impact of online learning, in general, on English learners.
5. Identify the English language skills that the instructors can fully give online, others that they can give partially online, and others that they cannot give online at all.

Therefore, the significance of the study is to examine the implementation of online learning to certain aspects of language teaching and the problems that may face the execution of online learning of English. It explores the skills that can be given online successfully and the skills that should be avoided online. Now that online teaching has become very popular than usual and students have got accustomed to it, certain aspects of language teaching have to be inspected to be able to use the online instrument in language teaching successfully.

**Literature Review**

**The Popularity of Researches about Online English Language Teaching/Learning**

A very recent study examined the trends and main findings of the studies concerning the flipped classroom method in English language teaching (ELT). For this purpose, databases including Web of Science, Eric, Taylor & Francis, and the Educational full-text EBSCO were reviewed, and 43 articles were analyzed. A systematic review was used as the research methodology. The articles were analyzed utilizing a content analysis method. The findings of the study revealed that the flipped classroom method in ELT gained popularity among researchers after 2014, and the number of studies in the field rapidly increased. Also, the most commonly used research methods in the flipped classroom in English Language Teaching (ELT) studies were found to be mixed and quantitative methods (Turan & Akdag-Cimen, 2020)

Online or E-learning is not a new topic for researchers, and it never lost its popularity. Online learning has enormous opportunities, as well as challenges, for individuals and organizations. It can save time, cost and effort, and enables remote access to the sources and contents. It can also satisfy the educational needs of learners, supports the learning process, and provides collaborative learning environments. However, these opportunities can turn into a big failure if the organization is not ready for online learning with all of its components (Soydal, Alır & Ünal, 2011)

**The Readiness of Institutions, Instructors and Students for Online Learning**

As early as 2011, universities were taking a close interest in the topic of online learning. For most institutions, the critical element of migrating to online learning is budget. However, the initial concern should be the institution’s readiness with all of its counterparts, such as faculty and students. It is vital to analyze all different aspects of online learning, determine the deficiencies, and close the gaps to be able to use online learning systems effectively. A Turkish study at Hacettepe University Faculty of Letters (HUFL) tested the readiness of the faculty members for online learning. The academic staff was tested with a questionnaire of 37 items that measured the participants’ perception in terms of Readiness, Acceptance, and Training. The results showed that, for most of the items, there were statistically significant differences among the mean scores of the departments, and the majority of the departments were not ready for online learning except for one department (Unal, Alır & Soydal, 2014).

Akaslan and Law (2010) pointed out some barriers concerning the implementation of online learning in universities. They investigated the readiness and training needs for online
learning systems of teachers working in the higher education institutes. They examined the online learning readiness with a 41-item web-based survey. The results of the study showed that the academic staff had confidence and positive attitudes towards online learning. Akaslan and Law (2011) also applied their online learning readiness survey to the students of the same program. Although their findings showed that the students were ready enough for online learning, they need training on online learning related issues. The study also emphasized the need for training on online education for the instructors.

Another study conducted to examine students’ readiness for online learning indicated that students were not fully ready to adopt online learning. The students were ready, but some improvements need to be implemented. Developing training programs for the students to help them to understand online learning better, making its benefits clearer, offering better internet infrastructures with more computer and mobile technology facilities can help students increase their readiness levels (Unal, et al., 2014). Moreover, Lin & Jou (2013) mentioned that previous studies concluded that most students have positive attitudes towards the learning that utilizes web applications.

Another study by Salloum, Al-Emran, Shaalan & Tarhini (2019) examined the factors affecting university students’ acceptance of E-learning systems. Its objective was to investigate the impact of innovativeness, quality, trust, and knowledge sharing on E-learning acceptance. The outcomes revealed that knowledge sharing and quality in the universities have a positive influence on E-learning acceptance among the students. Innovativeness and trust were found not to significantly affect the E-learning system acceptance. They realized that by identifying the factors that influence E-learning acceptance, it would be more useful to provide better E-learning services.

Teachers were the fundamental elements for adapting and implementing the entire learning environment to an online platform since they were directly engaged with students and course contents. They played an essential role in curricular transformations, integrating online learning technologies and adapting individuals to lifelong learning in a networked world in which knowledge plays a critical role (Bonanno, 2011). Tezer & Bicen (2008) conducted a survey-based study in The Faculty of Education at Near East University. The results showed that almost half of the respondents used online learning systems before, and that the academic staff of the sample faculty were ready for online learning.

**Researchers’ Attitudes towards Online Learning**

Many studies encouraged online learning, and others were neutral about it, indicating that there is absolutely no difference between E-leaning and face-to-face interactive learning. Some studies also examined the rate of success to perceive whether there is a difference in the students’ performance if online learning is applied.

**No Significant Difference between Online Education and Face-to-Face Education**

In the traditional teaching environment, face-to-face interaction with students is crucial for most teachers. However, Jahng, Krug, & Zhang (2007) compared online distance learning
and face-to-face learning in their study, and no significant differences were found in terms of student’s success.

**Online Learning can be More Effective than Face-to-Face Education**

Another study compared two U.S. universities in terms of face-to-face and online learning, it concluded that if the technological elements were balanced, online learning would be more effective. (Bender, Wood & Vredevoogd, 2004). McNeely (2015) also mentioned that students learn best through interaction, and they need a particular use for technology to communicate quickly with each other. Moreover, they learn by creating, editing, commenting, and sharing documents and ideas.

**Challenges & Benefits of Online Teaching of Speaking and Writing Skills**

In the studies examined by Turan & Akdag-Cimen (2020), speaking and writing abilities were the most commonly studied language skills. Further analysis revealed challenges and benefits related to the use of the flipped classroom method in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom. Additionally, in studies reviewed concerning the effectiveness of the flipped classroom methods, the findings mostly pointed to the benefits of the flipped classroom method. Based on the review, various suggestions are made for practitioners and future research.

**Some Reasons for the Failure of Online Learning**

Another case study was conducted in Indonesia during the pandemic of COVID-19 analyzed the students’ perceptions of their online learning during the pandemic, which is quite similar to this current study. However, the approach and the results were different. Sixty-six students of the English Language Education Study Program were involved. But their perceptions of their online classroom that were recorded through a survey was in terms of students’ participation, accessibility, material and assignment delivery, and the use of e-learning platforms. The result of the study suggested that accessibility was still the major factor influencing the success of online learning. Online learning for the English Language requires more friendly platforms so that students’ participation can be increased. This is mainly for students who reside in rural areas with limited internet connections and other support systems. The study concluded that the shift from face-to-face to online teaching presented a significant challenge, especially for those who were in least-developed regions. Most English students were not ready for this rapid shift in terms of teaching and learning style. The study identified various reasons: the first was availability and sustainability of internet connection, the second was the accessibility of teaching media, and the last was compatibility of tools to access the media. The good news was that the students also reported that their IT literacy improved when doing the stressful marathon task, though they also said that their gadgets were not ready for this sudden hi-tech change. (Agung, A., Surtikanti, M. & Quinones, C., 2020)

**Effectiveness of Google Applications for Teaching/Learning a Foreign Language**

As for using Google applications for language instruction and education, previous studies investigated the effectiveness of using Google applications in teaching and learning foreign languages. They have indicated the efficacy of these applications in improving the students’ English language skills. Alakurt & Bardakci (2017) have administered a perception questionnaire that proved that using Google Apps and Docs improved students' English language learning and increased their motivation. Furthermore, students had positive perceptions of using Google Docs and Google + inside their classes. Similarly, Liu & Jou (2013) have conducted a motivation questionnaire that proved the same.
Moreover, Dourda, Bratitsis, Griva, & Papadopoulou (2018) administered a reading and writing test that proved the same improvement of language skills. The results affirmed the effectiveness of Google Docs and the Google search engines in improving students’ writing performance. Therefore, with little training, Google tools run most activities inside and outside classes. Thus, they are suitable for project-based and online, or blended learning.

**Effectiveness of Other Internet Applications in Language Learning**

Besides the Google applications, some individual internet applications were examined in learning in general and English learning in particular. WhatsApp, for example, has been studied as an English language-learning tool from various perspectives (Çam & Can, 2019). In fact, WhatsApp is one of the most popular subjects for research papers and surveys. Furthermore, mobiles or smartphones as a technological tool that helps in accessing all the applications anywhere anytime were also discussed in several contexts. All the internet applications used in this research, as a method of online English language teaching, have been a subject for several researches. In these studies, the overall impact of these applications on Education in general and Language learning, in particular, is positive.

**Methods**

The study is a quantitative study using an online questionnaire. It was conducted after finishing an online course that was the first online experience for the instructor and most of the students. The course consisted of a Health Sciences Communication course, English for Specific Purposes, intended for medical professions, as well as an English language online course targeting all the skills including reading, writing, speaking, listening as well as presentations. This content was not intended to be delivered online. But the whole course content was rapidly transformed into an online course. This was the first time that the university had an online teaching-learning experience. Most of the faculties had a minimal idea about the online methods or how to use them. Moreover, most of the students were never exposed to online courses except for three students, who were exposed to other online courses than English.

**Participants**

The sample was a non-random quota that initially consisted of 120 students from the first-year, batch 2019-2020, studying English at RAK Medical and Health Sciences University in the U.A.E. The researcher distributed the questionnaire online among the students, but only 80 students responded. All the participants had either smartphones, tablets, iPads, laptops, or desktops that they used for online learning purposes. The participants were first year students whose English ranged from basic users to proficient English users. All were exposed to online learning for the first time except for three students who had previous online experiences. The instructors were also experiencing online teaching for the first time. They did not have sufficient experience using the internet or mobile applications used in online education. Moreover, the transition to online learning was sudden due to the Covid-19 outbreak, and the topics delivered were not intended for online learning.

**Instruments**

The researcher administered a closed-ended questionnaire to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire consisted of 35 questions. The items of the questionnaire were
categorized into seven sections, that is, demographic information, faculty and the quality of instruction, methods used in online teaching, learning outcomes and course requirements, communication methods, methods of online assessment, and the informed consent section. The questionnaire was sent online using Google Forms to the participants.

Results (Data Analyses)

The first section of the questionnaire is the demographic details of the students as their names, native language, and whether they were exposed to online learning before. The participants who filled the questionnaire were all Arabs, three Nigerians and one Pakistani. All of them were never exposed to academic or non-academic online learning before, except for three students were exposed to online education in subjects other than English. All the resulting figures in this study were rounded to a significant figure.

![Instructors' online Performance](image)

**Figure 1. Instructors’ online performance**

The second section, as shown in the above graph, illustrates the instructors’ online performance. This section indicates whether the academic staff was ready for online teaching or not. 75% of the participants agreed that the explanation of the lectures online was interesting and easily understood. 93% of the participants could discuss any problem like their grades or assignments with the instructor. 90% of the students agreed that they received prompt feedback from the instructor on assignments via Internet or mobile applications. 92% agreed that the instructor communicated with the class and responded to any inquiries at all times through the internet and mobile applications. Yet as an overall opinion, only 70% agreed that the quality of instruction affected their learning.

The third section of the questionnaire discusses the methods used in online teaching, course organizing, and planning. Instructors prepared PowerPoint presentations for the new online course; some of them also had an audio explanation. They uploaded the lectures in the Google Classrooms. The lectures were alternating between recorded lectures and live Google
Meet lectures. When the instructors recorded the lecture, they followed it with a quiz or an assignment to ensure that the students have seen the lecture. They also created a WhatsApp group to use in clarifying some points, to answer any queries by the students, or for announcements. Besides, they used email to send some small-sized files for study to the students and opened the mobile channel for any student who needs to contact.

**Figure 2. The methods used in online teaching (course organizing and planning)**

The analysis of this section of the questionnaire, which evaluates the online teaching methods, shows that 81% of the students agreed that the PowerPoints were clear and helped them understand the online lecture. 76% agreed that the examples, pictures, or challenging questions used to clarify the course material helped them. 82% agreed that the overall methods used for online learning were illustrative and helpful. That included Google meet, Google classroom, and illustrative PowerPoints. 87% agreed that live Google meet sessions were very successful. 85% agreed that the use of Google classroom was very successful.

The third section of the questionnaire included questions about the learning outcomes and course requirements. The learning outcomes are shown in more than one graph. The first set of learning outcomes that have to be learned by students at the end of the course is shown in the chart below.
It is evident from the above graph that there is a massive decline in the achievement of some learning outcomes. Compared to the previous two sections of the questionnaire, this section shows a significant drop in the percentages of agreement of the students. The participants who agree that they could apply the learning outcome of “speaking strategies” for participating in group or class discussions’ are only 30%. Another learning outcome that showed a decline in the agreement was “to demonstrate effective speaking using medical vocabulary,” as only 36% agree that the course achieved this learning outcome. As for the learning outcome of “composing and giving presentations,” the experience of making an online presentation, and the online evaluation for ideas presented in slides, 43% agree that it was very successful, which compose less than half of the students. Another learning outcome was constructing a composition such as essays, letters, and summarizing texts. The agreement that this learning outcome was achieved was satisfactory as 72% agreed that this learning outcome was achieved. After finishing the course, 40% strongly agreed that they could develop communication skills in spoken English to provide and receive feedback, which is also less than half the number of the students. Finally, 71% of the participants agreed that they could develop communication skills in written English to provide and receive feedback. Therefore, the fluctuations in this set of learning outcomes can be easily noticed.
The above graph illustrates the second set of learning outcomes. Same fluctuations can be observed in the achievement of the learning outcomes. Some of the learning outcomes suffer a massive drop in the agreement of the participants, yet other learning outcomes are high in the rate of agreement. 93% agreed that this course had improved their professional vocabulary, which was one of the most essential learning outcomes, as medical terminology constitutes about 40% of the curriculum.

As for the learning outcome of ‘improving the four language skills; listening, reading, writing, and speaking,’ the percentage has dramatically dropped in listening skills. Only 20% of the students agreed that this course improved the listening skills. However, 50% of the students agreed that it improved their reading skills, and 62% agreed that it improved their writing skills, whereas only 30% agreed that it improved their speaking skills. Therefore, there were variations in the achievement of the learning outcomes of the four skills, where speaking and listening got a very low percentage of agreement from the students.

At the end of this section, we asked the students to give a general evaluation of the online course in achieving the learning outcomes and whether it increased their learning. 76% of the participants agreed that the course had improved their knowledge. 68% agreed that the course increased their interest in the subject. Yet, the percentage of the overall agreement that the course achieved its learning outcomes was 70%. When students evaluated whether the online course ‘increased their independence in sourcing about the subject matter,’ 87% agreed that it increased their independence. 96% strongly agreed that they worked harder in the online course than in the interactive face-to-face courses. 89% agreed that the workload was much heavier than interactive face-to-face classes.

The fifth section of the questionnaire is about the communication methods used in the English online course and their efficiency. By communication methods, we mean the way or the
media that the instructor chose to communicate with the students and vice versa. It also includes
the channels that the students used to communicate with their peers. As a general evaluation,
91% agreed that generally the online applications were successful and that they could use them
efficiently. Moreover, 87% agree that performing any group work or working with other students
online was successful. They could use electronic media to discuss or complete an assignment
with their colleagues in any group work. The rest of the questions in this section are about the
participants’ preferences. The questions have the names of specific applications for the
participants to select among them or mention ‘Other’ applications if they prefer to choose an
application that is not mentioned in the choices.

Figure 6. Preferred communication methods with the instructor in the English online course

The above graph shows the participants’ preferred applications to be used in the English
online course as a medium of communication with the instructor. According to the students,
the preference was in the following order: Google Meet 95%, Google Classroom 89%, WhatsApp
62%, Email 25%, then mobile phones calls only 4%. None of the students mentioned another
media when they were asked to mention other media of communication with their instructor.

Figure 7. Preferred communication methods with peers in the English online course
The above graph shows the methods of communication that the participants prefer to communicate with their peers. WhatsApp comes first with a percentage of 98%, followed by mobile phones with a rate of 77%, then Google Meet with a lower percentage of 22%, and then Google Classroom with only 5% and only 18% for email. 22% of the participants mentioned that they used Zoom and House party applications to communicate with their peers and to discuss group work when we asked them to mention ‘Other’ applications used to communicate with their peers.

The Sixth section of the questionnaire examines the methods of online assessments. At RAK Medical and Health Sciences University, the TBL (Team-Based Learning) is one of the methods of assessments. They divide TBL assessment into two parts. The I-Rat (Individual Readiness Assurance Test) where every student is tested alone, and the second part of the assessment is the T-Rat (Team Readiness Assurance Test), where the students are divided into teams. Other assessments are Presentations assessment, quizzes, written tests, CA (Continuous assessment), and the final exam. The instructor conducted all of the assessments using google forms except for the CA and final exam; that the university conducted using software with camera supervision to watch the students through the exams.

![Methods of Assessment](image)

*Figure 8. Methods of assessment*

From the above graph, it is evident that the TBL assessment had a massive drop in the percentage of agreement that it was successful, as only 18% of the students agreed that this method of assessment was successful online. As for presentation assessment, only 33% agreed that the presentation assessment was successful and fair. Yet, 91% agree that the class assessment activities conducted by the instructor were clear and fair. Moreover, 87% agreed that the marking and returning of assignments online were very useful and fair and 80% agreed that in-course assessments and final exams conducted online were successful.
Discussion

The findings of the study showed the significance of Google Applications as educational methods of teaching and learning the English language. These Applications can be used as online learning instruments and can be implemented rapidly to enhance blended learning. Using Google meet, Google classroom, Google Docs, and other supporting internet applications like WhatsApp, email, and mobile phones, had significant effects on delivering a quality English language course and achieving the learning outcomes required. The language skills examined were generally writing, reading, speaking, and listening in addition to English for Specific purposes that included medical vocabulary needed for the medical profession. There was a focus on professional vocabulary, error correction, collaborative writing, and engagement in reading topics.

The analysis of the results regarding the methods used in the English online course revealed that the students preferred Google Meet as the best method of communication with their instructor, followed by Google Classroom, then WhatsApp, email, and finally mobile phones. Yet, when the students want to communicate with their peers, the methods level of preference changes. The students prefer WhatsApp to communicate with each other as most classes create groups to exchange information. The second method used is mobile phone calls followed by Google Meet, where they open live sessions to discuss group work and sometimes to help each other with assignments. As for Google Classroom and email, they are not much used among the students, as it is mainly the instructor’s method of uploading lectures, assignments, or quizzes. The students can only comment on what the instructor writes in the stream. Email plays the same role as it is mostly the instructors’ medium and the students tend to use WhatsApp, which is more manageable and format less. The students also use additional applications together like Zoom and House Party to open live sessions together. The study indicated a positive attitude towards the Google applications used. Among the advantages of Google Applications is that it is easy to use, useful and affordable. This is close to what McNeely (2015) mentioned that students could use technology to communicate quickly with each other.

The analyses of the questionnaires showed that the participants were satisfied with the instructors’ performance, as all the percentages ranged from 70% to 93%. Similarly, the participants were very much satisfied with course organizing and planning and the methods used in online teaching. The percentage of satisfaction ranged from 76% to 87%. It is worth mentioning that even though the instructors were new to online learning yet, it seems that they demonstrated good performance. As it is mentioned above in the study by Unal, Alır & Soydal (2014), where it proved that faculty were ready for teaching online effectively.

As for the learning outcomes achieved and the course requirements, the level of agreement of the participants was fluctuating. It was noticed from the graphs that the students feel that the learning outcomes did not fully achieve their purpose when it is related to the speaking skill. The percentage of agreement was very low compared to other skills. The agreement of the students that the learning outcome of the speaking skill was achieved ranged from 30% to 40% only. Therefore, it is evident from the results that most of the participants were not able to apply speaking strategies or participate in group or class discussions properly. The participants were not also able to demonstrate effective speaking using medical vocabulary, nor were they able to develop their communication skills of spoken English to provide and receive
feedback. Moreover, most of the participants were not satisfied with the presentation skills learning outcome, as the percentage of the agreement did not exceed 43%.

Similarly, the learning outcomes related to developing the listening skill were not met by great satisfaction from the participants. Only 20% of the participants felt that they demonstrated improvement in their listening skills. As for the reading skills, the agreement was halved between the students as 50% of the students felt that they showed improvement in their reading skills, whereas the other 50% did not.

Yet, the learning outcomes related to the writing skills were satisfactorily ranging from 62% to 72% of the participants, who agree that it was achieved, which shows that almost three-quarters of the participants could construct a composition such as essays, letters and summarizing texts. They were also able to develop their communication skills in written English to receive feedback. Most of the participants also agree that their writing skills have improved.

The learning outcomes that most of the participants agree it has been achieved with a very high percentage was the improvement of the professional vocabulary, which reached 93% of the participants. Yet, as an overall opinion of the whole achievement of the learning outcomes of the online English course, the results were satisfactory, ranging from 68% to 96%, which means that more than half of the participants had a positive attitude towards the delivery of the course.

As for the assessment methods, it is noticed that the assessments that involved groups were not very satisfactory for the participants. In the TBL, they felt that the assessments were not fair. Only 18% of the participants agreed that the TBL assessment was fair. Similarly, they were not satisfied with the online assessments of their presentations as only 33% mentioned that it was fair. Yet, in all other assessments, including the assessments administered by their instructor, as well as the in-course assessment and the final exam administered by the university, the satisfaction level ranged from 80 to 91, which means that the majority of the participants were satisfied with these exams.

Conclusion

There are multiple avenues to deliver the same content, and the way it is deployed is changed according to circumstances. What is required is the best delivery possible and the best learning situation for the students taking into consideration the content and the audience and their constraints. The results of this study indicate that blended learning is the best method for teaching English. Blended learning is a combination of face-to-face and online learning or distance learning assisted by computers or smartphones. Most of the English skills and English for specific purposes can be delivered online effectively and efficiently except for the skills related to listening, speaking and presentation. They have to be delivered face-to-face in an interactive class.

Similarly, the assessments that involve groups have to be administered in the examination hall. Online learning creates flexibility when we have to rapidly switch the methods of delivery
The Effectiveness of Internet and Mobile Applications in English Language

Mohamed

due to certain sudden circumstances. It is also budget-friendly for many institutions, as it requires less preparation for equipment or space and less teaching budget.

Further studies can investigate other online learning applications. Researches can be done to figure out better applications for teaching online speaking and listening skills in English. Moreover, other methods should be sought for presentation assessment or group assessments than the Google platform used in this study. Moreover, more researches can be done on web 2.0 tools, including Google Applications like Google translate and Google speech recognition. Studies can investigate the impact of the Google search engines and Google scholar in enhancing the production of researches related to the English language. Other Studies are needed to examine instructors' perception of using Google Meet or Google Classroom in English language learning. Finally, online or blended learning can be a fertile platform for researches. Researchers can examine new methods and applications that can enhance English language learning. Studies can also be administered based on pre-test and post-test scores to evaluate online learning from a different angle.

About the Author
Dr. Omnia Ibrahim Mohamed Hassanein is an assistant professor in the academic field since 1993. Had Masters of English Literature in 1996 and PhD of English Literature in 2003. Have been teaching English language and English for specific purposes from 1993 until now. Interested in English language researches as well as English literature. Currently an Assistant Professor of English at The Faculty of language and Translation - Sadat Academy for Management Sciences, Cairo- Egypt & RAK Medical and Health Sciences University in the United Arab Emirates. ORCID ID : https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0494-4482

References
http://dx.doi.org/10.31940/soshum.v10i2.1316.


Bender, D. M., Wood, B. J., & Vredevoogd, J. D. (2004), Teaching time: distance education versus classroom instruction, American Journal of Distance Education. 18(2), 103–114. DOI: 10.1207/s15389286ajde1802_4


The Comparison between the Process-oriented Approach and the Product-oriented Approach in Teaching Writing
The Case of Moroccan EFL Students in Preparatory Classes for the Grandes Ecoles

Mariam Kadmiry
Faculty of Education, Mohammed V University
Rabat, Morocco
Email: mariam.kadmiry@gmail.com

Abstract
Writing is an important language skill, and learning to write is not an easy endeavour, especially for English as a foreign language (EFL) students. An effective EFL writing instruction, therefore, plays a significant role in helping EFL students deal with writing problems efficiently and approach writing tasks effectively. Based on this premise, the present study aims at investigating the effect of two alternative writing approaches, process and product, on Moroccan EFL students’ writing performance to find out which of these approaches is more effective. It explores process writing instruction based on Hayes’ (2012) recent model that responded to both critiques of the 1980-s original model of Flower and Hayes and to new ideas, which adds more layers to EFL writing research and instruction. To this end, the participants were divided into two groups, A and B, and they all took a writing pre-test before the treatment. For three months (two hours per week), group A students received academic argumentative writing instruction that was product-oriented, while group B students were taught academic argumentative writing based on Hayes’ (2012) process writing model. After the treatment, all participants took a writing post-test. The analysis of the collected data revealed that group B participants showed a significant improvement in their compositions compared to their group A counterparts, which provides evidence that the process-oriented approach is more effective in enhancing EFL writing than the product-oriented approach. In the light of these findings, some pedagogical recommendations were suggested.

Keywords: academic argumentative writing, EFL writing instruction, Hayes’ (2012) process writing model, Moroccan EFL students, process-oriented approach, product-oriented approach

Introduction

Writing plays an important role in our lives for many reasons. Socially speaking, writing is an integral part of today’s modern life where emails, tweets, blog comments, Facebook posts, texts and other forms of written communication pervade (Graham et al., 2018). As for academic success, writing is an indispensable skill since it is the means by which information and data are gathered, refined, transmitted, exchanged and saved for future uses in any learning situation (Graham, Gillespie, & McKeown, 2013; Harris, Graham, Brindle, & Sandmel, 2009; Harris, Graham, Friedlander, & Laud, 2013). In addition to that, most exams commonly depend on students’ writing ability to test their knowledge and proficiency in foreign languages or other skills (Harmer, 2004). Writing is also a key requirement for professional growth especially in today’s world that is heavily dependent on numerical data more than ever before (Hyland, 2003a), thereby making candidates with command of strong writing skills more favourable and benefitting from promotions and hiring decisions made by companies and corporations (Coker & Lewis, 2008). Businesses spend large amounts of money on improving their employees’ writing skills that contribute to the creation of a good corporate image, the building of strong customer relations, and the accomplishment of legal proceedings (Coker & Lewis, 2008). Consequently, those who fail to acquire good writing skills encounter many barriers in their educational and professional life and are in a disadvantageous position in today’s world (Harris et al., 2009; Harris et al., 2013).

This is quite true especially when writing in English, the language of international communication or the world language today, which is the case of Moroccan EFL students in preparatory classes for the grandes écoles. A strong mastery of English writing skills contributes to their high scores and rankings in both French and Moroccan exams, which puts them in a competitively advantageous position, increasing their chances of joining the best engineering or business schools and thus opening for them many horizons in their professional careers both here and abroad. Unfortunately, many preparatory classes Moroccan EFL students face problems in developing this skill, which may hinder them from realizing their educational and professional dreams. In fact, writing is the most challenging language skill to master for EFL learners (Richards & Renandya, 2002) since it is demanding at all levels, cognitive, metacognitive and affective (Kellogg, 2008). Given this complexity of the writing skill and the challenges EFL students encounter in learning to write, the present researcher believes that an effective EFL writing instruction could enhance students’ ability to overcome these challenges and approach writing tasks with more self-confidence.

The present study, therefore, aims at examining the effect of both the product and process approaches on the writing performance of preparatory classes EFL Moroccan students. It aims at comparing both approaches to find out which one yields more encouraging results in enhancing EFL students’ writing performance. Process writing instruction has always been heavily criticized for its exclusive focus on writing processes. The present study, however, explores process writing instruction based on Hayes’ (2012) recent model that responded to both critiques and to new ideas, which adds more layers to EFL writing research and instruction. To this end, the present study seeks answers to the following questions:
1. To what extent does the product-oriented writing instruction enhance the writing performance of Moroccan EFL students?
2. To what extent does the process-oriented writing instruction improve the writing performance of Moroccan EFL students?
3. Does the product-oriented writing instruction develop the writing performance of Moroccan EFL students more than does the process-oriented instruction, or the opposite?

Literature Review

Product and process are two main approaches to second/foreign language writing instruction that have been broadly recognized. While the first one focuses on the written text, the second one gives more importance to the writer and the different stages of text creation.

The Product-oriented Approach to Writing Instruction

The traditional product approach perceives writing as a product of “combinations of lexical and syntactic forms and good writing as the demonstration of knowledge of these forms and of the rules used to create texts” (Hyland: 2003a, p. 4). Product-oriented teachers focus on formal accuracy and correctness at either a sentence- or paragraph-levels (Silva, 1990). They teach formal aspects of written texts such as vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, coherence, rhetorical organization, relevance of ideas to topic and so on and so forth. They regard writing “as an extension of grammar—a means of reinforcing language patterns through habit formation and testing learners’ ability to produce well-formed sentences” (Hyland, 2003a, p. 3). To this end, student writers are required to imitate and adhere to specific models as White (1988) demonstrated in the following figure.

![Figure 1. A model-based approach to teaching writing (White, 1988, p. 5)](image)

A model remains an important teaching tool by which students are taught the structure of good and coherent paragraphs, the different argument modes (such as cause and effect, comparison and contrast, classification, exemplification and so on and so forth) and discourse modes namely, description, narration, persuasion and exposition (Hyland, 2003a; Silva, 1990).

Since the product-oriented approach to teaching writing is form and language focused as well as model-based, this approach was put under heavy fire. First, it is true that grammatical structures and lexical patterns are crucial for SL/FL writers but “writing is obviously not only these things” (Hyland, 2003a, p. 6). Many FL students can form correct sentences and yet cannot write appropriate extended texts (Hyland, 2003a). Second, this approach overemphasizes the composed product and gives no insights into the route writers go through to develop that final product- that is to say the composing process (Flower & Hayes, 1977). When emphasizing the product in teaching writing to our students, “all we have done, in fact, is to give them standards to judge the goodness or badness of their finished effort. We haven't really taught them how to make that effort” (Rohman, 1965, p.106).

This increasing dissatisfaction with the product-oriented approach to L2/FL writing led to the emergence of the process-oriented approach to writing instruction. It is noteworthy that
despite all criticism directed toward the product writing approach, it is still widely used in FL writing instruction at different levels (Grabe & Kaplan, 2014; Hyland, 2003a).

**The Process-oriented Approach to Writing Instruction**

*Flower and Hayes’ (1981) Cognitive Writing Model*

Flower and Hayes’ (1981) cognitive writing model is the most cited and most influential process model in the fields of education and psychology (Graham, 2006). According to Flower and Hayes (1981), writing involves the interaction between three important elements, namely the task environment, the writer’s long-term memory, and the writing processes, as summarized in figure two.

Task environment refers to those variables that are “outside the writer’s skin” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 369), specifically the rhetorical problem and the growing text. The rhetorical problem, or simply a school assignment, describes the topic, the rhetorical situation, and the audience, which constrain writers while writing and enable them solve the problem successfully and respond to the writing assignment efficiently. As writers attempt to solve the rhetorical problem by writing, the task environment’s second component emerges and starts exerting a great influence on writers’ decisions. It is the growing written text itself since “each word in the growing text determines and limits the choices of what can come next” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 371). To deal with the rhetorical problem in the light of the exigencies of the growing written text, writers rely on their long-term memory in which they have “stored knowledge, not only of the topic, but of the audience and of various writing plans” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 369).
The third element in Flower and Hayes’ (1981) model is about writing processes of planning, translating, and reviewing, which are controlled by a monitor, the master process that enables writers track their current process and progress (Hayes, 2012). While planning writers try to guide themselves on how to proceed in their composing process, setting their goals and purposes, generating ideas and relevant information, and making a preliminary outline about the organization of their writing. This outline remains subject to constant change throughout the writing process when need arises. After putting an elementary plan, writers move to the second process, translating, in which they start tackling the first draft. In this process, they concentrate on getting ideas down on paper, without bothering themselves with the accuracy of expression. Finally, Reviewing takes place. In this process, writers rewrite their first drafts in order to refine their writing by making the necessary changes or modifications. They reconsider the objectives and purposes set previously at the planning stage and rethink about the topic and the audience (the rhetorical problem), paying attention to both fluency and accuracy. However, “We do not need to define “revision” as a unique stage in composing, but as thinking process that can occur at any time a writer chooses to evaluate or revise his text or his plans” (Flower & Hayes, 1981, p. 376), leading him to constant planning and reconsideration of what he wants to say. Obviously, these writing processes do not occur in a linear fashion. Instead, they are characterized by simultaneity and interdependence (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Harris et al., 2009).

This planning-translating-reviewing framework proposed by Flower and Hayes (1981) remained the most widely accepted and adopted process-writing model by second language (L2) writing teachers (Hyland, 2003a). Throughout all the stages of process writing classroom activities, the teacher’s role is to guide students in the areas in which they need help, provide them with feedback, focus on what students do while writing, and may address students’ weaknesses at the end of the writing session.

This process-oriented model has also come under fire, for its exclusive focus on writing processes. According to critics, this inductive method in teaching writing is not appropriate for all students (Horowitz, 1986). Teachers do not provide students with clear directives and an explicit instruction of the structure of the different target texts, leaving them on their own to discover appropriate forms while writing, drawing on their “growing experience of repetition” and on “suggestions in the margins of their drafts” (Hyland, 2003b, p. 19). After all, students are judged on their products regardless of the process they apply to reach them, and these products that are based on specific codes of a certain culture are more easily produced when the instructions of how to produce them are explicit (Delpit, 1988). FL learners, therefore, “find themselves held accountable for knowing a set of rules about which no one has ever directly informed them” (Delpit, 1988, p. 287), which may have serious consequences on their writing outcomes. As such, process writing approach fails to prepare learners for academic writing and, responding to the students rather than to the students’ writing, it gives them a false impression of how academic writing is evaluated (Horowitz, 1986). Teaching students writing skills such as planning, revising, and editing is important but it is not enough.

To overcome these shortcomings, Flower and Hayes’ (1981) process writing model was revised. After several years of empirical research and drawing on other writing researchers’ work and theories, Hayes (2012) published a new version of the 1980s-writing model, in which he responded to both critiques of the original model and to new ideas. It is, in fact, “the latest in a
sequence of writing models proposed by Hayes and his colleagues over more than 30 years” (Hayes & Olinghouse, 2015, p. 481).

*Hayes’ (2012) Writing Model*

This most recent model (Figure three) comprises three levels. The control level, as the name suggests, incorporates factors that form and guide the writing act. The process level comprises external and internal factors. It includes the inner cognitive processes involved in the writing act and the environmental components, both social and physical, that affect them. The resource level embraces functions that are important not only for writing but also for other human tasks (Hayes & Olinghouse, 2015).

*Figure 3. Hayes’ (2012) writing model (Hayes, 2012, p. 371)*

Hayes’ (2012) process model, which is a new version of the 1980s-writing model, offers an accurate description of what goes on at each stage of the writing process and a full integration of cognitive, social, internal and external factors that influence writing. It is more comprehensive than the original model of the 80s. This model has brought new implications for EFL writing instruction through the process approach. First, unlike Flower and Hayes’ (1981) old writing approach, Hayes’ (2012) new model considers motivation as a requisite to writing development especially “through its influence on people’s willingness to engage in writing” (Hayes, 2012, p. 372). Learners may not be motivated to write when they do not find a motive behind writing in their lives (Hayes & Olinghouse, 2015), perceiving it as a classroom routine and an uninteresting activity (Boscolo, 2009). Here, the meaningfulness and attractiveness of classroom writing activities and tasks play an important role in the way students approach writing (Boscolo, 2009). Students may also have a low motivation towards writing when they “associate it with negative consequences” (Hayes & Olinghouse, 2015, p. 482). For instance, they may feel afraid of harsh assessment especially if their linguistic and writing competencies are limited (Boscolo, 2009). Holding these beliefs and fears, students would avoid writing whenever possible thus a cycle can “begin in which lack of writing leads to lack of writing improvement, resulting in even less inclination to continue”( Bruning & Horn, 2000, p. 33). EFL writing teachers, therefore, should think about effective assessment methods that can reduce their learners’ anxieties.
In addition to motivation, writing schemas, which can be improved through explicit instruction (Hayes & Olinghouse, 2015), constitute another important element in Hayes’ (2012) new model and have a significant implication in teaching EFL writing to serve academic purposes. Writing teachers can begin their courses by building or improving their EFL students’ writing schemas of different genres through explicit instruction of the properties of different written texts to help them tailor their writing according to the requirements of their academic contexts. As such, process-oriented courses, based on Hayes’ (2012) new writing approach, can prepare EFL students for academic writing, hence overcome one of the shortcomings of Flower and Hayes’ (1981) old model. In fact, Hayes’ (2012) process writing model teaches students the two types of writing that Raimes (1991, p. 415) called for namely, “writing for learning” (i.e. prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing) and “writing for display” (i.e., writing to meet exam requirements).

Unlike Flower and Hayes’ (1981) original process model in which social factors were absent, Hayes’ (2012) revised model highlights the importance of collaborators and critiques in writing outcomes. Their contributions can be of great help especially when the writer’s knowledge drawn from his or her memory is insufficient (Carver & Scheier, 1991). In EFL writing classrooms, this may imply that while undertaking a writing task, students can draw on the knowledge and feedback of their peers as well as their teachers.

Furthermore, Hayes’ (2012) process writing model stresses the importance of reading for good writing as well. In fact, writers resort to reading for several reasons. For example, as they compose, writers read and reread what they have written so far to continue writing since reading may be a source of inspiration for new ideas (Hayes & Olinghouse, 2015). They need to “go back in order to move forward” (Zamel, 1982, p. 197). In addition to that, reading the text written so far serves revision and editing purposes (Hayes, Flower, Schriver, Stratman & Carey, 1987). Similarly, writers repeatedly read documents written by others in order to use them as source materials in their productions (Alamargot, Dansac, Chesnet & Fayol, 2007), which makes of reading a rich source of knowledge within a subject area (Hyland, 2003a). Consequently, EFL writing teachers should make use of this effective instructional tool, which is reading.

It is noteworthy to explain why planning and reviewing, which constitute major processes in addition to translating in Flower and Hayes’ (1981) original writing model, have disappeared in Hayes’ (2012) current model. “This may seem counterintuitive because we know that planning and revision happen” (Hayes, 2012, p. 375). However, there is a rationale behind this modification.

To achieve their writing goals, writers often make a plan before they start writing their texts. They may not need to write down their plans if they are clear, short and simple. Of course, such plans can be stored in memory and do not need to be transcribed (Hayes, 2012). Alternatively, if the plan is “complex”, they may opt for creating “a written plan before writing the formal text” and in this case, it becomes “a separate text” and “part of the physical task environment for crafting the new text” (Hayes & Olinghouse, 2015, pp. 482-483). As such, a written plan should be conceived as a separate writing activity (Hayes, 2012). Likewise, writers who are engaged in formal writing activities like writing articles or school essays, revise their texts that will be read by other people “to meet standards for spelling, grammar, and other rules...
of good communication” (Hayes, 2012, p. 376). Revision here should also be considered as a separate writing activity since it is initiated by the detection of a problem, followed by planning a solution to that problem. This solution is translated into language that is transcribed into a new text, replacing the old one (Hayes, 2012). However, writers who are engaged in non-formal writing activities such as writing journals may not revise their texts since they are not going to be read by other people. In this case, “formal rules may be relaxed a bit” (Hayes, 2012, p. 376) and revision may be overlooked.

A number of studies compared the process writing approach to traditional writing instruction and found out that the process writing instruction resulted in a statistically significant improvement in students’ overall performance (eg. Arici & Kaldirim, 2015; Graham & Sandmel, 2011; Mehr, 2017; Samsudin, 2016; Sarhady, 2015), hence the present researcher’s interest in contributing yet another study to this line of research in the Moroccan EFL context. To the researcher’s best knowledge, no study has attempted to investigate the effect of process-oriented writing instruction, based on Hayes’s (2012) writing model, on EFL students’ writing performance in Morocco, thereby the researcher’s willingness to fill in the empirical gap in writing research and instruction in this context. It is in this sense that the present paper gains its significance.

Methods

Participants

Convenience sampling was used to select subjects who participated in the present study. In the 2019-2020 winter semester, the entire study group consisted of 64 participants (34 females, 30 males) who were first-year EFL students, studying maths and physics at a center of preparatory classes for the grandes écoles, Rabat- Morocco, where they were supposed to spend two years to be able to join one of the Moroccan or French engineering schools. Their age ranged from 17 to 19 years old, and they were admitted in preparatory classes for the grandes écoles due to their good ranking in the entrance selection based on their overall achievement results in the baccalaureate exam. Some of them have been studying English since they were in primary school. Those ones came from private schools. Others, on the other hand, who came from public schools, did not study English until they reached the last year of middle school. They formed two groups: group A contained 33 students and group B included 31 students.

Instruments

Data was collected based on two writing tests. One was administered before the experiment (pre-test) and one after (post-test). Containing one writing prompt each, they aimed at assessing subjects’ writing proficiency directly, asking them to actually produce a piece of argumentative writing on topics related to the themes they study in their English program. To increase their validity and reliability, both tests were evaluated by an advisory panel of three teachers of English, and then piloted before their submission to the participants and use for data collection in the present study.

Procedures

The present study adopted the quasi-experimental research design since a true-experiment was impossible in a school setting where classes were formed at the beginning of the year, thereby
the unfeasibility of doing randomization of subjects into different groups. Two intact classes, therefore, participated in this study and the researcher implemented all experimental procedures.

The Pre-testing Phase
Prior to treatment, a one-hour session was devoted to the pre-test to measure participants’ writing proficiency. All participants were assigned a writing task (the pre-writing test), asking them to write a four-paragraph argumentative essay. These essays were holistically graded, using a holistic grading scale that was adapted on the basis of the general rubrics proposed by Hyland (2003a). Holistic scoring was chosen over other scoring methods for its practicality, for its focus on global achievement and for the general impression it provides about the quality of students’ writings (Hyland, 2003a), which best suits the present study’s purpose. To improve the reliability of this holistic scoring, students’ writing tests were rated by two assessors, which necessitated the assessment of Inter-rater reliability. The results revealed that there was a high Inter-rater reliability since the correlation coefficient was higher than .7. It was equal to .845.

To ensure that the participants of both Groups had a similar writing proficiency in English, the independent samples t-test was conducted on the pre-test scores of both groups. The purpose of the independent samples t-test was to find out whether there were any significant differences between the proficiency levels of both groups. The results revealed that there were no significant differences in the levels of writing proficiency of the participants between group A (M=10.44, SD=1.47) and group B (M=10.73, SD=1.29); t(62)=.829, p=.410). Table one summarizes the results.

Table 1. Results of the independent samples t-test on the pre-test scores of groups A and B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mean diff.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>10.44</td>
<td>1.477</td>
<td>0.2872</td>
<td>0.829</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>0.410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>10.73</td>
<td>1.293</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Treatment Phase
The treatment phase lasted three months (two hours per week) in which group A was taught writing based on the product approach while group B sat for writing sessions adopting the process-oriented approach.

Group A students received product-oriented writing instruction as described in figure one. In the first session, the teacher (the researcher) taught students the characteristics and features of the argumentative genre in terms of structure and content, as recommended by their educational program, through an analysis of an argumentative essay sample. Then, she suggested a writing topic and asked students to write argumentative essays based on the model text. In subsequent sessions, the participants were reminded of the properties of the argumentative genre and were asked to write argumentative essays on different topics. The teacher scored the essays after they were completed, and gave them back to the participants.

Group B students, on the other hand, received a process-oriented writing instruction by the same teacher, as shown in figure four.
The first session of the intervention, the teacher (the researcher) began the writing course by building and improving students’ writing schemas of the argumentative genre, as recommended by their educational program, through explicit instruction. In subsequent sessions, students were reminded of these characteristics and features and worked on a new writing topic.

![Process Model of Writing Instruction](adapted from Hyland, 2003a, p. 11).

The planning stage incorporates goal-setting, idea generating and organizing. In setting goals, students were urged to define the rhetorical problem, or simply to read carefully the writing assignment, to understand the topic and to determine the rhetorical situation (argumentative essays) and the audience. Then, students were invited to generate ideas about the writing topic through group/whole class brainstorming or semantic mapping and after that, they made a preliminary outline about the organization of their writing. Once sufficient ideas and information about the writing topic were gathered and an elementary plan was put at the planning stage, students moved to the next stage, drafting, in which they started tackling the first draft.

Once students produced the first draft and before proceeding to the revision stage, they exchanged their copies and expressed their reactions to each other’s products in small groups or in pairs, with the aid of a checklist proposed by Seow (2002). They wrote their remarks in the margin, between sentence lines or at the end of the texts. The teacher (the researcher) supervised and participated in the responding process by (1) providing the necessary help to students to be able to react effectively and evaluate each other’s writings successfully or by (2) expressing her opinion directly about students’ writings.

In light of the feedback provided in the previous stage, students revised what they had produced. They were required to focus on the global content and the organization of ideas to ensure an effective communication between them and their readers and to avoid any misunderstanding or confusion. After revising their essays in terms of content and structure,
students still needed to edit their drafts to make sure they were clear, concise, and error-free. At this stage, students were engaged in tidying up and refining their texts by making the necessary changes or modifications so that to be ready for evaluation. They edited their final drafts in terms of grammar, spelling, punctuation, diction, and sentence structure.

Once students felt satisfied with their final drafts after revising and editing them, they were invited to evaluate each other’s essays in pairs or in groups. They had to examine relevance, development and organization of ideas, format or layout, grammar and structure, spelling and punctuation, appropriateness of vocabulary, and clarity of communication. They were issued the criteria for evaluation with a grading scale to assign a grade and were asked to write a short comment or evaluation at the end of the essays they evaluated to justify that grade. Of course the teacher (the researcher) supervised the evaluating process, provided support to students to do this task successfully, and intervened when there was a need.

The final stage in process writing instruction is post-writing that refers to “any classroom activity that the teacher and students can do with the completed pieces of writing” such as “publishing, sharing, reading aloud, transforming texts for stage performances, or merely displaying texts on notice-boards” (Seow, 2002, p. 319). In the present study, sharing, reading aloud and displaying texts on the classroom notice-board were the main and possible post-writing activities.

Throughout all the experimental procedures followed with group B, the teacher (the researcher) guided students in the areas in which they needed help, provided them with feedback throughout the writing act and focused on what students were doing while writing.

**The Post-testing Phase**

After the interventions were conducted, a one-hour session was devoted to post-testing to assess the impact, if any, of the treatments on students’ writing performance. All participants were administered a post-writing test, asking them to write a four-paragraph argumentative essay. These essays were holistically graded, using the same holistic grading scale that was implemented in scoring participants’ pre-writing tests. To improve the reliability of this holistic scoring, students’ writing tests were rated by two assessors, which necessitated the assessment of Inter-rater reliability. The results revealed that there was an acceptable Inter-rater reliability since the correlation coefficient was higher than .7. It was equal to .767.

**Results**

To answer the first question, which measures the effect of the product-oriented writing instruction on the writing performance of group A students, the paired samples t-test was conducted to compare students’ scores before and after treatment. Table two summarizes the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mean diff.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>10.44</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>-1.749</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.091</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table two shows that although the post-test scores of group A students (M=10.83, SD=.86) are higher than their pre-test scores (M=10.44, SD=1.47), that difference remained non-significant; t(30)=-1.74, p = .091. These results suggest that the product-oriented approach did not significantly improve the writing performance of group A students. In other words, the product-oriented approach does not have a significant effect on students’ writing performance.

Likewise, to answer the second question, which measures the effect of the process-oriented writing instruction on the writing performance of group B students, the paired samples t-test was conducted to compare students’ scores before and after treatment. Table three summarizes the results.

Table 3. *Results of the paired samples t-test on pre- and post-test scores of group B*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mean diff.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>10.73</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>-1.09</td>
<td>-6.939</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>11.82</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table three displays, the post-test scores (M=11.82, SD=.86) of group B participants were significantly higher than their pre-test scores (M=10.73, SD=1.29); t(32)=-6.93, p = .000. These results suggest that the process-oriented approach significantly improved the writing performance of group B participants. In other words, the process-oriented approach has a significant effect on students’ writing performance.

To answer the third question, which compares the effect of both types of instruction on students’ writing performance, the independent sample t-test was conducted. This statistical tool was used to compare the two groups in terms of their writing performance after the treatment and to see if there would be any significant differences in their post-test scores. The findings are summarized in table four.

Table 4. *Results of the independent samples t-test on the post-test scores of groups A and B*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mean diff.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.(2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group A</td>
<td>10.83</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.9952</td>
<td>4.615</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group B</td>
<td>11.82</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table four reveals that after the treatment, group B participants (M=11.82, SD=.86) had a significant higher score than group A students (M=10.83, SD=.86); t(62)=4.61, p = .000. These findings indicate that the process-oriented approach improved students’ writing performance more than the product-oriented approach did. In other words, the process-oriented approach had a more significant effect than the product-oriented approach on students’ writing performance.

**Discussion**

The present study investigated the effect of two alternative writing approaches namely, process and product, on Moroccan EFL students’ writing performance and was an attempt to find out which of these approaches is more effective. The results indicated that the participants who received process-oriented writing instruction outperformed their counterparts who were taught writing through product-oriented approach. In other words, the study found that the process
approach had a more significant effect than the product approach on students’ writing performance. These findings are in line with previous research (e.g., Arici & Kaldirim, 2015; Graham & Sandmel, 2011; Mehr, 2017; Samsudin, 2016; Sarhady, 2015). There are a number of factors that may have contributed to these findings.

The difference of focus and of instructional tools between product and process approaches are the first factors. While the product approach focuses solely on students’ written products, the process approach, based on Hayes’ (2012) writing model, focuses on both students’ products and process. By building students’ writing schemas of the argumentative genre, as recommended by their educational program through explicit instruction and by teaching students problem-solving writing strategies (i.e., planning, drafting, revising and editing), the process approach in the present study helped group B students know both how to benefit from the process as language learners and writers, and also how to tailor their products according to the requirements of their academic contexts (Raimes, 1991). This is why group B students outperformed group A students who were taught only the product, by providing them with a model of an argumentative essay to analyze and leaving them to their own devices to write a similar essay. As Flower and Hayes (1977) stated, product approach teachers help students study the product, but they “leave the process of writing up to inspiration” (p. 449). Group A students, therefore, were taught the product but not the process that could lead them to that product, which was not enough to achieve the desired results. In addition, the use of models as instructional tools enchains students’ minds and kills their creativity (Sarhady, 2015). The process approach, however, engages students in recursive procedures demanding the use of planning, drafting, revising and editing strategies (Samsudin, 2016; Sarhady, 2015), thereby helping them hunt for ideas and thoughts, seek meaning, and refine their own writing step by step (Mehr, 2017), which encourages free, critical and creative thinking.

The second reason why Hayes’ (2012) process approach had a more significant effect on students’ writing performance than the traditional product approach in the present study is related to the time students received feedback. While group A students received feedback on their products till the end of the writing activity, simultaneously with evaluation, group B students were provided with feedback while writing in the responding stage, before being evaluated. Group B students, therefore, had the chance to revise and improve the quality of their products on the light of their teacher’s and peers’ remarks before they submitted the final versions of their products. Group A students, however, didn’t have this opportunity since the feedback they received was late, after they handed their final products. This finding is consistent with Sarhady’s (2015) and Mehr’s (2017) studies in which the experimental groups’ participants, who were provided with feedback from peers or the instructors, were able to improve their compositions and outperform their counterparts in the control groups who received product-based writing instruction where feedback was absent during the writing process. In fact, feedback while writing is one of the main factors that makes process-oriented instruction more rewarding and effective than product-oriented instruction (Seow, 2002). In other words, the process approach provides students with feedback throughout the composing process, which is constructive and helpful, whereas the product approach gives feedback after students finish writing, which is useless and ineffective. Feedback is important but what is more important is to give it at the right time.
Another reason why Hayes’ (2012) process approach had a more significant effect on students’ writing performance than the product approach is related to what teachers and students do with the finished written products. This is what is referred to as post writing. Product approach teachers do not give importance to this stage and that is why in the present study, the teacher gave back group A students their papers after she corrected them. Process writing teachers, however, always suggest post-writing activities to recognize students’ compositions as important and valuable, thereby motivating them for writing and prevent them from seeking excuses for not writing (Seow, 2002). In the present study, sharing, reading aloud and displaying texts on the classroom notice-board were the main and possible post-writing activities that the teacher tried with group B students who felt obliged, if not motivated, to write since their essays would be shared and displayed. Group A students, on the other hand, might not have been fully engaged in writing or might not have been motivated to write, perceiving maybe writing as a classroom routine and an uninteresting activity (Boscolo, 2009). In addition to post-writing activities, peer collaboration, personal responsibility, and a positive learning environment that are among the instructional components of the process approach are thought to enhance student writers’ motivation (Graham & Sandmel, 2011).

Last but not least, reading is among the factors that may have contributed to the present study’s findings. Group B students were encouraged to read about the writing topic in advance in order to gather enough information. They were also advised to read what they had written if they felt stuck while writing, to be inspired and move forward. In addition to that, they obviously read and reread their products while revising and editing their essays. Group A students, on the other hand, were not urged neither to do some reading about the writing topic beforehand nor to read for inspiration, revision or editing purposes. Group B students, therefore, outperformed group A students since they were assisted with one of the effective tools that enhance writing at many levels. This result is in line with Samsudin’s (2016) study in which the experimental group subjects, who were required to do a lot of reading while receiving process writing instruction, showed a significant improvement in their writing performance in terms of content, organization and mechanics. In fact, there is a strong relationship between reading and writing; reading improves writing by providing students “with the rhetorical and structural knowledge they need to develop, modify, and activate schemata which are invaluable when writing” (Hyland, 2003a, p. 17). In other words, reading offers “tacit knowledge of conventional features of written texts, including, grammar, vocabulary, organizational patterns, interactional devices, and so on” (Hyland, 2003a, p. 17). In addition to that, reading enriches students’ topic knowledge that does not only affect the quality of students’ written texts but it also relates to the amount of cognitive effort devoted to writing. In his study which examined the effect of topic knowledge on the amount of processing time and cognitive effort allocated to various writing processes, Kellogg (1987) found that writers with greater knowledge of the topic they wrote about allocated significantly less effort to the writing process than did low-knowledge writers. His finding supports the assumption that “The more an individual knows about a topic, the less effortful it might be to retrieve and use the relevant knowledge in preparing a written document” (Kellogg, 1987, p. 258). Group B students, therefore, outperformed group A students since reading may have unconsciously helped them get a sense for how writing should be done in terms of grammar and structure, learn new vocabulary and new ways of using that vocabulary, and gather enough information about the writing topic.
Conclusion
Given the complexity of the writing skill and the challenges EFL students encounter in learning to write, the present study aimed at investigating the effect of two alternative writing approaches namely, process and product, on Moroccan EFL students’ writing performance, an attempt to find out which of these approaches is more effective. The results indicated that the participants who were taught through process-oriented approach significantly outperformed their counterparts who were taught writing through product-oriented approach. In other words, the study found that the process-oriented approach had a more significant effect than the product-oriented approach on students’ writing performance.

With reference to the related literature and the findings of the present research, it is advisable that EFL teachers adopt the process-oriented writing instruction in their classrooms. Though it is time demanding, it remains worth using. Planning activities such as brainstorming and outlining, drafting, responding, revising, editing, and evaluating are instructive problem-solving strategies that EFL writing teachers are urged to teach students to increase their self-reflection and evaluation of the writing process as well as their writing progress. Teachers are also advised to opt for process-oriented writing instruction since it provides a supportive learning environment where students and teachers interact around writing and collaborate with each other, which can drive students towards peak writing performance. It is also recommended that teachers think about interesting post-writing activities as a means to make classroom writing tasks more meaningful and students more motivated and willing to write.

In addition to these pedagogical recommendations for teaching EFL writing, the present study also suggests more longitudinal studies including larger samples from different educational levels for further research. Furthermore, additional research is needed to measure the potential motivational effect of process writing, using precise and reliable methods, since the present study estimated a positive motivational effect, considering a number of instructional constituents of the process approach, without measuring it.

About the author
Mariam Kadmiry is an EFL teacher in preparatory classes for the grandes écoles, Rabat-Morocco. She holds an MA in Applied Linguistics and TEFL. She is currently doing her doctoral studies in EFL writing instruction at the faculty of Education at Mohammed V University, Rabat- Morocco. Her areas of interests include Applied Linguistics, second/foreign language acquisition, EFL writing instruction, and TEFL issues. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6305-8005

References
The Comparison between the Process-oriented Approach

Kadmiry


EFL Learners’ and Teachers’ Perception toward the Use of Online Videos in EFL Classes

Doniazad Sultan Alshraideh
English Language Centre, Taibah University
Madinah, Saudi Arabia
Email: doniazadsh@yahoo.com

Received: 12/26/2020 Accepted: 2/3/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract:
This study aims at analyzing the English as a foreign language (EFL) learners’ and teachers’ perception toward the use of online videos in EFL classes. The current study used a mixed method to answer the question of the study which is: What is the perception of EFL learners and teachers toward the use of online videos in EFL classes? It includes both quantitative and qualitative techniques, namely a questionnaire and an interview. To get the required data and to answer the question of the study, the researcher collected information by distributing a relevant questionnaire among 120 EFL Saudi female students who are studying English in their preparatory year “Unified Scientific Track” at Taibah University. Their ages range between 18 to 21 years old. The questionnaire of the study consists of 10 items. For the first nine items, Likert Scale is used to let the respondents range the statements on a five-point scale. The tenth item asks the respondents to rate the usefulness of the online video regarding language skills and other aspects. The researcher also conducted an interview with six EFL teachers who teach English language skills in the English Language Centre (ELC) at Taibah University. The responses of the participants showed that the use of online videos is an effective technique and has a positive influence in EFL classes.

Key words: EFL learners, language skills, online video, perception, technology

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.15
1-Introduction

Using technology in education is becoming a must all over the world these days as it facilitates, strengthens, and supports the education system in general. According to Hatlevik et al., (2013), during the last ten years, there has been much focus on the place of technology in education. What technology has added and is still adding in education is revolutionary, and the impetus toward more changes is irreversible (Hardin and Ziebarth, 2000). Peña-López (2015) states that effective and operative use of computers in schools leads to qualifying better teachers and improve learning material.

Saudi Arabia is one of the concerned and interested countries that play an important role in using technology in the teaching/learning process in general. For example, Altowjry (2004) conducted a research regarding the development of the educational system in Saudi Arabia by using telecommunications technologies and by incorporating the distance learning method. The findings show that there is a positive relationship between applying the new method of distance learning and decreasing the number of students who drop out of the educational process for many reasons. Also, Al-Fahad (2009) tried to determine how mobile learning technology can be applied to improve students’ retention at the Bachelor of Art and Medicine programs at King Saud University in Saudi Arabia. The results of the study indicate that using mobiles in learning could be a beneficial method that improves the retention of students as it enhances their teaching/learning process.

On the other hand, the English language is one of the subjects given important attention in Saudi Arabia Aljohani (2016) states that "The Ministry of Education shows its support by offering English classes in Saudi schools and assigning supervisors to evaluate and adjust the teaching methods and the teacher’s techniques" p.8. Many EFL methods, techniques, and strategies are used to teach English effectively. One of these strategies is using technology. The variety of applications and features that technology devises contain is providing the EFL learners with multiple ways to learn English. Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabour (2017) points out that technology has changed language teaching methods, and the application of technology helps learners learn according to their interests. Online video applications become a basic classroom instrument that plays a real and important role in enhancing learning English. Asensio and Young (2002) state that using a moving image is a good way that might be implemented for educational purposes in order to clarify information. Also, Jensen et al. (2011) state that including videos to the language learning process provides learners with many opportunities to learn the language within the classroom by a dynamic and interactive atmosphere which might help them promote their confidence and individual dependence.

2-Literature Review
2-1 Using Technology in EFL Classes

Using technology in EFL classes can be a useful method and a valuable technique. Many EFL teachers have taken information technology (IT) courses in order to be educated enough to use technology in their EFL classes. According to Bull and Ma (2001), the use of technology provides language learners with a lot of resources. Becker (2000) states that computers are important educational instruments in language classes as teachers could have convenient access, prepare their lessons properly with a kind of flexibility with the curriculum they use.

Moreover, Boukadi (2014) conducted a study to investigate teachers' experiences and perceptions regarding the use of technology in foreign language teaching. According to the
study, three teachers were interviewed. One of the study’s finding was that the teachers agreed that the students still need the training to be able to use technology properly. Furthermore, they were all in favor of the use of technology as it makes their teaching more effective and helps meet the needs of the students. Besides, they agreed that teachers need to be proficient in using technological devices to apply them in their teaching classes. Cutter (2015) also claims that technology helps increase learners’ motivation. When students use computers and modern devices, they become more motivated than when using their own textbooks.

On the other hand, some teachers have a negative attitude toward the use of technology in general and in their classes in particular. Pourhosein Gilakjani & Sabouri (2017) states that the attitudes of the teachers toward the use of technology affect the way they apply it in their classes. Mohamed (2014) claims that students are more capable of using technology than teachers and that might be an essential factor for some teachers not to use computers and technology in classrooms. It is better for them to attend professional training courses to be skillful in using technology in teaching.

2-2 Why online videos?

Online videos are used for many educational purposes. Teachers, as well as their students, can get a lot of pedagogical strategies and information that strengthen their understanding and foster their teaching-learning process. Mayer (2005) says that “videos are defined as “multimodal texts, which means that the material is presented in both verbal and pictorial form.”p.2. Lonie, Louise, and Andrew(2009) state: “virtual classrooms, web conferencing, and streaming, self-paced content provide both students and teachers with dynamic and visual resources that have now been accepted as a framework for successful learning”p.7. Burta (2007) claims that online videos are valuable, and they motivate students to be more active while learning. Besides, Adam and Mowers(2007) argue that online video sites like YouTube (www.youtube.com) have been recently used as a new tool in classrooms. Also, according to Friedman and Friedman(2013), more than 30% of college students have attended one or more online courses. Zhang, Zhou, Briggs, and Nunamaker (2006) conducted a study about the interactive video in which video segments are chosen directly for study. Then, the video is divided into segments and then the segments are played via action selected interface. The study reveals that using videos that way improves learning. According to the previous studies, it seems that the use of videos in the teaching-learning process has been investigated in many research papers and studies, and it has many benefits in this field.

2-3 Online videos in EFL classes

According to recent studies, the use of online videos in EFL classes has become one of the effective and efficient methods in teaching and learning English. Harmer (2006) points to the use of videos as a useful tool. He claims that it enhances students’ learning experiences; it assists them in using a language properly and becoming more creative. It also deepens their cultural understanding and increases their motivation in learning. According to the study which was conducted by Mohammed (2013), he uses the subtitled videos in order to teach grammar. The findings reveal that students’ grammatical accuracy was developed. He explains the results by referring to the role of using pictures and texts to attract the students' attention rather than using the text only. Progosh (1996); Canning-Wilson (2000); Rammal (2006), point out the usefulness of Video-based materials in teaching EFL learners.
To sum up, no one can deny that online videos are increasingly used in teaching EFL learners, and it has a positive effect that deserves to be studied in different language areas. This study aims to find out the EFL learners’ and teachers’ perceptions toward the use of online videos in EFL classes.

3- Research Questions

This study aims to answer the following questions:
1- What is the perception of EFL learners toward the use of online videos in EFL classes?
2- What is the perception of EFL teachers toward the use of online videos in EFL classes?

4- The context of the study

In order to answer the first questions, the researcher has prepared a questionnaire and distributed it among 120 EFL Saudi female students who study English in their preparatory year “Unified Scientific Track” at Taibah University. Their ages range between 18 to 21 years old. For the second question, the researcher has interviewed six EFL teachers who teach English language skills for two terms (14 teaching weeks with 224 hours per term).

5- Significance of the study

Using online video classes have become a vital tool for most, if not all, EFL teachers. It provides EFL teachers with authentic resources that facilitate teaching English and making it more interesting and dynamic which attracts and encourages EFL students to learn English and provide them with the opportunity to listen as many times as required until mastering their lesson. It also saves their time and their efforts in conveying the message ‘topic of the lesson’ if they invest it in a professional way. Moreover, the students may come back to the video in their free time. According to Berk (2009), teachers have many choices of video types that are used in the classrooms depending on the objectives of learning, students’ characteristics, and their needs and interests. On the other hand, EFL students can benefit more when they follow effective methods while using online videos in learning English. Alimemaj(2010) states that using YouTube can provide students and teachers as well with many authentic examples of everyday English that are used by native speakers of English in their daily life.

The current study will provide the EFL teachers and educators with important information about the use of online videos in EFL Classes, and how to make it beneficial while presenting them in English classes and the best methods that might be used to apply it professionally.

6-Methodology

6-1 Participants

The study population consists of 120 EFL female Saudi students and six EFL female teachers. The students study English as a foreign language in the Unified Scientific Track at Taibah University. Their ages range from 18 to 21. Their level of proficiency in English is varied. According to the teachers, they teach English as a foreign language. Two of them have their PhD degree in TEFL. Other teachers have their M.A. degree in different fields of English. Their experience of teaching is varied. Three of them have been teaching for more than 15 years. There are two teachers who have been teaching English for more than six years. One is a new teacher. Her experience was one year.
6-2 Research Design
At the end of the year, the researcher distributed a questionnaire to the students. The students completed the questionnaire to reflect their perceptions toward the use of online videos in EFL classes. For the EFL teachers, they were all interviewed by the researcher. They answered the questions in a friendly relaxed atmosphere. There were six questions. Each teacher spent between five to seven minutes answering the questions.

6-3 Data Collection
This study uses a mixed-method to answer the questions of the study. It includes two instruments, namely, a questionnaire and an interview. To get the needed data and to answer the questions of the study, the researcher collected the information by distributing a relevant questionnaire among 120 students and conducting an interview with six EFL teachers.

6-4 Questionnaire
A questionnaire is an important instrument that can be used to collect data regarding the topic of any study. It should be planned carefully in order to elicit the needed data which are related, vital and sufficient from the respondents to accomplish the goal it is designed for. Check and Schutt (2012) state "A common survey method is the questionnaire, which is “a survey instrument containing the questions in a self-administered survey.”” p.161.

The questionnaire used in the current study is directed to the EFL learners to gather information about their perceptions toward the use of online videos in EFL classes. The questionnaire of the study consists of 10 items. For the first nine items, Likert Scales is used to let the respondents range the statements on a five-point scale. According to Dörnyei (2007), “A Likert scale item requires the respondent to indicate to which extent they “agree” or “disagree” with a statement.” p.105. The tenth item asks the respondents to rate the usefulness of the online video regarding language skills and other aspects.

6-5 Interview
The other instrument that the researcher used to collect data is the interview. The use of an interview could be a successful way to gather information if the questions of the interview are professionally selected and intelligently asked to the interviewee. According to Dufva (2011), interviews could be a meaningful method to let the examinees express their opinions and experiences. Also, the environment in which the interview takes place should be comfortable, suitable, and motivating one. According to this study, there are six related questions. The environment is friendly and encouraging. The questions are asked to six EFL teachers to reveal their perceptions toward the use of online videos in EFL classes.

6-7 Data Analysis and Findings
After collecting the responses of the participants of the questionnaire, the researcher utilized the quantitative data of the questionnaire and presented them in Appendix A. The questionnaire is also analyzed qualitatively.

7- Discussion:
The students’ responses to the questionnaire are shown on Table 1.
Table 1 reveals that upwards of 87% of the respondents strongly agree and agree with the use of online videos in EFL classes. Most of them perceive that it is useful, while 7% do not agree with that. For the first statement which asks the students if using online videos makes their classes more interesting, 83% agree and strongly agree with this statement, while 10% disagree. The use of online videos in EFL classes may create a good environment for the students to communicate and interact with each other to discuss the information they get from the videos they watch and enhance their understanding of the topic which let them feel that the class is more interesting. 99.16% agree and strongly agree with the statement that the online videos they watch in their classes are relevant to the course content which indicates that teachers are really care about the content of the videos they show to their students in their EFL classes. Only 84% disagree with that. According to the third statement that using the online videos enhances their participation in the classroom, 95% agree and strongly agree with this statement. This means that it motivates them to participate more when they watch the videos. Callow and Zammit (2012) point out that students’ participation and involvement can be improved more by using YouTube
in the classroom and learning strategies. Regarding the fourth statement that watching the online videos develops their overall comprehension of the lesson, 98% agree and strongly agree with this statement. As for the respondents who disagree, there is only 0.83%. The fifth statement asks the students whether online videos are beneficial sources for Learning English language, 88% of the respondents agree and strongly agree with the statement, while 21% do not. A percentage of 21% of the students, they may prefer traditional methods of teaching and learning by using their textbooks. For the sixth statement ‘using online videos motivates me to learn the English language’, more than 88% agree and strongly agree with the statement. They might feel that watching videos provide them with a dynamic environment and more active classes that encourage them to learn English. The percentage of the responses of those who disagree with this statement is just 5.9%. According to the seventh item which asks the students if watching online videos deepens their understanding of other cultures, the percentage of the students who agree and strongly agree is 90%. This might be considered as a good indicator that the students use online videos to be educated about other cultures, especially with the ease of accessing the net and searching about any cultural topic they might be interested in while learning English. The respondents who disagree with the statement are only 2.5%. The eighth statement about discovering new information via online videos’, the responses for this statement are clearly high, 92.5% of the respondents agree and strongly agree with the statement, while 3.3% do not. The students may find it easier to use online videos in order to get more information about any topic they need. The ninth statement asks the students if they recommend the use of online videos in learning English, 82.5% of the respondents agree and strongly agree with this statement, while 9.2% do not. Students can use online videos in their daily life and they might depend on them as aiding tools to facilitate their studying and learning. They share the videos and tell each other about the videos that help them to increase their understanding of any topic they need to learn it better in English. The tenth statement of the questionnaire asks the students to rate the usefulness of the online video regarding language skills and other aspects. According to the listening skill, 90% of the students rate it useful, while 4.2% rate it not useful. When the students watch a video, they listen to the information at the same time, so they might develop their listening skills unless the video has no sound or they watch a video with a different language. For that reason, teachers should take that into their consideration while preparing the video they use in EFL classes. They should show their students a video using English language sounds to guide the subject if they want to use the online video as a learning tool to enhance the students’ listening skill besides any other language skill. Harmer (2001) claims that one advantage of using videos in EFL classes is that it allows the EFL learners to listen to the language. The second skill is speaking, the respondents who consider it as a useful tool for speaking skill are 86.7%, and this percentage indicates that most of the respondents find online videos as an efficient tool in improving speaking skill. For this skill, only 5.8% of the respondents find it not useful. Busà (2010) states that listening to people when they are speaking about their real-life experiences and communicating with speakers in a usual way might be more effective than listening to actors while they are reading scripts elaborated by EFL (English for Foreign Language). Also, Lee (2007) states that via videos, students can become more fluent in oral skills as they pronounce the words they listen to while watching the video. The third skill is that of reading. For this skill, 48.4% find it useful, while 20.8% find it not useful. 30.8% is neutral. This percentage may refer to the fact that students pay more attention to what they hear and try to focus more on listening and speaking skills while watching videos. However, when students listen to the video and if there are subtitles, they might improve their reading. The fourth skill is the writing skill. The
percentage of respondents who rate it as a useful skill is 19.16, while 60% find it not useful. Compared to the previous skills, it is the lowest percentage. The students may find online videos not useful enough for writing. It might refer to their interest while watching the video. If the teachers want their students to get benefit from the online videos for writing, they should prepare and plan suitable videos with appropriate strategies to attract their students’ attention to applying what they watch to learn writing. Moving to the fifth language aspect which is vocabulary, the percentage of the respondents who rate it as a useful tool to learning vocabulary is 69.2, whereas 13.3% reflect on it as being not useful one. According to the findings, it is clear that many of the participants think that the use of online videos is an effective method to learn vocabulary. According to many studies, EFL learners use movies to learn English while watching movies. They try to get benefits from what they hear to improve their acquisition of vocabulary. For the next language aspect which is grammar, only 29.16% consider it as a useful device to learn grammar, but 66.66% reflect on it as not useful. It could refer to the students’ concentration on and interest in other aspects of language. While watching videos, students usually focus on listening, vocabulary, speaking...etc. instead of paying attention to grammar. According to the pronunciation aspect, 87.5% of the respondents find online videos as a useful tool, whereas 6.66% consider it as not useful. When students watch and listen to hear the video, they may benefit and improve their pronunciation of the words of the target language. For that reason, teachers should focus on the content and prepare audio-visual videos that can help students improve their pronunciation. Richards and Renandya (2002) claim that encouraging students to speak the target language could be done by giving them an opportunity to use the language through extensive exposure to it via audio-visual stimuli. The last aspect is that of spelling. 20.8% of the respondents rate it as a useful tool, while 71.6% do not. The reason for such a percentage could be the fact that the videos they watch might not contain captions or subtitles. Also, the responses may indicate that most of the respondents do not care to the spelling of the words if the videos have captions or transcripts.

To sum up, the findings of the questionnaire reveal that most of the respondents find the online videos are useful in EFL classes and they could be a useful and effective method in learning English language. Harmer (2007) points that using videos to learn a language increases the learners’ motivation. Also, Mekheimer (2011) concludes “Integrating video-based material with whole language teaching of the language skills of our students in a fashion that ameliorates viewing comprehension can produce an enhanced overall linguistic proficiency in EFL students at university levels.” (p.27).

8- Interview Results

For the interview, the researcher collected the data from the interviewees. The responses were:

The first questions” Do you think using online videos is useful in EFL classes? How? The first teacher said:” Using online videos is very beneficial in teaching in general and in EFL classes in particular. It facilitates teaching and motivates our student to learn visually and audibly. The second teacher commented:” Utilizing online videos in my classes as EFL teacher is valuable for me and my students as well. It gives them an opportunity to learn the language with a relaxed atmosphere. For me it is a supplementary useful tool. However, teachers should be vigilant when preparing the video material they want to show to their students. The answer of the third teacher was:” I like to apply different methods and techniques in my class. It is a good way
to get learners’ attention. No doubt that social media has an effective way in education in general and online videos might be so beneficial, but I like using it whenever I need it. Sometimes it is very efficient, while other times I feel it is just a waste of time, so I do my best to employ it when it is a source of enrichment material. The fourth teacher replied: “It’s a good tool to enhance learning in general. This generation uses online videos in their daily life, so why not to get benefit from that point while teaching them. It is absolutely an interesting and favorable way to teach EFL students”. The fifth teacher said:” I think it is has two sides, I mean it could be a good way if the teacher is really cares about the learners because he should be very careful while using online videos in the class. On the other hand, it could be a negative tool if the teacher uses it without planning”. The sixth teacher’s answer was” Ignoring online videos as a technique in teaching is like ignoring essential ingredients of a certain meal. I am totally in favor of utilizing this strategy as we live in the age of technology. It makes teaching more effective, interesting and active.

The answers of the teachers clarified their opinion and attitude regarding the usefulness of the online videos in EFL classes. All of them consider it as an efficient technique, but it should be used carefully and in an organized and planned way.

For the second question ‘What impact do you think online video have on students’ engagement, motivation, and achievements? The answers were:

The first teacher commented:” I think it has appositive impact on students’ engagement by stimulating them to talk about the topic of the video they watch. They share their ideas and try to use their background information when they learn that way. According to their motivation, as I mentioned it motivate them positively. Regarding their achievement, well! It may encourage them to improve their language and a result, their achievement could be better”.

The second teacher said:” Students are trying to share their ideas when they watch a video which is related to their interests and they like to talk about the scenes they watch with each other. Especially, our students are fond of social media. It is a good chance for my students to feel that they are watching a video and learning at the same time. Their social interaction after watching the video may motivate them intrinsic and extrinsic. I think that using videos might affect their achievement if they understand and the teacher was properly using the related material that they really need in learning the language. The third teacher replied that it could be a good tool that enthusiasts the learners improve their engagement with each other. They try to make comments while watching the video and keep sharing their ideas and concepts that might be related to the topic of the video. For motivation, yes. I think learners become a kind of motivated while having videos in their EFL class. Regarding their achievement, it depends on their understanding and many other factors like their language level and language proficiency. The fourth teacher said:” Yes, It is an amazing tool that I use and I think it is an engaging and motivating classroom device for teaching English language. As it enhances their learning in general, it also has its effectiveness in developing their achievement. The fifth teacher commented:” If I use it, I will be sure that it has a positive impact on their engagement. I will let them feel that it is a way to motivate them and attract them to participate. Choosing the content of the video will be carefully planned. For their achievement, it is a good way, but actually, it depends on them”. The sixth teacher said:” It is absolutely magnificent and has a positive impact. It could be an effective tool that increases student’s engagement while watching a related well planned video. It also stimulates the students’ motivation. As a result, it may improve their achievement.
For the third question of the interview ‘When do you think using online videos is appropriate while teaching the lesson, at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the lesson? the first teacher said:” Personally, I believe that teachers should prepare carefully the material they want to use in the class, and it should be related to the topic of the lesson. It could be presented at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the lesson. It depends on when it is going to be efficient”. The second one states:” There is no specific time to use the video. I just use it when I feel my students need it and it may facilitate my teaching. I also use it when it adds something to them like new information or creative ideas…etc. I just do my best not to use it meaninglessly”. According to the third teacher, her answer was” As I mentioned before. I use it whenever I find it beneficial. I don’t like to let my students depend on social media to enhance their language. As teachers, we should manipulate our students into seeking success by their own techniques and their ways of learning”. The fourth teacher responded by saying:" It is a must that teachers should deeply think before choosing the video. Her choice will affect the process of teaching and learning. The appropriate videos can direct the class achieve the goal the teacher has set. I prefer using it when it is the best for my students and if it adds something valuable or assist my teaching process”. The fifth teacher said:" As I mentioned before, the teacher should prepare the material wisely. When he\ she feels it is suitable to use it, he could do that. No specific time. It depends on the many factors and only the teacher can decide when and how to apply it”. The sixth teachers’ replied by saying:" In my view, it could be used whenever the teacher finds id beneficial. There is no definite time. It might be used to introduce a certain topic, to explain a term or an idea,…etc”.

According to the teachers’ responses, they do not have a specific time to present and use the online video. It could be presented whenever the teacher, the learners, and the lesson require that. It means that whenever you need it, just use it. I think it is necessary to know when to present the online video to the learners to be sure that your class is interesting, engaging, and valuable at the same time.

The fourth question which was’ How does it impact your time?. Following are the answers of the teachers:

The first teacher answered by saying:" Actually, it really influences my time effectively. It saves my time during the class when I prepare it properly”. The second one said:" It actually consumes my time while trying to choose consciously the video. But when I use it in the class, I really find it the saver of my time”. The third teacher’s answer was:" I do my best to apply online videos when there is time for them. Sometimes using them is a time consuming, whistle other times, it saves my time. Actually, I can’t guarantee my students reactions”. According to the fourth teacher, she said:" It saves my time when I plan how, when and why to apply it. Otherwise, it consumes time”. The fifth teacher said:" Of course it saves time, and that is one of the benefits of using it in my class”. The sixth teacher replied by saying:" Well..it takes time when I prepare the lesson, but it saves my time when applying it”.

The teachers’ answers were varied. That may be related to the many factors like, learners’ needs, learners’ levels, teachers’ style of teaching, etc. On the other hand, the teachers agree that online video saved their time in general.
The fourth question was “How would you rate the usefulness of the online video from 1 to 5 regarding language skills and other aspects? (Listening, speaking, reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and spelling). The answers were:

The first teacher answer was:” Umm… It is really effective and useful in teaching the whole skills, but according to the rating, it is 1 for listening as it’s so useful. For speaking it is 2. For reading it’s 4. It is 4 also for writing. 2 for vocabulary. It is 1 for Pronunciation, and if there are captions, it is 3 for spelling”. The second teachers said:”’ It depends on many factors. If it is used with sound and captions, it could be very beneficial for the whole skills. In general, I will give 1 to listening and speaking, 3 for reading and writing. I give 2 for vocabulary. 3 for grammar and 2 for pronunciation. for spelling, 3”. The third teacher replied by saying:” It is not easy to rate its effectiveness. In my view, it is useful for listening as well as for speaking, so it is 1 for these both skills. For reading..it might not be that efficient, let’s give it 3. For writing, it is not more than 4. For vocabulary, well, it is 2. 3 for grammar. 1 for pronunciation, and 3 for spelling”. The fourth teacher said:” For listening skill, I think it is effective, so I’ll give it 1. If the teacher knows how to apply it effectively, it might be very efficient for speaking. Let’s say 2. Reading and writing skills. I rate them as 4. Of course when students watch the video carefully and attentively. It will be useful to learn vocabulary. I will give it 2. Not that effective for grammar, so it is 4 or 5. Pronunciation, well, it is 2, and for spelling it is 3”. The fifth teacher reply was:” For me, using online videos is effective in general, but is more effective for skills than others. If I want to rate its effectiveness, I think listening skill is 1 as they listen to what they watch. And that would be great for the students to listen to the target language while watching the video. Speaking needs practicing, so if they practice the language after watching, it would be very beneficial, so I will give it 2. Reading takes 2 also, if it is supported with captions. For writing, I give it 4. It is not that beneficial. For vocabulary, it is 2 if the teacher directs them to focus on the key words. I will give 4 for grammar. 1 for pronunciation as the students hear the target language naturally”. The sixth teacher’s answer was:” It doesn’t have the same rating… I find it so helpful for listening, so I’ll give it 1. Speaking skill is a productive skill, but it depends on listening, so I think it has the same rating. Umm it is good for reading if the students focus on the caption and get benefit from what they listen to and apply it in reading, but I think it deserves 4. It is the same with writing. According to vocabulary, I feel it deserves 3, but if the students know how to manipulate with the language they hear and listen to, the rating might become 1. Grammar, I will rate it as 5. I think 2 for pronunciation and 5 for spelling”.

The replies and the answers of the teachers may support the use of the online videos in EFL classes. Their ratings were different and vary. I think it refers to the fact that each leaner has his/her own style of learning. Also, the learners’ motivation, abilities, and language proficiency might be vital factors in their learning.

The last question was:” Would you like to add any comments/ suggestions about using online videos in EFL classes? Following were the answers and the comments:

The first teacher commented:” I encourage EFL teachers to apply this technique in their classes. It is interesting as well as valuable”. The second teacher said:” I am one of the teachers who is in favor of using this technique in EFL classes. However, teachers should use it appropriately and efficiently”. According to the third teacher, she said” It is a good tool that might enhance students’ language. However, teachers should be vigilant when they use this
technique, and I encourage them to use it properly and accurately”. The fourth teacher commented:” Absolutely, I encourage teachers not to ignore this tool in teaching. It could be one of their keys that enhances teaching and learning process”. The fifth teacher said:” It needs teachers’ desire and awareness to apply online videos in EFL classes. I do encourage them, but they should be careful and aware of some points like the learner’s culture, needs, levels..etc”. The sixth teacher replied by saying:” Yes of course, I advise all teachers to use online videos in TEFL, but they should be very cautious and careful when they choose the video as it affects their students behavior and attitudes”.

According to the interview responses, it is clear that EFL teachers encourage the use of online videos as a technique to teach English language, most teachers recommend it as an effective tool. However, they assure the necessity of preparing and planning carefully the content of the video. Besides, teachers should present a useful and relative material that attract their students and let them get benefit from it.

9- Conclusion

Online videos are interesting and attractive teaching techniques that might help and facilitate teachers’ missions if used professionally and carefully. This generation of learners is the generation of technology and they might be more motivated while using such techniques in learning English language. They also provide them with a good opportunity to learn the language authentically as they can hear the language from the native speakers if the teacher wants to focus on that point. The learners can get benefit from them to improve and develop all language skills. Teachers also might reduce the time they speak in the class and make it more efficient for the students. They open many doors that make teaching and learning the language more live and dynamic if they employ them proficiently.

About the Author:
Dr. Doniazad Sultan AlShraideh is an Assistant Professor at Taibah University. She received her Ph.D. in English Language Curriculum and Instruction Specification/TEFL from Yarmouk University, Jordan. Her research interests include: English Teaching Methods and Language Learning, Foreign language teaching and learning, and Second language acquisition.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8461-5955

References
Al-Fahad, F. N. (2009). Students' attitudes and perceptions towards the effectiveness of mobile learning in King Saud University, Saudi Arabia. Online Submission, 8(2).


Cutter, M. (2010). *Using technology with English Language Learners in the classroom*.


Pourhosein, A., Banou, N.


**Appendix**

EFL Students’ Questionnaire on Using Online Videos in EFL Classes

Read each statement carefully then circle the number that matches your point of view. There are five possible choices as follow:

**Strongly agree** | **Agree** | **Neutral** | **Disagree** | **Strongly Disagree**
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1. Using online videos makes my class more interesting. |  |  |  |  
2. The online videos I watch in my class are relevant to course content |  |  |  |  
3. Using online videos enhances my participation in the classroom. |  |  |  |  
4. Watching the online videos develops my overall comprehension of the lesson. |  |  |  |  
5. Online videos are beneficial sources for Learning English language. |  |  |  |  
6. Using online videos motivates me to learn English language. |  |  |  |  
7. Watching online videos deepens my understanding of other cultures. |  |  |  |  
8. I like discovering new information via online videos. |  |  |  |  
9. I recommend the use of online videos in learning English. |  |  |  |  
10. How would you rate the usefulness of the online video regarding language skills and other aspects? |  |  |  |  

5: not at all useful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Listening</th>
<th>Speaking</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Grammar</th>
<th>Pronunciation</th>
<th>Spelling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characterizing English Language Literacy among Famous English Language Educators in China

Jie Lin
School of Foreign Languages
Hubei University of Technology, Wuhan, China

Chili Li
School of Foreign Languages
Hubei University of Technology, Wuhan, China
Correspondent Author: sundaylcl@qq.com

Received : 12/30/2020 Accepted: 2/8/2021 Published :3/24/2021

Abstract
The present study explores the features of English language literacy among 12 famous English language educators since the opening-up policy in China, using the narrative research approach. The purpose of this paper is to examine the characteristics of English language literacy among some famous educators in China and the influencing factors in the process of their formations of English language literacy through the analysis of the narrative texts of some foreign language educators. The findings showed that English language literacy among these famous educators is fundamental, developmental, and comprehensive. In addition, it has been found that the formation of their English language literacy is related to social, teacher, and personal factors. This study will be insightful for the cultivation of English language literacy in curriculum reform, teaching practice, and evaluation. Moreover, it will be helpful for the construction of cultivating talents based on the English language literacy, the consummation of the research of English language literacy, and the profound fusion of the talent cultivation.

Keywords: English language literacy, famous English language Educators, narrative study, teaching and learning

Cite as: Lin, J. & Li, C. (2021) Characterizing English Language Literacy among Famous English Language Educators in China. Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 229-238. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.16
Introduction

In recent years, English language literacy has attracted much interest by many international scholars, as well as the cultivation of students’ English language literacy. According to The Opinions on Deepening Curriculum Reform to Implement the Basic Tasks of Lideshuren issued by the Chinese Ministry of Education in 2014, the standards of academic evaluation and college entrance examination should be designed based on the English language literacy of the students (Fu & Qian, 2018). The cultivation of English language literacy has become the focus of the international education reform, and Chinese educators are continually exploring the cultivation of students’ English language literacy (X. Cheng, 2017). However, the studies in the field of English language literacy still lack support from empirical research. Many educators have some problems in understanding the various characteristics of English language literacy among famous English language educators, and they are not so clear about the essential factors that have some impacts on English language literacy. Therefore, this study will explore the characteristics and the influencing factors of English language literacy among the famous foreign language educators in Chinese context, by using a narrative research method. The purpose of this study is to enable us to understand the characteristics and the influencing factors of English language literacy, and thus provide some guidance for the cultivation of students’ English language literacy in teaching practices from three aspects: educators and tools, educators and society, and between educators.

Literature Review

The practices of the literacy framework have been proposed and applied by a number of educators in many countries or relevant regions, as well as some educational policies. Many scholars in China have also explored the implications of literacy skills for China’s educational reform (Cheng & Zhao, 2016). In order to collect the information about the English language literacy of Chinese scholars in previous studies, two keywords “English” and “language literacy” have been used to select the relevant articles in CNKI (a database of Chinese academic journals). It has been found that there have been 1,6735 articles related to these two keywords. In addition, it has shown a gradual rising tendency from 2014 to 2016, and it has become faster since 2016. The number has reached the highest point in 2019. It is clear that Chinese scholars have carried out multi-angle and in-depth research on English language literacy since 2014.

Among the studies, it has been found that Cheng and Zhao (2016)’s article is one of the influential ones in this field. Cheng and Zhao (2016) briefly discussed the definition of English language literacy, and they also introduced in detail the four aspects of the literacy of English language: language ability, cultural character, thinking quality, and learning ability. Moreover, they proposed to explore the connotation and composition of literacy of the subject of English. In addition, X. Cheng (2017) analyzed English language literacy and its relation with English Curriculum, and then he pointed out that English language literacy can be studied in four aspects of the academic standards: listening and speaking, reading, and writing. Shu (2017) pointed out the two characteristics of English language literacy should be highlighted: foreign-related and supplementary. Wang (2017) explored the relationship between English language literacy and the teaching of English reading strategies in the Chinese EFL context. Wang (2017) critically discussed the existing problems in the current teaching of English reading, and she put forward some principles, goals, and paths that could be complied with in the practices of English teaching.
Narrative method is regarded as an effective tool in the field of language education. It provides teachers an opportunity to reflect, enquire and learn from their own educational experience (Qian & Chen, 2014). In addition, this also allows us to combine the research of language literacy and narrative study. The reason is that narrative study not only provides perspectives and self-cognition from learners, but it also helps them to sort out their learning experiences and discover the meanings and connections. Thus, the construction of self-identity of language learners can be achieved (Qian & Chen, 2014).

It is true that foreign language educators are excellent foreign language learners, as well as leaders of language education with very high language literacy. Therefore, the words related to famous English language educators in China, language literacy and narrative method are the keywords in this research. However, the results of CNKI showed that the study of English language literacy on foreign language educators by using a narrative method is an area that was rarely discussed. Moreover, the analysis showed that in the current research against language literacy, most of the research still stayed at the theoretical level. It is clear that few empirical studies explored language literacy from the perspective of the foreign language educators. In addition, some appropriate targets for the instruction of literacy skills remained abstract, and it was a field that still needs to be furthered examined.

Therefore, in this article, some practical questions will be discussed regarding the characteristics of English language literacy among some famous educators in the Chinese context and the implications of their formations of English language literacy for the cultivation of language literacy in the Chinese EFL context. These problems are of great significance to the cultivation of English language literacy in the instructional practices and designs. Therefore, it is necessary to discover some educational events that famous educators experienced at different periods and their influence on the development of language literacy. In this way, we can understand the characteristics of their language literacy and the process of its formulation, which can help us understand language learning effectively (Lu & Zou, 2008).

Research Methodology

Research Questions
(1) What are the characteristics of English language literacy from the perspective of foreign language educators?
(2) What are the influencing factors of English language literacy from the perspective of foreign language educators?

Research Participants

Purposive sampling was used in this study to determine the research subjects. Their academic achievements, age, and gender will be included in the inclusion criteria. By the purposive sampling design, appropriate cases are more likely to be collected, and thus research resources could be used more effectively (Palinkas et al., 2015). Thus, the trustworthiness of the data will be enhanced. A sample size of 12 participants will be the aim considering the study scope and design of this research. The research subjects are the famous educators in the field of foreign language learning during the past 40 years of reform and opening-up policy in China. Twelve renowned English educators were the research subjects, including two female and ten female educators. They include Gui Shichun, known as the first person to introduce Chinese
psycholinguistics, Wen Qiufang, who has been engaged in applied linguistics for many years, Cheng Xiaotang, who has made achievements in the study of English language literacy, and Dai Weidong, Hu Zhuanglin, Yang Zijian, Shu Dingfang, Xu Guo, Zhang Delu, Liu Runqing, Zou Weicheng, Wang Qiang and so on. These famous foreign language educators have participated in all stages of the development of English subjects in China since the reform and opening-up policy in the 1980s.

Research Materials

The principles of data collection are as follows: first, objective authenticity. The selected materials are first-hand materials, mostly derived from the factual narratives of their personal experience. The second is relevance. The chosen materials are closely related to the characteristics, influencing factors, and practical significance of English language literacy. The third is innovation. Most of the chosen materials conform to the research trend in recent years with its novelty.

The data resources mainly come from the following aspects: the personal profile of famous foreign language educators from Baidu, Bing, and other search engines; narratives such as Memoirs: Foreign Language Education Past: Memories of Professors; related interviews, Website reports, as well as specialized academic papers. The list is shown in Table One.

Table 1. List of selected representative texts collected

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research subjects</th>
<th>Text Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Gui Shi Chun      | (1) Memoirs: Memories of the Student Age (1989)  
| Cheng Xiaotang    | (1) Academic Papers: The Essence of English Language Literacy (2016)  
(2) Interview: An interview with Professor Cheng Xiaotang, Dean of the School of Foreign Languages and Literature ——— Beijing Normal University, about the value of English courses in promoting students’ development, not just the mastery of a foreign language (2012) |
(2) Interview of Prof. Hu Zhuanglin, Peking University English Department (2007) |
| Hu Zhuanglin      | (1) Talking about English Learning (2005)  
(2) Interview: Interview with Professor Hu Zhuanglin in the Department of English ——— Peking University (2007) |

Research Procedures

The research method used is category analysis of qualitative research. The steps were as follows.

First, the meaning units related to English language Literacy in the collected information will be discussed. This step aims to find specific examples and to provide authentic materials for the next step of generalization of the data. Thus, the characteristics of English language literacy can be examined from the perspective of research subjects.
Second, the units of meaning with the same attributes into the same category will be classified. For example, Shu (2017, p.40) mentioned: “Foreign language learning is a gradual process, students’ foreign language ability varies in different stages of development. Therefore, the focus of the course should be adjusted in different stages”. It is clear that this sentence describes the developmental characteristics of English language literacy. Thus, it is concluded as the developmental characteristics of core literacy. The aim of this step is to summarize the meaning units of the same attributes and to explore the features of English language literacy.

In addition, the relationship between the meaningful units, between the meaningful units and the categories, between the categories will be examined. Then the tendency reflected in the data will be identified. The purpose of this step is to investigate the influencing factors of English language literacy from the perspective of foreign language educators.

Results and Discussion

Characteristics of English Language Literacy from the Perspective of Foreign Language Educators

The results showed that the characteristics of English language literacy from the perspective of foreign language educators are mainly three aspects: lifelong, developmental, and comprehensive.

Characteristics of English Language Literacy: Lifelong

Literacy is an essential character that students could adapt to in their life-long development (Wang, 2017). The analysis showed that in the description of English language literacy by foreign language educators, “far-reaching” appeared once, “long-term” appeared twice, and “lifelong” appeared five times. It indicated that the nature of English language literacy is lifelong.

According to Wang (2017), early-formed reading habits and gradually developed reading abilities, can facilitate the accumulation and development of learners’ English language knowledge and thus promote their lifelong learning. It can be seen that the function of English language literacy is to support student’s lifelong development. Han and Liu (2008) also noted that foreign language (English) education, as a part of primary education, enables students to learn different cultures, cultivate their mind in perceiving the world, and lay the foundation for their lifelong development through the learning of languages”.

It can be seen that the value of English education lies in promoting the mental development of learners, shaping their character, and cultivating their thinking ability. As a result, learners can form the ability to adapt to their lifelong development, which has been regarded as the goal of language teaching (Zhang, 2016). Therefore, literacy has lifelong nature in the roles that English language literacy plays in the learners’ development.

Characteristics of English Language Literacy: developmental

English language literacy is not innate, but it needs to be generated and developed in a given situation (Shu, 2017). It was found that “development” appeared five times in their narrative description of English language literacy. The importance of literacy is highlighted as the development of English language literacy is not fixed and static. Zou noted his view in Chang’s study (2010), students are likely to learn a language in a dead, fixed, and static way at
the beginning. Thus, it is related to the actual language knowledge rather than language ability. In other words, learners cannot cultivate language ability from fixed and static learning, which is not related to literacy. It indicates that English language literacy is developmental and dynamic, instead of being fixed and static.

By interpreting the process of foreign language learning, Shu (2017) introduced that foreign language learning is a gradual process, and students’ ability may vary in different stages of their development. Therefore, course’s goal should also have different emphasis at different stages. It can be seen that English language literacy always shows certain features in different educational stages. Moreover, any stage will not be the end of the cultivation of English language literacy (Shu, 2017).

As Niu and Liu (2015) claimed that the geographical literacy has the characteristics of developmental. Similarly, the cultivation of English language literacy is also an accumulating process that the English ability can be improved gradually. In other words, the cultivation of English language literacy is a long-term task and a gradual developmental process.

**Characteristics of English Language Literacy: comprehensive**

The analysis showed that many famous foreign language educators often use the words “comprehensive” and “all-round” when talking about English language literacy. It indicated that English language literacy is a comprehensive embodiment of knowledge, ability, and attitude. According to Shu (2017), Curriculum Standard points out that English language literacy covers many aspects, including knowledge and skills, process and method, emotional attitude, and values education. The result is that an integral relationship between them can be formed as they penetrate and interact with each other (Shu 2017).

Therefore, the connotation of English language literacy is not simple, as well as the formation of language literacy. The formation of language literacy cannot be detached from the support of knowledge, ability, attitude, emotion, values of the learners. However, if knowledge, ability, attitude, and value are isolated, then the formation of English language literacy will not be possible. Thus, connections between them can be helpful for the construction of English language literacy.

It is clear that comprehensiveness is one of the characteristics of English language literacy due to the synthetic tendency of curriculum reform (S. Cheng, 2017). Therefore, each of them is required to respond to the English language literacy, as well as the comprehensive characteristics of the literacy (S. Cheng, 2017).

**Influencing Factors of English Language Literacy from the Perspective of Famous Foreign Language Educators**

According to fields’ classification, the influencing factors of English language literacy can be divided into three aspects: the factors between people, between people and society, and between people and tools. First, the elements between people refer to the influence from students, teachers, and parents. Secondly, the elements between people and society refer to many influencing factors influenced by social development. Finally, the elements between people and tools refer to the factors formed by people impacted by tools.
Between people: Influenced by Self and Educators

The analysis showed that “self”, “autonomy”, and “teacher guidance” have appeared many times in the relevant texts of famous foreign language educators. It can be seen that teacher guidance and learner autonomy are necessary in the formation and development of English language literacy. The development of English language literacy is influenced by the learners themselves and the teachers who play an essential role in their learning process (Wang, 2017).

Learners’ autonomy is regarded as a primary factor in the development of English language literacy. It was also highlighted in the discussion of Wen (1995) that learning theory has a direct impact on learners’ learning behavior in the last two decades. Learners’ attitudes and ideas are closely related to learners’ language learning behavior (Wen, 1995). Moreover, teachers play a guiding role in the formation of English language literacy. It is in accordance with the view of Wen in Xu and Shi’s study (2018), which claimed that teachers are required to understand the relationship between English language literacy and other factors influencing teaching. Thus, they could properly implement it in their teaching process. In other words, students’ awareness of cross-culture could be raised, and their effective learning strategies could be enhanced by teachers’ instruction in the class. English language literacy plays a fundamental role in the teaching practices (Wang, 2016).

Human and Society: Influenced by Language Environment and Society

The analysis showed that many foreign language educators indicate that foreign language education is primarily influenced by social factors. The development of English language literacy results from the social studies by many scholars in foreign language education. Therefore, the development of English language literacy is also affected by many social factors (X. Cheng & Zhao, 2016). Dai (2003) pointed out that foreign language education cannot be separate from society, and it is a crucial base for the needs of society. Thus, in the process of language teaching, the reform of language teaching should consider the social needs (Gui, 2004).

Nowadays, literacy plays a guiding role in the process of discovering creative practices in practical teaching (Zhong, 2016). The primary purpose of education is to meet the needs of society, politics, economy, and culture (Gui, 2004). The secondary purpose is to reflect some changes in educational and teaching concepts, and in the development of students. The importance of innovation, creativity, international vision, communication and interaction, teamwork, social contribution, self-planning, and management literacy, is emphasized in the formation of English language literacy. It is consistent with Shu’s view (2013) that foreign language education is required to serve the developmental and long-term goals of the society. The cultivation of students’ creative ability, critical thinking ability, communication and cooperation ability, and social responsibility are also the challenges in the stage of primary education in China. Therefore, the reform of language teaching and language learning should conform to the social needs (Gui, 2004).

Between People and Tools: Learning Medium

Tools refer to the learning medium and the resources used by the subjects in the process of learning English, such as books, references, or other information. Text analysis showed that foreign language educators have repeatedly stressed the importance of tools in language learning.
Gui (1989) noted that English is helpful for his literacy development through reading progressive literature and art. Similarly, Xu stated in Li and Liu’s study (1988) that the benefit of reading is to develop the habit of self-study skills, and it was enlightening for future learning. Dai (2003) also claimed that taking advantage of the opportunity to learn is helpful, and it may be helpful for the understanding of the new tendency of linguistic development internationally. The result showed that the cultivation of language skills is supported by many books and reading experience.

The function of tools is gradually developed in language use (S. Cheng, 2017). In other words, the potential of tools can be generated when people learn language actively. Therefore, the use of tools can facilitate learners’ language ability, and it can be helpful for the development of language literacy (Shu, 2017).

Conclusion
This study investigated English language literacy from the perspective of foreign language educators through the narrative analysis of the texts. The aim of this study is to explore the characteristics and the influencing factors of the English language literacy among the famous foreign language educators in China. It was found that English language literacy in the eyes of foreign language educators is lifelong, developmental, and comprehensive. The influencing factors of English language literacy are threefold: people, society, and tools. English language literacy is influenced by society, learners themselves, educators, and the learning medium.

According to the results and the actual situation, the suggested recommendations are from curriculum reform, teaching practice, and educational evaluation. The formation of English language literacy is determined by various complex factors. The Ministry of Education put forward the implementation in educational practices: first, to implement language literacy through curriculum reform. The educational objectives should be examined based on the cultivation of language literacy, and thus the connection of the curriculums could be enhanced. Second, the implementation of English language literacy derives from the teaching practices. Third, the implementation of English language literacy can rely on educational evaluation. The development of students’ English language literacy is an essential basis in the evaluation of the quality of education (X. Cheng, 2017). Thus, standards of each subject can be established in the process of the cultivation of English language literacy.

Acknowledgement
This paper is under the support of a project in the National Training Program of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Undergraduates (201810500002).

About the author:
Jie Lin is a graduate student of TESOL at the Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh, UK. She obtained her BA in English from the School of Foreign Languages, Hubei University of Technology, China. Her research interests include Applied Linguistics and TESOL. https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1344-5132

Chili Li is an associate professor of applied linguistics at the School of Foreign Languages, Hubei University of Technology, China. He obtained his doctorate in Applied Linguistics from
School of English, the University of Liverpool, UK. His research interests include Applied Linguistics and EAP teaching in the Chinese EFL context.

Reference


Doing Stylistic Versus Critical Stylistic: An Analysis of If by Rudyard Kipling

Suadad Fadhil Kadhum Al-Janabi
Department of English Language, College of Languages
University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq
Correspondent soadod.kadhem@colang.uobaghdad.edu.iq

Nawar Hussein Rdhaiwi Al-Marsumi
Department of English Language, College of Languages
University of Baghdad, Baghdad, Iraq

Received: 9/27/2020 Accepted: 2/4/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
This paper displays the ideological positioning as found in Rudyard Kipling’s poem If. It is a poem published in 1910. It presents the embedded ideologies and shows how the poet used the available linguistic resources to achieve his goal. The models of analysis adopted are Critical Stylistics as proposed by Lesley Jeffries (2010) and Stylistic Analysis as submitted by McIntyre (2010). The paper aims at identifying the poet's beliefs to show that success is the outcome of self-control and a real sense of the values of things. It is a try to discover how the poet used various linguistic choices to build a message telling us how to deal with life confidently and identify a line of ideological positioning through Critical Stylistic strategies. The paper presents a theoretical background of the term stylistics and critical stylistics, explaining the adopted models; Analyzing the poem stylistically with a focus on critical stylistic regarding two tools: Representing and Negating for their dominant use in the poem and their effectiveness in interpreting the hidden ideologies. Stylistic devices are used because they steer the text to enable the writer to reach the intended goal. In conclusion, the paper displays that the poet uses the stylistic tools in a brilliant way that leads All, not only his son, to follow and consider it a moral lesson of life.

Keywords: critical stylistic analysis, stylistics, Rudyard Kipling poem If, material actions, mental processes, verbalization

Introduction

Every time a language is used, the writer or the speaker needs to adopt a particular style. Language is considered a fundamental tool for communication that can effectively achieve specific goals to reach the desired influence. The user of the language can select from a series of stylistic possibilities according to the aim of the speech, poem, essay, etc. The poem gains its impact from the specific style which the poet uses to deliver what he/she wants to convey since stylistics is concerned with exploring language and specifically exploring creativity in language use. Accordingly, stylistics has its principal aim to observe the prospective expressive energies in a language, not in a person.

Selecting specific stylistic devices to convey a message is powerfully manifested in literary works and, most specifically, in literature. The didactic poem If has a special privilege over all kinds of poetry for its veracity. It reflects proof of dignified morals. This kind of poetry is the most genuine and authentic sort of poetry because it comes from the human soul depths and mind. The poet tries to express his feelings or give entertainment and teach or give instructions about a specific case. Thus, this study explores the language of didactic poetry in English stylistically at two levels: negation and representation. It displays and identifies the poet beliefs to make it clear that success results from self-control and a real sense of things’ values. It manifests how the poet used various linguistic choices to build a message of life.

Literature Review
Style and Stylistics

Style is a choice of linguistic means. Every writer makes choices to put things of expression, and there in the choices, the style resides. Supporting this idea, style is viewed by Haynes (2006) as "a matter of the careful choice of exactly the right word phrase, le mot juste" (p. 2). Verdonk 2002 stated that language style could also be "a set of conscious or unconscious choices of expression, inspired or included by a particular context" (p. 3). Abrams (1999) displayed style to show how writers and speakers used certain linguistic expressions to convey whatever they want to say. All the definitions of style can cover the term stylistics. Thus, the most common definition of stylistics, found in dictionaries, is 'the study of style.' However, according to Spencer (1998), stylistics signifies exploiting linguistics as a tool for literary criticism to search and inspect the aesthetic effect of language in a broad sense and style in a specific sense.

Nevertheless, this view is somehow vague and challenged. Simpson (2004) states that stylistics is "a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language" (p. 2). Whereas, Scott (2013) mentions that stylistics is an academic discipline between language and literary studies. It investigates the readers' interactive behavior with the style of texts to show how the text is understood and how the readers are affected by the texts when they read them. Verdonk (2002) states that stylistics is "the analysis of distinctive expressions in language and the description of their purposes and effects" (p. 3). In conclusion, stylistics aims to study the style of language usage in different contexts, either linguistic or situational, and to provide a detailed description of the work in question.
Critical Stylistics

Critical stylistics is a term that refers to the stylistic activity used in the methods in which social meanings are verified through language. This stylistic tendency is conducted by critical linguistics and CD (Norgaard, Busse, & Montoro, 2010). Critical Stylistics is assigned to Lesley Jeffries' work, which is based on work in CDA, which uses different analysis methods to display the link between language, power, and ideology (Evans & Schuller, 2015). Moreover, the term Critical Stylistics was first used by Jeffries (2007). Critical stylistics sets the objective of combining the powers and advantages of stylistics and CDA to show the way writers insert their ideologies with the other social concepts into their writing. Coffey (2013) pinpoints that Critical Stylistics attempts to connect CDA and stylistics. CDA is applied to show how language is involved in social relations of power and domination. Stylistics, which is 'the study of style,' deals with analyzing 'literary language' to display the connection between language and artistic fiction.

Jeffries (2010) shows that Critical Stylistics is used to "assemble the main general function that a text has in representing realities" (p. 14). She adds that Critical Stylistics provides several tools, which are assumed to be more comprehensive than any other work in CDA. Lesley Jeffries published her book Critical Stylistics in 2010, integrating CDA and stylistics with a particular emphasis, as Dopar (2015) states, on the actual linguistic manifestation of social meaning and the needed analysis tools, which is called textual conceptual functions. Moreover, Jeffries (2010) asserts that 'textual conceptual functions' are used to display the implicit ideologies produced by linguistic choices.

Critical statisticians utilize the linguistic features that are described in many semantic-grammatical theories and models as analytical tools, as Jeffries (2010) shows “for the different methods in which texts allow/ ask us to conceptualize the topics they are addressing and to provide some means of accessing this representational practice” (p. 14).

Differences between Critical Stylistics and Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA lacks a comprehensive, complete account of tools for the analyst to utilize. In contrast, critical stylistics, in turn, has a systemic analytical model that incorporates tools from stylistics and critical linguistics to display "linguistic choices of text producers and their possible ideological motifs and implications" (Coffey, 2013, p. 30).

Jeffries (2010) asserts that Critical Linguistics and CDA do not present an analysis framework that shows the texts' hidden ideologies. Therefore, she offers ten analytical tools to examine textual ideology. These tools resemble the eclectic model of tools that were created by scholars as Fowler (1991), Simpson (1993), and Fairclough (1989).

Critical stylistics deals with uncovering the texts' underlying ideology manifesting how language is used to apply particular ideologies through literary or non-literary texts without considering the outside circumstances (Jeffries, 2014). CDA deals with the social, historical, visual texts putting the external circumstances at the core of the analysis. Jeffries realizes that stylistics analysis is being useful and insightful in the same way when the data was non-fiction and when literary. (Jeffries, 2014)
Critical stylistics shows that all texts are ideologically influenced consciously or unconsciously (Oluwuoye, 2015). It offers a set of analytical tools that help the analyst shed light on the texts’ hidden ideologies in an objective way.

Jeffries (2016) coincides with Fowler’s (1966) definition of ideology as she put up with that ideology is prevalent in texts and reflects the principles of credibility in a particular community or group. Besides, Jeffries (2010) defines ideology as "those ideas that are shared by a community or society […] are an essential aspect of the world that we live in, and they are, of course, communicated, reproduced, constructed and negotiated through language" (p.5).

Methods

The Adopted Models

Rudyard Kipling If is the title of the poem under analysis. Rudyard Kipling was born in 1865 in India. He was John Lockwood Kipling's bright son, who is a teacher of English art. His mother was Scottish. Kipling spent the best six years of his early life in India. In 1871 his mother sent him to England, where he lived with a foster family. This situation, which makes him live a complicated life, has a significant impact on him, and could not hinder his innovation. His poem "if" is a didactic poem. It delivers a life lesson. The poet, who is the speaker in this poem, gives his son instructions concerning whatever he can do and can not do overtime to be a man. It is considered a lesson about crucial things in life. He teaches his son the matters in life that worth fighting for. He teaches his son how to be self-controlled and how to become a winner. It is a lesson not only to his son but a lesson to ALL through his son.

The models adopted for analysis are: Firstly, The stylistic analysis model as proposed by McIntyre (2010); Secondly, the analytical model proposed by Jeffries (2010) which consists of ten tools and I chose two tools to be adopted which are: Representing (Actions/Events/States) and Negating for their dominant use in the poem and their effectiveness in interpreting the hidden ideologies.

McIntyre’s Model (2010)

In his article, McIntyre (2010) demonstrates that stylistics aims to illuminate how the words of specific text generate the feelings and responses that the reader gets from these selected words when reading them. His model of analysis is based on some procedures. The procedures adopted by McIntyre (2010) are as follows: 1. Looking at the chosen poem. This step gives a general description of the poem. It focuses on the striking irregularities of forms like lack of capitalization, the strange use of punctuation, and the odd structure of particular phrases. 2. Examining the lexical features. In this step, McIntyre concentrates on the open class words showing how they are distributed throughout the poem and whether they are nouns, verbs, adjectives, or adverbs. 3. Breaking down the open classes into some essential semantic areas. In this step, each part of speech within the semantic areas are to be examined according to their numbers to understand the reasons behind the differences between them. 4. Pointing out the unusual word and the neologism. 5. Studying the existence of the foregrounded aspects in the repetition, deviation, and parallelism.
Jeffries’s Model (2010)
The following is a survey of the tenth tools that Jeffries’ model has:

Naming and Describing
Naming indicates the choices of a noun that may be used to denote the same entity. It can be done directly by choosing nouns from the available alternates, using certain modifications to describe that referent within the noun phrase domain, and using nominalization in specific contexts that can be expressed using verbs. The above mentioned are essential methods that can invent ideological meaning in the text.

Representing Actions/Events/States
Jeffries (2010) uses this tool to display how the speaker or writer expresses the event in terms of actions, events, and states. It deals with the noun phrase semantic function according to the verbal elements.

Equating and Contrasting
This tool's debate is that all texts can create new synonyms and antonyms between words, phrases or clauses, or the whole paragraphs. It concerns with how the world is structured in the texts in terms of both equation and opposition. The semantic relations that are textually constructed refer to similarities and differences of meaning.

Exemplifying and Enumerating
The choice of using exemplification or enumeration in specific text relies on pragmatic inferencing. It is used to decide which one is more relevant than the other in a given case. This case happens because there is no linguistic difference in functions between them.

Prioritizing
The syntactic opportunities of prioritizing certain information over the other rely on the fact that while structuring the sentence of the language, in specific structures, we put the essential information at the beginning as in fronting through the transformational process and in other structure we put the prioritizing information in the final position as insubordination as the main obligatory clause bears the most critical information.

Implying and Assuming
This tool is mainly concerned with pragmatics as the latter deals with the implicitly in the language. The utilization of assumptions and implications to give common sense to the ideologies is called naturalization. It is a method of vital importance that can influence people's viewpoints.

Negating
It is used In a general term to deal with the conceptual practice rather than the verb negative form. It helps the speaker produce a hypothetical version of reality. It has the power of a persuasive kind. It can be a negative power or a positive one. Such constructions create implicatures about the other realities that may occur by disregarding the Gricean maxim of quantity.
Hypothesizing

The hypothetical reality in the text can be manifested by using modality. Halliday (1994) believes that the language's interpersonal metafunctions can be expressed by using the modal system. However, Jeffries assumes that modality is ideational according to the conceptual meaning that it has. It can show the different ways of influence on the reader or hearer (Jeffries, 2016).

Presenting Others' Speech and Thought

This tool presented others' words and thought through direct and indirect speech and according to the textual function (Jeffries, 2016).

Representing Time, Space and Society

It shows the moment, place, audience, and context of the text displayed through the linguistic realization. The use of deixis within the text becomes more sensitive to textual ideology (Jeffries, 2016).

Stylistic Analysis
Looking at the Chosen Poem

Using stylistic tools to analyze particular text doesn't resemble a literary analysis. Literary analysis is less objective and rooted than stylistic analysis. Stylistic analysis displays how the chosen linguistic elements construct the intended semantic goal to get the readers' desired reactions. The poem If is typical of Rudyard's style. It consists of 30 lines. For example, one notices the excessive use of If clause with no independent (main) clause as if it reflects one sentence length. The independent clause appears at the end of the poem, in the last two lines. The poem is full of instructions in the form of conditions full of negative and imperative forms. The poet uses such constructions to steer the readers' intention to read the whole poem to see if he/she fulfills all these conditions, what will happen. If at the beginning of sequential sentences is to stir emotion and unify separate sentences into a cohesive whole.

Examining the lexical Categories

McIntyre 2010 concentrates on the open class words showing how they are distributed throughout the poem within the limit of their major categories.

Table 1. Distribution of open class words (Content Words) in the poem If

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns (line No.)</th>
<th>Verbs (line No.)</th>
<th>Adverbs</th>
<th>Adjectives (line No.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men (3)</td>
<td>Keep your head (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tired (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowance (4)</td>
<td>Losing , Blaming (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Good, wise (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doubting (4)</td>
<td>Trust, Doubt (3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>worn-out (16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lies (6)</td>
<td>Make (4)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hating (7)</td>
<td>Wait, Waiting (5)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dreams, master (8)</td>
<td>Lied, Deal (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughts, aim(10)</td>
<td>Hated, give (7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aim (10)</td>
<td>Look, talk (8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triumph, disaster (11)</td>
<td>Dream, make (9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impostors (12)</td>
<td>Think, make (10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The total number of content words used in the poem is (95). The high number (47) and the frequency rate (49.473%) of verbs indicate that the poem or the poem's instructions need actions that are strictly required to achieve the triumph. The number of nouns (44) and the frequency rate (46.315%) seem to be close to rate of the verbs used in the poems. Such a rate of nouns indicates that the poem is an excellent example of stability.

There is no adverb mentioned in the poem, which indicates that this is a real lesson for ALL without considering the place or time. It is a lesson of how to grow up and become a man no matter where or when the given instructions should be fulfilled. Only four adjectives are used with a rate of (4.210). This rate indicates that the poem is not a descriptive one.

Breaking down the Open Classes into some Basic Semantic Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. A Breakdown of nouns in the poem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nouns in the selected poem are analyzed within five rough areas of the semantic field. Concrete and abstract nouns are (20) and (24) respectively, and with frequency rates of (45.454) and (54.545) respectively are distributed in the poem. The relatively similar rate of both nouns refers to the everlasting relation between concrete or material and what is abstract or untouchable in humans' lives. The numbers of nouns that refer to triumph, disasters and that are neutral as for
the theme of triumph and disasters (16), (12) and (16) respectively and with frequency rates of (36.363), (27.272), and (36.363) respectively are distributed in the poem in such a way that shows how the theme of triumph and disaster affects the poet's inspiration to draw the lines of instructions.

Table 3. *A breakdown of verbs in the poem*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic areas</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total verbs</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitive verbs</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>65.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intransitive verbs</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stative verbs</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>34.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dynamic verbs</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>65.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbs with a human agent</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>97.872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbs with a non-human agent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive voice</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active voice</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>97.872</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rudyard Kipling uses transitive verbs (31) times with a frequency rate of (65.957%) while there are only (16) intransitive verbs that show the frequency rate of (34.042%). He uses verbs like lose, trust, give, keep, hurt, count, say, etc. This displays that the poet is stable to incorporate all the details that can be achieved by using these verbs. The highest number and frequency rate of dynamic verbs over stative verbs is (31) times with a frequency rate of (65.957%), which is a typical result of the continuous actions that the poet asks (YOU) to fulfill to be successful mankind. Only one passive verb and all others are active, i.e., 97.872% are active to express Rudyard Kipling's desire to make the doer of his verbs clear.

Table 4. *A Breakdown of adjectives in the poem*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semantic areas</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total adjectives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predicative adjective</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attributive adjective</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because the poem is not a descriptive one, the poet uses very few adjectives, but out of four adjectives, 75% are predicative adjectives. Such adjectives modify the subject, who is the doer of the action, and the whole poem.

**Pointing out the Unusual Word and the Neologism**

All words that are used by the Rudyard are ordinary words which can be roughly divided into some semantic fields; triumph, disaster, and characters. From the field of triumph come the words winnings, triumph, trust yourself, look good, and virtue. From the disaster field come the words; disaster, trap, pitch, toss, loss, lies, hating, and hurt. From the characters' field come the words; men, masters, imposters, knaves, king, friends, and son.

**Studying the Existence of the Foregrounded Aspects in the Repetition, Parallelism, and Deviation**

Table 5. *Instances of foregrounding in If*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Repetition</th>
<th>Parallelism</th>
<th>Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327
Repetition takes the highest rate with its total number of (70) instances. The poet intentionally repeats the pronoun "you" (18) times and "if" (14) times to express the conditions that "YOU" must follow to be a Man. The auxiliary verb "can" is repeated (10) times. The pronoun "your" is repeated (9) times. The negative particle "not" is repeated (6) times. The verb "make" is repeated (4) times. The relative pronoun "when" is repeated (3) times. The words "dream," "hate," and "hold on" are repeated (2) times equally. Rudyard uses parallelism throughout the poem several times as he uses the construction "If you can..."(11) times to show suspense concerning the conditions that bear the spirit of advice. He intentionally delays the response to the condition till the end of the poem, as the poet displays the consequences that come up after fulfilling these conditions. Besides, such parallelism adds a rhythmical feeling to the poem. All instances of deviation are ( 10 ) with their frequency rate ( 10.989 ). Within the area of semantic deviation comes Personification; as seen in the poem, this kind of figure of speech can be seen in 4 places. In the second stanza, the poet personifies "dreams" to be just like "masters" who can control our lives. Besides, in the second stanza, too, Rudyard personifies "success" as " triumph" and "failure" as "Disaster." In the third stanza, Rudyard personifies "will" as a person; Metaphor: In the first stanza, Rudyard uses "impostors" to refer to "triumph and disaster." And "worn-out tools" is used in the third stanza to refer to feeling; and Symbolism: The poet uses some words to symbolize people such as "knaves" is used to represent "liars"; " crowds" indicates "people"; "kings" refers to significant people, and "common touch" stands for humility.

**Critical Stylistic Analysis**

**Representing Actions/Events/States**

It considers the textual- conceptual function that signifies the choice of transitivity. It demonstrates the noun phrase semantic function regarding verbal elements. It shows how the situation is expressed by the writer or the speaker according to events, states, or actions and who bears the responsibility for the resulted action (Jeffnes, 2016). His tool refers to Halliday’s (1985) and Simpson's Model (1993), which is based on Halliday's work. The model is used to describe predicators' choices in a particular text and its effects. It concerns the meaning level associated with the verbal clause part and submits information on the action, event, and states. Jeffries (2010) displays the transitivity model categorization:

1- Material Action Processes represent the main category. They are the processes of doing in the physical world. It involves two participants. One of them is the actor, who is the doer of the action. It is an obligatory participant. The second participant is the goal, which is an optional participant. It expresses the person or entity, whether animate or inanimate, affected by the process. The subcategories reflects Intention, Supervention, Event (Simpson,1993).

2- Verbalization Processes represent the main category. They are the processes of "saying" covers any kind of symbolic exchange of meaning. A verbal process contains three participants: Sayer, Verbiage, and Receiver. Te Sayer is the participant responsible for the verbal process. The Verbiage is a normalized statement of the verbal process. The Receiver is the one to whom the verbal process is directed (Eggins, 2004). This type of process includes verbs like tell, promise, suggest, announce, inform, etc.
3- Mental Cognition Process is called the process of sensing. It is the process of feeling, thinking, and receiving. Simpson (1993) labels this process as an internalized process compared to the externalized processes of doing and speaking. The mental process involves two participants: the sensor and the phenomenon. The sensor reflects the conscious being that is feeling, thinking, or seeing. The phenomenon demonstrates what is sensed- felt, thought, or seen (Eggins, 1994; Halliday, 1985).

Mental process verbs are subcategorized by Halliday (1994) into three types: Cognition, Affection, and Perception. Cognition can be manifested through verbs of thinking, knowing, and understanding; Affection is reflected by verbs of liking, hating, loving, and fearing; and Perception contains verbs of seeing and hearing.

4- Relational Processes are called the processes of being, which can be realized by the verb "be" and other copular verbs like seem, appear, become, and verbs as own, possess and have. Relational processes involve two participants: Carrier and Attribute. Carrier refers to the entity which carries the attribute, while attribute refers to that which qualifies the entity. They can be subcategorized into three categories: Intensive, Possessive, circumstantial.

Table 7. Classifications and frequencies of verbalization processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Sayer</th>
<th>Verbiage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>blaming (2)</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Theirs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lied (6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>about you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spoken (13)</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>the truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Classifications and frequencies of mental Cognition process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb (line No.)</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Sensor</th>
<th>Phenomenon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>trust (3)</td>
<td>reaction</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>Yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doubt(3)</td>
<td>reaction</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hated(7)</td>
<td>reaction</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>look (8)</td>
<td>perception</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>too good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dearm(9)</td>
<td>Cognition</td>
<td>you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think(10)</td>
<td>Cognition</td>
<td>you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bear (13)</td>
<td>Reaction</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>to hear the truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hear(13)</td>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>you</td>
<td>the truth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hurt (27)</td>
<td>Reaction</td>
<td>you</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 9</td>
<td>5 reaction</td>
<td>2 perception</td>
<td>9 you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 cognition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Classifications and frequencies of relational processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb (line No.)</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Carrier</th>
<th>Attribute</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>is (31)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yours</td>
<td>the earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be(32)</td>
<td></td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total :2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participants' prominent roles are Actor and Goal, and whether the process is controlled and done towards the goal. According to the transitivity model, the statistical outcomes of the data classification show that the most used actions are of intentionality subcategories (93,10%). "You" is significantly involved as an actor (70%) in the material processes. "you" is his son who is directed towards the goal which controls the actions. Besides, "You" is involved in a high percentage (24%) as a sensor in the mental cognition process. The poem reflects instructions that tell how to be a good human being by adopting certain behaviors. The poem is devoted to "you," addressing his son directly and human being indirectly. "YOU" has to accomplish all the conditions and requirements that the poet states through the use of intentional material action processes along with the mental processes and through which the actor is directed towards the mentioned goal. Moreover, the poet uses these kinds of verbs to encode the reality in such a way that it seems that he reflects his experience of the world around in order to deliver a lesson to"YOU". Thus, it is manifested that actions that are considered conditions to be successful a good human being have to be accomplished intentionally by the actor or the doer of the action or what the poet called "You."

**Negating**

To enhance the aimed ideology, the poet uses negation to build a non-existing world in the mind of "you" in such a way that helps to create specific desire, fear, or belief. It can be achieved by using sets of triggers. Thus, negating a clause is gained through the use of negative particles, whereas negating a word is achieved through morphological, semantic, and pragmatic processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syntactically</th>
<th>Pronoun</th>
<th>Morphologically</th>
<th>Lexically</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>not be (5)</td>
<td>nothing(23)</td>
<td>unforgiving(29)</td>
<td>lose(2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't deal(6)</td>
<td>none(28)</td>
<td></td>
<td>hated(7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't give(7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>broken(15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't look(8)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>lose(19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not make(9)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>hurt(27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not make (10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>never (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nor lose(26)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither for…. nor loving(27)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The poem is full of negative sentences in the main conditional clause in form of order. The poet delivers his didactic message in a very negative manner. All instructions are devoted to things that one doesn't have to do, or it is better not to do or never do, to achieve a successful life instead of giving positive instructions. The poet makes "You" fears to do these forbidden things or behaviors. He makes him imagine the other reality that stands behind the negative action. Negating is used to denote a mental activity more significant than the direct negation of a verb. This concerns its pragmatic force, which is used to render the addressee "You" conscious of situations that occurs if the opposite happens. The importance of the textual practice of negation in this poem makes the addressee built a virtual version of reality even though it is imaginary. Besides, it let the reader imagine the hypothetical situation to the degree that it may have a persuasive power, which should be positive according to this poem.
Conclusion

'Stylistic tools are used to show that the poem recalls actions, and the emphasis is put on the "You" to refer to ALL. The poet uses certain stylistic elements to reach his intended semantic goal and affect the reader. The poet uses the content words relying mainly on the nouns and verbs with no adverb just to reflect that these instructions are not for the time being. They are set for all times. Besides, the poet uses particular poetic foregrounding such as repetition, especially when repeated the words If and “you” several times with parallelism and deviation just to direct the reader to the conditions that imply the instructions and recognize the gift that the reader may get if he/she fulfill these conditions.

Critical stylistic devices steer the text in such a way that let the writer or producer reaches the set goal. The use of transitivity to promote the ideational function in the text. The poet uses two kinds of lexical verbs (intentional material action and mental process) significantly. The poet succeeded in setting his embedded ideology through this choice. He used these verbs to make "You" the addressee realized that he/she should follow and do all the mentioned guidelines to have a good life even though they are not compulsory. The port makes the addressee realize and imagine the other world that he/she might have through the use of negation. The poet uses the mentioned tools in a very clever way that leads All not only his son "You" to follow and consider it a moral lesson of life.

About the Authors;

Suadad Fadhil Kadhum holds a Master of Arts degree in English Language and Linguistics from the University of Baghdad, College of Languages. I am an Assistant Professor in the department of English at the College of Languages, and I have been teaching at the university since 1999. I published several papers concerning my major. My research interest is discourse, pragmatics, stylistics, and cognitive issues.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1600-057X

Nawar Hussein Al-Marsumi is an Assistant Professor, holding the Master of Arts degree in English Language and Linguistics obtained from the University of Baghdad, College of Education- Ibn Rushd. Since 1999, I have been working at Baghdad University as a teaching member in the Department of English. My major is the English language and linguistics, and I published several papers in contrastive studies, stylistics and pragmatics.
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3918-5984

References


Conflict, 3(1), 128-150
Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

### Appendices

#### Appendix A

Table 6. Classifications and frequencies of material action processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb (line No.)</th>
<th>Subcategory</th>
<th>Actor</th>
<th>Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>keep (1)</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>your head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>losing (2)</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Theirs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>make allowance(4)</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>their doubt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wait (5)</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>give (7)</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Wise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talk (8)</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>triumph and disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meet (11)</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>those impostors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>treat (12)</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>those impostors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twisted (14)</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Knaves</td>
<td>You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watch (15)</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gave (15)</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>your life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>broken (15)</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Things</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stoop (16)</td>
<td>Intention</td>
<td>You</td>
<td>Things</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix B

*If* by Rudyard Kipling

| IF you can keep your head when all about you | Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken, |
| Are losing theirs and blaming it on you. | And stoop and build ’em up with worn-out tools: |
| If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, | If you can make one heap of all your winnings |
| But make allowance for their doubting too; | And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss, |
| If you can wait and not be tired by waiting, | And lose, and start again at your beginnings |
| Or being lied about, don’t deal in lies, | And never breathe a word about your loss; |
| Or being hated, don’t give way to hating, | If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew |
| 8And yet don’t look too good, nor talk too wise: | To serve your turn long after they are gone, |
| if you can dream — and not make dreams your master; | And so hold on when there is nothing in you |
| If you can think — and not make thoughts your aim; | Except the Will which says to them: ‘Hold on!’ |
| If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster | If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue, |
| And treat those two impostors just the same; | ‘ Or walk with Kings — nor lose the common touch, |
| If you can bear to hear the truth you’ve spoken | if neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you, |
| Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools, | If all men count with you, but none too much; |
| | If you can fill the unforgiving minute |
| | With sixty seconds’ worth of distance run, |
| | Yours is the Earth and everything that’s in it, |
| | And — which is more — you’ll be a Man, my son!
The Effects of Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy Instruction on Thai EFL Undergraduate Students’ Vocabulary Knowledge and Perceptions

Nuntiporn Raungsawat
Language Institute, Thammasat University
Bangkok, Thailand
Correspondent Author: nun.raung@gmail.com

Tipamas Chumworatayee
Language Institute, Thammasat University
Bangkok, Thailand

Received: 12/26/2020 Accepted: 2/22/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
This study mainly examines the effect of Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) instruction on students’ vocabulary knowledge. Moreover, it investigates the students’ perceptions towards the implementation of VSS instruction. Thirty-eight Thai EFL undergraduate students majoring in English at a university located in Thailand participated in the study. To determine the students’ vocabulary knowledge before and after the instruction, the vocabulary pretest and posttest were employed. A perception questionnaire and a semi-structured interview were conducted at the end of VSS instruction to elicit the students’ perceptions towards VSS instruction. The paired samples t-test analysis indicates that the students improved short-term vocabulary retention, and they could retain vocabulary learned after VSS instruction. The results from the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview showed that they mostly agreed that VSS instruction assisted them in learning new words, memorizing word meaning, having a chance to choose their own words to learn, sharing words to classmates, working in a group, and realizing the importance of learning new words. The findings will help Thai EFL university students improve their vocabulary learning and generate an innovative body of knowledge regarding vocabulary instruction. Pedagogical implications are also suggested for EFL teachers who want to implement VSS in their vocabulary instruction.

Keywords: perceptions, Thai EFL undergraduate students, vocabulary instruction, vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary retention, Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS)

Cite as: Raungsawat, N., & Chumworatayee, T. (2021). The Effects of Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy Instruction on Thai EFL Undergraduate Students’ Vocabulary Knowledge and Perceptions Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 253-269. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.18
Introduction

Vocabulary is an essential component in learning a second language. Schmitt (2010) states that learners require a large vocabulary to function in a second language. Schmitt (2000) and Hsu (2006) point out that lexical knowledge is central to communicative competence. Mothe (2013) further explains that vocabulary is required for expressing thoughts, feeling, and meaning through productive and receptive skills. According to Wilkins (1972), learners of a second language who do not have sufficient vocabularies cannot understand others or express their own ideas.

However, research findings revealed that insufficient vocabulary knowledge is one of the main problems for Thai students in comprehending English texts, especially those at the tertiary level (Wiriyakarun, 2018). For example, Adunyarittigun (2002) found that inadequate vocabulary was one of the factors leading to Thai students’ failure in predicting the meaning of unknown words in context. Akkakoson and Setobol (2009) revealed that most Thai students had limited vocabulary and could not interpret the word meanings, sentences and paragraphs. Similarly, Attaprechakul’s (2013) research findings showed that Thai students faced problems in inferring unfamiliar word meanings from the context which resulted in understanding the meaning of the whole text. With regard to the aforementioned English reading problems, Thai EFL university students urgently need to improve vocabulary knowledge to facilitate their understanding of English reading materials. Hence, a number of vocabulary instructional methods employed to help increase students’ vocabulary knowledge were reviewed. After the revision of literature and previous studies on vocabulary learning, the researchers found an interesting strategy called “Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy” or “VSS” proposed by Haggard (1982).

Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) is an interactive-learning instructional strategy that “helps students increase their vocabulary so that they can become better readers, promotes the long-term acquisition of language in an academic setting” (Haggard, 1986, p.4). Through VSS, students are encouraged to select and study words from a reading text that are new and interesting. Then they use the context to determine word meaning, and nominate the words to be learned with members of the class (Antonacci & O’Callaghan, 2012). It is believed that when learners are given a chance to choose their own vocabularies based on their interest, reading comprehension is enhanced (Haggard, 1986; Ruddell & Shearer, 2002). Student-centered tasks of VSS: selecting, defining, finalizing, and using words (Antonacci & O’Callaghan, 2012) help promote “content learning and independent word-learning strategies” (Harmon et al., 2005, p.314). Simply put, VSS procedures support reading comprehension by developing both knowledge of word definitions and knowledge of the context in which the words are found (Haggard, 1982).

As the previous studies show, VSS has been successfully implemented with different levels of learners in cooperative group settings. However, none of the research has been carried out with Thai tertiary students. Therefore, this study mainly aims to examine Thai university students’ vocabulary knowledge through VSS instruction. Additionally, the students’ perceptions towards the implementation of VSS are investigated. The research findings will help Thai
undergraduate students to improve vocabulary learning and be a valuable guideline for further studies. To this end, two main research questions are proposed in this study as follows.

1. To what extent does Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) instruction affect Thai EFL undergraduate students’ vocabulary knowledge?
2. What are Thai EFL undergraduate students’ perceptions towards Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) instruction?

**Literature Review**

**Vocabulary Knowledge**

Vocabulary knowledge generally refers to knowledge of individual word meaning. Moreover, the meaning of a word is often associated with a learner’s real-life experience, and its exact meaning depends on the context in which it appears. Thus, knowing a word may go beyond its definition found in a dictionary (Koda, 2005). It is widely accepted that vocabulary knowledge plays a vital role in students’ success in learning a language because it is a crucial component of linguistic competence (Killic, 2019) and enables language use (Nation, 1993).

One distinction that has frequently been made in the recent literature on vocabulary learning between two primary aspects of vocabulary is breadth and depth of knowledge (Anderson and Freebody, 1981; Qian, 2002; Nassaji, 2006; Killic, 2019). The breadth of knowledge refers to the quantity or number of words that a learner knows at a certain level of language proficiency (Nation, 2001), whereas the depth of knowledge is defined as the quality of how well a learner knows a word (Read, 2000). Another well-known distinction regarding vocabulary knowledge is receptive and productive knowledge. The former means the ability to comprehend lexical items when listening or reading while the latter refers to what a learner needs to know about lexical items when speaking or writing (Schmitt, 2014). Nation (2013) provided three significant aspects of the vocabulary knowledge: form, meaning, and use. ‘Form’ means knowledge of spoken and written form of words. ‘Meaning’ entails an understanding of form-meaning relationships, concepts and referents of words, and its association with other words. ‘Use’ refers to knowing grammatical functions, collocations, and usage constraints of words.

**Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy**

Haggard (1982) firstly introduced an approach to word learning called the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (VSS) to develop students’ highly refined, independent vocabulary development skills. In this strategy, students are put into cooperative groups to read an assigned reading to identify words that they think should be studied further or essential to understand a text. The definition of words can be discussed in a cooperative group before sharing them with the whole class. Simply put, the main components dealing with VSS include word choice and interest, word consciousness, using context clues, and group discussion.

VSS has been recognized in a similar way. Martin (2002) defines VSS as “an interactive-learning instructional strategy that promotes word awareness; it helps students to learn vocabulary words, and allow them to have an active role in their teaching and learning process” (p.29). As stated by Haggard (1986):
VSS helps students increase their vocabulary so that they can become better readers, promotes the long-term acquisition of language in an academic setting, and helps them to be able to learn a few key terms in depth rather than knowing much more superficially. (p.4)

Ruddell and Shearer (2002) claim that VSS “had the potential not only to reduce the limitations of traditional word learning instruction concerning student choice and motivation, but also to increase students’ word awareness and strategic abilities for independent learning” (p.355). Antonacci and O’Callaghan (2012) add that VSS is employed to motivate students to learn new words by promoting “long-term acquisition and development of an academic discipline language” (p.26). Likewise, Ruddell (2005) indicates that VSS is intended to enhance long-term vocabulary growth and promote the acquisition and development of language of academic discipline. Manzo, Manzo, and Thomas (2005) describe VSS as “a cooperative structure that provides practice in identifying important terms and using context to predict meaning” (as cited in Kang & Netto-Shek, 2017, pp. 174-175). To sum up, VSS is a vocabulary learning strategy that is used to promote vocabulary acquisition, word consciousness and long-term retention of academic vocabulary by motivating students to select their own vocabulary and work in a group to use contextual clues in order to derive the meaning of unknown words.

**Related Studies**

Several studies were carried out to investigate the perceptions towards VSS of the university students. Haggard (1986) analyzed 42 American university students’ written responses from log entries after their word learning through VSS. The results revealed the strong motivation for learning new words, and VSS led them to become more sensitive to new words and more enjoyable in word learning. Moreover, the students developed their own systematic and independent strategies for learning new words.

Yanto (2017) examined the Indonesian tertiary students’ responses towards learning research terminologies by using VSS. The results from the questionnaire showed that most students agreed that VSS helped them to better understand key words from their reading, supported them to learn how to understand words in contexts, motivated them to read a text, and encouraged them to apply the strategy across the curriculum in any content area. The students thought that VSS created collaborative learning, active learning, and improved their long-term memory of words.

To confirm the findings from the studies mentioned above, Ali (2017) described the Indonesian undergraduate students’ perceptions on the use of VSS. The questionnaire results revealed that VSS helped them in learning new words, learning difficult words, and remembering words they have learned. Moreover, they thought that the strategy enhanced them to freely choose any words to learn, enriched their vocabulary knowledge, and made the learning of vocabulary more interesting.

Besides perceptions, many researchers conducted studies to assure the effectiveness of VSS by comparing VSS with other vocabulary instructions. Masoudi (2017) investigated the effects of VSS and Input Enhancement strategy on the vocabulary knowledge of Iranian EFL university students. The findings showed that learners who learned vocabulary using VSS had
higher vocabulary test mean scores than those exposed to the Input Enhancement strategy. Also, the students in the VSS group were more motivated to guess the unknown words.

Dowswell (2017) employed VSS to improve the vocabulary knowledge of university students in the UAE. The results revealed that the students who learned vocabulary with VSS outperformed those who studied with conventional teaching. Furthermore, they reported that VSS was useful for them in vocabulary learning, they liked using VSS as a way of learning new vocabulary, their motivation increased, and the strategy improved their sense of community in the class.

Similarly, Ali et al. (2018) implemented VSS to enhance the students’ vocabulary knowledge. The results revealed that the Indonesian university students instructed with VSS performed better than those taught with traditional teaching. The students described that VSS is a meaningful strategy in learning vocabulary, which increased their chances to choose any words to be learned. Additionally, they thought that VSS improved their vocabulary knowledge, and felt more interested in learning new words.

According to previous studies, the researchers found that VSS has been implemented across many countries and showed positive vocabulary learning and perceptions. In Thailand, Yunita (2015) conducted classroom action research on VSS instruction. The results showed higher scores in the vocabulary posttest when compared to the pretest scores. The data obtained from classroom observation, field notes, and interviews revealed an increase in the students’ participation and motivation during the vocabulary instruction. However, participants in the study of Yunita (2015) were EFL Thai first-grade students. Therefore, to fulfill the gap, the current study aims to examine the VSS’s effects on vocabulary knowledge and perceptions of undergraduate students in Thailand.

**Research Methodology**

**Research Design**

The present study used mixed methods and experimental research design. Moreover, a one-group pretest-posttest design was employed since there was only one student group participating in this study.

**Participants**

The participants in this study were 38 second-year undergraduate English major students enrolling in *English Reading for Academic Purposes* course in Academic Year 2/2019 at a university in Thailand. Convenience sampling was employed for sample selection. Six males and thirty-two females, aged between 19-20 years old, participated in the study. They had mixed abilities according to the scores they got from the reading course they have taken previously.

**Reading Materials**

The reading passages were developed based on three aspects: students’ preferences, text difficulty, and text length. For the students’ preferences, the top three disciplines selected by the students were (1) cultural studies, (2) art, and (3) education. Regarding text difficulty, the Flesch Reading Ease scores of the passages were 60.1, 60.0, and 61.8, respectively. When aligning the scores to CEFR, it revealed that the reading passages were appropriate for the learners at B2 CEFR level or upper intermediate (Linguapress, 2020). Concerning the text length, the passage
of cultural studies, art, and education comprises 1,029, 665, and 689 words, respectively. These lengths came from the average number of words in reading passages in renowned academic reading textbooks designed for the EFL university students at B2 CEFR levels. The reading tasks in each reading passage were developed based on three reading instruction phases: before reading, during reading, and after reading. VSS instruction was implemented in during and after reading phases.

**Research Instruments**

The data were collected through three research instruments, including vocabulary tests, a perception questionnaire, and semi-structured interview questions.

**Vocabulary Tests**

The vocabulary tests were used as a pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest. The aim was to assess the students’ vocabulary knowledge before and after VSS instruction. The tests were constructed by adapting Gregersen (2001)’s vocabulary test. They consisted of academic vocabularies that are parts of the AWL at B2 CEFR level taken from three B2 CEFR level reading passages on cultural studies, art, and education. Totally, there were 30 academic vocabularies in the tests which were divided into two sections. The first section required the students to match each word with its definition. The second section provided sentences with missing words. To get a score for knowing the word, the students were required to match the word with its definition and complete the correct word into the sentence. The total scores of the tests were 30 points. The administration time for the tests was 45 minutes.

**Perception Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was adapted from the questionnaires designed by Yanto (2017) and Ali (2017). There were two parts in the questionnaire. The first part included 19 closed statements divided into the perceptions regarding the effects of VSS instruction on vocabulary knowledge and word consciousness. The participants were asked to rank their agreement level to the given statements ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). The second part of the questionnaire consisted of two open-ended questions asking the participants regarding the strengths and weaknesses of VSS instruction.

**Semi-structured Interview**

A semi-structured interview was employed to elicit in-depth information of the results from the perception questionnaire on the VSS instruction. There were seven interview questions consisted of three aspects: the participants’ opinions about vocabulary teaching in their previous English reading course, the benefits of VSS instruction, and the participants’ suggestions about the activity in VSS instruction.

**Research Procedures**

This study was carried out in the course entitled *English Reading for Academic Purposes*. The participants took the vocabulary pretest in the first week. VSS instruction was implemented in Week 2 - 7. The total time of each lesson was 150 minutes. There were seven VSS instruction steps based on three phases of reading instruction, namely before reading, during reading, and after reading (Figure one). The vocabulary posttest was administered in Week 8. Then all participants were asked to complete the questionnaire to express perceptions towards the VSS
instruction. Nine students were purposively selected to join the interview based on the interesting responses from the open-ended questionnaire. Fourteen days after the intervention, all participants were requested to take a vocabulary delayed posttest to measure their vocabulary retention.

Figure 1. VSS Instruction Model (Adapted from Antonacci & O’Callaghan, 2010; Martin, 2002; Ruddell, 2005; Tierney & Readence, 2005)

Results
The results of the study are presented according to two aspects: vocabulary knowledge and perceptions towards VSS instruction.

Vocabulary Knowledge
Table one shows descriptive statistics of the vocabulary pretest and posttest. Out of 30 points, the mean score (\( \bar{x} \)) of the vocabulary pretest was 8.50 (SD = 4.70) while the vocabulary posttest had a higher mean score (\( \bar{x} \)) at 12.18 (SD = 4.71).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean (( \bar{x} ))</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pretest</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8.50</td>
<td>4.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12.18</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table two presents the paired samples \( t \)-test analysis of the vocabulary pretest and posttest. The difference between the mean score (\( \bar{x} \)) of the vocabulary pretest and posttest was 3.68. The significant value (2-tailed) was .000, which indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in vocabulary pretest and posttest scores at the .05 level.

Table 2 *Paired samples* \( t \)-test of vocabulary pretest and posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples ( t )-test</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretest-Posttest</td>
<td>-3.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* \( p < .05 \)

The comparison of descriptive statistics of the vocabulary posttest and delayed posttest were illustrated in Table three. It revealed that the mean score (\( \bar{x} \)) of the vocabulary posttest and delayed posttest was 12.18 (SD = 4.71) and 11.53 (SD = 4.68), respectively.

Table 3 Descriptive statistics of vocabulary posttest and delayed posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Min (0)</th>
<th>Max (30)</th>
<th>Mean (( \bar{x} )) (n = 38)</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12.18</td>
<td>4.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed Posttest</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11.53</td>
<td>4.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The paired samples \( t \)-test was used again to compare the mean score (\( \bar{x} \)) of the vocabulary posttest and delayed posttest. Table four revealed the difference between the mean score (\( \bar{x} \)) of the vocabulary posttest and delayed posttest was at .658. The results showed that the significant value (2-tailed) was .062, indicating no statistically significant difference in vocabulary posttest and delayed posttest mean scores at the .05 level. This can be implied that the students could retain vocabulary learned after VSS instruction.

Table 4 *Paired samples* \( t \)-test of vocabulary posttest and delayed posttest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples ( t )-test</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest – Delayed Posttest (n =38)</td>
<td>.658</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\* \( p < .05 \)
Perceptions towards VSS Instruction
Results from Questionnaire

The total mean score of statements in the questionnaire was 4.4 with SD of 0.11 as shown in Table five. Regarding vocabulary knowledge, the mean score was 4.41 with SD of 0.09. In terms of word consciousness, the mean score was 4.47 and SD 0.14. The results from the total mean scores of vocabulary knowledge and word consciousness demonstrate that the participants mostly strongly agreed to the statements in the questionnaire.

Table 5 Descriptive statistics of the perception questionnaire (N =38)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary knowledge</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word consciousness</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 Descriptive statistics of statements on vocabulary knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I can learn new words through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I can remember words that I have learned through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.</td>
<td>4.45</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I can retain my long-term memory of words through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I can learn vocabulary more meaningfully through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I think learning vocabulary becomes a more interesting activity through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy enriches my vocabulary knowledge.</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy is good to be applied in a vocabulary classroom.</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I think I am a better reader through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy as I understand key words in depth from my reading.</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy helps me learn how to understand word meaning in the context.</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I better understand how I can make text more comprehensible through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table six shows that top three statements of vocabulary knowledge were Item one, “I can learn new words through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.” and item six, “I think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy enriches my vocabulary knowledge.” had the highest and same mean scores (4.53) and SD (0.61). Item three, “I can retain my long-term memory of words through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.” had the second-highest mean score at 4.52 with SD of 0.65. The third- highest mean score (4.47, SD 0.66) was item five, “I think learning vocabulary...
becomes a more interesting activity through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.” Item eight, “I think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy helps me learn how to understand word meaning in the context.” and Item 10, “I am satisfied when the teacher gives me a freedom to choose words that I want to learn.” had the lowest and same mean scores at 4.29 with S.D 0.72 and 0.68 respectively. The item with the second lowest mean score (4.37, SD 0.69) was Item nine, “I think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy is good to be applied in a vocabulary classroom.” had the third lowest mean score at 4.39 with SD of 0.77.

Table 7 Descriptive statistics of statements on word consciousness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. I like selecting and collecting new or difficult words from the reading text.</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I like to share my chosen words with my classmates.</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>0.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. I am satisfied when the teacher gives me a freedom to choose words that I want to learn.</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I am more interested in new words through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I like to learn vocabulary based on my own choice.</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I am motivated to guess the word meaning in a text through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy enhances my word awareness.</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy creates collaborative learning.</td>
<td>4.71</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I am very happy when the teacher explains my selected words.</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For word consciousness (Table seven), the top three statements included Item 13, “I am satisfied when the teacher gives me a freedom to choose words that I want to learn.” (mean score 4.79, SD 0.49), Item 18 “I think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy creates collaborative learning.” (mean score 4.71, SD 0.47), and Item 19, “I am very happy when the teacher explains my selected words.” (mean score 4.61, SD 0.61) respectively. In terms of the bottom three items, Item 12, “I like to share my chosen words with my classmates,” had the lowest mean score at 4.21 with SD of 0.74. Item 16, “I am motivated to guess the word meaning in a text through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.” had the second-lowest mean score at 4.26 with SD 0.82. The third-lowest mean score was Item 11, “I like selecting and collecting new or difficult words from the reading text.” (mean score 4.32, SD 0.86). Although the questionnaire items had slightly different mean scores, they were all interpreted in the same way. That is, the majority of the participants strongly agreed to the statements.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of two open-ended questions. The first question in this section was, “In your opinion, what is the strong point of Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy?” The students’ perceptions regarding the strengths of VSS can be classified into seven themes in the order of frequency, as displayed in Table eight.
Table 8 Students’ opinions on the strengths of Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Strengths of VSS</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Help learn new words</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Have a chance to select interesting words</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Foster word memorization</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Better guess word meaning</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Be easier to learn vocabulary</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Practice working in a group</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Be able to consult the teacher immediately</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second open-ended question in the questionnaire was, “In your opinion, what is the weak point of Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy?” Table nine shows ten themes that emerged from the analysis of data in the order of frequency.

Table 9 Students’ opinions on the weaknesses of Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Weaknesses of VSS</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lead to wrong word meaning</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Be difficult to guess word meaning</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Not able to memorize all vocabularies</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Miss out other vocabularies from selection</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Take a long time</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Be able to share only some ideas and fear to answer in the presentation</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Not match between the selected words and the teacher’s purposes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Interrupt reading</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Not focus on grammar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Not realizing the importance of the selected words if they are not used in real life</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data collected from closed-statements and open-ended statements in the questionnaire showed the consistent results. Regarding vocabulary knowledge, Item one, “I can learn new words through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy.” had the highest mean scores at 4.53, indicating that most participants strongly agreed with this statement. Similarly, the theme with the highest frequency for the strengths of VSS is VSS “helps learn new words.” For word consciousness, the participants rated their agreement to Item 13, “I am satisfied when the teacher gives me a freedom to choose words.” with the highest mean score (4.79), which demonstrates that the majority of the participants strongly agreed to the statement. This finding is in accordance with the result from the participants’ responses regarding the strong point of VSS. That is to say, most of them identified that they “have a chance to select interesting words” by themselves through the use of VSS. Moreover, various themes of the benefits of VSS were found in many closed-ended statements. For example, the theme “Foster word memorization” is shown in Item three, “I can retain my long-term memory of words through Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy”. Also, the theme “Practice working in a group” is appeared in Item 18, “I think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy creates collaborative learning.”
Results from Semi-Structured Interview
Opinions towards Vocabulary Teaching in Previous Reading Classes

The first interview question was “How is vocabulary taught to you in your previous English classes? What is your opinion towards that?” The findings revealed that the participants mostly experienced traditional vocabulary instruction or decontextualized teaching methods in the past English reading courses.

Benefits of VSS Instruction

The second question in the interview was, “Do you find Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy instruction beneficial for you? If so, how?” All respondents found VSS instruction useful for them in encouraging vocabulary learning, memorizing word meanings, better understanding word meaning in different contexts, having a chance to share words to classmates, and using learned vocabularies in the future.

The third question was, “Do you think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy instruction help you to develop vocabulary knowledge? If so, how?” The participants had similar opinions that VSS instruction improved their vocabulary knowledge for many reasons. They agreed that they could better memorize vocabularies because the strategy allowed them to guess the meanings of vocabularies from the context. Additionally, it gave them to freely select the vocabularies that they really want to know and share them with their peers.

The fourth question was, “Do you think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy instruction makes you retain vocabulary that you learned in the class? If so, how?” The participants revealed that when they selected vocabularies from their own interest, they could memorize those in a long period of time.

The fifth question was, “Do you think Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy instruction assist you to be more aware of learning new vocabulary? If so, how?” The participants thought that VSS instruction enhanced their awareness in vocabulary learning. They realized the importance of learning new vocabularies because the strategy stimulated them to learn by themselves. They also paid special attention to keywords in the context. Moreover, they had more intention in learning vocabularies since they searched for vocabularies based on their interest.

The sixth question was, “Do you like Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy instruction taught in the class? If so, why?” Every respondent liked VSS instruction. They had fun and felt interested more when they could choose their own words to learn. The strategy helped them find keywords, guess word meanings, cooperate with the classmates, and share vocabularies with the class.

Suggestions about the Activity in VSS Instruction

The last question of the interview was, “What do you think should be added more to Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy instruction?” Some respondents thought that there was nothing to add more because the strategy was useful for them. However, many of them suggested that other vocabulary activities related to games and songs should be integrated to help the
students better memorize vocabularies. Also, the teacher should explain more the parts of words such as prefixes, suffixes as well as how to translate the meaning of words in different contexts.

To conclude, the findings from the semi-structured interview revealed that the participants mainly received conventional vocabulary teaching in previous reading classes. They thought that VSS instruction is beneficial for them in enhancing vocabulary knowledge and raising their awareness in vocabulary learning. They also suggested integrating other vocabulary activities such as games and songs into VSS instruction to improve long-term memory.

The questionnaire and the interview showed the similar results. The participants indicated that VSS instruction supported them in learning new words, memorizing word meaning, having a chance to choose their own words to learn, sharing words to classmates, working in a group, and realizing the importance of learning new words.

Discussion

The present study aimed to investigate the effects of VSS instruction on Thai EFL university students’ vocabulary knowledge and perceptions. The findings revealed the effectiveness of VSS instruction on both variables. The result of the study regarding vocabulary knowledge is in line with previous studies conducted by Masoudi (2017), Dowswell (2017) and Ali et al. (2018). This can be due to the differences between VSS instruction and the traditional vocabulary teaching approach. Conventionally, the primary teaching methods in an English reading class include lectures for the whole group, rote memorization, grammar-translation, and examination-oriented methods. These activities might not sufficiently promote students’ intrinsic motivation in language learning. On the contrary, VSS instruction provided the students with learner-centered activities as Ali et al. (2018) states that VSS is considered as the type of independent learning which is used to support student-centered learning method (SCL) because the students have an opportunity to choose and collect words based on their want and need. The student-centered tasks of VSS helped the students in the current study improve their vocabulary knowledge.

The finding relevant to the students’ perceptions towards VSS instruction is consistent with the study of Yanto (2017) and Ali (2017). The questionnaire results in the present and the past research showed that the students mostly agreed that they could learn new words, increased their vocabulary knowledge, and retained their long-term memory through VSS. However, it is noticeable that the students rated Item eight, “I think I am a better reader through VSS as I understand key words in depth from my reading.” and Item 10, “I better understand how I can make text more comprehensible through VSS.” as the third lowest rank. These statements were supported by the response from one of the participants who described that VSS interrupted her reading because while she focused more on the words she was interested in, she sometimes missed the main point of the reading passage. This might be due to the reason provided by Hulstijn et al. (1996), explaining that when learners derive the targeted word meaning from context, they may decide to ignore other unknown words because they judge those words unnecessary for comprehension. Therefore, the overall understanding of the reading text might not be reached because the readers pay less attention to other details in the passage.

Besides, the results from the questionnaire revealed that Item 18, “I think VSS creates collaborative learning.” had the second highest mean score. The students thought that working in
a group with their peers through VSS is a way to support each other in vocabulary learning. Nonetheless, they rated Item 12, “I like to share my chosen words with my classmates.” as the final rank. This can be interpreted that they perceived that VSS enhanced word learning through working together, but in practice, they did not really want to share their chosen words with their classmates. This point can be explained based on Thai students’ culture and behavior in working in a group. Many Thai students, especially those who have low English proficiency levels, lack confidence in sharing their ideas and fear of mistakes. Furthermore, they are unwilling to be intimidated by their friends if they present incorrect word meanings to the group. These could block the process of word learning through a collaborative group.

With regard to motivation, the students in the present study rated Item 16, “I am motivated to guess the word meaning in a text through VSS.” as the second-lowest rank. The result of this study is not in line with the study of Haggard (1986), which revealed the strong motivation of the students in learning words through VSS. This might be because the students in Haggard’s (1986) study were asked to collect the words they were interested to learn from various sources outside the classroom based on their own experiences such as magazines and newspapers, and then they were required to bring the words to discuss with their classmates. Therefore, they might have more independence in choosing their own words and more internal motivation in guessing the meanings of the words. As Chin (2004) states, internal motivation significantly stimulates vocabulary acquisition and improvement.

**Pedagogical Implications**

The findings of this study shed light on the efficacy of VSS. The study provided the empirical evidence that VSS can promote the undergraduate students’ vocabulary knowledge and perceptions. Some pedagogical implications are suggested to EFL teachers who decide to integrate VSS in their vocabulary instruction. First, teachers should provide understanding of VSS to students in terms of its purposes and procedures. Moreover, the benefits of VSS should be discussed in the class to help raise students’ awareness regarding the importance of the strategy. Second, since VSS requires the use of contextual clues to establish the meaning of unknown words, teachers should train students to derive word meanings from context to prepare students of how to use contextual clues and to ensure that they will not have a problem in using context during VSS instruction. Finally, teachers should not only allow students to select words that they are interested in and important to them from reading texts used in the class, but they should also provide more chances to students in selecting words based on their individual experiences and world knowledge from other reading sources outside the class. This encourages students’ independent learning and motivation in learning new words.

**Conclusion**

VSS studies have been conducted with learners ranging from primary to university levels. However, no empirical research on VSS was carried out with Thai tertiary students. This paper aimed to investigate the effectiveness of VSS instruction on Thai undergraduate students’ vocabulary knowledge and perceptions. The findings revealed that VSS is worth integrating into the Thai university context to improve the students’ vocabulary learning. As Haggard (1986) states, VSS helps students increase their vocabulary so that they can become better readers, promote long-term retention of vocabulary in an academic setting. This is because the strategy
motivates students to select their own vocabulary and work in a group to use contextual clues to derive the meaning of unknown words.

It is recommended for researchers of further studies to consider the suitable way in participant selection. In an EFL context, VSS might be more appropriate for the students who have sufficient reading skills and language knowledge in order to apply the strategy effectively. Besides, this study employed one-group pretest-posttest design because there was only one group of the students enrolling in the English Reading for Academic Purposes course. Therefore, research in the future should include a control group to compare the effectiveness of VSS instruction with traditional vocabulary teaching. Also, VSS instruction in the current study was implemented for only eight weeks because of the limited time frame of the study. Further studies should expand the duration in data collection to see whether VSS instruction can enhance the students’ vocabulary knowledge in a more extended period. Also, based on the suggestions about the activity in VSS instruction from the participants in this study, it is suggested that further research should integrate other vocabulary activities such as games and songs to enhance students’ word learning and memorization.

About the Authors
Nuntiporn Raungsawat is a full-time lecturer at English Department, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Rajabhat Rajanagarindra University. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in English Language Teaching at Thammasat University, Thailand. Her areas of interests are EFL reading instruction and English language teaching.
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5331-9600

Dr. Tipamas Chumworatayee (Associate Professor) teaches both post- and undergraduate courses at the Language Institute, Thammasat University, Thailand. She obtained her Ph.D. from Department of Reading, College of Education, Texas Woman’s University, Texas, USA. Her main interests include ELT methodology, ELT teacher training, EFL reading-strategy instruction, and EFL reading strategy awareness raising.

References


Najat Alabdullah
Ministry of Education, Kuwait
Kuwait, Kuwait City
Email: najatalabdullah@gmail.com

Received: 11/8/2020 Accepted: 2/22/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract:
This research paper presents a quasi-experimental empirical study investigating the effects of structured input and structured output tasks on the acquisition of English causative forms. This research is framed on VanPatten’s (1996) input processing theory. The grammatical form chosen for this investigation is affected by a processing strategy called the First Noun Principle. There are three variables included that make this study significant. These variables are having participants that are young learners who speak Arabic as an L1 and using discourse-level instrumentation. These variables make this study significant because the studies that investigated the effectiveness of structured input practice with these variables are in the minority. The study’s main questions are: (i) What are the short-term effects of structured input and structured output on the acquisition of English causative forms as measured with discourse-level interpretation tasks? (ii) What are the short-term effects of structured input and structured output on the learners’ ability to acquire the English causative forms as measured with discourse-level production tasks? Participants were school-age learners (aged 12-13) from an Arabic background with Arabic as an L1 who studied English as a second language in Kuwait. A pre and post-test procedure was adopted in this study. Two instructional groups were created, which are: (i) structured input; (ii) structured output. Discourse-level tasks were used in the study to assess the effectiveness of the two instructional treatments. Results were analyzed using descriptive statistics and ANOVA. The main findings support the view that discourse-level structured input tasks are a useful pedagogical intervention in helping young L2 learners from an Arabic background with Arabic as an L1 to process, interpret and produce accurate English causative forms. The main findings have theoretical and pedagogical implications for language learning and teaching.

Keywords: Arabic L1, discourse-level instrumentation, first noun principle, processing instruction, young learners, structured input, structured output, causative form

Introduction

The study presented in this research paper is a quasi-experimental empirical study conducted to investigate the effects of structured input (SI) activities and structured output (SO) tasks on acquiring the English causative forms. More specifically, the primary purpose of this investigation is to compare the effectiveness of structured input and structured output tasks on participants that are young L2 learners from an Arabic background with Arabic as an L1 and using interpretation and production discourse-level tests to measure this effectiveness. Although this study is a replication, it is a significant one because of the inclusion of three variables, which are having young L2 learners from an Arabic background with Arabic as an L1 and using discourse-level instrumentation, because the previous studies that investigated the effectiveness of structured input practice including these variables are in the minority. The main questions of this study arise from previous findings of different empirical studies that measured the effects of structured input activities and structured output tasks. The questions are: (i) What are the short-term effects of structured input and structured output on the acquisition of English causative forms as measured with discourse-level interpretation tasks? (ii) What are the short-term effects of structured input and structured output on acquiring English causative forms as measured with discourse-level production tasks? This study is based on VanPatten’s (1996) input processing theory. The grammatical form that will be investigated is the English causative form, that is affected by a processing strategy called the ‘First Noun Principle.’ The findings of this research paper will provide a solution to the learners’ delay in acquisition of causative forms, which is caused by the First Noun Principle. The research design adopted and the results obtained in this study will be presented. The final part of this research paper will interpret the results and highlight implications, limitations, and possible avenues for further research.

Literature Review

The Theory of Input Processing

This study is framed on the input processing theoretical model. Input processing is a theory that was developed in the nineties by VanPatten (1996). Research and theory within this framework investigated what L2 learners process or do not process when exposed to language input. Processing according to VanPatten (2004) refers to “…processing refers to making a connection between form and meaning.” ((VanPatten, 2004, p. 6)). The input processing theory also explains the conditions that allow L2 learners to make connections between a grammatical form and its meaning.

The input processing theory is concerned with (i) moment-by-moment connection of form to meaning and(ii) moment-by-moment computation of sentence structure during comprehension. Based on these two main constructs, the input processing theory consists of two main principles: The Primacy of Meaning Principle and The First Noun Principle.

The Primacy of Meaning Principle asserts that ‘‘learners process input for meaning before they process it for form’’ (VanPatten, 2004, p.14). For instance, when L2 learners listen to a sentence such as “Yesterday, Dana studied in the library,” they would process Yesterday as an indicator of past tense before the ending -ed. This processing problem occurs because both the lexical item (temporal adverb) and the grammatical form encode the same semantic information. L2 learners, therefore, would rely (due to limited processing capacity) on the first lexical item they encounter in the sentence such as yesterday to process the sentence for its meaning instead...
of processing the grammatical form such as the -ed. The inability for L2 learners to initially connect form and meaning would reduce the amount of input processed, which is called intake “I use the term intake to refer to that subset of the input that has been processed in working memory and made available for further processing” ((Bill VanPatten, 2004, p. 7)). It would also cause a delay in the acquisition of verbal morphology (in this case, the processing of the -ed past tense marker).

Research within the input processing framework has consistently demonstrated the failure of L2 learners to make appropriate from-meaning mappings (Faerch & Kasper, 1986; Klein, 1986; Fillmore, 1976; among others).

The First Noun Principle asserts that L2 learners usually process the first noun or pronoun they read or hear in a sentence as the subject of that sentence. According to this principle, “learners tend to process the first noun or pronoun they encounter in a sentence as the subject/agent” (VanPatten, 2004, p.18). This processing behavior would often lead to a misinterpretation of the sentence L2 learners hear or read. For example, in a sentence such as “The student was rewarded by the teacher,” L2 learners would misinterpret the sentence as if The student rewarded the teacher. The lack of comprehension of this sentence causes a delay in the acquisition.

Evidence for this processing strategy comes from several studies. LoCoco (1987) measured learners’ comprehension of oral and written sentences containing word order in German and Spanish. One-hundred and fifty-one university students participated in the study. Their L1 was English. Seventy-three were studying Spanish, and seventy-eight were learning German. The experiment included an aural comprehension task and a written comprehension task. The tasks included sentences with a variety in word order, and participants had to establish ‘who did what to whom.’ Also, responses were classified as correct or incorrect.

The results of the study indicated that word order in both languages played a vital role in the participants’ interpretation and comprehension of sentences. Sentences with the word order subject-verb-direct object were nearly always interpreted correctly. However, students made many more mistakes in interpreting other sentences in which the first noun they encountered in the sentence was not the subject. For example, the following sentence Den lastwagen schiebt der junge (LoCoco, 1987) means in English ‘the boy pushes the truck.’ However, the object was written before the subject like the following sentence ‘the truck pushes the boy.’ Because of this particular word order in the sentence, 76% of the students misinterpreted it, by processing the sentence as ‘the truck who pushes the boy.’

In another study investigating the effects of the First Noun Principle, VanPatten and Wong (2004) conducted an empirical study in two universities in the United States. The target grammatical form under investigation was the French causative form. In a sentence like “Jean-Paul fait lire le journal a Henri (Jean-Paul makes to read the newspaper to Henri/ Jean-Paul makes Henri read the newspaper)” (VanPatten & Wong, 2004, p.104), most participants would process Jean-Paul as the one who reads the newspaper and not Henri and therefore misinterpret the meaning of the sentence because of the First Noun Principle.
Participants were undergraduates enrolled in French courses who did not receive any formal instruction on the French causative form before the experiment. They were distributed into three groups: the first group with twenty-nine subjects received processing instruction (PI); the second with twenty students received traditional instruction (TI), and the third with twenty-eight subjects as a control group received no instruction. Pre and post-tests interpretation and production tests were administered. The results showed that only the processing instruction group improved significantly in the interpretation test from pre to post-test. The traditional instruction group did not. However, for the production test, both processing instruction and traditional instruction groups improved almost equally.

In the current study, the acquisition of English causative forms will be investigated. This syntactic feature is also affected by the First Noun Principle (FNP). This universal and default processing strategy is used by L2 learners which causes misinterpretations and delays in the acquisition. The present study will make use of structured input practice and investigate its effectiveness compared to structured output practice in enabling young L2 learners from an Arabic background with Arabic as an L1 to circumvent this processing principle and ensure that they are in the best position to process word order correctly when exposed to English causative forms.

**Processing Instruction**

Processing instruction is a pedagogical intervention derived from the input processing theory, and it aims at facilitating the cognitive processes by which L2 learners make form-meaning connections and, or compute sentence structure during comprehension. For example, L2 learners prefer to process lexical items first, before grammatical items when both items encode the same semantic information (Benati, 2010). Processing instruction has been described in previous work (Benati, 2019; VanPatten, 2015). The main characteristic of the processing instruction is that it uses a particular type of input practice (structured input) to push learners away from non-optimal processing principles so that they are more likely to process input correctly and appropriately. Processing instruction is mainly concerned with the processing of morpho-phonological units in input strings and the development of underlying linguistic representation. Most simply, one of the primary objectives of processing instruction is to ensure that L2 learners process grammatical forms and structures (one at a time) accurately and efficiently in the input they receive, “The main purpose for Processing Instruction is to guide and focus L2 learner’s attention when they process input; to instill in them target language appropriate processing strategies.” (Benati & Lee, 2010, p.32), “The main purpose of Processing Instruction is, then, to help L2 learners to make appropriate form-meaning connections and parse sentences correctly so that as a result they develop their internal linguistic system for the target language” (Benati & Lee, 2010, p.33).

Processing instruction consists of two main components: (i) L2 learners are given explicit information about a linguistic structure or grammatical form and the particular processing principle which may have a negative impact on their picking up of the grammatical form or structure while processing the language; and (ii) L2 learners are pushed to process (not produce) the target grammatical form or structure during structured input (SI) activities. In structured input activities, the input is structured so that L2 learners can process the grammatical markers that otherwise would not be processed, “SI activities require L2 learners to process form correctly in order to get meaning. SI activities are designed to ensure that learners are indeed making the proper form-meaning connections” (VanPatten, 2004, p.198).
The Effects of Structured Input Activities

Structured input practice pushes L2 learners to process the grammatical form or structure during activities in which the input is manipulated in particular ways. Hence, learners become dependent on the grammatical form to get meaning. In structured input tasks, the input is manipulated in a special way to push learners towards being dependent on the grammatical form to reach the meaning. Therefore, processing instruction “pushes learners to abandon their inefficient processing strategies for more optimal ones so that better form-meaning connections are made” (Wong, 2004, p.35).

The positive effects of structured input practice have been measured in many empirical studies (Benati, 2019) and generalized to different learners’ backgrounds and L1s, forms/structures (verbal and nominal morphology), processing strategies, and languages (both romance and non-romance languages). Structured input practice has been compared to output-based instruction (including traditional instruction) using offline and online measurements.

VanPatten and Oikkenon (1996) originally investigated the effects of processing instruction components. Three groups were compared: explicit instruction only group, structured input practice only group, and full processing instruction group. The results showed that the processing instruction and the structured input groups made similar gains on the other hand, the explicit information only group did not. The main findings of this study indicated that the structured practice is the causative factor in explaining the positive results of processing instruction. Benati (2004a, 2004b), Farley (2004), and Wong (2004) replicated this original study and obtained similar findings. Lee and Benati (2007) established that performing structured input activities is an effective treatment for helping Italian native-speakers improve their grammatical gains with the Japanese past tense marker. They made a comparison between the results of structured input practice with no explanation and the results of traditional output instruction. The structured input group outperformed the traditional instruction group on the interpretation post-test whereas, both groups made equal gains on the production post-test.

Wong and Ito (2018) compared changes in processing patterns between L2 learners receiving structured input and traditional instruction on acquiring the French causative. In this pre-and post-test experimental study, a dichotomous scene selection eye-tracking activity was utilized to measure eye movement patterns and accuracy in selecting pictures while learners were processing auditory sentences. The results indicated that the structured input group gained higher accuracy scores than the traditional instruction group. Also, a change in eye movement was observed in learners only after the processing instruction training and not after the traditional instruction training.

Benati and Batziou (2019a, 2019b) have explored the discourse and long-term effects of structured input and structured output practice when delivered in isolation or combination on the acquisition of the English causative forms. These studies included young (10-12) Greek learners and adult (18-20) Chinese learners. The results of both studies were similar and showed that L2 learners who received the structured input instructional training benefitted more than L2 learners receiving structured output instructional training. In both studies, structured input practice alone was sufficient to improve learners’ performance on both interpretation and production discourse tests containing English causative forms regardless of their age or native language. These
findings support the *Age Hypothesis*, which suggests that “PI will be just as effective an intervention with young learners as it is with older learners” (Benati & Lee, 2008, p. 168). Also, these findings support the *Native Language Hypothesis*, which suggests that “PI will be effective for instilling target language specific processing strategies, no matter the native language of the learners” (Benati & Lee, 2008, p. 166). The effectiveness of structured input practice has been generalized to different learner backgrounds and L1s, grammatical forms/structures (verbal and nominal morphology), processing strategies (Primacy of meaning principle and its corollaries), and languages (romance languages and Japanese).

Benati (2020) investigated the effects of structured input and traditional instruction on accuracy when measured by an eye-tracking picture selection task among Chinese native speakers learning English. A pre and post-training design was adopted. An eye-tracking picture selection task was used for assessment. Students had to listen to a sentence through a headphone, answer by choosing a picture from the two images displayed, decide on who did the action in every sentence, and then move on to the sentence after it. The results showed that the improvement of the structured input group reached 70% in the learners’ ability to process and interpret the causative form. In contrast, the traditional instruction group didn’t improve their performance at all. Structured input treatment also increased the learners’ gaze towards the correct picture in the tests compared to the traditional instruction. Therefore, the results of this eye-tracking assessment task indicated that the structured input group achieved significantly higher accuracy.

**Research Measuring Discourse-Level Effects**

There is a huge amount of research on processing instruction (Benati & Lee, 2009; Benati & Lee, 2010), which provides evidence that learners who received this type of instruction performed significantly better on sentence-level interpretation tasks than learners receiving other kinds of instruction such as traditional instruction (paradigmatic explanations of rules followed by drill practice) or less mechanical output-based interventions to grammar instruction (e.g., structured-output tasks, more later). Also, processing instruction can cause equal improvement compared to output-based approaches in learners’ performance in different sentence-level production tasks (oral and written). However, few studies have investigated whether processing instruction effects can be measured on discourse-level interpretation and production tasks.

Benati and Lee (2010) assessed the effects of processing instruction using discourse-level interpretation tasks. They showed that processing instruction on English past tense led to improved scores on sentence-level and discourse-level interpretation task. Benati, Lee, and Hikima (2010) showed that processing instruction on Japanese passive constructions led to improved scores on two different discourse-level interpretation tasks (immediate effects), both presented aurally. The processing instruction group also made measurable gains in the discourse-level task. These results confirm Lee’s original hypothesis “PI will yield significant improvement on discourse level interpretation tasks” (Lee, 2004, p.322)

Concerning production, VanPatten and Sanz (1995), Sanz (1997, 2004), and Sanz and Morgan-Short (2004) showed that processing instruction on Spanish direct object pronouns led to improved scores on oral and written structured interviews in addition to oral and written video-based retellings. Other types of discourse-level assessment tasks have been used in
processing instruction research. Cheng (2002, 2004) found positive effects for processing instruction on Spanish copular verbs using a picture-based guided composition. Benati, Lee, and McNulty (2010) used a guided composition and found a positive effect for processing instruction on the Spanish subjunctive after *cuando*. Empirical findings from these studies have indicated that processing instruction is effective not only at the sentence level but at discourse level production tasks (immediate and short-term effects). There is a minimal amount of research conducted to examine the impact of processing instruction using discourse-level instrumentation. Therefore, future research may investigate how learners process and produce discourse containing different target grammatical forms and whether these effects are durable. Therefore, in this study, discourse-level instrumentation was used.

Hence, this study is significant because the studies that investigated the effectiveness of structured input practice on young L2 learners from an Arabic background with Arabic as an L1 by using discourse-level instrumentation is in the minority. Thus, replications including these three variables (young, Arabic L1, and discourse-level instrumentation) are very much needed because they will allow us to include a larger population of learners on which the positive impact of structured input practice has been experimented and confirmed. Therefore, although this study is a replication yet, it is an important one as its purpose is to provide more empirical evidence for the effectiveness of structured input practice in improving the ability of young L2 learners from an Arabic background with Arabic as an L1 in processing, interpreting, and producing the English causative form using discourse-level instrumentation. Moreover, this study will contribute to the field by providing additional empirical evidence for the so-called *Age Hypothesis* and *Native Language Hypothesis* (Benati & Lee, 2008).

**Methods**

**Motivation and Research Questions**

Overall, the empirical work measuring structured input practice has indicated that it is an useful pedagogical intervention for grammar instruction. A growing body of research (Benati, 2019, Benati and Batziou, 2019a, 2019b) has compared discourse-level effects of structured input practice versus structured output practice on acquiring various linguistic features across different romance and non-romance languages. Most of these empirical studies have involved adult learners.

Despite the existing research within this investigation line, there are still several issues that have not been addressed: (a) Would structured input and structured output practice have beneficial effects among L1 Arabic school-age learners? (b) Would L1 Arabic school-age learners receiving structured input practice be able to interpret and produce discourse containing English causative forms? There are two primary aims for this study:

a) To compare and contrast two instructional treatments: structured input (SI) practice versus structured output (SO) practice, on the acquisition of English causative forms by L1 Arabic school-age learners;

b) To measure short-term effects of structured input practice and structured output practice on discourse-level interpretation and production tasks.

Based on these aims, two specific questions were formulated:
Q1: What are the short-term effects of structured input and structured output on the acquisition of English causative forms as measured with discourse-level interpretation tasks?
Q2: What are the short-term effects of structured input and structured output on the acquisition of English causative forms as measured with discourse-level production tasks?

Subjects and Procedures
To address the two main questions of this study, a quasi-experimental classroom study was carried out. Before conducting the experiment and collecting the data, the American University of Sharjah’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained. Two existing classes in a school in Kuwait were used to collect data. Although no randomization procedure was adopted, yet participants in these classes are usually distributed by the administration to include students with high, moderate, and low school performance, including language proficiency level in English. This is done to avoid having a class with only high achievers and another class with only low achievers.

The original pool was reduced to twenty-seven subjects (L1 Arabic) enrolled in an English course in a public school in Kuwait. They were young female learners (aged 12–13). The final pool consisted of the following two groups: SI (n=15); SO (n=12). Each group was taught separately. No control group was used. Instruction lasted for two hours over three days in a pre-test and post-test design measuring immediate effects of the two instructional treatments. The three-day treatment was designed and implemented specifically for this study. The English causative was neither a structure included in the curriculum pupils were currently studying nor part of previous English courses they studied. Therefore, it was assumed that they had not received any formal instruction related to the targeted grammatical form before the experiment.

Participants who scored over 40% on the pre-tests (administered before the beginning of the instructional treatment) were excluded from the final data pools. Moreover, only the participants who completed all the phases of the experiment were counted in the final data analyses. The instructor was the researcher. She acted as a facilitator and delivered the instructional treatment in both classes (see an overview of the study in Table one).

Table 1. Overview of the study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-tests</td>
<td>Discourse-level interpretation and production tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional Period</td>
<td>Structured input (SI) vs. Structured output (SO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 3 days = 2 hours instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-tests (immediate)</td>
<td>Discourse-level interpretation and production tests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This study got an ethical approval from the university and the Ministry of Education in Kuwait. To get consent from The Ministry of Education in Kuwait, all the materials used in the experiment were translated and submitted for consideration.

Target Grammar Feature
The targeted grammatical feature selected for the current study was the passive English causative form. It was picked because it is affected by the First Noun Principle (VanPatten, 1996,
Due to this principle, L2 learners tend to give agent status to the first pronoun or noun they read or hear in a sentence. For instance, in the sentence *Jury had her dress mended last Monday*, learners would process *Jury* as the person who repaired the dress. This default processing strategy would cause misunderstanding and delay in the acquisition of the target feature and word order pattern. The main goal of structured input is to aid learners in parsing English causative correctly and appropriately. Previous studies in the input processing framework demonstrated evidence for the positive effects of structured input in circumventing the First Noun Principle and helping learners to correctly interpret and produce sentences containing the target feature (Benati & Lee, 2010).

**Instructional Treatments**

Two instructional treatments were used in the present study. The materials were adopted from the materials used in a previous study (Benati & Batziou, 2019a, 2019b). They were balanced in terms of the activity types (seven), the number of target features (seventy targets), the duration of activities, the vocabulary items (high frequency and familiar things), and the use of visuals. The activities were provided to learners on worksheets. No explicit instruction concerning the targeted grammatical form was given, and participants were given equal time to complete their activities in both instructional treatments. At no time did the participants receive either explanation or feedback about the target grammatical form. Participants in the two groups were only informed whether they were right or wrong, but no explanation was given at the end of each activity.

**The Structured Input (SI) Treatment**

Structured input (SI) is the practice component of processing instruction. During structured input activities, students are pushed to process the targeted grammatical feature through tasks with an input that is manipulated in a specific way. Hence, learners become dependent on the grammatical form or the structure to get meaning, “L2 Learners are now pushed to process the form or structure during activities in which the input is manipulated in particular ways to get learners to become dependent on form to get meaning. We refer to these as structured input activities.” (Benati & Lee, 2010, p.36). Structured input activities created for this study were referential. Referential tasks are tasks that have a correct or wrong answer, also for the learner to get meaning he/she must rely on the targeted grammatical form. The structured input treatment, developed for this experiment, contained in total seventy target items in seven activities (see sample in Figure one). It was designed according to the following guidelines, which were originally produced by VanPatten and Sanz (1995) for creating structured input tasks “…a. Present one thing at a time. b. Keep meaning in focus. c. Move from sentences to connected discourse. d. Use both oral and written input. e. Have the learners do something with the input. f. Keep the learner’s processing strategies in mind.” (Benati, 2013, p.37). More specifically, the activities included were aural and written input. Tasks were structured in a way that enables L2 learners to rely on the causative structure to understand the meaning in the input correctly. Also, they were developed to aid learners to circumvent the First Noun Principle by manipulating word order and contrasting passive (English) causative structures to SVO order active structures where the first noun was the causer/agent of the action. All tasks were meaningful and communicative, and participants were asked to correctly interpret the input. Moreover, tasks that require producing the targeted grammatical feature were excluded.
1:  
A) Fatima had her homework written.  
B) Fatima wrote her homework.  

2:  
A) Abdullah checked his teeth.  
B) Abdullah had his teeth checked.  

Figure 1. Sample of a SI activity

The Structured Output (SO) Treatment

The structured output treatment contained in total seventy target items in seven activities (see example in Figure two) that were developed according to the following guidelines provided by Lee and VanPatten (1995) to create structured output tasks “a. Present one thing at a time. b. Keep meaning in focus. c. Move from sentences to connected discourse. d. Use both written and oral output. e. Others must respond to the content of the output. f. The learners must have some knowledge of the form or structure.” (Lee & VanPatten, 1995, p.121) Learners included in the final pool had limited knowledge of the target grammatical form as only learners who scored up to 40% of the maximum score available in the pre-tests were included in the final pool. Each activity contained two to three steps that pushed participants to produce oral and written output. All tasks were communicative and meaningful, and mechanical practice was excluded. They were working in pairs to complete each task. Each activity included familiar items, and a list of vocabulary items was also provided. Structured output has two characteristics: “involves the exchange of previously unknown information; requires learners to access a particular form or structure in order to express meaning” (Lee & VanPatten, 1995, p.21)

Step 1. Write at least six winter activities that you had to do last winter. Write down how many you did yourself and how many you had done by someone else.  
Example: “I drank hot chocolate, but I had it prepared by my mother, I was too busy”  
Step 2. Write at least six summer activities that you had to do last summer. Write down how many you did yourself and how many you had done by someone else.  
Example: “I ate ice cream, but I had it bought by my father, I don’t know much was it.”

Figure 2. Sample of a SO activit

Assessment Tasks and Scoring

A pre-test and post-test design was used. There were two versions of the interpretation and production tests. Pre-tests were administered before the instructional period to both experimental groups. Immediate post-tests were distributed at the end of the instructional period. The assessment tasks consisted of a discourse-level interpretation task and a discourse-level production task. The two versions of each assessment test were developed and balanced in terms of difficulty and vocabulary.
The discourse-level interpretation task (see Figure three, Appendix B) was developed to measure the learners’ ability to interpret correct English passive causative forms when these forms are embedded in discourse. Participants had to listen to a story presented in three segments, each segment included three target items and two distractors. In total, the activity had nine target items and six distractors. Also, a booklet was made for the discourse-level interpretation task. Participants heard the story segment once, then turned to the appropriate answer sheet (it included images showing two different characters doing the same thing) to decide who was performing the action or opt for Not Sure if they could not understand who the agent was. Participants received one point for each correct selection and 0 points for each incorrect one.

![Figure 3. Sample of a discourse-level interpretation task](image)

The discourse-level production task (see Figure four, Appendix A) was developed to measure learners’ ability to produce correct English passive causative forms at discourse-level (text reconstruction). It had five target items (which are instances of the English causative form). Learners had to review some essential vocabulary items before the beginning of the assessment. The instructor played the audio of the story, which was read by a native English language speaker, at an average pace providing information about the context at the beginning. As the instructor played the audio of the story, she also projected it on the whiteboard to enable the participants to read and listen at the same time. After that, participants were asked to re-write the story they listened to. They had five minutes to reconstruct the story with the aid of some prompts. For each right use of the target structure, one point was given. On the other hand, if the participants had used the right structure of the target item but the incorrect form of the verb (i.e., an infinitive instead of a participle), they were given half a point. The maximum score for the discourse level tasks was five points as this was the maximum number of target items learners needed to complete the story.

![Then re-write the story you heard.](image)
Data Analysis

One-way ANOVA was conducted on the raw scores for the interpretation and the production-discourse level tasks to assess whether there were any statistically considerable differences among the class means of any of the pre-test’s measures. A repeated-measures ANOVA was carried out on the raw scores of both the interpretation and the production discourse-level tasks. The between-subjects factor was ‘Treatment’ (SI vs. SO), and the within-subjects factor was ‘Time’ (pre-tests vs. post-tests).

Results

Discourse-Level Interpretation Data

A one-way ANOVA was carried out on the two groups pre-test scores (SI and SO). The one-way analysis indicated no significant differences among the two groups before instruction ($F(1,27) = 1.346, p = .89$). If any differences were found after instruction, they will be attributed to the effects of the instructional treatments. In Table 2, the descriptive statistics for learners’ performance on the discourse-level interpretation tasks are presented. They show the means of the two groups in the discourse-level interpretation task (pre-test and immediate post-test). The structured input group improved from pre-test to post-test scores. The structured output group did not.

Table 2. Interpretation discourse-level task (descriptive statistics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.500</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.340</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>0.560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A two-way ANOVA was performed on the raw scores of the discourse-level interpretation task. The results showed a significant main effect for Treatment ($F(1,27) = 34.358, p < .001$); a considerable main effect for Time $F(1,27) = 12.130, p < .001$; and significant interaction between Treatment and Time $F(1,27) = 6.235, p < .001$. The results of the ANOVA and the descriptive statistics indicated that only the subjects in the structured input group gained (from pre-test to post-test) in their ability to interpret the target grammatical forms presented at the discourse-level.

Discourse-Level Production Data

A one-way ANOVA was conducted on the two groups pre-test scores. It showed no significant differences among the two instructional groups (SI and SO) before instruction ($F(1,27) = 2.139 p = .103$). If any differences were found after instruction, they will be attributed to
the effects of the instructional treatments. In Table 3 below, the descriptive statistics for learners’ performance on the discourse-level production tasks are presented. They showed the means of the two groups in the discourse-level production task (pre-test and immediate post-test). Once again, like the interpretation task, the structured input group was the only group improving from pre-test to post-test scores.

Table 3. Production discourse-level task (descriptive statistics).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.100</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.050</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A two-way ANOVA was carried out on the raw scores of the discourse-level production task. The results showed a significant main effect for Treatment \( F (1,27) = 23.376, p < .003 \); a considerable main effect for Time \( F (1,27) = 10.129, p < .001 \); and significant interaction between Treatment and Time \( F (1,27) = 6.237, p < .001 \). The results from the ANOVA and the means of both groups in the post-test indicated that only subjects in the structured input group gained in their ability to produce the target grammatical forms presented at the discourse-level.

**Discussion**

This study aimed to investigate the effects of structured input tasks and structured output tasks on the acquisition of the English causative form, including young L2 learners from an Arabic background with Arabic as an L1, using both interpretation and production discourse-level tasks. This makes this study significant and vital because the studies that investigated the effectiveness of structured input practice, including these variables, are in the minority.

The findings from the interpretation discourse-level task provide empirical support for the view that structured input practice is better than structured output practice in changing the way learners process input. Structured input practice is a better pedagogical intervention for ensuring learners’ correct interpretation of English causative forms, including young L2 learners from an Arabic background with Arabic as an L1 receiving discourse-level instrumentation. One of the possible explanations for the results obtained in the interpretation discourse-level task is that the structured input practice pushed learners to abandon their default processing strategy, the First Noun Principle, and process word order correctly in interpreting English causative forms.

The main findings from the production discourse-level task indicated that structured input practice has a positive effect on the ability of young L2 learners from an Arabic background with Arabic as an L1 to produce the target feature at discourse-level also. The statistical analysis showed that only structured input practice made statistically significant gains from the pre-test to the immediate post-test. A possible explanation of this particular finding is that structured input practice has altered the way L2 learners processed input and must have had the following effects:
(i) a positive effect on L2 learners’ developing system; (b) a subsequent impact on what L2 learners in this group could access for production.

The findings from the interpretation and the production discourse-level tasks are in line with previous research findings measuring the effects of structured input practice (Benati & Lee, 2015; Benati, 2017). Overall, the results are consistent with the original study (VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993).

This view is further supported by the fact that in this study, learners receiving structured input practice could produce the targeted grammatical form by receiving discourse-level instrumentation, which is a less controlled situation, instead of sentence-level instrumentation. While the structured input treatment seems to be successful at circumventing processing problems and consequently having an impact on learners’ developing system, the structured output treatment was not successful at helping L2 learners to interpret and produce the target feature at the discourse-level. The discourse-level production task used in this study was not used as a skill measure. The primary purpose of this production task was to see if L2 learners can access newly developed knowledge. Although with a note of caution, considering the small sample of the population in this study, the structured input practice was once again successful in helping L2 learners to develop their underlying knowledge.

Conclusion

Generally, the empirical work measuring structured input practice has shown that it is an useful pedagogical intervention for grammar instruction (Benati & Lee, 2015; Benati, 2017; VanPatten & Cadierno, 1993). However, minimal studies have investigated whether processing instruction effects can be measured on discourse-level interpretation and production tasks. Also, the majority of these empirical studies have involved adult participants. Therefore, this study included discourse-level instrumentation and L1 Arabic school-age learners to investigate the effectiveness of structured input tasks with these variables in providing a solution to the delay in acquisition of the causative form, which is caused by the First Noun Principle. Also, to investigate the effectiveness of discourse-level structured input tasks in enabling these participants to interpret and produce the grammatical feature targeted.

The results of the interpretation discourse-level task indicated that structured input helps learners process the English causative form correctly and appropriately in an immediate post-test. The structured input instructions were more effective than the structured output instructions in enabling participants to interpret the targeted grammatical forms embedded in discourse. The results of the production discourse-level task indicated that the instructional group structured input performed better than the structured output only group in an immediate post-test. The structured input instructions were more effective than the structured output instructions in helping the students produce the target grammatical forms embedded in discourse.

Implications

In general, the primary findings of this study make several theoretical and pedagogical contributions to the ongoing debate on the impact of structured input and structured output practice.
Firstly, the results of this quasi-experimental study confirm the crucial role of structured input as an effective pedagogical intervention created to alter processing problems such as the First Noun Principle. Structured output alone is not successful in bringing similar effects to those brought by structured input in interpretation discourse-level tasks. The findings of this research reaffirm the significance of input-based practice as a critical pedagogical tool in language teaching contributing to the view that input practice should precede output practice. Structured output practice did not affect the interpretation of language discourse.

Secondly, structured input effectively develops learners’ ability to access the developing system for speech production. L2 learners in the structured input practice group produced English causative forms in language discourse by using discourse-level task, which is a less controlled situation, instead of sentence-level tasks. Structured output practice did not affect the production of language discourse.

Thirdly, the main results from this study provide new short-term effects evidence of structured input practice effectiveness on school-age learners from an Arabic background with Arabic as an L1. Given that very little research has investigated the effectiveness of structured input tasks on young L2 learners from an Arabic background with Arabic as an L1 hence, the findings of this study are highly significant as they allow us to include a larger population of learners on which the effectiveness of structured input practice has been observed. In this respect, the overall findings from this study lend support to several hypotheses formulated within the processing instruction research framework. The positive results reached by this study support the so-called Age Hypothesis (Benati & Lee, 2008). Confirming that structured input is an effective intervention with young learners just as it is with older learners. It also supports the so-called Native Language Hypothesis (Benati & Lee, 2008). This research contributes to the expanding of the Native Language Hypothesis by adding Arabic, a non-western language, to the current list of languages on which the effectiveness of structured input practice has been observed.

**Limitations and Further Research**

Despite the positive outcomes of this research, there are few limitations. There is no control group (due to attrition and other practical issues) is a methodological limitation. Future studies should replicate this study using a control group. Also, no randomization procedure was applied as existing classes were used. However, in this particular school context, students were equally distributed by the administration, considering high, moderate, and low school performance and English language proficiency.

The sample of the population is relatively small for a quasi-experimental study. Future research should use a larger sample to generalize these findings.

This study measured the short-term effects of structured input and structured output on the interpretation and production of discourse-level tasks. Future research should aim at measuring long-term effects. In this study, delayed post-tests were not used because of the school closure due to the current circumstances.

Overall, research measuring the effects of structured input practice should use more spontaneous tasks that include time pressure, reaction time measures and do not allow learners to
monitor their responses. This research might also consider the role and effects of structured input and structured output practice with or without explicit information.

Acknowledgement
This study was funded by the Ministry of Education in Kuwait.

About the Author
Najat Alabdullah pursued her Bachelor degree in English Language linguistics from Kuwait University (2012). She worked as a translator in the Foreign Relations Department in the Ministry of Social Affairs in Kuwait (2013-2016). Also, she worked as a teacher in the Ministry of Education in Kuwait (2012-2013/2016-2021). In addition, she pursued her MA TESOL from the American University of Sharjah (2018-2020). https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8075-4504

References
Benati, A. (2019). Classroom-oriented research: Processing Instruction (findings and implications). Language Teaching, 52(3) 343-359. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000386


Appendix A:
Sample:

Discourse Level Production Test (Version A).

Discourse Level Production Task:
You will hear a story once, which will also be projected on the whiteboard. When the projector is turned off. You will be asked to re-write it with the help of the prompts provided to you. You have also been given some words; please write their definition before the story begins. If you still have unknown words in the following story you can ask your instructor after you listen to it.
“Amal is a very good girl. She always takes good care of her bedroom and makes sure that it is clean and tidy. However, during the exams she becomes so busy, so her mother helps her…”

Amal came from school. She had her bed tidied. She hanged her dress in the cupboard. She had her desk dusted. She put her school books on the bookshelf to study later on. She had her flowers watered and her goldfish fed. She had the windows cleaned, so she opened the curtains. She was so happy that her room was clean and tidy, so she can study all day comfortably.

Version A:
Discourse Level Production Task:

Name:

Give the definitions of the following words. Ask your instructor for help if you need any. Then re-write the story you heard.

Dusted=
Fed=
Watered=

“Amal is a very good girl. She always takes good care of her bedroom and makes sure that it is clean and tidy. However, during the exams she becomes so busy, so her mother helps her…”

Appendix B:
Sample:
Discourse-Level Interpretation Task (Version A).

Instructor’s script
VERSION A
(Corresponding pages on students’ test: 2-5)

Sara’s trip to Egypt.

Segment 1 (pictures:1-5, page:3)

Sara was so excited because the summer holiday began. After a long semester and passing all of her exams. She and her family were busy preparing for their trip to Egypt. She prepared her luggage. She had the tickets booked online. She had a list of interesting places written on a paper, she really wanted to see the pyramids. She had a tour guide called and informed about the places they were interested in visiting. She also had a suit reserved in a hotel on the Nile.

Segment 2 (pictures:6-10, page:4)

They all enjoyed their vacation in Egypt. Sara took many pictures for the pyramids. She had many souvenirs bought for her relatives. She had delicious lunch served in a restaurant on the Nile. She wore sunglasses because she spent most of her time outdoors. Finally, she had the car driven back to their hotel for them to rest.

Segment 3 (pictures:11-15, page:5)

After their vacation was over, Sara and her family had the car driven to the airport. They went to a café waiting for the airplane to arrive. Sara had a terrible headache. So, she had a cup of coffee poured. She took a final selfie to remember her vacation. Finally, she sat beside the window to enjoy the view.

VERSION A
DISCOURSE INTERPRETATION TASK

NAME: _____________________

1-a) Are you a tour guide?

b) c) Not

2-a) Are you a tour guide?

b) c) Not

3-a) Are you a teacher?

b) c) Not

4-a) Are you a tour guide?

b) c) Not
Structured Input vs. Structured Output Task’s Effects on the Acquisition of Arabic
5-a)  

1-a)  

2-a)  

3-a)  

b)  

b)  

b)  

b)  

b)  

b)  

b)  

b)  

b)  

b)  

b)  

Not sure  

Not sure  

Not sure  

Not sure  

I have a headache.  

I have a headache.
Structured Input vs. Structured Output Task’s Effects on the Acquisition of Pronouns

My last selfie

Our last selfie.
English Language Pronunciation Barriers Encountered by the Expatriate Students at King Saud University, Riyadh

Kesavan Vadakalur Elumalai
Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of English, College of Arts, King Saud University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Correspondent Author: ekesavan@ksu.edu.sa

Mohammad Sufian Abdullah
Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts, King Saud University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Jayendira P Sankar
College of Administrative and Financial Sciences, AMA International University, Kingdom of Bahrain

Kalaichelvi R
College of Administrative and Financial Sciences, AMA International University, Kingdom of Bahrain

Received: 11/20/2020 Accepted: 2/3/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
The English language pronunciation is a sub-skill of speaking modules during the learning process of a second language. Accurate pronunciation is not followed enough by Bangladesh students in speaking English. It was found that the participants face barriers while pronouncing English. However, it is ignored and even provided the least attention by them. In order to explore the pronunciation barriers of vowels and consonants of Bangladesh expatriate learners and to identify remedial measures, this study stresses about four aspects of pronunciation: vowel confusion and insertion, missing stress sounds, sounds’ errors cause of written form, and absence of fricatives. The study emphasizes on the value and status of pronunciation and overcame the approach of it among Bangladesh expatriate students. A pronunciation test was conducted with 8 Bangladesh expatriate learners with an age range of 20-25 years and the participants were asked to pronounce 7-8 words in every aspect, recorded their voice and documented for analysis along with observation of the Bangladesh expatriate learners at King Saud University. The study reveals that Bangladeshi students have many errors on the way to the correct vocalization of English sounds, which are mainly the influence of their mother tongue. Bangladeshi Learners could not make the distinction between long and short vowels. To overcome this problem, learners need to participate pronunciation practice in the formal assessment process in addition to language lessons and also focus their attention on conversation through multimedia.

Keywords: absence of fricatives, Bangladesh expatriate students, higher educational level, missing stress sounds, recorded voice, sounds’ errors cause written form, vowel confusion and insertion.

Cite as: Kesavan, V. E., Mohammad, S. A., Jayendira, P. S., & Kalaichelvi, R. (2021) English Language Pronunciation Barriers Encountered by the Expatriate Students at King Saud University, Riyadh. Arab World English Journal, 12 (1). DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.20
Introduction
In Bangladesh, Bangla is the official language in all aspects of life and places such as schools, markets, parks, and streets. Like many other countries, the English language in Bangladesh is the second language. Teacher and learners in Bangladesh are often ignorant about pronunciation. Non-native speakers make slips or faults when they use English. Ellis (2003) In Bangladesh, English, as a first global lingua franca, first world language, and language of commerce, science, and technology, is dominating higher education, trades, corporate offices, mass entertainment, courts, and media for many years. There English is considered as a superpower to bring social status and modernize a man. People feel proud and smart for speaking in English. Influential elite groups, decision-makers speak in English. Hence learning English is essential for Bangladeshi people. As a second language, Bangladeshi students learn English from the primary label of education. For the differentiation of the articulator system and pronunciation between Bangla and English, the Bangladeshi students face many difficulties in learning English. Most of them face difficulties in pronunciation. Pronunciation is the primary key to communication with people. Without correct pronunciation, it is not easy to communicate with native people Also, lousy pronunciation may lead to misunderstanding in communication, although the speakers have good grammatical and reading skills.

Consequently, learning pronunciation is essential to English learners. Kelly (2001) states that including teaching pronunciation in the classrooms is essential because learners’ errors may guide to misunderstanding and prevent fruitful communication. Incidentally, what is the pronunciation? Robinett (1985) says that it is “the act or the result of producing the sounds of speech, including articulation, vowel formation, accent, inflection, and intonation. They often concern the correctness or acceptability of the speech sounds” (64). Consonant and vowels are assumed to be the basis of pronunciation.

Bangla has 11 vowels and 39 consonant letters. “English alphabet contains 26 letters of Latin script” Hopkins (2017) in which five vowels and 21 consonants. Though Bengali has more vowels and consonants, some English sounds have no equivalent in Bangla. For example, /ʒ/ and /z/ sounds. Another reason why English is difficult for SLL that, for 26 letters in English, it has 39 sounds. One sound has a few phonemes. For example, the letter “a” can be pronounced like [s] as in ‘law” and [ɑː] like in “father” and [æ] in “ago” and [æ] in “pat” and [ɛ] in “make.” Another cause is, the English language has many accents, Irish, Welsh, Scottish, and mainly British and American accents. Every accent has a different pronunciation. Sometimes British and American use different words to describe a thing, which leads the English language learners in difficulties for acquisition.

English is written in the Latin alphabet, whereas Bangla script is derived from the eastern variety of Brahmi, the Latin alphabet and Brahmi are different languages from each other, whether in writing or speaking. English has two forms for the alphabet. Small and capital forms. However, in the Bangla language, all letters have only one form. In Bangla, there is no need to capital the first letter of the sentence and the first letter of some specific words, which may guide Bangladeshi learners to more difficulties in learning English.
The study focuses on English pronunciation barriers among Bangladeshi students and analysis what kind of errors being produced by them in the higher class. The researcher will also provide some remedies to the students and teachers to overcome the barriers and errors. This study will find out the problems and errors encountered by Bangladeshi students in the pronunciation of English sounds and also will discover the barriers to correct pronunciation and how students would overcome these errors. Thus, this study may find a solution to fill the gap between the barriers and correct pronunciation. The researcher chooses eight students for conducting the research. All the students are adults. Their ages are from 22s to 30s. All students have finished secondary school level, and they are studying a bachelor’s degree in different faculties at King Saud University in Riyadh. The researcher uses an android mobile phone to record students’ voices (pronunciation).

Literature Review

Pronunciation errors are a common phenomenon in many countries where English is a second language or foreign language. The learner identifies the fault and he/she can answer it by himself/herself. Gilakjani (2011) Rivers (1981) has argued that language is an important way of communication. Learning grammatical rules, vocabularies, and phrases are not sufficient for students until they are not able to pronounce the language, which he wants to learn, in a way that the native speakers of that language can understand their expression correctly. Jenkins (2011), non-native speakers impossible to pronounce as the native speaker; rather non-native speakers can try to learn the pronunciation which is mutually agreed to native and non-native speakers. She emphasized some phonemes that a non-native speaker must learn and some phonemes are not as important as others are. (Jenkins, 2011, p. 9)

Second language learners also face barriers from their mother language. Robinett (1985) told that learners’ first language or mother tongue plays a great rule to interfere in gaining the skill of expression in a foreign language. For example, at the beginning stage of learning the English language, Spanish native people more commonly pronounce thank (/θæŋk/ as sank (/sæŋk/) and thing (/θɪŋ/) as sing (/sɪŋ/). The reason why Spanish people pronounce like that is Spanish has no equal sound of /θ/ as has in English. Therefore, Spanish people replace the primary sound of the thing, which is /θ/ sound, with /s/ sound, which is nearly similar to the /θ/ sound.

Wahba (1998) examines the difficulties encountered by Egyptian students in learning English as a second language. He finds out that some specific phonological errors made by Egyptian students are related to stress and intonation. She also describes the reason for errors, which are the different phonological features of English and Arabic. Ahmad (2011) found that Arab students scarcely can pronounce certain consonant sounds in the right way. For instance, the voiceless bilabial plosive /p/ sound has no equivalent in the Arabic language; hence Saudi students cannot easily understand the voiceless of /p/ sound. Instead, they replace the sound with a voiced /b/ sound. Begum and Hoque (2016) stated that, in some specific situations, some English sounds disappear in some words. The tertiary level students of Bangladesh encounter this problem. They do not pronounce a single sound while uttering a word. For example: they vocalize /skrɪpts/ as /skrɪps/, /æks/ as /æks/, without phoneme “t”. They also do not utter stress sound perfectly. Like; (interesting) /ˈɪntrəstɪŋ/ as /ɪntərəstɪŋ/, (tourist)/ˈtuːrɪst/ as /tuːrɪst/ without
stress in the initial of the words and (literature) /ˈlɪtrɪʃʊər/ as /lɪˈtrɪʃʊər/ with stress in wrong position.

According to Ramelan (1994), there are some pronunciation problems faced by Indonesian students when they want to learn English as a foreign language. They are a) move of Linguistic habit, b) different components between mother language and second language, c) the similarity of phonetic features in both languages but the difference in their distributions, d) same sounds in both languages, but these sounds have different variations or allophones, and e) Similar sounds in two languages, but those sounds differ slightly in their phonetic features. Native people of Arabic, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog, and other essential dialects of all present Iberian Romance Languages have difficulties in differentiation [b] and [v] sounds, what is called betacism (Hopkins, 2017). Hassan (2000) said that Arab students find difficulties in the vocalization of some specific words due to the difference and discrepancy in the orthography and pronunciation of those words. For example, the /f/ sound it could be represented by the letter f or the combination of ph in phantom, and gh in a laugh. Here it is evident that there is no similarity between letters and sound, which makes English spelling and pronunciation more problematic to learn and teach for Arab students and teachers.

Methodology
The present study examines eight Bangladeshi students at King Saud University. They are all adults. They have never been in any country where English is the first language. They are divided into two groups: the first group is the students of science and engineering faculty at Kings Saud University, where English is the means of teaching, and the second group is the students of art faculty at KSU, in which English is not the medium of teaching. English department students are not included in the research’s subjects. This study stresses about four aspects of pronunciation. Which are: vowel confusion an insertion, missing stress sounds, sounds’ errors cause of written form, and absence of fricatives: The researcher met the participants each week until eight weeks to test and collect the data. The subjects are told about the research so they can be aware of their pronunciation and other activities. They are asked to pronounce 7-8 words in every approach, and recorded their pronunciation in android mobile. They are allowed to prepare for reading around five to ten minutes before they start. Every week the obtained data is analyzed by the researcher himself and other specialists in English pronunciation. The researcher also uses Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries to compare the participants’ sounds and the sounds in the dictionary. Only 8 learners from two colleges were considered due to study limitations. The Science and Engineering and College of Arts were selected purposively and then the learners were selected randomly. (SeeTable1.) The pronunciation test was designed on phonemes of English.

Results
Vowel Confusion and Insertion
In group one, most of the students are confused in the monophthong /ɔ/ sound in small and soar. They pronounced /a/, /əl/, /əl/, /u/ sounds instead of /ɔ/ sound. One student pronounced the /ɔ/ properly. Two students were confused in the /e/ sound; instead, they pronounced the /əl/ sound in bet. However, surprisingly they all pronounced the same sound /e/ correctly in the net. Most of the students pronounced the /ə/ sound correctly in the zoo. Only one student mispronounced; instead, he pronounced the /əl/ sound. Most of the students vocalized the diphthong /əʊ/sound
wrongly in-\textit{joke} and \textit{hole}. They pronounced /u/, /o/, /ɔ/ sounds instead of the /əʊ/ sound. Only one student pronounced correctly. Finally, two students added /i/ and /e/ sounds before /s/ sound in \textit{small}.

Table 1. \textit{Gives the information about the vowel confusion and insertion errors in the group one}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word</th>
<th>correct pronunciation by objects.</th>
<th>wrong pronunciation by objects</th>
<th>notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>/smɔːl/ 1</td>
<td>/smal/ 3</td>
<td>Adding /e/ and /i/ sounds before /s/ sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soar</td>
<td>/sɔːr/ 1</td>
<td>/sər/ 1, /soar/ 1, /sur/ 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hide</td>
<td>/haɪd/ 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net</td>
<td>/net/ 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoo</td>
<td>/zuː/ 3</td>
<td>/dʒɔːl/ 1</td>
<td>Pronounced /z/ sound as /dʒ/ sound by 1 student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joke</td>
<td>/dʒɔʊk/</td>
<td>/dʒɔk/ 3, /dʒʊk/ 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hole</td>
<td>/hɔʊl/ 1</td>
<td>/hɔl/ 2, /hol/ 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet</td>
<td>/bet/ 2</td>
<td>/bɪt/ 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Figure 1. Shows the vowel confusion and insertion errors in group one}
In a group, two more students had similar confusion problems with vowel sounds to the students of group one. Also, some different errors appeared in the pronunciation vowel sounds. Like, one student pronounces the /ə/ sound instead of the /ɔ/ sound in soar. Two students pronounced the /œ/ sound in the place of /œə/ sound in soar. There is also adding /ɪ/ vowel mistake before the /s/ sound in small. All of the participants pronounced correctly /aɪ/ sound in hiding and the /e/ sound in the net. Table two illustrates the errors that occurred by the students in vowel sounds and how many students pronounced correctly.

Table 2. Demonstrates the vowel confusion and insertion errors in group 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word</th>
<th>correct pronunciation by objects.</th>
<th>wrong pronunciation by objects</th>
<th>notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Small</td>
<td>/smɔːl/ 3</td>
<td>/smal/ 1</td>
<td>Adding /ɪ/ sounds before /s/ sound.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soar</td>
<td>/sɔːr/</td>
<td>/soar/ 3, /suər/ 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hide</td>
<td>/haɪd/ 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net</td>
<td>/net/ 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoo</td>
<td>/zuː/ 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pronounced /ɪ/ sound as /dʒ/ sound by 1 student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joke</td>
<td>/dʒoʊk/ 1</td>
<td>/dʒok/ 1, /dʒək/ 2</td>
<td>Pronounced /ɪ/ sound in the /dʒ/ sound by one student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hole</td>
<td>/həʊl/ 1</td>
<td>/hɔl/ 1, /həl/ 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bet</td>
<td>/bet/ 3</td>
<td>/bɪt/ 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Shows the vowel confusion and insertion errors in group two
**Missing stress**

It is another problem that can be encountered by EL is missing stress in words or sentences. Some stress in words is meaningful. They differentiate nouns from verbs. For example, “overflow” if we stress on the first syllable as ‘‘overflow’’ it will be a noun, and stress on the last syllable as “over’flow” makes its verb. We can produce a stressed syllable by pushing more air from our lungs. Thus, a stressful syllable or word increases respiratory activity. It may also raise laryngeal activity (Ladefoged and Johnson, 2014). Stressed syllables are more prominent than unstressed syllables. According to Roach (2001), here are some factors which make a stressed syllable prominent. They are loudness, length, pitch, and quality. It does not need all these four factors to make a syllable stressed; instead, only one or two factors can make a syllable stressed.

Ladefoged and Johnson (2014) stated that stress has few functions in the English language. They are a) for emphasizing a word or contradicting one word to another, stress can be used in the English language. b) for indicating the syntactical variation of parts of speech and c) in illustrating the grammatical structures of the words.

In group one, without considering any other pronunciation mistake, most of the students missed the stress on the right syllable in words such as record, open envy, and equal. Only one student stressed correctly in open and equal. Most of the students could not differentiate nouns from verbs in words such as subject and insult. They failed to make the stress in the second syllable while subject and insult are verbs and at the beginning of those words while they are nouns. Only one student stressed correctly in subject and insult as nouns. Table four shows the number of students who missed the stress and who stressed the words correctly.

**Table 3. Depicts the stress errors in the group one**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>word</th>
<th>correct stress</th>
<th>miss stress</th>
<th>notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>/səbˈdʒekt/ 0</td>
<td>/səbdʒekt/ 4</td>
<td>As a verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>/ˈsəbdʒekt/ 1</td>
<td>/səbdʒekt/ 3</td>
<td>As a noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insult</td>
<td>/ɪnˈsʌlt/ 0</td>
<td>/ɪnsʌlt/ 4</td>
<td>As a verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insult</td>
<td>/ˈɪnsʌlt/ 1</td>
<td>/ɪnsʌlt/ 3</td>
<td>As a noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record</td>
<td>/ˈrekɔːd/ 0</td>
<td>/rekɔːd/ 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>/ˈɔupən/ 1</td>
<td>/ɔupən/ 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envy</td>
<td>/ˈenvi/ 0</td>
<td>/envi/ 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>/iːkwɔːl/ 1</td>
<td>/iːkwɔːl/ 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3. Illustrates the stress errors in the group one

In group two, as same as group one, most of the students missed the stress in words such as record, open, envy, and equal. Only two students correctly stressed the word equal. Only one student stressed correctly in the word subject as a noun, and all other students failed to make stress correctly in words subject and insult whether they are nouns or verbs. Table 4 shows the number of students who stress correctly or wrongly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>words</th>
<th>correct stress</th>
<th>miss stress</th>
<th>notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>/səbˈdʒekt/ 0</td>
<td>/səbdʒekt/ 4</td>
<td>As a verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject</td>
<td>/ˈsəbdʒekt/ 1</td>
<td>/səbdʒekt/ 3</td>
<td>As a noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insult</td>
<td>/mˈsɔlt/ 0</td>
<td>/msɔlt/ 4</td>
<td>As a verb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insult</td>
<td>/msɔlt/ 1</td>
<td>/msɔlt/ 3</td>
<td>As a noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record</td>
<td>/ˈreɪkɔːd/ 0</td>
<td>/reɪkɔːd/ 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>/ˈəʊpən/ 0</td>
<td>/œpən/ 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Envy</td>
<td>/ˈ envi/ 0</td>
<td>/envi/ 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>/ˈiːkwəl/ 2</td>
<td>/iːkwəl/ 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4. Shows the stress errors in the group two

Written Form

Bangladeshi students face pronunciation problems because of the written form. They are confused by silent words. In group one, all students pronounce the /ɔ/ sound correctly in thought and slaughter. Two students mispronounce silent /a/ sound in incidentally. They pronounce /ˌɪnˈdentali/ with /a/ sound instead of /ˌɪnˈdentali/ without a sound. However, other students pronounce correctly. All students mispronounced the word hasten. They pronounced /a:sten/, /a:sn/, /nsten/, /afən/ sounds instead of ˈeɪsn/ sound. Most of the students pronounced the word sigh correctly. Only one student pronounced wrongly /aʊl/ sound in a sigh. He added /t/ sound with /aʊl/ sound. Most of the students pronounced the proper surgeon. However, one student confused with silent sound /ɑ/. He pronounced /ˈdʒeon/. Half of the students pronounced /ˈʃia:s/ and /ˈʃən/ in the place of /ˈʃəns/, while other students were right in their pronunciation. Table five shows the error sounds created by the students because of the written form of the words.

Table 5. Shows the written form of errors in the group one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>words</th>
<th>correct pronunciation</th>
<th>wrong pronunciation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incidentally</td>
<td>/ˌɪnˈdentali/ 2.</td>
<td>/ˌɪnˈdentali/ 2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought</td>
<td>/θɔːt/ 4</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaughter</td>
<td>/ˈslaːtə(r)/ 4</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasten</td>
<td>/ˈheɪsn/ 0</td>
<td>/ˈhaːsten/ 1, /ˈhaːsn/ 1, /ˈhoʊsten/ 1, /ˈhoʊʃn/ 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigh</td>
<td>/sɑː/ 3</td>
<td>/sɑːt/ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgeon</td>
<td>/ˈsɜːdʒən/ 3</td>
<td>/ˈsɜːdʒən/ 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cautious</td>
<td>/ˈkɔːʃəs/ 2</td>
<td>/ˈkɔːʃəs/ 1, /ˈkoʊʃəs/ 1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In group two, most students pronounced correctly, *though*, and *slaughter*, like group one. Only one student pronounced the /ð/ sound instead of the /θ/ sound in *slaughter*. All students pronounced exactly the word *incidentally*. All students mispronounced *hasten* as like as group 1. They pronounced /ˈesten/, /ˈɑːsten/, and /ˈezen/ in the place of /ˈɛsn/. All students could not pronounce the surgeon correctly. They replaced /dʒən/ sound by /ˈzən/, /ˈzən/, /ˈzen/, and /dʒen/ sounds. One student vocalized the ai sound in a sigh, and one cannot read the word, and two students pronounced /ˈæm/ and /i/ sounds instead of the ai/ sound. The word *cautious* is confused by one student as he pronounced /ʃn/ instead of /ʃəs/, while two students vocalized correctly, and one student could not vocalize. Table 6 illustrates the number of students in group 2, pronounced correctly, and the students who could not in the written form problems.

Table 6. Shows written form problems in the group two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>words</th>
<th>correct pronunciation</th>
<th>wrong pronunciation</th>
<th>notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incidentally</td>
<td>/ˈɪnsəntli/ 4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought</td>
<td>/θɔːt/ 4</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaughter</td>
<td>/ˈslɔːt(r)/ 3</td>
<td>/ˈsləz(r)/ 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hasten</td>
<td>/ˈheɪsn/ 0</td>
<td>/ˈhesten/ 2, /ˈhɑːsten/ 1, /ˈhezen/ 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigh</td>
<td>/ˈsaɪ/ 1</td>
<td>/ˈsæn/ 1, /ˈsɪ/ 1</td>
<td>No pronunciation 1.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgeon</td>
<td>/ˈsɜːən/ 0</td>
<td>/ˈzɜːn/ 1, /ˈzən/ 1, /ˈzen/ 1, /ˈsɜːzən/ 1, /ˈzɜːdʒən/ 1.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cautious</td>
<td>/ˈkɔːʃəs/ 2</td>
<td>/ˈkɔːʃn/ 1</td>
<td>No pronunciation 1.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fricatives

To produce fricative consonant sounds, two articulators come close together and make a narrow passage so that the air goes through this with producing intense hissing noise. Therefore, fricatives like plosives and affricates, distinguished by voice elements. Sometimes this hissing noise or friction associated with voice or not (Gimson, 1989). According to Ward (1972), there are ten fricative consonants in English. They are f, v; θ, ð; s, z; ŋ, ʒ; ɹ; h.

In group one, all students mispronounced fricative labiodental sounds /f/, /v/, and dental /ð/ in the words father, vote, and there. Most of the students pronounced correctly /ʃ/ sound in the shop. Only one student failed to vocalize the fricative /ʃ/sound in the word. The glottal fricative sound /h/ in hot is pronounced correctly by half of the students and also mispronounced by the same students. Most of the students could not pronounce correctly alveolar fricative /s/ sound in site while only one student did. All students correctly pronounced dental fricative /θ/ sound in thank. Table seven demonstrates the number of students who correctly pronounced fricative sounds and who did not.

Table 7. Shows fricative problems in the group one

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words</th>
<th>With fricative</th>
<th>Without fricative</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>/ˈfaːðə(r)/ 0</td>
<td>/ˈfaːðə(r)/ 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote</td>
<td>/vəʊt/ 0</td>
<td>/vəʊt/ 4</td>
<td>While 3 students pronounced /bhut/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank</td>
<td>/θæŋk/ 4</td>
<td>/θæŋk/ none</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In group two, all students pronounced correctly /θ/ sound in *thank* as like as group one. Half of the students vocalized exactly fricative sounds /ʃ/, /θ/, /h/ and /s/ in words *father, shop, hot, and site*, and another half of the students mispronounced those fricative sounds. Most of the students vocalized wrongly labiodental fricative /v/ sound and dental fricative /ð/ sound in the *vote* and *there*, and only one student did correctly. Table eight gives information about how many students pronounced fricative sounds correct and how many mispronounced.

**Table 8. Shows fricative errors in the group two**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>words</th>
<th>with fricative</th>
<th>without fricative</th>
<th>notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>/faːðə(r)/ 2</td>
<td>/faːðə(r)/ 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote</td>
<td>/vɒʊt/ 1</td>
<td>/vɒʊt/ 3</td>
<td>While 2 students pronounced /bhut/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thank</td>
<td>/θæŋk/ 4</td>
<td>/θæŋk/ 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There</td>
<td>/ðeə(r)/ 1</td>
<td>/ðeə(r)/ 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop</td>
<td>/ʃɒp/ 2</td>
<td>/ʃɒp/ 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot</td>
<td>/hɒt/ 2</td>
<td>/hɒt/ 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>/saɪt/ 2</td>
<td>/saɪt/ 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary of the Findings

According to Roach (1998), there are 25 vowels in English phonetics (short-7, long-5, diphthongs-8, triphthongs-5). Both group one and group two students are the same in making pronunciation errors. English, as a means of the educational system, does not affect pronunciation. The summary of results is described as.

This study concentrated on vowel confusion an insertion, missing stress sounds, sounds’ errors cause of written form, and absence of fricatives only, and found the following problems: Learners cannot make the distinction between long and short vowels of English. Problems in vowel confusion and insertion: a) changing vowel sound /ɔ/ with /ʊ/, /ʊɑ/, /a/, /uə/ and /u/ sounds, and pronouncing diphthong /əʊ/ sound with monophthong /ə/, /ɑ/, /ɒ/ and /u/ sounds. Missing stress: missing stress is common among Bangladeshi students. According to Roach (2001), there are 24 consonants in English phonetics. According to Huq (1990), five consonants are absent (four completely and one /h/ partially) in the Bangla phonetics. Written form: a) /ɜːsn/ sound in hasten turns into /ɑːsten/, /ɑːsn/, /ɒsten/, /aʃn/, /esten/, and /ezen/ sounds, and /dʒən/ sound in surgeon pronounced as /zɪɔn/, /lən/, /zen/, /dʒən/ and /dʒən/ sounds. Fricatives: /ʃ/, /v/, /ð/, /h/ and /s/ sounds vocalized without fricative sounds.

Recommendations

Bangladeshi educational and social environment is not appropriate to learn correct pronunciation. Most People cannot understand correct pronunciation, whether British or American dialect. Even sometimes, people laugh at the person who speaks in the British or American dialect. People use their dialect in speaking English, which is far beyond the correct English pronunciation. Students need to be very enthusiastic and careful about correct pronunciation. The researcher suggests some rules to cope with pronunciation errors. They are,

1. The first step in the correction of L2 pronunciation is, as Wijk (1966) said, to learn the vocalization of each new word, separately, encountered by learners when they begin to
learn the language, either from a teacher or any kind of phonetic transcription ignoring many references of any rules of the pronunciation of the letters with which the words are made up.

2. Students should focus on the manner of articulation of English letters.

3. They should follow the natives’ pronunciation.

4. They may follow any authentic online program where teaches correct English pronunciation.

5. Teachers should correct students’ pronunciation in the classes and encourage them to speak in the correct dialect.

6. Students should emphasize speaking correctly from the primary level of education.

7. Institutes can play a significant role in developing correct pronunciation by proposing more pronunciation courses for teachers and students.

8. There are many websites and online English dictionaries which provide exact pronunciation for English words, students can follow them. Such as, “Oxford Learner’s Dictionaries” and “Cambridge Dictionary” has both British and American dialect for English words.

9. Students can also use technology software like rosetta and pronunciation coach to score their vowels’ and consonants’ production through what is called the language intelligibility scorer. Hence, this may also help them in writing their pronunciation awareness.

10. Conclusion

    The importance of the English language is flourishing day by day in Bangladesh as well as in the world. Nowadays, no one can deny the worth of the English language as it is the language of science, technology, trade, and global communication. For appropriate communication with people, the correct pronunciation is vital for everyone. A pronunciation test was conducted with 8 Bangladesh expatriate learners and the participants were asked to pronounce 7-8 words in every aspect, documented for analysis along with observation of the Bangladesh expatriate learners at King Saud University. The study reveals that Bangladeshi students have many errors on the way to the correct vocalization of English sounds, which are mainly influence of their mother tongue. Bangladeshi Learners could not make the distinction between long and short vowels. To overcome this problem, learners need to participate pronunciation practice in the formal assessment process in addition to language lessons, and also focus their attention on conversation through multimedia, the researcher believes the study may help to improve pronunciation errors to those who follow it.

About the Authors:
Kesavan Vadakalur Elumalai, Ph.D. is an associate professor of Applied Linguistics in the department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts at King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He has published a few articles in the field of language teaching and learning in reputed journals and he is one of member in a research group approved by Deanship of Scientific Research at King Saud University. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5700-3294. (Correspondence author)

Mohammad Sufian Abdullah: a graduate student in the Department of English Language and Literature of King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He is interested on English linguistics
especially language acquisition and English pronunciation. He holds a diploma degree on Arabic language from Arabic Linguistic Institute of King Saud University as well. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7047-9588

Jayendira P. Sanka, PhD is an assistant professor of MBA at AMA International University in the Kingdom of Bahrain. He has fourteen years of academic experience and fellow HEA-UK with over fifty publications in various international journals. The current research interests include, quality of e-learning in higher education, blended learning, employee development, and employee satisfaction. drpjai14@gmail.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8435-2123.

R. Kalaichelvi, PhD is an Assistant Professor at AMA International University in the Kingdom of Bahrain. She received the Best Paper award at the IEEE conference in 2017 and served as a reviewer for SmartTech-2017 and the International Journal of Information Technology and Web Engineering. Her research focuses on Cloud Computing, Employee Development & Satisfaction, E-learning, and Blended Learning in Higher Education. kalai_hasan@yahoo.com, https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8355-7669.

References


Impact of EMI on Omani Engineering Students’ Academic Performance

Holi Ibrahim Holi Ali
Department of English Language & Literature
University of Technology & Applied Sciences
Rustaq, the Sultanate of Oman
Email: howlli2@yahoo.com

Received: 12/31/2020          Accepted: 3/1/2021          Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
Using English to teach and learn academic subjects in higher education (HE) across the globe is increasing in popularity. The overarching aim of this study is to examine the impact of English-medium instruction (EMI) on Omani engineering students’ academic performance and their studies in an English-medium engineering programme in Oman. This paper reports on findings from a larger project that was intended to investigate Omani engineering students’ experience of learning through the medium of English in one of the Colleges of Technology in Oman. The study adopted a qualitative interpretative approach with a case study strategy and a purposive sampling technique to look into the impact of EMI on Omani engineering students’ academic performance and their studies. The sample included 12 Omani engineering and 8 engineering instructors who were interviewed along with five classroom observations. The data were collected and generated through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. They were analysed manually, inductively and thematically using Braun and Clarke’s model (2006). The findings showed that EMI had both positive and negative impacts on the students’ academic performance and their studies.

Keywords: academic performance, EMI, impact; learning experiences, Omani engineering students

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.21
Introduction

English as a means of instruction may be defined as the use of the English language to teach academic subjects in communities or countries where the first language (L1) of the majority of the population is not English (Dearden, 2014; Macaro, Curle, Pun, & Dearden, 2018; Holi, 2018; Ekoç, 2020; Holi, 2020). EMI has become an important worldwide phenomenon and a matter of debate at the educational, political, and societal levels (Tollefson & Tsui, 2003), especially in non-Anglophone countries (Scatolini, 2020). The juggernaut of EMI in non-English-speaking countries appears to be accelerating despite the notable dangers of pursuing this policy for the local language(s) and classroom practices (Kedzierski, 2016). Using EMI certainly has its merits from both students’ and institutions’ perspectives. However, adopting it also means that students end up learning their major subject areas in, what is for most of them, a foreign language (Kim, 2020). Internationally, there is a rapidly growing trend for English to be adopted as the medium of instruction, even when the majority of the population has another first language (Vu, 2014) and, in some cases, another second or even third language.

EMI has gained considerable momentum, and become an indispensable aspect of education curricula around the world (Selvi, 2020). One of the driving forces for the development of EMI has been globalization, whereby English has come to play a crucial role in assisting global academic exchange, the advancement of knowledge, and career advancement and mobility (Montgomery, 2004). However, the adoption of EMI has posed several challenges for both students and content teachers. Al-Issa conducted a study in the UAE in 2017 on the impact of EMI on students’ Arabic literacy, and his findings showed that there was clear evidence showing that while Arabic as a dialect continues to be spoken and used daily, literacy in Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is unquestionably losing ground.

Furthermore, higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world have been racing to increase the international competitiveness of their systems and to prepare graduates for the global workplace. Their attempts have often resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of EMI academic programmes in non-Anglophone countries (Bradford, 2018). This trend is placing new pressures on faculty members concerning such things as programme design, course delivery, and classroom management, especially in EFL/ESL contexts (Bradford, 2018).

What matters in EMI teaching is the choices lecturers make in their pedagogical practice. For example, the design and implementation of their classroom instructions is key to promoting learners’ responses and making learning happen (Chen, Han & Wright, 2020). An English-only classroom language policy can have considerable effects on school achievement. Throughout schooling, learners often have low levels of ability in English (Williams & Cooke 2002; Dutcher 2004; Aliou, Brock-Utne, Diallo, Heugh, & Wolff, 2006). The transition of students from L1 medium to EMI creates a large gap between the learners’ English language ability and the English language demands of the curriculum. These levels of language ability are often far too low to enable learners to achieve grade-appropriate levels of disciplinary knowledge. Even the pedagogy used in schools, though vary from context to context, often tends to make heavy language demands on learners in their EMI classes (Clegg & Simpson, 2016). Additionally, learners cannot always meet all the general language-related demands on top of the more specific demands for them to master subject-specific vocabulary, register, and grammar (Clegg & Simpson, 2016).
Therefore, this study adopted a qualitative interpretative approach with a case study strategy as well as semi-structured interviews and classroom observations to examine the impact of EMI on Omani engineering students’ academic performance and their studies in general from a pragmatic perspective. The significance of the present study is because it drives its magnitude and from the fact that the results would help both engineering and EAP teachers to minimize the negative impact of EMI on students’ academic performance.

**Relevant Literature Review**

Research has shown that EMI has both positive and negative effects on EFL/ESL students and their academic performance, but this depends on the students’ and content teachers’ levels of proficiency and training.

In their study, Xie and Curle (2020) investigated Chinese students’ academic success in EMI at a Chinese state university. A questionnaire, exam score (n=100), and semi-structured interview data (n=29) were collected from second-year undergraduate students majoring in Business Management. Content-related language proficiency and level of motivation were explored as possible significant predictors of academic success in EMI. Business English proficiency was a statistically significant predictor, highlighting that students with a lower level of proficiency needed supplementary linguistic support to fully succeed in their EMI studies. Language learning motivation did not predict academic success. Perceived success in EMI did predict actual success in EMI, highlighting the need to enhance students’ perceptions of their ability to succeed in EMI. Qualitative data revealed that students’ perceptions of success in EMI centred on content knowledge acquisition, improved English proficiency, knowledge application and transformation, and forming new modes of thinking. However, in the end, classroom observations enhanced the quality of the findings.

A study conducted by Lin and He (2019) investigated the effects of bilingual instruction on content-based learning and provided empirical evidence after testing influential factors in bilingual environments. After analysing a sample of 498 undergraduate students enrolled in a fundamental business course at a sample university in China, the study found insignificant statistical differences in the academic performance of bilingual and L1 (Chinese) classes. They attributed these differences to the English language support provided by the university and showed that learning competence can help students minimize language barriers and solve common learning problems facing both bilingual and L1 students. However, the study relied on corpus analysis only.

In their study, Guo, Tong, Wang, Min, and Tang (2018) used a quasi-experimental approach including Chinese college students’ learning motivation, content knowledge, English language proficiency, and instructor’s pedagogical practices of an English-medium instruction (EMI) class and the parallel Chinese-medium instruction (CMI) course in a non-traditional discipline. The results indicated that EMI was more effective, in comparison to CMI, in motivating the students’ learning of the focal subject. More specifically, EMI students held a stronger external goal orientation than did their CMI peers. Furthermore, EMI and CMI students performed equally well in their final exam in the subject and English after one semester of participation, controlling for their prior performance. The finding suggested that EMI did not have a detrimental effect on Chinese college students’ content area learning. Finally, observations revealed a significantly higher percentage of the English language instruction focused on a higher-order dense cognitive
area in the EMI classroom where students were more engaged in their learning. Methodologically, the study relied heavily on quantitative data about the students’ learning experiences of EMI. Other qualitative data collection methods, such as stories, enhanced the quality of the findings.

In their study, Vidal and Jarvis (2018) examined essays by 195 undergraduate students (99 first-year and 96 third-year) at a university in Spain to investigate the effect of three years of instruction through the medium of English on their level of proficiency, essay quality and lexical diversity (as measured by the Oxford Placement Test, the CEFR writing scale and three measures of lexical diversity). The results showed a significant improvement in the learners’ second language (L2) proficiency and a significant but subtle increase in essay quality ratings, but no significant increase in lexical diversity was scored. However, since the study relied exclusively on the textual analysis of their students’ essays, it would have been useful if it had also incorporated interviews with students and subject teachers to learn about their views on the impact of EMI on learning experiences and academic performance.

In a recent study, Al-Bakri (2017) explored the perceptions of students about the implementation of the EMI policy at an Omani public higher educational institution. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of EMI on students’ learning experiences and academic performance. The findings showed that the majority of students either supported or accepted the EMI policy for utilitarian reasons, such as future employability. Students also considered the adoption of Arabic as a medium of instruction (AMI) as a plausibly helpful strategy to enhance their comprehensive understanding of disciplinary courses, and this eventually also improved their academic performance.

Al-Bakri also showed that the implementation of EMI had disempowered students with low English language proficiency. It also had a negative psychological impact on them. EMI policy was, therefore, contested as it disadvantaged some of the students, and it did not provide them with equal opportunities in education. Neither did it allow them to improve their Arabic competence.

In response to EMI, it was recommended that English language teaching in schools should be improved to better prepare students for their tertiary education. Additionally, AMI courses should be offered in all colleges to help students to comprehend their disciplinary subjects. Finally, teachers should be offered professional development activities to develop their pedagogical competencies. Al-Bakri’s general findings were corroborated by Scatolini in 2020.

However, although Al-Bakri (2017) elicited Omani students’ perceptions about EMI, her study did not address the students’ learning experiences in any given discipline. In this way, no light was cast upon the question of whether EMI affects students’ performance in different (specific) disciplines differently.

At the same time, Al-Bakri (2017) took a critical stance towards EMI. The researcher problematised EMI without offering a genuine alternative medium of instruction that could help students to study their core subjects and function in their future workplace in the same way as English.
Additionally, it would have been useful if the study had incorporated interviews with subject teachers and EAP teachers to learn about their views of their students’ learning experiences through the medium of English. Methodologically, the study relied heavily on questionnaires for collecting the data about students’ learning experiences of EMI. Other qualitative data collection methods, such as stories, would have enhanced the quality of the findings.

Another study, conducted by Dofouz and Camacho-Minano (2016), examined the impact the EMI may have on students’ academic performance in comparison to their L1 (which in this case was Spanish). The data were collected from 383 financial accounting students in a Spanish university via tests that were administered during four successive academic years and analysed statistically. Overall, the findings showed that there was no statistical difference between the groups and that the use of EMI did not negatively impact students’ academic performance. However, Dofouz and Camacho-Minano did not interview any students about the impact of EMI on their academic performance; rather, they relied exclusively on the analysis of their test results. Interviews and observations might have painted a different picture.

Worp (2017) conducted a study by analysing the relationship between the experiences of future professionals with EMI in the workplace, their learning experiences as language learners, their proficiency and competence in English, and their expectations of the use of English in their future career. A questionnaire was used to collect data from 194 business students at the University of the Basque Country. The findings revealed that students who had taken EMI classes demonstrated higher oral language skills and proficiency in English, and they were comfortable using English in work situations due to the amount of their exposure to the language. This study suggested that studying through the medium of English had positively impacted the students’ language proficiency. The study argued that EMI might help professionals in their future careers. However, this study had a couple of limitations that merit consideration.

First, Worp (2017) only employed questionnaires to collect data about students’ learning experiences as language learners and future professionals. Second, stakeholders and workplace professionals were not involved in giving their suggestions about workplace linguistic needs. Using interviews as one of the methods of data collection and involving workplace professionals might have helped to better understand students’ learning experiences through the medium of English and their thoughts and expectations about their language needs in their future careers.

Another study conducted by Huang (2015) investigated the students’ perceptions of the EMI courses at Southern Taiwan University of Science & Technology (STUST) in terms of their learning motivation, learning anxiety, and learning achievement. The study included 157 participants (93 local and 64 foreign students), who completed a self-assessment questionnaire on EMI course-taking experiences. The major findings of the study were as follows. (1) Most participants were motivated to take EMI courses to strengthen their English ability and professional knowledge. (2) Most participants agreed with the helpfulness of EMI courses. (3) Interactions with students of other nationalities motivated their learning of English. (4) The local students’ self-perceived low English proficiency caused them major anxiety. (5) There existed a significant reverse association between learning anxiety and achievement or motivation. (6) There existed significant differences between local and international students in measures of motivation, anxiety, and achievement. However, Huang did not interview any students about the impact of
EMI on their academic performance; rather, the study relied exclusively on questionnaires. Interviews and observations might have yielded a different picture.

In their studies, Shohamy (2013) and Ali (2013) suggested that when English is used in instruction, it not only helps students to acquire domain-specific knowledge but also language skills. From this, it would transpire that teaching English is not only the task of language teachers but indirectly also of content teachers. However, in reality, the latter do not concentrate on language learning during their classes as they do not see themselves as language teachers at all and have not been trained to be such, either. Generally, content teachers expected that their EFL/ESL students would be linguistically prepared for their studies before joining their speciality (Clegg & Simpson, 2016; Huang 2015; Dearden, 2016; Vu, 2014; King, 2014; Costa & Coleman, 2013; Airey, 2012; Aguilar & Rodrigues, 2012; Rogier, 2012; Kerklan, Moreira, & Boersma, 2008). As previously suggested, some content teachers felt that they were pedagogically competent to teach content, but their own limited English language proficiency presented them with obstacles that they had not been prepared to deal with (Zacharias, 2013; Hamid, 2011; Wilkinson, 2013; Airey & Linder, 2006).

In light of the foregoing, the researcher would argue that EMI could have a positive impact on EFL/ESL students’ language development if the content courses specialists possessed higher levels of language proficiency and if their teachers were trained in how to deliver their classes through the medium of English. When both students and teachers are ill-prepared for English-medium classes, they equally lack the appropriate linguistic competence to ensure that EMI classes can lead to better content-based education.

Additionally, Barnard (2014) argued that most of the EFL students in Asian HEIs lack the appropriate and critical linguistic abilities to engage with academic content delivered in English or to produce original and appropriate academic texts. In this way, he suggested a dual-medium model (translanguaging), which could better enable students to cope with their content courses and the difficulties and challenges which are usually associated with studying in a language that is not one’s mother tongue. This idea was also supported by Kirkpatrick (2011), who claimed that Hong Kong universities need to use a bilingual system to safeguard their local languages and promote publications in their local language. Moreover, many other researchers (Belhiah & Elham, 2014; King, 2014; Raddawi & Meslem, 2015; Scatolini, 2020) have advocated the need for implementing bilingual education systems, or translanguaging, to preserve the national identity and heritage and L1s such as Arabic.

**Research Methodology and Design**

The overarching aim of this study is to interpret and thoroughly understand Omani engineering students’ perceptions about the impact of EMI on their academic performance and studies.

A qualitative methodology was used as it usually helps to address the aims and questions of studies like this and to understand social phenomena. The methodological approach to a research problem should be appropriate to the research questions and should reflect the research topic (Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2010).
The necessary data were generated through semi-structured interviews and observations of teaching and classroom-based learning interactions. The semi-structured interviews were the main source of data collection, and they helped the researcher to generate rich data from both engineering students and their teachers. The students’ interviews were conducted in Arabic, and the data were subsequently transcribed and coded in Arabic. The relevant accounts were also translated into English.

A case study approach was adopted because the study focuses on a group of engineering students in an EMI programme in one of the Colleges of Technology in the Sultanate of Oman. The case study approach helps to study a problem in-depth within a limited time. Arguably, the case study approach was useful for the present research as it led to a better understanding of the participants’ perceptions and perspectives towards the impact of EMI on their engineering education and their academic performance.

Purposive sampling was used as it entails studying information-rich cases and yields insight and in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalisations (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling aims at capturing and describing the central themes across the case under study (Patton, 2002).

The data analysis was done manually and through the identification of themes and codes. Braun and Clarke’s (2006) five phases of thematic analysis (‘familiarising myself with my data’, ‘generating initial themes’, ‘searching for themes’, ‘reviewing themes’ and ‘defining and naming themes’) were employed to code and analyse the data. Key ethical considerations were taken into account, such as others’ opinions, anonymity, confidentiality, gaining access, acceptance and permission, informed consent and sensitivity throughout the study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). The participants were explicitly told that they could withdraw from the study at any stage or any point of time if they so wished without having to explain why. Measures were taken such as member checking, triangulation, etc. to minimise the effects of design and procedures that might give an advantage to one group of participants or institute over the others and to protect the confidentiality of the data gathered and the respondents’ identities and sustain the study credibility and trustworthiness.

Findings and Discussion

The potential impact of EMI on students and their studies

EMI can potentially impact the students’ learning experiences and their studies both positively and negatively. It may well be a positive factor in improving their English language proficiency while, at the same time, it may also be a source of hindrance to their acquisition of subject-related knowledge and skills. Based on the data collected, this part considers the impact of EMI on the students’ academic performance and studies and its consequences for them.

Generally speaking, students attributed several of their low results to the implementation of EMI in their content courses in the Colleges of Technology. In this regard, student 5 (S5) stated:

"Studying through the medium of English had a negative impact on my study. I need to spend much time with my English rather than concentrating on my content courses. English"
has taken much of our valuable time. Further, I find it difficult to understand exams because of the kind of technical words and instructions used and this could impact my marks and academic performance. Because of English, I need to spend much time practising for my presentations instead of focusing on core subjects. Besides, I need to spend time researching and looking up meanings of new words and finding technical meanings. I have difficulties in understanding and comprehending engineering lectures because of the level of my English. Also, I need to have much time to prepare and write my assignments to meet the deadlines. All these could be considered as challenges that have a great impact on my degree and academic performance as well.

S5 considered the mandatory EMI a waste of time and a cause of his relatively poor content learning. The time which could have gone into studying content was used to learn English. In other words, the end, including examination performance, suffered because of the medium. This would have a negative impact on his academic performance and his grade point average (GPA), which is increasingly used by major international oil and gas companies as a criterion for recruiting engineers. Also, he believed that the English language was a barrier for him to understand the engineering terms and the associated register. Additionally, the interviewee had problems with written assignments and speaking tasks. S5 found it difficult to understand what his engineering teachers were saying during lectures and classes and, so, he struggled and spent a disproportionate amount of time preparing his presentations.

Teachers, too, had their coping strategies to get around EMI, as one of them explained:

For example, if there are a few spelling mistakes in their reports, I will just overlook them because for me, yes, I am not here to teach them English (Eng. T3).

The example above suggests that engineering teachers, such as Eng. T3 had their understanding of the challenges presented to their students by mandatory EMI. In some instances, they weighed up the possible courses of action and decided that in the case of content courses, students should not be penalised because of their language mistakes, other than spelling mistakes. In other words, content teachers prioritized content over language. As long as students’ reports were clear, on target and understandable to the reader, they were found acceptable. Some engineering teachers believed that their job was not to teach English, and their informal individual assessment criteria must have taken this into account.

On the other hand, S5 added:

Of course, EMI has had a negative impact on my study but at the same time, it enabled me to know my strengths and weaknesses in English in particular. My problem with English writing has impacted my assignments, projects, essays and exams.

Students like S5 reported that the use of English as the medium of instruction was useful for them and helped them to improve their language proficiency and to develop their competence as reported by S6:
I had difficulties with reading, writing and speaking as well but things have begun to improve drastically [after joining the degree programme]. As all subjects in college are in English and this has helped me to improve my English.

However, these comments contradict the arguments raised by the majority of the students who participated in this study and served to illustrate that the individual perspectives are complex in that they are connected with each student’s unique circumstances.

The findings of this study indicate that EMI had a positive impact on students who were comfortably proficient in English and a negative effect on those with low levels of proficiency. This tendency has already been identified by Kim & Sohn (2009) in the context of EMI in South Korea. He pointed out that English was treated as more important than the content of the lectures, and students who were not competent in English found it hard to participate in the lectures. Some studies have argued that EMI can minimise interaction between faculty and students, and reduce the level of comprehension of the content of courses taught in English. Additionally, using English to teach non-English native speakers can impede discussion among students, putting those who struggle with the language in a disadvantageous position. As a result, EMI can lead to lower graduation rates (Byun, Chu, Kim, Park, Kim, & Jung, 2011; Airey & Linders, 2007; Collins, 2010; Al-Issa, 2017; Querol-Julián, & Camiciottoli, 2019; Phuong, & Nguyen, 2019).

Two-third of the interviewees who participated in this study had positive views about EMI as they believed that it helped them to improve their English language skills and that it would help them considerably in their future employment and studies. This view is the result of the ubiquitousness of English in today’s job market and the high demand for professional engineers with good language proficiency in both the local and international labour markets. The findings of the present study indicated that EMI may be expected to have a significant impact on students’ future employability, which will be either positive or negative depending on whether or not it has helped them improve their English language proficiency and academic attainment in engineering.

Nevertheless, the study also revealed that the participating Omani engineering students believed that the mandatory use of EMI caused them to spend much of their time studying English instead of concentrating on the technical content of the courses. S12 explained that:

They [his English-related difficulties] have a negative impact as I devote much of my time to studying English rather than engineering and telecommunication courses. The impact on my comprehension and understanding negatively as I need to read things several times to understand. I need to check online dictionaries and text my friends to ask them about unknown technical terms and concepts. Another impact was on my marks. Because of the language barriers I sometimes lose marks as I couldn’t understand the questions well, or I couldn’t express myself clearly when responding to exam questions. However, EMI has had a positive impact as my English was improved due to the engineering classes, and I managed to know most of the important technical vocabulary in my speciality. My writing was improved because of practising writing in the labs and writing projects and lab reports. I am able now to understand things more easily because of the engineering classes delivered in English, and I can speak to teachers and my
classmates in English which was not possible when I was in the foundation years. English-medium classes are great and have been useful for us.

It was apparent from the students’ responses that in this particular Omani college, the chosen language of instruction was hindering the technical education of engineers, and this may have been the case elsewhere, too, given the similar approaches and students in those colleges. Sivaraman, Al Balushi, & Rao (2014) reported similar findings elsewhere in Oman and showed that the language barrier negatively affected the performance of Omani engineering students in their engineering modules. Consequently, English as their foreign language of instruction may be regarded as partly responsible for their poor academic performance and low GPAs.

At the same time, all core subject teachers were of the view that their job was not to teach English, so their informal individual assessment criteria did not overemphasise the linguistic correctness of their students’ output. This was a clear indication that the general English, EAP, ESP and the core subject teachers must come to a shared understanding of their students’ linguistic needs to work towards target-oriented goals which are dictated by their students’ present and future language needs. Half of the students appeared to be unable to study effectively in English after one and a half of the full-time foundation English courses (approximately 20 hours a week) which, in turn, says something about the students themselves. Without their commitment to their learning (e.g. by preparing for lectures beforehand, previewing texts and using dictionaries and online resources to learn domain-specific vocabulary on their own), no existing language programme would be able to perform academic miracles. Therefore, considering that the students are notionally well aware of the importance of English, both in the college and the labour market, teachers across disciplines must continue to strive to motivate their students to commit themselves to learning English proactively before, during and after their content classes.

English plays a key role in the Omani gas and oil industry. Even though in everyday life, pidginised Omani Arabic may be the most common means of communication in the Sultanate, in oil and gas refineries, English is the language for spoken interaction and, above all, professional, written communication. Hence, since engineering colleges ideally prepare students for employment mostly in oil and gas refineries, English has become the undisputed means of communication in education, too. The interviewees recognised that this is part of the rationale behind EMI in Oman. Two-third of the participating students in the present study also concurred that their college offered them countless opportunities to acquire and develop their English language and communicative skills. Notwithstanding this, much of the students’ time is currently being channelled into learning English rather than engineering subjects (which are the very reason why engineering students are in higher education). This imbalance in time management has repercussions. It negatively impacts students’ learning and GPA. It also entails that engineering teachers have to modify, and frequently simplify, what they teach and calculate which concepts they will be able to explain in English and what their students will be able to grasp.

**Students’ perceptions of EMI as scaffolding language proficiency**

The data collected revealed that the interviewees felt that EMI had a significant impact on their language proficiency and practice. They considered themselves empowered by the engineering classes delivered through the medium of English. Student 7 explained that:
Using English as the medium of teaching is a challenge for us, but it has helped us to learn new terms and concepts and improve our language skills.

Some students considered EMI an important opportunity for them to maximise their exposure to English and to improve their literacy skills despite the challenges which EMI represented for them. Engineering courses in English exposed the students to the engineering register, as well as to technical terms and concepts which were, in the main, new to them. Accordingly, the students believed that their English academic literacy improved as a result of the EMI policy.

Another student added:

My engineering teachers help me with my English and they sometimes correct my grammar mistakes in my reports and projects. I use English to communicate with them and this has made me feel confident when I speak English. My speaking, writing and reading skills have improved (S8).

This student appreciated the impact of EMI on his English proficiency. Additionally, this extract illustrates, on the one hand, what an important role non-language content teachers can play a role in ensuring the success of EMI when they can coach the students, not only in the area of engineering but also occasionally in English. On the other hand, this shows that although most of the engineering teachers who were interviewed believed that their job was to teach subject contents, some of them still helped their students with their language problems. This finding corroborates that of both Xie and Curle (2020) and Vidal and Jarvis (2018).

In summary, EMI classes were of great value to students because they enhanced their language proficiency and competency. However, some of the students developed a perception that they were at a disadvantage by not being able to fully grasp the content and gain the necessary skills in their major simply because of the language barrier. Moreover, the interviews indicated that developing students’ language abilities should be a shared responsibility between language and content teachers. However, to do that systematically, there must be cooperation and collaboration between the teaching staff across subjects and programmes.

Conclusions, implications and recommendations

The evidence gathered through interviews and observations strongly suggests that EMI had a positive impact on students’ learning despite the challenges it presented. Students’ conversations revealed their belief that EMI provided opportunities for them to improve their language proficiency, despite its corresponding challenges and difficulties. This suggests that the use of EMI in Omani engineering education should be promoted and sustained as it enhances the students’ language competence and enables them to find good jobs in the future in engineering-related industries. However, a considerable number of the participants expressed their concerns about EMI and its impact on their academic achievements and their GPAs. Further evidence comes from several studies, which indicated undesirable effects of EMI on students and their studies, indicating that EMI minimises interactions between faculty and students; reduces the level of comprehension of the content of the course; impedes discussions among students; disadvantages students with low proficiency; and it lowers graduation rates (Byun et al., 2011; Airey & Linders,
In contrast, engineering and EAP teachers believed that EMI had a positive effect on students and their future career regardless of the challenges the EMI presented to EFL/ESL students. This suggests that higher education institutions need to ensure offering appropriate EMI infrastructures and promoting adequate pre-university preparation courses before launching their EMI programmes and degrees. This would enable students to study their disciplinary courses successfully and minimise EMI language-related challenges and difficulties. To run an effective EMI programme, higher education institutions need to meet successful EMI implementation needs, demands and requirements. The dialogue between engineering teachers and EAP teachers should take place before implementing EMI programmes by creating bridges between them to avoid any barriers that might arise in the future.

From the study, several implications and recommendations can be ensured to help improve the content, provision and delivery of EAP courses. They could also assist engineering teachers with the delivery of their content courses in English and their students with their language-related challenges and difficulties. The findings of the present study could also help the designers of EAP/ESP textbooks and materials as well as of teacher training programmes. In this way, the potential negative impact of EMI on students could be reduced. Furthermore, the study recommends that engineering teachers and EAP teachers need to collaborate to promote students’ language proficiency in their engineering classes and to address the negative impact of EMI on students’ academic performance and their studies. Finally, engineering teachers should be trained on pedagogical issues and how to use EMI successfully and purposefully to release the great potential of EMI higher education in Oman.

About the Author:
Holi Ibrahim Holi Ali, Ph.D. is an assistant professor of applied linguistics & TESOL at the Department of English Language & Literature, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Rustaq, Sultanate of Oman. He has a PhD in applied linguistics from the University of Huddersfield, UK. His teaching and research interests include English medium of instruction (EMI) in higher education, language education and literacy, translation studies, theoretical linguistics, applied linguistics and TESOL. He has presented widely and published extensively in peer-reviewed journals. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0608-6146

References


The Syntax of Multiple Determination in Arabic: 
An anti- residual relative clause/close-apposition account

Saleh Jarallah AlQahtani
Department of Linguistics and Translation Studies
College of Languages and Translation
King Saud University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Email: alashry@KSU.EDU.SA

Abstract
This paper aims to give an account of the multiple determination (determiner spreading) phenomenon in Arabic. Determiner spreading is the syntactic representation and phonological realization of multiple determiners within the same determiner phrase. As a cross-linguistic phenomenon, determiner spreading has been investigated in other languages (e.g., Scandinavian and Greek); different accounts have been proposed. For Scandinavian languages, determiner spreading has been analyzed as a representation of different semantic interpretations. As far as Greek is concerned, some analyses have been proposed; however, two prominent ones have received considerable attention in the literature: (i) a residue of a reduced relative clause and (ii) an instantiation of close appositions. Contrary to those analyses, this paper claims that none of the two analyses is suitable for Arabic; thus, a language-specific analysis is required. To analyze determiner spreading in Arabic, the current paper posits the following research question: What is the linguistic purpose of the multiple determiners found in Arabic determiner phrases? Answering the research question, the paper claims that, in addition to its indispensable role in establishing agreement between nouns and adjectives within the Arabic determiner phrase, determiner spreading demarcates syntactic and semantic phrase boundaries. The paper takes Minimalist Program and Distributed Morphology as a theoretical framework to argue that attributive adjectives are projection of an agreement phrase headed by the definite article ʔal or by the indefinite phonological marker ‘numation: -n’. This proposal requires no syntactic movements in the syntax proper. The ultimate linear order is achieved in the phonological components.

Keywords: Arabic, close apposition, demarcation, determiner phrases, determiner spreading, semantics, syntax

Cite as: (2021). The Syntax of Multiple Determination in Arabic: An anti- residual relative clause/close-apposition account Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 325-338 .
DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.22
Introduction

This paper intends to investigate Determiner Spreading (DS) in Arabic Determiner Phrases (DP). DS is the realization/appearance of multiple definite/indefinite determiners within the same phrase. DS is very transparent in Semitic languages. Arabic determiners appear with head nouns and with their modifying postnominal adjectives; see examples (1) & (2) for definiteness ‘ʔal’ and indefiniteness ‘nunation’, (NUN) respectively.

(1) ʔal-kitaab ʔal-ʤadeed
the-book the-new
‘the new book’

(2) kitaabu-n dğadeedu-n
book,NUN new,NUN
‘a new book’

The same phenomenon is found in other languages (e.g., Greek, Hebrew and Swedish). For illustrations, see examples (3), (4) & (5) below.

(3) to vivlio to kokino
the-book the-new
‘the red book’

(4) ha smalot ha yapot
the-dresses the nice
‘the nice dresses’

(5) den ny-a bok-en
the new-weak book-the
‘the new book’

Two different accounts have been proposed to address the DS phenomenon in Greek. These accounts are a) a reduced relative clause account and b) a close apposition account. There are two problematic aspects of these accounts. Greek DS’s analysis is not applicable to DS in Arabic. Second, the Greek attributive adjectives’ distribution differs from the distribution of Arabic adjectives.

Arabic DS has not been investigated in the literature; the current study aims to fill this gap. In other words, the study attempts to answer the research question stated below.

Research question

What is the linguistic purpose of the multiple determiners found in Arabic determiner phrases?

Answering this question will significantly contribute to the field of Arabic linguistics and to the field of theoretical linguistics in general.

The paper's organization proceeds as follows: the second section reviews the previous studies and argues that DS in Arabic cannot be a spell out of reduced relative clauses or close appositions; the third section presents the account and analysis of DS in Arabic, and the last section concludes the paper.
The Syntax of Multiple Determination in Arabic: An anti-residual relative clause  

AlQahtani

Literature review

Alexiadou (2003, 2014), Alexiadou, Haegeman & Stavrou (2007), Kayne (1994) & Stavrou (2012) argue that DS is a residue of a reduced relative clause; this proposal is based on two syntactic issues. Precisely, they claim that non-intersective adjectives are impossible in predicative positions and the unpopularity of Head movement (the head noun moves to a higher position above the adjective) in order to achieve D-N-D-Adj order. The second proposal argues that postnominal adjectives that carry determiners, which in turn show DS, are treated as close appositions (Lekakou & Szendröi, 2007, 2010, 2012). These proposals share a general argument that DS, shown by a single DP, is a spell out of two canonically independent phrases. As far as Arabic is concerned, no investigation has been done to analyze DS in Arabic. Previous studies only approach the structure of DPs from a general syntactic point of view (AlQahtani, 2016; Fassi Fehri, 1993, 1999, 2012; Giusti, 2002). These studies argue that the linear order of Arabic DPs is achieved through N-to-D and XP movements. However, with the emergence of the Distributed-Morphology theory (Embick, 2015; Embick & Marantz, 2008; Embick & Noyer, 2001, 2007; Halle & Marantz, 1993), syntactic movements in the syntax proper, specifically Head movement, may not be required; this is because movement operations can take place in the Phonological Components (PF); (see Embick and Noyer (2001) for movement operations at PF). Focusing on DS in Arabic, the current study argues against the two analyses that have been put forth for Greek and shows that they are syntactically and semantically incompatible with DS in Arabic. This study will not adopt the two analyses introduced above (residue of reduced relative clauses and close appositions) to analyze DS in Arabic. Therefore, a language-based account of DS, in Arabic, is required due to the language-specific parameters. Noticeably, there are apparent differences between Arabic and Greek in terms of the distribution of adjectives within the DP; below, some examples show that DS in Arabic is different from DS in Greek.

Definiteness/indefiniteness

DS in Arabic is attested in both definite and indefinite DPs as respectively shown by (6) & (7). By contrast, DS in Greek is only attested in definite DPs; see (8).

(6) ?al-kitaab  
the-book  
‘the new book’

(7) kitaabu-n 
book-NUN  
‘a new book’

(8) to vivlio  
the-book  
‘the red book’

(Greek)

Alexiadou, 2014, p. 2

Distribution of adjectives

Adjectives in Greek can appear prenominally/postnominally as shown by examples (9) & (10).

(9) to kokino  
the-new  
‘the red book’

(10) to vivlio  
the-book  
‘the red book’

(Greek)
The Syntax of Multiple Determination in Arabic: An anti-residual relative clause

AlQahtani

However, this option is ruled out for Arabic. In other words, Arabic adjectives can appear postnominally (11) but not prenominally (12).

(11) ʔal-kitaab ʔal-ʤadeed
   the-book the-new
   ‘the new book’

(12) *ʔal-ʤadeed ʔal-kitaab
   the-new the-book
   ‘No reading’

Arabic Attributive adjectives cannot precede their modified nouns. The ill-formedness of (12) results from incorrect positioning of the adjective ʔal-ʤadeed 'the new'. By contrast, Greek attributive adjectives can precede their modified nouns, as shown by (9) above. It is important to indicate that Fassi Fehri (1999) argues that Arabic adjectives can be placed prenominally. He built his argument on the following example:

(13) qaqrt?a-u ʤadeed-a ʔal-kutib-i
    I-read new-ACC the-books GEN
    ‘I read the new (of the) books.’

It’s claimed that the adjective ʤadeed-a modifies an elided noun; it does not modify ʔal-kutibi. As can be noted, Φ agreement features are lost. Additionally, the adjective and the noun in this example have been assigned different Case, respectively, Accusative (ACC) and Genitive (GEN); see AlQahtani (2016) for a complete discussion.

Non-intersective adjectives
DS with non-intersective adjectives is permissible in Arabic (14), but not in Greek (16).

(14) ʔal-qaatil ʔal-mazʔoum
    the-killer the-alleged
    ‘the alleged killer’

(15) i ipotithemenit romokrates
    the-alleged terrorist
    ‘the alleged killer’

(16) i ipotithemenit (*i) romokrates
    the-alleged (*the) terrorist
    Intended to read: ‘the alleged killer’

The difference between (15) and (16) resides in the placement of the definite article i ‘the’; the ill-formedness of (16) is a result of DS, which is not permissible to appear with nouns that are modified by non-intersective adjectives.

Construct State (CS)
CS structures can pose a challenging problem to both analyses (reduced relative clauses and close appositions). The adjective ئال-دَجَّاد ال ‘the new’ can, in the absence of Case phonological realization, bind to the head noun kitaab or to the genitive noun ئال-مَدْرِيس as shown by the different readings of example (17) below.

(17) baab ئال-بَجِّيْت ئال-قَدِيم (Arabic)
door the-house the-old

‘the old door of the house’ OR ‘the door of the old house’

(AIQahtani, 2016, p. 135)

Suppose it is assumed that that adjective ئال-دَجَّاد ال ‘the old’ is an instantiation of a residue of a reduced relative clause or an instantiation of a close apposition. In that case, a crucial puzzling question emerges: is it a reduced relative clause that modifies baab or modifies ئال-بَجِّيْت? The same inquiry is problematic for the close apposition argument as well. In other words, is ئال-قَدِيم an appositive for baab or for ئال-بَجِّيْت?

The previous discussion shows considerable differences between Greek and Arabic in terms of the adjective distribution with in the same DP. Based on these differences, the two arguments (reduced relative clauses and close appositions) used for DS in Greek cannot account for DS in Arabic. Therefore, this paper aims to propose a novel analysis for DS in Arabic.

**Arabic versus Greek**

The proposed analyses (reduced relative clauses and close appositions) have their shortcomings that make them incompatible with Arabic. In this section, the paper claims that both views cannot account for DS in Arabic; i.e., the present data cannot be analyzed within the said analysis framework.

**Against reduced relative clauses analysis**

Alexiadou (2014), Alexiadou et al. (2007), Cinque (2010) & Kayne (1994) propose that DS is an instantiation of a reduced relative clause in Greek. They claim that DS is a merge of a DP and a Complementizer Phrase (CP) that has undergone reduction which spells out one DP. They propose the following analysis for the phenomenon in Greek as illustrated by example (18) and tree diagram (19).

(18) to vivlio to kokino (Greek)
the-book the-red

(19)

(Alexiadou, 2014, p. 35)
In her analysis, Alexiadou (2014) proposes that the adjective acts as a conjunctive modifier which is similar to restrictive relative clauses. The order D-N-D-Adj is a result of two different raising movements. First, the adjective moves to the Spec CP, which gives the order D-Adj-D-N. Second, the other movement raises the DP1 ‘the book’ to the Spec DP2. This analysis assumes that the adjective determiner acts like a copula, which takes the noun as a subject and the adjective as a complement, as demonstrated by the tree diagram in (20).

Alexiadou (2014) points out that DS in Hebrew is merely a copy of the modified noun's definiteness features. Analogously speaking, this generalization can be extended to Arabic as a Semitic language. If so, we expect adjectives that modify CS head nouns to bear no determiner, as shown by the following examples:

(21) kitaab ?al-mudrris *?adeed
    book     the-teacher *0-new
    ‘Intended to read: the new book of the teacher’ (Arabic) (AlQahtani, 2016, p. 135)

If we assume that ?adeed 'new' is modifying kitaab 'book' then (21) must be grammatical according to Alexiadou’s generalization on Hebrew; however, it turns out that the generalization is not accurate. This paper contends that DS in Arabic is not just a copying of features; more explanations to come in the account and analysis section.

**Construct State**

The CS structure poses some challenges to the proposal suggested by (Alexiadou, 2014) among others. As a Semitic language, Arabic adjectives that modify CS can have ambiguous referentiality even in the presence of Case and gender markers; see example (22) below.

(22) kutiba ʔala baab-i ʔal-bajit-i ʔal-qadeem-i
    written on door-MSC-GEN the-house-MSC-GEN the-old-MSC-GEN
    ‘It has been written on the old door of the house; or it has been written on the door of the old house.’ (AlQahtani, 2016, p. 135)

Looking at (22), it can be noticed that ʔal-qadeem-i ‘the old’ is referentially ambiguous. It carries genitive Case and masculine (MSC) gender. This makes it very difficult to tell whether it is ‘the old door; or the old house’. For the sake of argument, let’s agree with the reduced relative clause idea wherein we consider ʔal-qadeem-i as a reduced relative clause. Relative clauses referentiality is ambiguous since they can refer to a low or high attachment. Late Closure theory put forth by Frazier and Fodor (1978) predicts that relative clauses tend to select the lower attachment. Experimentally, Bilal (2004) pointed out that Arabic is among the languages that show
a preference to the lower attachment while, on the other hand, Greek shows a high attachment preference. Accordingly, the adjective in (22), ʔal-qadeem-i, a reduced relative clause in Alexiadou’s view, modifies the lower noun (the closest; ʔal-bajit-i) and not the higher one. This is not accurate; ʔal-qadeem-i may modify the higher attachment as well. Consequently, it can be summed up that DS in Arabic cannot be explained within the reduced relative clause proposal.

Against close apposition analysis

The close apposition analysis theorized by Lekakou & Szendröi (2007, 2010, 2012) proposes that DS is akin to close appositives. Their proposal dictates that a DP that shows DS is an appositive phrase, say DP\textsubscript{2} juxtaposed to DP\textsubscript{1} as demonstrated by example (23) and tree diagram (24).

(23) to spiti to petrino
the-house the-stone

(24) (Lekakou & Szendröi, 2012, p. 120)

There are two problematic issues with the current proposal. First, it claims that determiner-bearing adjectives are DPs with elided nouns. If this is correct, the immediate question is how can we analyze DPs that have ‘true’ elided nouns? as illustrated by examples (25), (26) & (27) below.

(25) ʔeyu sajjarati-n ʔiflariet
which car\textsubscript{NUN} buy\textsubscript{PAST-you}
`Which car did you buy?`

Two answers are available:

(26) ʔiflariet-u ʔas-saowdaa
buy\textsubscript{PAST-I} the-black
`I bought the black one.`

(27) ʔiflariet-u ʔas-sajjarat ʔas-saowdaa
buy\textsubscript{PAST-I} the-car the-black
`I bought the black car.`
It can be noticed that example (26) has no phonologically realized noun (i.e., it is elided); however, the clause is still well-formed. This example is a representation of ‘true’ elision. By contrast, example (27) shows no elision. If Lekakou & Szendröi’s (2007, 2010, 2012) argument is extended to (26), two nouns are assumed to be omitted, which may not be the case.

The second problematic issue with the apposition analysis is that adjectives with elided nouns require referential nouns (presupposition); they cannot be informative without knowing the referent which the adjective modifies. The following sentence is not informative without context.

(28) *kasart-u ʔal-ʔazraq
    break,PAST-I the-blue,MSC
    ’Intends to read: I broke the blue one.’

The adjective ʔal-ʔazraq `the blue can be a pen, a glass, anything fragile. For (28) to be semantically valid, the hearer must share the same background information with the reporter, the speaker. Adjectives with elided nouns cannot answer questions that require novel information; consider the following:

(29) maða kasart
    what break,PAST-you
    ’What did you break?’
    *I broke the blue.

The ill-formedness of the declarative clause `I broke the blue’ in (29) results from an elided noun that the hearer has no previous information about. This means that elided nouns cannot be deleted until background information is established between the speaker and the hearer.

On the contrary, appositions are very informative in the absence of the main nouns. In other words, they require no shared background knowledge between the speaker and the hearer; consider the set of examples in (30) for clarifications.

(30) Mr. Biden, the US new president, will visit Canada
    The US new president will visit Canada
    Mr. Biden will visit Canada

The three clauses listed in (30) are semantically equivalent. There is no much difference among them except for someone who has not heard of Biden before. By contrast, the examples (28), (29) & (30) show that there are substantial differences between close appositions and DPs with elided nouns.

**No Prenominal Adjectives in Arabic**

Prenominal adjectives are not productively attested in Arabic. Previous studies cast doubts on the proposals which contend that Arabic prenominal adjectives may exist (AlQahtani, 2016). Fassi Fehri (1999) proposes that Arabic can be classified among the languages that have prenominal adjectives.

(31) ʔakal-tu ladiid-a t-ta’aam-i
    ate-I delicious,ACC the-food,GEN
`I ate the delicious (of the) food.’

(32) ʔaqrʔa-u dʒadeed-a ʔal-kutib-i
I-read new.ACC the-book._GEN
`I read the new (of the) books.’  

(Fassi Fehri, 1999, p. 115)

Looking at (31) & (32), we find that the adjectives ladiida ‘delicious’ and dʒadeed-a ‘new’ precede the nouns. Fassi Fehri (1999) grounds his argument, that Arabic has prenominal adjectives, on the examples above. The loss of Φ features between the noun and the adjective casts doubts on this argument. Notice that, if we reverse the Adjective-noun order of (31) & (32) to noun-adjective (i.e., from pre to postmodifier), the full agreement is established between the noun and the adjective as shown by (33) & (34); this type of agreement is the norm and a salient property of Arabic.

(33) ʔakal-tu t-ʔa’aam-a ʔal-ladiid-a
ate-I the-food.ACC the-delicious.ACC
`I ate the delicious food.’

(34) ʔaqrʔa-u ʔal-kutib-a ʔal-dʒadeed-a
I-read the-books.ACC the-new.ACC
`I read the new (of the) books.’  

(Fassi Fehri, 1999, p. 115)

Fassi Fehri claims that (31)/(32) and (33)/(34) are semantically interchangeable; there is no difference between their interpretations a proposal which may not be accurate since it cannot accommodate the following examples:

(35) qaabalt-u kabeer-a ʔal-ʕaʃirat-i
met-I master-ACC the-tribe._GEN
`I met the master of the tribe.’

(36) *qaabalt-u ʔal-ʕaʃirat-i ʔal-kabeer-a
I-read the-tribe-ACC the-master-ACC
`No reading’

Examples (35) and (36) are not semantically equivalent nor syntactically. The adjective, master, is modifying an elided noun assumed to be I met the person who is the master of his tribe. Based on this argument, it is assumed that Arabic adjectives are postnominal modifiers.

To conclude this section, the proposals, namely the reduced relative clauses and the close appositions suggested for analyzing DS in Greek, cannot be used to analyze DS in Arabic. It also has been argued that Arabic adjectives are postmodifiers, and they cannot be premodifiers as claimed by Fassi Fehri (1999). The next section presents the account and analysis for DS in Arabic.

Account and analysis

The current study proposes that DS in Arabic is a two-fold purpose: (i) it demarcates syntactic and semantic boundaries between DPs and Tense phrases (TP); (ii) it establishes full agreement (Φ features and in/definiteness feature) between the NP and its modifying adjectival phrase (AdjP), which both are encapsulated within the same DP. From a syntactic point of view, the study argues that attributive adjectives are the projection of an agreement phrase headed by the
definite article ʔal or by the indefinite phonological marker -n in the case of an indefinite determiner phrase. The agreement phrase is base generated as a complement of the noun phrase. From a semantic point of view, it is assumed that the definite determiner ʔal acts as a type-shifting operator; this assumption does not apply to the indefinite marker -n, however. The discussion of this section is two-fold: first, it discusses the syntactic demarcation of definite and indefinite determiners ʔal and -n and shows how DS establishes/disestablishes the syntactic relations between adjectives that modify NPs; second, it discusses the semantic demarcation of these two determiners and the role of DS as a type-shifting process.

**Syntactic demarcation**

This section explains how DS affects the syntactic structure of Arabic DPs and TPs. It also illustrates how DS has different distributions in definite and indefinite DPs.

**Definite DPs vs. TPs**

The multiple appearances of the Arabic definite determiner within the same DP delimits the boundaries of this DP. The idea is that the DP that shows DS forms one and only one syntactic object; see the examples below.

(36) ʔal-kitaab ʔal-ʤadeed
      the-book the-new
      ‘the new book’
(37) qarʔa-tu
      read_PAST-I
      ?al-kitaab ?al-ʤadeed
      the-book the-new
      ‘I read the new book.’
(38) qarʔa-tu-hu
      read_PAST-I-it
      ‘I read it.’

It can be noticed that the DP exemplified in (36) is employed in (37) as an object. It occupies one syntactic position, which is the internal argument position. The DP ʔal-kitaab ʔal-ʤadeed forms one syntactic object; thus, it can be replaced by the enclitic pronoun hu ‘it’ as demonstrated by (38). It can be noticed that the example (36) illustrates that full agreement (Φ features and definiteness) is established between the noun ʔal-kitaab and the adjective ʔal-ʤadeed.

**DPs without DS are TPs**

Postnominal adjectives that lack the definite determiner ʔal become syntactically independent from their NPs. They are not anymore part of the entire DP. To illustrate the argument, the DP in (36), which shows DS, is repeated in (39); however, the definite article is removed from the adjective.

(39) ʔal-kitaab ʤadeed
      the-book new
      ‘The book is new.’

Interestingly, the absence of the definite determiner ʔal shifts the DP in (36) into a TP in (39). This shift results in two completely different syntactic structures; the tree diagrams in (40) & (41) represent the syntactic structure for (36) and (39) respectively.
It can be clearly stated that the presence/absence of DS demarcates the DP boundaries from TP boundaries. That is to say, the presence of the definite determiner with the postmodifying adjective delimits the boundaries of the DP as illustrated by (40). By contrast, the absence of the same determiner shifts the DP into a TP in the form of Subject-Predicate construction as schematized in (41). Given the structure in (39) which is the ultimate derivation of (41), it might be well claimed that determiners are type-shift operators.

**Indefinite DS**

Indefinite DPs are akin to definite DPs in terms of the underlying syntactic distribution. However, they differ from each other at the surface order, the phonological representation. This difference is due to the placement of the determiner itself. In the case of definiteness, the definite determiner is prefixed to the noun (enclitic). In the case of indefiniteness, the indefinite marker is suffixed to the noun (proclitic). The difference in the surface order between definite and indefinite DPs requires a special linguistic operation. To be precise, definite DPs' derivation is straightforward and requires no syntactic movements, as illustrated by (40). As far as the indefinite DPs are concerned, more movements are required to derive the correct word order. These movements do not occur in the syntax proper. Instead, they occur post-syntactically at the phonological components.
It can be seen that the surface structure in (42) is different from the underlying syntactic representation; the idea is that the indefinite marker -n precedes the noun in the syntactic tree (43). By contrast, looking at the phonological linear order in (42), the indefinite marker follows the noun. The immediate question is ‘how is the order noun-nun adjective-nun is derived? To answer this question, the study adopts AlQahtani’s (2016) analysis to derive (42). AlQahtani (2016) contends that movement operations at PF, proposed by Embick & Noyer (2001, 2007) and Marantz (1984, 1988), can account for the mismatches between the syntactic hierarchy and phonological form. In other words, the PF movement operation, namely Local Dislocation linearizes the neighboring elements by reversing the adjacent elements' order. Preserving DS in the correct linear order, this movement dislocates nunciation to the left of the noun and its spread copy to the left of the postnominal adjective resulting in the order noun-nun adjective-nun as shown by (42).

**Semantic demarcation**

This section illustrates how the presence/absence of DS in definite DPs affects the semantic distribution of the postmodifiers. By contrast, DS in indefinite DPs does not affect the semantics of the postmodifiers thus, it will not be discussed.

**Attributive vs. predicative adjectives**

Determiners play an essential role in the semantic types of adjectives and their distribution. The following examples show how the presence/absence of determiners, specifically the definite determiners, shifts the adjectives' semantic type.

(44) ʔal-muʕlim ʔal-muʃliʃ
the-teacher the-loyal
`the loyal teacher’

(45) ʔal-muʕlim muʃliʃ
the-teacher loyal
`The teacher is loyal.’

Example (45) illustrates how the absence of the definite determiner from the adjective radically changes the type of the phrase. That is to say, the phrase in (44) is not propositional (i.e., it contains no theme); it is merely a definite DP. On the contrary, example (45) is a proposition; it has an external argument ʔal-muʕlim and a predicate adjective muʃliʃ. Strikingly, the absence of the definite determiner ʔal from the adjective in (44) results in two semantic consequences. First, it shifts the non-propositional phrase (DP) into a propositional phrase (TP). Second, it shifts the attributive adjective muʃliʃ into a predicate one.

**Conclusion**

This paper investigates DS in Arabic. It shows that DS cannot be analyzed within the view of reduced relative clauses or the close apposition view. Answering the research question, *what is the linguistic purpose of the multiple determiners found in Arabic determiner phrases?* it claims that DS has an important role in establishing an agreement between nouns and adjectives within the Arabic determiner phrase. It also demarcates syntactic and semantic phrase boundaries. From a syntactic point of view, it shows that attributive adjectives are the projection of an agreement phrase headed by the definite article ʔal or by the indefinite phonological marker nunciation: ‘n’ in
the case of the indefinite determiner phrase. The agreement phrase is base generated as a complement of the noun phrase. This proposal is very straightforward and economic (i.e., no syntactic movements are required). The ultimate linear order is achieved in the phonological components. In this analysis, no head/phrasal movement is assumed in the syntax proper.

About the Author:
Dr. Saleh Jarallah AlQahtani is an assistant professor of theoretical and experimental linguistics. He specializes in syntax, distributed morphology and experimental syntax. He is affiliated to the Department of Linguistics and Translation Studies/College of Languages and Translation/King Saud University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He teaches MA graduate courses (Syntax, Morphology). He supervises MA students. He earned his Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Ottawa/Canada. ORCid ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2240-2989

Reference
Investigating Saudi EFL Students’ Knowledge and Beliefs Related to English Reading Comprehension

Saud Alenezi
Department of Languages and Translation
Faculty of Education and Arts
Northern Border University, Arar, KSA
Email: Saud.alenezi@nbu.edu.sa

Received: 10/17/2020     Accepted: 2/20/2021     Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract

Reading is an essential strategic and a life-long skill required for success in learning. The current study explores the knowledge and beliefs of Saudi students of English as a foreign language (EFL) about English reading comprehension strategies. It also intends to determine if there is a significant correlation between the students’ foundational knowledge of English reading comprehension strategies and their beliefs about reading comprehension strategies. The study employed a quantitative method. The data were collected using a forty-item survey questionnaire. The respondents were 203 Saudi EFL students enrolled in Preparatory Year Program at Northern Border University in Saudi Arabia. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and a test of non-parametric correlation (Spearman’s rho correlation coefficient) was run to determine the relationship between the variables. The overall findings of the study revealed that the students have a good foundational knowledge of pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading reading strategies. The correlational analysis showed a medium correlation between students’ foundational knowledge of reading strategies and their beliefs about reading strategies. In conclusion, the study suggests some implications for teaching English reading to EFL students.

Keywords: Extensive reading, foundational knowledge, foreign language learning, intensive reading, reading comprehension, reading strategies, Saudi EFL students, students’ beliefs about reading strategies

Cite as: Saud Alenezi, S. (2021). Investigating Saudi EFL Students’ Knowledge and Beliefs Related to English Reading Comprehension. Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 339-356. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.23
Introduction

Language learning strategies are essential aspects in language learning. The foundational knowledge of effective learning strategies helps language learners to become self-managed and self-regulated learners who take responsibility for their education (Habok & Magyar, 2018). Reading is an essential strategic and a life-long skill required to achieve higher academic performances (Shoebottom, 2015). In other words, reading is a substantial skill that contributes to success of learners of foreign language learning. Recent educational trends consider reading as the prerequisite skill required at the beginning of cognitive growth and attaining the necessary skills of language (Alshumaimeri, 2017; Wang, 2017).

Moreover, several studies conducted by researchers about English reading strategies and acquisition in foreign language contents have attempted to look for components that affect students’ reading performances, and teaching methods. Concerning students’ knowledge, some students struggle to read just a few words appropriately, while at the same time, others can read fluently. Students mostly encounter problems while reading, for example, lack of self-study activities, spelling and pronunciation problems, disinterest in collaborative work, and difficulties to apply scanning and skimming reading strategies (Nezami, 2012).

Moreover, the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education has prioritized the teaching of the four basic skills of language (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) at Preparatory Year Program (Mitchell & Alfuraih, 2017). It set a standard English course curriculum in a way that supports a learner-centered approach and peer collaboration. However, Saud EFL students are facing some challenges in adopting to the new standard. Generally speaking, the Arab countries reported some common problems including, poor foundational knowledge, poor reading habits, and students’ attitudes regarding reading in English (Almahrooqi & Denman, 2016). As gaps in the literature, the researcher noticed that, although there are several studies conducted in the foreign language context about the issues of English reading skills, mostly the researchers have focused on measuring reading strategies and the students’ performances in reading comprehension (Al-Qahtani, 2016; Al-Jahwari & Al-Humaidi, 2015; Bakhshalinezhad, Nikou & Bonyadi, 2015; Fitrisia, Tan & Yusuf., 2015; Han & Choi, 2018; Rajab & Al-Sadi, 2015). Few studies have investigated the foundational knowledge and beliefs of teachers about reading strategies (Al Asmari & Javid, 2018). The researcher noticed the need to conduct similar study to investigate the students’ foundational knowledge and their beliefs regarding reading strategies. Henceforth, the current study is an attempt to examine Saudi EFL students’ knowledge and beliefs related to English reading comprehension strategies.

This study is essential as it extends the understanding of reading comprehension from the students’ accounts on their beliefs and perceptions of academic reading and reading strategy usage. Also understanding the students’ knowledge and expectations is a prerequisite to meet language course objectives.

Questions of the Study

1. What are the levels of foundational knowledge of English reading comprehension strategies and beliefs of Saudi EFL students in the Preparatory Year studies at Northern Border University?
2. Is there a significant correlation between Saudi EFL students' foundational knowledge of English reading comprehension strategies and their beliefs about reading comprehension strategies?

**Literature Review**

Major linguistics theorists such as Piaget (1976), Vygotsky (1978), and Chomsky (1986) have considered reading as a process beyond more than just seeing and pronouncing words or attaining the aspects of phonology and semantics. However, reading is not merely decoding the written material of language; instead, it involves how we interact with the whole language through critical thinking, understanding contexts, and meanings (Crossley, Kyle & McNamara, 2016). In the past, there are two main models of teaching reading comprehension, namely, bottom-up and top-up models. The bottom-up model regarded reading development as a text-driven method where merely the text holds the significance irrespective of the reader’s understanding, while the top-down model is a reader-driven procedure with text reading belonging to the eye of the reader. Later the third reading model emerged, which is called an interactive method. According to this model, understanding a text involved diverse reading processes, including the reader, the text and the context (Horiba & Fukaya, 2015). There are two types of communication while reading. First, it refers to the reader’s use of both bottom-up (lower-level) and top-down (higher-level) processes. Second, it denotes the communication between the reader and the text while triggering the readers’ schema and background knowledge (Hudson, 2007).

Okasha (2020) examined the effectiveness of using strategic reading techniques for improving EFL reading skills among Saudi university students. The experimental group used strategic reading techniques, while the control group received traditional class method. Study results showed that Saudi EFL learners need an innovative strategy to help them improve their reading. Therefore, the researcher recommended that teachers should adopt new techniques for providing feedback to EFL learners in reading, such as peer-review, reading conferences, and self-correction.

Taladngoen, Palawatwichai, Estaban, and Phuphawan (2020) explored factors affecting Thai EFL tertiary students’ reading comprehension ability. Study participants were 19 EFL tertiary students majoring in English for International Communication (EIC) in the Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna Phitsanulok. The data were collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings showed the participants’ linguistic knowledge impacted on their reading comprehension ability than their perceptions. On the other hand, their background knowledge of the reading content was the most affecting sub-internal factor, at the same time, their perception of reading difficulty was the least affecting sub-internal factor.

The study by Alenizi (2019) evaluated pre-university educators’ beliefs about reading comprehension in English as a foreign language (EFL) in the framework of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It also recognized the complications confronted by undergraduate students in their reading comprehension courses to have a rounded view of the education progression. The findings revealed that teachers’ reluctance to awareness of teaching strategies causes adverse
effects on the learners. The results also showed that the culture and background knowledge played substantial roles in enhancing students reading comprehension.

The study by Han and Choi (2018) examined Korean EFL middle school students reading performance. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design. The participants of the study were divided into experimental and control groups. Both groups received the same reading materials to read. However, participants in the control group answered comprehension questions only, in contrast, their counterparts in the experimental group received supplemented questions in three forms: literal, inferential, and evaluative. The results revealed a positive effect between post-reading question-generation activities and cooperative learning on English reading abilities. The results also found the experimental group performed better than the control group regarding inferential and evaluative questions. On the other hand, self-learning was more operational than cooperative learning in the evaluative questions.

Haryanto, Mukminin, Habibi, Sulistiyo, and Peni (2016) conducted a qualitative study to explore information about the reading comprehension strategies employed by EFL students. The data was collected using an in-depth semi-structured interview. The study assessed the students’ cognitive and metacognitive strategy under three phases: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. The findings of this study revealed that the participants employed some metacognitive strategies during pre-reading activities, such as: understanding the theme or heading of the text, observing the images, diagrams, maps, and other symbols, and reading the opening sentences. While reading a cognitive strategy was frequently engaged with reading to enhance comprehension and taking notes or highlighting vital material in a text. Further, during post-reading, a cognitive strategy was applied to check or assess comprehension.

Torres (2017) conducted a study to investigate the influence of pre-reading exercises and summaries on EFL students’ reading comprehension. The results showed that the learners can understand the key concepts of the texts. The findings also showed that students have opposing opinions on the effectiveness of both approaches for reading English texts before and after the intervention.

Al Asmari and Javid (2018) investigated the English language teachers’ perception of Saudi EFL students’ reading comprehension and the importance of content schemata in learning. This study explored the practical classroom approaches employed by English language teachers that enable content schemas and can improve the students’ reading comprehension. Study results found students’ reading problems are as result of a lack of suitable instructional materials needed by the students to activate the content schemata.

Rajab and Al-Sadi (2015) investigated the attitudes and preferences of EFL learners regarding personal practices of the reading skill in the first and second language. A ten-item questionnaire was used to gain insights into the attitudes of EFL students towards English reading comprehension. The results showed the participants lack interest and motivation in academic reading, in both the first and second language.

Qrqez and Ab Rashid (2017) investigated the reading comprehension difficulties faced by Jordanian EFL students. A questionnaire was used to collect the data from 200 students at
Yarmouk University. The results of the study showed that the students had positive motivation towards English reading. However, the subjects faced some problems in the reading process, for example, unfamiliar vocabulary, ambiguous words, and limited available time to cognitively process the text.

Shehzad, Lashari, Lashari, and Hasan (2020) conducted a correlational study to find the relationship between Saudi learners’ sources of reading self-efficacy beliefs and reading strategies. The study participants were 188 Saudi EFL learners selected using stratified random sampling from five public universities in Saudi Arabia. A questionnaire instrument consisting of three constructs, sources of reading self-efficacy, reading self-efficacy beliefs, and reading strategies, were used to collect the data. The results showed self-efficacy sources were substantially related to the reading of beliefs in self-efficacy. Reading beliefs in self-efficacy were also strongly associated with metacognitive reading strategies. On the other hand, the result showed that reading self-efficacy beliefs are positively and substantially associated with reading strategy.

Ahmadian and Pasand (2017) investigated the relationship between Iranian EFL students’ usage of reading metacognitive strategy online and their self-efficacy in reading comprehension. The study further examined if there was an effect of gender in that respect. The data were collected from 63 Iranian EFL students using an online survey questionnaire instrument. The Friedman test results showed that online metacognitive reading strategies for problem-solving are most frequently used by learners, whereas support strategies are less regularly used. Furthermore, the results of MANOVA showed a substantial positive relationship between the perceived usage of metacognitive online reading strategies by learners and their self-efficacy in understanding reading. The study further revealed that women use more global strategies for online reading, while men were more self-efficient in reading online texts.

Kim (2016) examined the relationships between Korean undergraduate students’ reading attitude and reading strategy. The data were collected using a questionnaire instrument distributed to 153 Korean undergraduate EFL students. Descriptive analysis and ANOVA were used to analyze the data. The findings revealed that out of the six components used to test students’ reading attitudes, only discomfort was linked to reading skills.

**Methodology**
In this current study, the researcher employed a quantitative approach to collect and analyze the data. According to Creswell and Plano (2012), there are three main designs in conducting quantitative research, experimental, correlational, and survey designs. The current study employs a descriptive survey. A correlation was used to find the relationship between the constructs on the survey.

**Setting and Participants**
The present study was conducted at Northern Border University, Arar, Saudi Arabia. The research respondents were 203 students enrolled in the Preparatory Year Program in the first semester of 2019-2020. Samples consist of male and female students selected using simple random sampling. Table one depicts the students’ gender and age distributions.
Data Collection

Data collection is an essential part of any academic research. The instrument of collecting data is a tool for measuring, observing, or documenting quantitative data. It involves the instrument used to collect the relevant data to provide answers to the research questions. In quantitative data collection, a researcher uses a questionnaire to collect the quantitative data. A survey questionnaire designed by the teacher was the primary source of data collection in this study.

Describing the Survey

This study employed a structured closed-ended questionnaire to collect the data. It contained a part for demographic information which asked about the students’ age and gender, and it was followed by the main sections of the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of forty-item closed-ended questions divided into four sections under four constructs (i.e., pre-reading strategies, while reading strategies, post-reading strategies, and students’ beliefs about English reading strategies). The first three sections (A, B & C) contained 30 questions regarding students’ foundational knowledge of English reading strategies. Section A contained a list of ten items about pre-reading strategies/activities. Section B contained ten items about while-reading strategies/activities. Section C contained ten items about post-reading strategies/activities. Section D contained ten items about students’ beliefs about English reading strategies. This survey questionnaire was designed based on a five-point Likert-type. Moreover, the first thirty items of the questionnaire were rated using frequency as follow: 1 = always, 2 = often, 3 = sometimes, 4 = rarely, and 5 = never. Meanwhile, the last ten (10) items were rated using degree of agreement: 1 = strongly agree (SA), 2 = agree (A), 3 = undecided (U), 4 = disagree (D), and 5 = strongly disagree (SD). The researcher used numerical values (1, 2, 3, 4, & 5) to each item for easy access.

Reliability and Validity of the Survey Questionnaire

The researcher sent the developed survey questionnaire to three lecturers of English linguistics to check the content and construct validity of the survey questionnaire. Also, the questionnaire was pilot tested to check reliability using test/retest reliability with 100 students. A copy of the survey questionnaire was given to the students two times in a two-week interval. The overall internal consistency reliability of this survey questionnaire was (α = .93) (n = 100). This result indicated that the instrument was reliable and ready to be used for data collection.

Table 1. Students’ gender and age distributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender Distribution</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105 (51.7%)</td>
<td>98 (48.3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Distribution</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18 – 21</td>
<td>22 and above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>195 (96%)</td>
<td>8 (4 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Cronbach’s Alpha Results for Reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Sections</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>1st. Reliability (α*)</th>
<th>2nd. Reliability (α*)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Reading Strategies</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>While Reading Strategies</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Reading Strategies</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ Beliefs about English Reading Strategies</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cronbach’s alpha (α)

Table two illustrates the test-retest results obtained based on the four constructs of the survey questionnaire.

**Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics (such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, and percentage) were used to analyze the data collected from the 203 students. A correlational test was further run to check if there was a significant relationship between the students’ foundational knowledge of English reading strategies and their beliefs about reading strategies. All of these analyses run using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25.

**Results**

The study employed descriptive statistics to determine the frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation from the students’ responses based on the four constructs divided into sections, A, B, C, and D, of the survey questionnaire to answer the first research question. What are the levels of foundational knowledge of English reading comprehension strategies and beliefs of Saudi EFL students in the Preparatory Year Studies at Northern Border University?

The results presented in Table three in appendix A show the students’ perceptions of foundational knowledge of pre-reading strategies. The results indicate that the respondents perceived that they have good utilization of pre-reading strategies. Item 10 was the highest-rated under this construct with a very high mean score of 4.43. It shows that 49.26 percent of the respondents are mostly discussing the topic of reading comprehension with their coursemates. It was followed by Items 5, 2, 9, 8, 1, 3, 4, and 7. Item five indicates that 49.26 percent of the respondents, with a very high mean score of 4.24, are making predictions about the possible content of the text in a general way before they start reading. In Item two, 28.08 percent of the respondents with a very high mean score of 4.08 claimed that they often pay attention to the titles and subtitles before reading. Concerning the vocabulary, the result of Item nine shows that 67.99 percent of the respondents with a high mean score of 3.84, are often think about the possible
vocabulary to be found in a given text before they start reading. Item eight indicates a high mean score of 3.77, with 38.92 percent of the respondents claimed that they are familiar with the process of watching videos about the topic of the text to activate schema (in texts accompanied with videos).

Concerning planning before reading, the result of Item one shows that 48.3 percent of the respondents, with a high mean score of 3.58, claimed that they often plan what to do before reading the text. Item three indicates 42.36 percent of the respondents with a mean score of 3.57 are often focus on the words from the title. Subsequently, Items four and six have the same mean score of 3.39 and 36.45 percentage. They indicate that the respondents often engage in brainstorming for the possible topics in the text and predict the text of a given reading comprehension activity. The least-rated was Items seven with a medium mean score of 3.26, whereas 40.39 percent of the respondents perceived that they often predict about the content of the text from the pictures.

Furthermore, the results presented in Table four in Appendix B show students’ perceptions about foundational knowledge of reading comprehension strategies they utilized while reading. The second ten items of the questionnaire asked students about the list of some activities they do or strategies they employ while reading comprehension. The results indicate that rates of the students’ responses about ‘while reading strategies’ in the following order: 17, 20, 18, 15, 13, 19, 11, 14, 12, and 16.

Looking at the mean scores of these ten items under this construct (section B), items 17 and 20 are the highest-rated items. As shown in Table four, Item 17 has a very high mean score of 4.55, and Item 20 has a high mean score of 4.36. Moreover, Item 17 indicates that 61.084 percent of the respondents are always using a dictionary or Google translator to find the meaning of unknown words ‘while reading’. Besides, Item 20 indicates that 46.798 percent of the respondents are always employing scanning strategies to understand the specific idea in the text ‘while reading’. Item 18 has a high mean score of 4.29, which indicates 51.232 percent of the respondents often use knowledge of English grammar to help them in understanding the text ‘while reading’. The next high-rated was Item 15 with a high mean score of 4.19, which shows that 52.709 of the respondents often skip unknown words ‘while reading’ comprehension. It was followed by Item 13, which has a high mean score of 4.09, which indicates that 58.128 of the respondents often use pay attention to the type of text when reading (like narrative, expository, scientific, or reference, etc.). The next was Item 19, which has a high mean score of 4.03, which indicates that most of the respondents (76.847%) often utilize a skimming strategy for them to understand the main idea. Concerning to the topic sentence identification, the result of Item 11 shows that most of the respondents (56.158%), with a high mean score of 3.95, often try to understand the topic sentence in a paragraph ‘while reading’ comprehension. The subsequent high-rated was Item 14 with a high mean score of 4.03, which indicates that 41.379 percent of the respondents often use guessing strategy to understand the meaning of unknown words from the text. The next was Item 12 with a medium mean score of 3.30, which shows that 30.542 of the respondents often pay attention to punctuations while reading comprehension. Item 16 was least-rated with a medium mean score of (2.78) which indicates that 40.394 percent of the respondents claimed that they sometimes stop while reading to check the meaning of unknown words they found in the text.
On the other hand, the results presented in Table five in Appendix C indicate the students’ perceptions about foundational knowledge of post-reading strategies. The third ten items of the questionnaire asked students about the list of some activities they do or strategies they employ in post-reading comprehension. The results indicate the rates of students’ responses about strategies they used while reading in the following order: 27, 24, 21, 23, 28, 29, 22, 25, 26, and 30.

Item 27 was the highest-rated under this construct with a mean score of 4.56, which indicates that most of the respondents (58.620%) discuss the read text with their coursemates. The next high-rated was Item 24, with a high mean score of 4.34, which indicates that 56.650 percent of the respondents perceived to have confidence in answering the reading comprehension questions. Concerning rereading, Item 21 with a high mean score of 4.15 shows that the most of the respondents (55.665%) re-reading the text more than one time to get the main idea of the text.

Regarding evaluating exercise, the result of Item 23, with a high mean score of 3.96, shows that 61.084 percent of the respondents often evaluate their reading plans to check whether they achieve their set reading purposes or not. Besides, this finding shows that about half of the students perceived to have an excellent self-evaluating strategy. The next high-rated item was Item 28 with a high mean score of 3.96, which indicates that 35.961 percent of the respondents often collaborate with others (such as tutors, brothers, sisters, or parents) at home and discuss their reading comprehension activities. The next high-rated item was Item 29 with a high mean score of 3.58, which indicates that most respondents (64.039) often try to understand the text alone without peer collaboration or teachers’ explanation. The next was Item 22, which has a high mean score of 3.57, with 40.394 percent of the respondents perceived that they often make notes for the main points in the text. The next high-rated was Item 25, with a medium mean score of 3.48, which indicates that 38.916 percent of the respondents sometimes summarize the text in one’s own words. Item 26, with a medium mean score of 3.11, indicates that 56.158 percent of the respondents sometimes engage in making inferences from the text to understand the hidden meanings. Item 30 was the least-rated, with a medium mean score of 2.59, which indicates that 34.975 percent of the respondents are sometimes used to read other materials (books, articles, etc.) related to the text to help in understanding the text.

Henceforth, the results in Table six, in Appendix D display the results of students’ general beliefs about reading strategies. The responses of the participants are arranged in the following descending order based on their mean scores (31, 37, 38, 35, 32, 39, 36, 40, 34, and 33).

Item 31 was the highest-rated item with a very high mean score of 4.64, which indicates that the most of the respondents (64.532%) strongly agree that language learning involves culture, so it is crucial to increase Saudi learners’ cultural awareness of English speakers. Moreover, the result reveals that students firmly perceived the importance of selected the relevant reading comprehension texts based on their culture. The next high-rated was Item 37, with a very high mean score of 4.57, which indicates that most of the respondents (61.084%) strongly agree that the focus in English reading classes should be more on the meaning than the rules of grammar.
Regarding intensive reading, the result of Item 38 shows that 54.187 percent of the respondents with a very high mean score of 4.51 strongly agree that students should read intensively. Item 35 shows that 52.709 percent of the respondents, with a mean score of 4.42, firmly believed that English reading classes should emphasize the students' ability to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context. Item 32 and Item 39 have the same mean score of 4.13. Meanwhile, Item 32 indicates that 45.320 percent of the respondents have a quite positive beliefs about extensive reading, and they acknowledged the importance of reading additional relevant materials at home and school. In addition to that, Item 39 shows that 66.995 percent of the respondents agreed that reading additional English materials such as newspapers, magazines, and books in addition to course material is a prerequisite for the students. This finding shows the students’ have a positive belief about extensive reading.

Item 36, with a medium mean score of 3.32, indicates that 53.202 percent of the respondents are undecided about the reading between the lines technique to find hidden meaning from the text successfully. It was followed by Item 40 with a medium mean score of 3.14, which indicates that 38.916 percent of the respondents are undecided about being strategic readers in the English language. It also shows students’ self-efficiency in reading comprehension. The next high-rated was Item 34 with a mean score of 3.12, which shows that 46.798 percent of the respondents are firmly undecided about a belief that students should be given more time for group discussion and students’ activities rather than teacher dominating the class.

The least-rated item under this construct was Item 33 with a medium mean score of 2.94, which indicates that 32.512 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement that says: “Students should read other relevant materials (like magazines, books, articles) to understand the content (extensive reading)”.

**Research Question two**

This section reports and discusses the results obtained from the data analysis for Research Question 2:

Is there a significant correlation between Saudi EFL students' foundational knowledge of English reading comprehension strategies and their beliefs about reading comprehension strategies?

In addition to descriptive statistics, an independent Pearson correlation test was also conducted to examine if there is a significant correlation between the students' foundational knowledge of English reading comprehension and their general beliefs about reading strategies. According to Creswell and Plano (2012), researchers using quantitative studies use correlation to see the relationship or association between research variables. This study utilized Cohen’s (1988) Coefficient $r$, effect size, which postulates a small degree of association between the variables. There is a positive correlation when the value of $r$ is between the ranges of one to three. While it indicates a strong negative correlation when the value of $r$ is between -1.0 and -3.0. It shows a medium degree of association between the variables if the value of $r$ is between the ranges of three to five, which indicates a positive correlation. It postulates that there is a negative correlation when the value of $r$ is between the ranges of three and five. Finally, it reveals a positive correlation when the value of $r$ is between the ranges of .5 to 1.0, while it shows that there is a negative correlation when the value of $r$ is between the ranges of -.5 to -1.0. Due to the
non-normal distribution found in the data, the study proceeds with a non-parametric correlation suggested by Ary, Jacobs, Irvine, and Walker (2018).

**Table 7. Correlation between Saudi EFL students’ foundational knowledge of English reading strategies (SFRST) and the students’ beliefs on reading strategies (SBRS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SFRST</th>
<th>SBRS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SFRST</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>3.382**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SBRS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.382**</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is Significant at 0.01 (2-tailed)**

Table seven shows the value of Spearson’s correlation coefficient between Saudi EFL students’ foundational knowledge of English reading strategies (SFRST) and their beliefs on reading strategies (SBRS). The value of Spearson’s correlation coefficient \( r = .382 \) indicates that there is a medium positive correlation between Saudi EFL students’ foundational knowledge of English reading strategies (SFRST) and their beliefs on reading strategies (SBRS). The \( p \)-value (2-tailed) indicated a significant correlation \( (p = 0.00) \) between these two constructs. Moreover, the medium degree of association between these two variables indicates a positive medium correlation between the students’ knowledge of reading and their beliefs about reading strategies. However, it also shows a need for the students to adjust their attitudes and perceptions towards reading strategies and their foundational knowledge of reading comprehension.

**Discussion**

The overall discussion of the results indicated that the students have a good foundational knowledge in most of the reading strategies of three phases: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading. The study found consistency in the students’ use of collaboration in their foundational reading strategies (pre-reading, while reading, and post-reading). The results also support Horiba and Fukaya’s (2015) study, which found that EFL learners need foundational knowledge of reading strategies to reach the optimal reading comprehension level. In addition to that, Okasha’s (2020) findings of the study showed that the Saudi EFL learners need an innovative strategy to improve their reading. This study recommends that teachers to adopt new techniques of providing feedback to EFL learners, such as peer-review, reading conferences, and self-correction.

In the present study, the participants acknowledged the importance of pre-reading strategies in reading comprehension, and they claimed they are using those strategies in their English reading course. The finding was inconsistent with studies of Haryanto et al. (2016) and Torres (2017). The results show that the students are aware of the importance of using...
background knowledge before reading. Developing background knowledge is one of the significant roles of pre-reading activities/strategies. Brainstorming is also part of activities that utilize background knowledge (Crossley & McNamara, 2016). Like Alenizi (2019) and Han and Choi (2018), the current study elaborated on the significant roles of culture and contextual knowledge in reading comprehension.

In this study, the students are familiar with collaborative learning in both school and home. The finding conformed with Horiba and Fukaya’s (2015) study, which revealed that students’ collaboration is one of the reading techniques that help the students to comprehend the meaning of the text. This result was inconsistent with the Rajab and Al-Sadi’s (2015) study, which found students lack interest and motivation in academic reading.

On the other hand, the results indicated that the students need to improve their reading skills knowledge in some areas of the three phases of reading strategies such as: extensive reading, and reading between the lines. Another area is improving extensive reading strategies which engage in reading other relevant materials to understand the content. Finally, appropriate use of reading strategies is required for students to perform specific language tasks more effectively.

The result has also shown a positive medium correlation between the students’ foundational knowledge of reading, and their beliefs about reading strategies. This finding was consistent with Shehzad, Lashari, Lashari, and Hasan’s (2020) study, which indicated reading self-efficacy beliefs are positively and substantially associated with reading strategies. The finding of this study is closed to studies of Ahmadian and Pasand (2017) and Kim (2016). Ahmadian and Pasand’s (2017) study showed a substantially positive relationship between the perceived usage of metacognitive online reading strategies by learners and their self-efficacy in understanding reading. While, Kim’s (2016) study revealed that metacognitive strategy usage was described as having an important relationship with reading skills concerning the use of reading strategy. On the other hand, the results contrasted Taladngoen et al. (2020) findings which showed that linguistic knowledge impacted on their reading comprehension ability than their perceptions.

Conclusion

In summary, reading comprehension is part of the four basic language skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Saudi Ministry of Higher Education prioritized foundational program made it mandatory for any student before joining a degree programme at universities and colleges. As observed, most of the previous studies conducted in the foreign language contexts about learning English reading and other foundational skills have focused on measuring reading strategies and the students’ performances in reading comprehension.

Therefore, this current descriptive study focuses on the foundational reading knowledge of EFL learners. It described the students’ foundational knowledge of reading strategies (pre-reading strategies, while-reading strategies, and post-reading strategies). It also examined the students’ beliefs about reading strategies. The overall results found students have an excellent foundational knowledge of reading strategies. However, some areas that need to be improved further by the students. Furthermore, the correlational test has shown a significant medium
correlation between the students’ foundational knowledge of reading strategies and their beliefs about reading strategies. This study suggests a need to improve students' knowledge of extensive reading, reading between the lines, and using more of a learner-centered approach to help students become more strategic readers.

**About the Author:**
**Dr. Saud Alenezi** is an assistant professor at NBU. He is teaching English courses at the languages and translation department. His research interests include second language learning, Applied Linguistics, practices in the teaching of foreign languages, Language Assessment, Language motivation. ORCiD: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3848-7363

**References**

Al-Mahrooqi, R., & Denman, C. (2016). Establishing a reading culture in Arabic and English in Oman. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ), 7*(1), 5-17. DOI: 10.24093/awej/vol7no1.1


### Appendix A

#### Table 3. Students’ foundational knowledge of pre-reading strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Planning what to do before reading the text.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>59.1</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Paying attention to the titles and subtitles</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.08</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>28.08</td>
<td>54.68</td>
<td>54.6</td>
<td>14.78</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>0.723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Focusing on the keywords from the title.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11.82</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>11.82</td>
<td>42.36</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>36.95</td>
<td>8.38</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I am brainstorming the possible topics addressed in the text.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16.75</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>16.75</td>
<td>36.45</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>19.70</td>
<td>23.15</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I am making predictions about the possible content of the text in a general way.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>39.41</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>39.41</td>
<td>49.26</td>
<td>49.3</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I am checking if the predictions about the text are correct or not.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20.69</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>20.69</td>
<td>12.81</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>55.17</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Predicting the content from the pictures.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>40.39</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>28.08</td>
<td>17.24</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Watching videos about the topic of the text to activate schema.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.15</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>23.15</td>
<td>38.92</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>30.54</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Thinking about the possible vocabulary that could be encountered in the text.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49.26</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>49.26</td>
<td>44.33</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>6.41</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Talking with other coursemates about</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.612</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of indicator: Very low = 1.00-1.49, Low = 1.50-2.49, Medium = 2.50-3.49, High = 3.50-4.49, Very high= 4.50-5.00

### Appendix B

#### Table 4. Students’ foundational knowledge of “while reading” strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Understanding the topic sentence in a paragraph.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>22.167</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>22.167</td>
<td>56.158</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>16.256</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.791</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Paying attention to punctuations.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.867</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>8.867</td>
<td>38.424</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>30.54</td>
<td>18.227</td>
<td>0.997</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Paying attention to the type of text when reading (like narrative, expository, scientific or reference, etc.)</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>27.094</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>27.094</td>
<td>58.128</td>
<td>58.1</td>
<td>11.823</td>
<td>2.956</td>
<td>0.708</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Guessing the meaning of unknown words from the text.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15.27</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>15.27</td>
<td>41.379</td>
<td>41.379</td>
<td>30.049</td>
<td>11.823</td>
<td>0.938</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>68</th>
<th>107</th>
<th>26</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>4.19</th>
<th>0.685</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Skipping unknown words while reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Stopping to check the meaning of unknown words.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Using dictionary or google translator to find the meaning of unknown words.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Using English Grammar knowledge to help in understanding the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Skim the text quickly to understanding the main idea.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Scan the text to understand the specific idea in the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of indicator: Very low = 1.00-1.49, Low = 1.50-2.49, Medium = 2.50-3.49, High = 3.50-4.49, Very high= 4.50-5.00

### Appendix C

#### Table 5. Students’ foundational knowledge of post-reading strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Re-read the text more than one time if not getting the main idea.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>0.712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Making notes for the main points in the text.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.970</td>
<td>0.979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Evaluate the plan to check whether I achieve my purpose of reading or not.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Giving the correct answer to the reading comprehension questions.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Summarizing the text in one’s own words.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>0.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Making inferences from the text to understand the hidden meaning.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.448</td>
<td>0.878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Discussing with other coursework about the text.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.56</td>
<td>0.554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Discussing the topic with others (such as tutors, brothers,</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Understanding the whole text alone (means that you can read and comprehend a text while reading alone, without peer collaboration or teachers' explanation).</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Reading other materials (books, articles etc.) related to the text to help in understanding the text.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>0.926</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of indicator: Very low = 1.00-1.49, Low = 1.50-2.49, Medium = 2.50-3.49, High = 3.50-4.49, Very high= 4.50-5.00

**Appendix D**

Table 6. **Students’ beliefs about English reading strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Language learning involves culture, so it is important to increase Saudi learners’ cultural awareness of English speakers.</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.64</td>
<td>0.491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Students should read other relevant materials at home/library the class to comprehensive. (Extensive reading).</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Students should read other relevant materials (like magazines, books, articles) to understand the content (extensive reading).</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>0.950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>In English reading classes, students should be given more time for group discussion and students’ activities rather than the</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>English reading classes should emphasize on students' ability to guess meaning of unknown words from the context.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>107</td>
<td>52.709</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>38.424</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.389</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.985</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>I can use reading between the lines technique to find hidden meaning from the text successfully.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.389</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>29.064</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>53.202</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.867</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>In English reading classes the focus should be more on the meaning rather than the rules of grammar.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>124</td>
<td>61.084</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>34.975</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.447</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.494</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Students need to read intensively (intensive reading strategy = reading in detail with a specific purpose to reading tasks).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>110</td>
<td>54.187</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>42.857</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.463</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.494</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>I read other additional English materials such as newspapers, magazines, and books in addition to course material.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23.153</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>66.995</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.852</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>I am a strategic and effective reader in the English language (= I can successfully, use varieties of strategies to understand what I read, before, during and after reading).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8.374</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>28.571</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>38.916</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17.241</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of indicator: Very low = 1.00-1.49, Low = 1.50-2.49, Medium = 2.50-3.49, High = 3.50-4.49, Very high= 4.50-5.00
Utilizing Learners’ Linguistic Landscape as a Pedagogical Resource in the Translation Classroom: A case study in the Sultanate of Oman

Ali Algryani
Department of English Language and Literature,
College of Arts and Applied Sciences,
Dhofar University, Salalah, Oman
& Department of English Language and Translation,
School of Languages, The Libyan Academy, Tripoli, Libya
correspondent Author: aalgryani@du.edu.om

Syerina Syahrin
Department of English Language and Literature,
College of Arts and Applied Sciences,
Dhofar University, Salalah, Oman

Received: 12/30/2020 Accepted: 2/20/202 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
The study investigates learners’ awareness of their linguistic landscape (LL) and perspectives on the use of LL as part of classroom teaching and learning. It also examines the course instructor's pedagogical perspective on the use of LL. The study aims to explore the potential benefits of utilizing bilingual public signage representing translational content to develop translation students' critical literacy, language awareness, and translation skills through reflecting on the use of LL as a teaching and learning material. The study is significant as it addresses the gap in the literature on the use of LL to promote students’ critical literacy, language awareness, and translation skills in the EFL context of Oman. The samples of the study are 58 participants enrolled in undergraduate translation courses at Dhofar University. The data collection methods used in the study consist of focus group discussions, online surveys, and teacher's retrospective reflection. The quantitative data were analyzed by IBM SPSS V26, while the qualitative data were analyzed by common themes that emerged from students' feedback and teacher's reflection. The findings of the study showed positive outcomes on the use of LL as a teaching and learning resource such as improved language awareness, language proficiency, translation skills, creativity, and critical thinking skills. The implication of the study is to draw attention to the existing quality of the learners' LL and invite them to actively and responsibly participate in improving the linguistic landscapes of their local communities.

Keywords: EFL, linguistic landscape, public signage, Sultanate of Oman, translation

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.24
Introduction

Landscape Linguistics as a field of study was introduced by Landery and Bourhis (1997). Generally speaking, the linguistic landscape (LL) of a territory or urban agglomeration is defined as language scripts on public road signs, commercial signs, advertising billboards, and signs on government buildings.

Linguistic landscape, as an object of research, has been studied from a variety of perspectives. For instance, recent studies such as those of Ben-Rafael, Shohamy, Amara & Trumper-Hecht (2006), Gorter (2006, 2013), Backhaus (2007), Shohamy and Gorter (2009), Spolsky (2009), Kasanga (2012) among others, approached linguistic landscape from applied linguistics and sociolinguistics perspectives, paying special attention to language use, policy, identity, ideology and awareness in the public sphere. Furthermore, there have been several attempts to explore LL from an educational perspective (e.g. Shohamy & Waksman 2009; Sayer 2010; Hewitt-Bradshaw 2014; Gorter & Cenoz 2015; Malinowski, 2015; Roos & Nicholas, 2019; Wiśniewska 2020). In such works, LL is seen as “a site of language and literacy learning” (Malinowski, 2015, p. 95) as it can be utilized as an educational tool to help learners develop language awareness, understanding, and communicative competencies (Hewitt-Bradshaw, 2014).

The use of LL as a teaching and learning resource has been described in several studies. Hewitt-Bradshaw (2014), for instance, points out that LL promotes “the social context of language learning and language use, and offers educators many opportunities to create meaningful experiences for learners” (pp. 159-160). Through the use of LL as an educational tool, learners are engaged in literacy activities outside classroom contexts, thus relating their classroom learning experiences to the linguistic practices in their communities of existence (Hewitt-Bradshaw, 2014). This can help learners develop knowledge of text genres, language use, and appropriateness in a given context, etc. Furthermore, LL can also be a useful tool for teaching learners about language awareness via, for instance, classroom activities aiming to explore language contact in students' communities to develop their knowledge of language diversity (Dagenias, Moore, Sabatier, Lamarre & Ahmed, 2009). Finally, as pointed out by Sayer (2010), the use of LL as a resource for teaching develops learners’ awareness of the role of languages used for communication in their communities.

There is a gap in the current literature on the use of LL to promote students' linguistic competence, language awareness, and translation skills in the EFL context of Oman. The current study is an attempt to examine whether the utilization of students’ linguistic landscape can contribute to the enhancement of their language awareness, translation, and literacy skills.

The rationale for investigating the students' language awareness, translation skills, and critical literacy through the use of LL is to provide an additional pedagogical resource in the teaching and learning of language and translation courses. The study is significant as it supports the view that by exposing students to their LL, they are expected to be able to identify and examine closely the relevance and significance of the languages used in their communities. Through the use of LL, the participants of the study were offered the opportunity to maximize the use of real-life language in their local context (Floralde & Valdez, 2017). The participants provided input on the existing translations of their LL, the languages used in their local communities, and its functions through active engagement in critical thinking activities and
classroom discussions. The students aspire to be the agents of change in the future by ensuring that the LL of their environments is well-represented. Critical thinking skills, active communication, and participating in the community for the development of the Sultanate are important aspects of Oman Vision 2040.

The study aims to enhance language awareness, translation skills, and critical literacy among the participants of the study through the use of LL in classroom teaching and learning. Paramount to achieving these aims is an investigation that looks at these specific areas:

1. To determine the participants’ awareness of their linguistic landscape,
2. To document the perspectives of the participants on the use of the LL as part of the classroom teaching and learning,
3. To explore the effectiveness of LL as a teaching and learning resource for translation courses.

The study is framed by the following research questions:

1. How do the participants report their awareness of the linguistic landscape of their community?
2. What are the perspectives of the participants on the use of the linguistic landscape as part of the classroom teaching and learning?
3. How does the course instructor report the outcome of the lesson delivery utilizing LL as a teaching and learning resource?

Literature Review

Numerous studies have investigated the use of the linguistic landscape as a teaching and learning resource. To begin with, in his survey of LL research, Gorter (2017) points out that "the linguistic landscape in an educational context provides a promising way to teach about languages, multilingualism, language awareness, and literacy practices". Wiśniewska (2020) studied the relationship between linguistic landscape, murals, and language learning and found out that "the linguistic landscape provides verbal and visual input for language learning" (p.429). Wiśniewska concluded that the use of linguistic landscape materials and murals provides learners with opportunities to develop their language skills and enhance discussing and thinking about such materials within their socio-cultural contexts, resulting in “combining language learning, content learning, and development of social, political, and art awareness” (p. 441).

Roos and Nicholas (2019) conducted a study on the use of learners’ linguistic landscape (language environments) for EFL learning in German primary schools. The study aimed at finding out how primary school students engage with English texts in their communities. The results of the study showed that the use of LL provides EFL learners with authentic learning materials and “opportunities to learn about the ‘foreign’ language in ways that contribute to their general (language) learning, about their own culture and language as well as about themselves and their (cultural) diversity” (Roos & Nicholas, 2019, p. 108). Moreover, the study reported that students’ reflections about the languages used in their local linguistic landscapes helped them develop an awareness of linguistic diversity in their local communities.

In the same vein, Hewitt-Bradshaw (2014) studied the benefits of utilizing linguistic landscape texts as an educational tool for developing learners' literacy in Caribbean Creole environments. The study shows that the use of public texts in classroom settings not only
develops students' language awareness and communicative competence but also renders the process of language learning more interesting and appealing. Furthermore, the use of learners' LL in teaching activities make students aware of the linguistic characteristics of the LL in their environments and help learners recognize that LL is a space where different players, such as advertisers, politicians, etc, exercise their influence in the society, which results in developing “students’ critical literacy as well as their pragmatic competence” (Hewitt-Bradshaw, 2014, p.172).

A study carried out by Cenoz and Gorter (2008) explored the role of linguistic landscapes as a source of input for second and foreign language acquisition with a special reference to the acquisition of pragmatic competence. The study concluded that language scripts of public signage can serve as authentic input for language learners and can enhance learners’ language awareness. Furthermore, in their study, Cenoz and Gorter (2008) identified five areas of learning as potential pedagogical benefits of exploring and using LL. These are incidental learning, pragmatic competence, multimodal literacy skills, multicompetence, and the symbolic and emotional power of language. It has been reported in other studies that the use of English in the public sphere can express social meanings such as prestige, modernity, and associations with English-speaking cultures (Blommaert, 1996; Backhaus 2007, Torkington, 2009).

Sayer (2010) investigated the use of the linguistic landscape as a pedagogical resource in the EFL classroom in Oaxaca, Mexico. He used public signs to analyze the different social meanings of English. Sayer points out that students can act as investigators through conducting student-led projects exploring their local linguistic landscapes as such a practice helps students make “connections between the content of classroom lessons and the world beyond the classroom walls” (Sayer, 2010, p. 153) and think critically and creatively. It also helps them better understand their sociolinguistic environments, which leads to a better understanding of language awareness, use, and appropriateness. Likewise, Muth (2018) concludes that the use of LL contributes significantly to the development of literacy skills and pragmatic competence. Equally important, Muth (2018) argues that “research in linguistic landscaping opens up the potential to transform students into sociolinguists, critically reflecting on multilingual practices both in school and beyond.” (p. 213).

Rowland (2012) also examined the effectiveness of using the linguistic landscape as a pedagogical resource in EFL contexts. In his study, EFL students were required to take part in a project in which they collected and analyzed English texts displayed on public signs such as advertisements and road signs in Japan. The study concluded that the linguistic landscape can provide EFL students with pedagogical benefits such as the development of symbolic competence as well as literacy skills (Kramsch, 2009; Shohamy & Waksman, 2009). In addition, Dumanig and David (2019) carried a study on the use of shop name signs for teaching purposes in Al Bruaimi region in Oman. The study was based on data obtained from students who were exposed to LL data (shop name signs) and asked to recall the English words and phrases they read and categorize them as function or content words. The study concluded that using LL data can help students develop their knowledge of vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. Finally, in their study of linguistic landscape in which three university students were required to do a LL project, Chestnut, Lee, and Schulte (2013) found out that such LL-based tasks contribute to the development of students’ language abilities and intercultural communicative skills.
For many years, the way language learning is understood was dominated by the view that "learning to read and write is seen as the point of education" (Barton, 1994, p. 176), and thus the skills acquired for school-approved textbooks are emphasized. This view has been challenged since the 1970s with recognition of the importance of language learning outside of school (Lankshear & Knobel, 2011). Barton (1994) pointed out that, “everyday literacy gives a richer view of literacy which demands a new definition of literacy, a new way of thinking about what is involved in reading and writing” (p.5). In a study such as this that exploits linguistic landscape with a group of students, it is essential to take into consideration the students’ awareness and perception of their linguistic landscape. The students’ learning should not be limited to the materials based on their textbooks. Studies that explore the incongruities in the real-life use of English, such as the work of Dumanig and David (2019) are important as they suggest possible ways that the students’ understanding of language and learning issues outside of school may be supported in the classroom.

Studies that investigate out-of-school language learning in the first language (L1) contexts are well documented in the field of literacy as social practice studies, for example, Heath (1981) and Street (1984). On the other hand, studies on out-of-school language learning in the second language (L2) contexts have been overlooked as the emphasis has been given to assist L2 students in their academic achievement relied heavily on the use of textbooks (Yi, 2005). Empirical investigations such as the studies carried out on a Cambodian immigrant (Skilton-Sylvester, 2002), a Chinese immigrant (Lam, 2000), and a group of Korean immigrants (Yi, 2005) found that the participants engaged with meaningful out-of-school language learning activities, echoing some results from L1 out-of-school language learning.

Rubinstein-Avila (2007) reported that her Latino immigrant students participate in L2 activities for three purposes. These were for entertainment, for seeking information, and for practicing English. The choice of language in their out-of-school language learning is crucial to our understanding of how students navigate their everyday literacy practices in bilingual and multilingual contexts. The argument made in this study is, for students to acquire English out-of-school contexts, they need to be presented with the linguistic landscape that aids their learning of the target language and helps them develop translation skills.

Thus, based on the pedagogical benefits of LL for second and foreign language learning stated in the previous studies, the current study investigates the effectiveness of LL as a teaching and learning material for translation classroom to develop students’ language and translation skills as well as critical literacy skills.

**Methodology**

**Context of the Study**

The site of the research is the city of Salalah. The site of the study is an integral part of the findings as it involved images of public signage and participants residing and studying in Salalah. The city of Salalah is the main city located in the governorate of Dhofar in the south of the Sultanate of Oman. Salalah is selected as the context for the study for the following two reasons. First, it is because the LL of this locale has not been studied from pedagogical perspectives. Second, Salalah comprises a large number of expatriate communities of diverse
linguistic, cultural, and economic backgrounds, not to mention the status of the city as a tourist destination in the Gulf region.

With regards to the linguistic situation in this region, it is worthy to note that the indigenous population of Dhofar speaks local languages known as Jibbali and Mehri in addition to Arabic, which is the official language of the country. These local languages, as stated by Rubin (2014), do not have writing traditions, and as a result, they are not displayed in the linguistic landscape of the region.

Since the largest percentage of expatriate labor force such as those from Asian, western and African countries do not speak Arabic, the prevalence of English as a lingua franca and the role of English/Arabic/English translations in the city's linguistic landscape have been significantly increasing in order to maintain linguistic and cultural communication among foreign nationalities. Consequently, given such an ethnically and linguistically diverse population, the city has a huge number of bilingual public signs on which its linguistically diverse landscape is displayed.

Participants

The research samples consisted of 58 undergraduate students at Dhofar University, a higher learning institution in Oman. The type of sampling used in the study is a systematic sampling. The sampling criteria of the participants are: a) field of study, b) completion of at least two introductory translation courses and c) active enrolment in study programs. The participants are enrolled in two different programs of study, namely Bachelor in English Language and Bachelor in Translation Studies. All students who participated in the study have completed at least two introductory translation courses. By the completion of these courses, students are expected to be familiar with key concepts in translation theory, linguistic and extra-linguistic issues in translation and to have practiced translation from English into Arabic and vice versa.

Data Collection Procedures

The study aims to explore the pedagogical benefits of LL through the experiences of a group of students as part of the classroom teaching and learning. Paramount to achieving this aim is a research design that enables the students to engage with LL materials as part of the classroom discussion and to seek their perspectives on the use of LL through reflection activities. The reflection activities included focus group discussions and an online survey.

The course instructor presented the students with images of their LL and elicited information from the students through online classroom discussions. This involved four 50-minute online sessions. All of the students enrolled in the particular translation courses engaged in the LL discussions because it is part of the students' course work. The students were invited to participate in an online focus group discussion after the lessons. An online survey comprised the Linkert scale, close-ended and open-ended questions were shared with the students. 80.2% of the overall students in the courses responded to the online survey.

The students' responses from the online survey were analyzed using IBM SPSS V26 software. The data gathered from the online survey generated information on their awareness of LL, perception on the use of LL in the classroom, and the students' perception of the errors in
their LL. The survey included open-ended questions which sought an in-depth understanding of the participants' view of their LL. The students' open-ended responses were viewed closely for broad domains of analysis. A micro-level coding system was applied to tag units of data to organize and reorganize them to allow interpretation of the material.

Findings

**Finding one: Participants’ awareness of their linguistic landscape**

The findings of the participants' awareness of their linguistic landscape were gathered from 58 participants (n = 58). Out of the 58 participants, 31% of the students responded that they were not aware of the errors in the translation of their linguistic landscape prior to the lesson. In a focus group discussion, the students revealed that they assumed the translation of their linguistic landscape was appropriate. The participants were tested to recall the errors of the images of the linguistic landscape that were discussed in the classroom. 82.7% of the respondents were able to recall and explain the translation errors. To test if there is an association between the students' reported awareness of their linguistic landscape and their perceived enjoyment of LL, T-test is applied.

Table 1. Summary of the participants’ perceived enjoyment and increased awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived increased awareness</th>
<th>Perceived enjoyment of LL</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>.699</td>
<td>.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>.707</td>
<td>.316</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Independent samples T-test between the perceived enjoyment and increased awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived increased awareness</th>
<th>Equal variances assumed</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>Std. Error Difference</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived increased awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances assumed</td>
<td>2.031</td>
<td>.160</td>
<td>.406</td>
<td>.164</td>
<td>.462</td>
<td>.328</td>
<td>-.195</td>
<td>1.118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>.224</td>
<td>.331</td>
<td>-.400</td>
<td>1.323</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The p-value in Table two is $< 0.5$ which indicates that there is a correlation between the students who enjoyed the lesson utilizing LL and their increased awareness of their LL.

The students’ feedback from open-ended questions of the online survey revealed that their increased awareness of their linguistic landscape is one of the positive outcomes of the lesson. The following are excerpts taken from the feedback.

1. “I liked studying signs a lot, because I became more attentive to signs than before and increased my vocabulary, and it is fun to correct signs and correct mistakes as an educational game” (S2)
2. “The most thing I like it is I know now what is wrong translation of public signage so I can now distinguish the wrong and the right translation” (S51).
3. “It was so helpful and the same time funny to see the mistakes in translation because I did not pay attention to such things before. After this session, I am sure that I will assess the signs more and I will see which type of translation is used” (S9).

In addition to the findings above, 91% of the respondents of the study reported that they would actively look around their LL for errors after the particular lessons.

**Finding two: The perspectives of the participants on the use of linguistic landscape as part of the classroom instruction**

The students’ perspectives of the use of LL as part of the classroom instruction were gathered from 58 respondents. The students’ feedback was gathered from open-ended questions of the online survey. The responses were viewed closely to identify a suitable frame for analysis. The broad domains that were derived from the questions were coded as follows: bridging theory and practice, improved language learning skills, and participation in the community. Each of these is described in turns.

**Bridging Theory and Practice**

All of the participants enjoyed the lessons utilizing LL as part of the classroom instruction, of which 98.2% reported that the use of LL as part of the classroom instruction aided their understanding of the translation theories. The following are excerpts from the feedback the students wrote.

1. "I believe that this lesson is one of the most beautiful and useful lessons that we have gone through, because it allowed us to apply what we have learned and to relate translation theories to the environment around us" (S23).
2. “We get to see examples from real life of what we learned theoretically, so it made it obvious and easy for us to grasp the concepts” (S11).
3. “I have learned to apply what I have studied in theoretical lessons in the real life” (S17).

**Improved Language Learning Skills**

The ability to identify the translation errors in the linguistic landscape requires the understanding of the source text and the formulating of the target text. It also requires proficiency in understanding the language aspects of both languages. In the context of this study, the languages involved are Arabic and English. The cultural nuances of the two languages are influenced by other languages as described in the Methodology section. The participants of the study attributed improved English language skills and the ability to apply translation theories into real-life language use. To test if there is an association between the students’ application of
theories and their perception of their improved language learning skills, the Pearson Correlation test is applied.

Table 3. Correlation between students’ ability to apply translation theories and improved language skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application of theories</th>
<th>Perceived improved language skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application of theories</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived improved language skills</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The p-value is < 0.5 which indicates that there is a correlation between the students’ perceived ability to apply theories of translation and their perceived improved language skills.

The responses to the open-ended questions of the survey revealed similar findings. The following are the excerpts of the responses.

1. “I like that I learn grammar and vocabulary also we can assist translation .and I like that know I can correct the translation” (S3)
2. “I learned more words” (S49)
3. “I learned the appropriate use of the language and how to avoid the linguistic mistakes” (S30).

The following are the excerpts of the responses.

In addition to the above, 55 respondents preferred learning English through real-life language use, such as LL as part of classroom instruction. 96.5% of the respondents found the lesson engaging as it motivated them to participate in the classroom discussions.

Participation in the Community

The domain of Participation in the Community is derived from Oman National Education Strategy for 2040. The students’ responses for this domain are divided into the following sub-categories: being critical of their own community and empowering students as agents of change.

Being Critical of their Community

87.9% of the students find that inaccurate translation of LL gives a negative image of Salalah to people visiting the city. The students responded in the open-ended question as follows:

1. “In my view, it is important because it will reflect the extent of the development of the city and the learning of its inhabitants” (S9)
2. “It reflects the image of local people, so foreigners might think that local people are not educated enough” (S7).
Empowering Students as Agents of Change

84.4% of the respondents reported that the awareness of LL made through the lessons motivated them to be the agents of change. In a focus-group discussion, the students commented that they are motivated to engage with the Dhofar Municipal Council and business Registration Office in the future to ensure that their LL is represented accurately.

Finding three: The course instructor’s reflection on the lesson delivery utilizing LL as a teaching and learning resource

As an instructor of translation courses, the researcher often uses a variety of teaching materials such as newspaper articles, short stories, business, legal and technical texts to allow students to practice translation and develop their language and translation skills. However, having noticed that translation students' exposure and practice outside classrooms are limited as the resources and materials available for them are often textbook-based, and thus can be not very related to learners' environment, culture, and experience, the researcher explored the potential of utilizing language texts publically displayed in the students’ community as a teaching and learning resource to enhance students’ literacy development as well as their language and translation skills.

Bearing in mind that learning can take place outside classroom settings (Sayer, 2010) and that such a learning environment can contribute to the development of learners’ language awareness, critical thinking, pragmatic and symbolic competence, etc (Wiśniewska, 2020; Gorter & Cenoz 2015; Rowland 2012; Sayer 2010), the researcher conducted four 50-minute sessions online using monolingual and bilingual (translated) public signs as a pedagogical tool to enhance learners’ language awareness and help them apply the translation theories they studied to translations of public signs in their local communities. The sessions aimed to connect students to the linguistic realities and translation practices they encounter outside the classroom and determine to what extent such a practice can be pedagogically beneficial. It is worth noting that the use of public signage translations as a resource in language and translation classrooms is underutilized; based on my observation as well as students' responses to the questionnaire, teachers seem not to make use of such a resource to promote students' language, translation and literacy skills.

The classroom discussions are framed with the following “grand-tour” (Spradley, 1979, p. 79) questions: what languages are used in your community? Why is English used on public signs? Why are most of the public signs translated into English? Are the translations of public signage appropriate, informative and communicative? Such questions aimed to creatively and critically engage students with the texts on the signs by presenting and defending their interpretations of the texts on the signs. Based on the discussion and analysis of scripts on monolingual and bilingual public signs, some findings have been reached. The findings are presented below as themes derived from the instructor's observations made during the classroom discussions.

Awareness of Language Use and Function

Through the discussion and analysis of LL texts in class with respect to language function and use in the locale understudy, students learned more about the languages that are relevant and used in their social context, taking into account the fact that there exist several languages spoken...
in the Dhofar region. Students learnt about the social functions of language; for instance, they stated that some public signs are mainly used to convey information to non-Arabic speakers such as tourists, visitors, or expatriate audience, showing the use of English as a lingua franca; others, such as advertisements, are used to attract people to services and products.

Enhancement of Translation, Critical Thinking & Creativity Skills

The use of bilingual public signs (signs with translational content) provides students with an opportunity to put into practice the translation theories they studied in class through discussing, assessing, and commenting on existing public signage translations. Furthermore, the use of LL material for teaching and learning purposes renders the learning process more exciting and motivating, which encourages learners to engage more actively and creatively with language texts. Most students were engaged in discussions on public signs by presenting and defending their ideas regarding issues such as their assessment of public signage translations and how to improve the quality of existing translations, which eventually helps in the development of students' critical and analytical skills.

Enhancement of Foreign Language Proficiency

The use of LL gave learners the opportunity to identify language inaccuracies, which contributes to the enhancement of their foreign language proficiency. It also makes them aware of the linguistic features of their local linguistic landscape. During the sessions, students, for instance, noticed and identified a number of grammatical and lexical inaccuracies while analyzing LL texts in class, and they commented on how such inaccuracies affect the meaning and perception of the text by the target audience.

Empowerment of Students’ Role in the Community

During the lessons, the students developed an awareness of both the importance of the linguistic landscape and the quality of their community linguistic landscape. Having been aware now that the linguistic landscape of a locale can give a positive or negative view, students expressed their willingness to actively take part in any attempt aiming to improve the quality of the linguistic landscape in their local communities. Given that the participants are expected to work as teachers, translators, and/or language editors or proof-readers, they are aware now of the current situation of their community LL and what should be done to improve its quality and present it more appropriately. In this respect, most students expressed an interest in raising awareness among their fellow students, family members, relatives, and friends about the importance of linguistic landscape not only as a medium of communication but also as a learning space and a space of linguistic diversity that can reflect an image on the community.

Discussion of the Findings

The study focused relatively on a small sample of undergraduate students at Dhofar University in Oman (n = 58). All of the participants are able to effectively communicate in Arabic and English. A large percentage of the participants are also able to communicate in the local languages spoken in the Dhofar region, i.e. Jibbali and Mehri.

The LL data used as a teaching and learning resource for the study consisted of a corpus of 20 digital photos of public signs. Methodologically, as pointed out by Hult (2009), linguistic landscape data analysis relies mainly upon photography and visual analysis. Thus, in line with
previous LL studies, e.g. Sayer (2010), Cenoz and Gorter (2008), Backhaus (2007), and Ben-Rafael et al., (2006), digital photography was used as a data collection method to compile a corpus of 20 digital photos of non-official public signs of commercial nature, including signs on shops, cafes, restaurants, and other commercial places. The photos of public signs were taken and documented in fieldwork visits to different parts of Salalah city in June and July of 2020.

The majority of the respondents reported increased awareness of their LL through classroom discussions. A small percentage of the students (31%) were not aware of the translation errors in their LL before the lesson and accepted the translation as accurate. The false impression of the language in their LL may negatively impact the students' understanding of the target language use, in the case of this study, English. The students' increased awareness of their LL echoes the findings of Cenoz’ and Gorter’s study (2008) and that of Gorter (2017) that uncovered the relationship between the learners’ exposure to the language scripts of public signage and their language awareness. The data of the students’ enjoyment of the lesson, preferred authentic real-life language use and their ability to recall translation errors as reported in this study serves for the consideration of language and translation teachers to utilize LL as part of their classroom instruction. These findings were also reflected in the previous research such as the works of Sayer (2010) and Hewitt-Bradshaw (2014).

The findings of the study also revealed that the students perceived the use of LL as part of the classroom discussion positively. The responses from the students and the reflection of the course instructor revealed that by utilizing LL in the classroom, the students were encouraged to actively participate in the classroom discussions. The majority of the participants (98.2%) reported that the use of LL as part of the classroom discussion aided their understanding of translation theories. The study also showed high enjoyment of the lessons and a positive correlation (p. < 0.5) between the students' perceived ability to understand the translation theories and improved language skills. These two skills are crucial for the students' careers as translators and language instructors. Hewitt-Bradshaw's (2014) study on LL observed similar results. The study concluded that the use of public texts in the classroom offered strengths in three areas, namely: language awareness, communicative competence, and process of language learning more interesting and appealing. One of the crucial findings of the study is the motivation of the students to engage with their local community in the future. The awareness of their LL, and the discussion they had with their course instructor and peers motivated the students to actively look around for LL errors, engage with the Municipal Council and business registration offices in the future to ensure their LL is accurate and well-represented. The students' motivation to be critical and to actively participate in the development of the Sultanate is an important aspect outlined in Oman National Education Strategy 2040.

In addition, the study showed that students developed an awareness of language use and function in society (Gorter, 2017). They, for instance, recognized that in their community English is used as a lingua franca to serve as a means of intercultural communication among expatriate communities. The students also noticed that some signs, especially those displaying national flags and universal landmarks considered as cultural icons, as shown in Figure one, are used to express social meanings (Sayer, 2010), such as prestige, modernity, and associations with foreign cultures as English, French and Italian, etc (Blommaert, 1996; Backhaus 2007, Torkington, 2009).
Thus, it can be concluded that the use of LL materials can encourage students to look critically at the scripts displayed in their LL communities questioning how and why individuals use language differently in accordance with different social contexts and purposes (Shohamy & Waksman 2009; Sayer, 2010; Muth, 2018). Furthermore, the use of LL as a learning resource showed that it contributes to the development of learners’ foreign language knowledge and awareness as this helps learners gain a better understanding of the social, cultural, and economic values associated with the use of English, for instance, as a global language in their local community (Sayer, 2010; Rowland, 2012; Gorter, 2017; Wiśniewska, 2020).

The study showed that the discussion of public signage translations encouraged the students to engage more critically and creatively with the existing translations of their LL and gave them the opportunity to assess their quality and propose more adequate translations. The students, for instance, considered the translations in Figure two inaccurate due to the improper use of omission as a translation strategy. They noticed that the non-translation of the lexical items ‘تأجير’ and ‘الإنجليزية’ in Signs one and two respectively distorted the source text meaning and gave rise to meanings different from those intended in the source texts. The students stated that it is not clear from the English translation in Sign one whether the store provides sale, rental, or fixing services to customers. Likewise, the omission (non-translation) of the word ‘الإنجليزية’ in Sign 2 creates ambiguity because, as the students reported, it is not clear for non-Arabic speakers what languages are taught at the institute.

More importantly, as a pedagogical benefit of discussing public signage translations, creativity was attested as students proposed translations they considered more appropriate, informative, and communicative based on their diagnosis of the context and the background of the target text audience. For instance, they proposed ‘Rental of Land Transportation Vehicles’ and ‘Car Rentals’ as translations for the text in Sign one, and ‘Bethel Institute for English Language and Computer Studies’ as an appropriate rendering for the text in Sign two. Thus, it is concluded that such a LL discussion activity promotes the development of translation knowledge and skills as it provides learners with the opportunity of connecting what they learn in class to language texts.
displayed in their community. Equally important, it encourages them to be critical in the sense that they question translated texts on public signs they encounter outside the classroom, contributing to the enhancement of their incidental learning, i.e. “learning without the intent to do so” (Cenoz & Gorter, 2008, p. 272).

Conclusion

The research has examined the utilization of students' linguistic landscape for the enhancement of learners’ language awareness, translation, and literacy skills. The study revealed three major findings. First, through the use of LL as a pedagogical resource in the classroom, the students have become more aware of their own linguistic landscape. Second, the students perceived the use of LL in the classroom positively and attributed it to their improved language skills and ability to draw links between translation theories and practice. The students also reported that the use of LL as part of the classroom learning enabled them to participate in their own communities by being critical of the public signage in their environments, empowering them to be the agents of change in the future. Lastly, the course instructor's reflection showed that the use of LL provided the students with the opportunity to develop their creativity, critical thinking, and literacy skills.

Although the study focused on a small sample of students, it has important pedagogical implications. The technique of utilizing LL scripts that the participants are familiar with motivated them to actively and creatively engage in classroom discussions. The statistical findings and feedback received from the participants on the use of LL as a teaching and learning resource showed positive outcomes such as enhancement of language and literacy skills. Furthermore, the course instructor uncovered the effectiveness of LL for the development of students’ creativity and critical thinking skills, which are crucial skills in the 21st century. The implication of the study is not only to draw attention to the usefulness of LL as a learning space and the quality of the participants’ local LL, but also to invite learners to actively take part in improving the quality of their communities’ linguistic landscapes, given that they are the prospective language specialists and translators who are expected to provide language and translation services for private and government sectors.

Endnotes

1Jibbali and Mehri are Semitic Modern South Arabian languages. See Rubin (2014) for further information on Modern South Arabian languages.

About the authors

Ali Algryani is an assistant professor of Linguistics and Translation Studies at Dhofar University, Oman, and The Libyan Academy, Tripoli, Libya. He received his PhD from Newcastle University School of English Literature, Language & Linguistics. His research interests are comparative syntax, translation studies, sociolinguistics and second and foreign language pedagogy. ORCid ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2806-6680

Syerina Syahrin is a faculty member of Dhofar University. She was the recipient of Victoria Award of Excellence, New Zealand, Erasmus+ Mobility, and was a visiting academician in Thailand. Syerina’s research interests include teaching linguistically diverse students, inclusive
pedagogy, and internationalization of education. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9214-759X

References


Teachers’ Perceptions of Customizing Students’ Learning through Differentiated Instruction at a Tertiary level

Munira Said Al Siyabi
Department of English Language and Literature
University of Technology and Applied Sciences
Rustaq, Oman
Correspondent Author: DalalAl-Shekaili.rus@cas.edu.om

Dalal Abdullah Al Shekaili
Department of English Language and Literature
University of Technology and Applied Sciences
Rustaq, Oman

Received: 11/4/2020 Accepted: 3/5/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
Traditional ways of teaching were challenged by differentiated instruction which aims to embrace students’ variance. Teachers are expected to maximize the learning opportunities by meeting the diverse needs of their learners. English teachers in Omani schools are trained and instructed to modify the content to meet students’ different levels; however, teachers in higher education institutions are given more freedom in planning and conducting their classes. This research investigated teachers’ perceptions of differentiated instruction which is customised to meet the diversity of learning needs and interests of English as foreign language students in the University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Rustaq (UTAS-Rustaq). The study also sought to identify practices teachers follow to implement differentiated instruction. An exploratory, descriptive analysis and a survey were employed to obtain the necessary data, which indicated that teachers are aware of differentiating instruction and the related practices. Teachers also showed a good understanding of the type of knowledge needed to obtain before implementing differentiation and the assessment tools to attain them. However, the results also indicate an essential need for structural support, professional development, to meet the challenges identified by teachers to maintain the continuity of these practices.

Keywords: Content, differentiated instruction, process, product, teachers’ perception

Cite as: Al Siyabi, M. S., & Al Shekaili, D. A. (2021). Teachers’ Perceptions of Customizing Students’ Learning through Differentiated Instruction at a Tertiary level. Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 74-387. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.25
Introduction

As current classrooms are challenged with diversity in students’ backgrounds and learning needs, the teaching boards are working hard to accommodate students’ learning needs. Contemporary educational trends, as a result, are shifting focus from a one-size-fits-all design to a more personalized learning approach (Fox & Hoffman, 2011). Teachers are constantly encouraged to pay attention to individual differences in their students. However, few teachers are aware of tailoring a lesson that respects students’ diversity and responds to their various needs. Differentiation is a concept that has been found to effectively address all students’ needs and assist them in achieving course objectives at their own pace. It empowers all students to invest their varying potential to attain class standards. Differentiation also refers to a teacher’s proactive response to learner needs (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). The main principle of differentiation is that all students should achieve the same objectives. Thus, standardisation can be aligned with differentiation (McTighe & Brown, 2010).

This study aims to investigate teachers’ perceptions of differentiated instruction in the Department of English Language and Literature (ELL) in UTAS-Rustaq. It also seeks to examine teachers’ awareness of the principles needed to maintain efficient implementation of differentiated instruction practice in their classes. ELL is running English teacher preparation program which is committed to prepare its prospective teachers to meet the standards of the Omani schools’ system. ELL offers a Differentiated Learning and Independent Learning course to its fourth-year students to ensure a good comprehension of the concept. However, the current study investigates if the instructors in the department are adopting the principles of differentiation. The implementation of differentiated instruction by the instructors will not only assist them to meet their students’ needs but it will provide an excellent example for the prospective teachers. In light of the essential need for differentiated instruction as discussed and the decisions that must be made to pave the way for differentiation, the following research questions guided this research:

1) What are English teachers’ perceptions of implementing differentiated instruction?
2) What procedures are followed to implement differentiated instruction?

Literature Review

Differentiation as a term is interconnected to different classroom elements, and among them is instruction. Biggs (1999) defined instruction as “a construction site on which students build on what they already know” (as cited in Moon, 2005, p. 227). Teachers should ensure that new learning is taking place and provide support whenever needed. Tomlinson and Moon (2013) mentioned that ‘instruction is at the core of differentiation’ since the primary goal of differentiation is to give each student the best learning experience. Furthermore, Levy (2008) identified differentiated instruction as ways or strategies that help teachers to reach students at their current levels and help them advance from there. Levy (2008) also added that concerning student’s readiness, interests, and learning profiles, differentiated instruction should aim to provide “flexibility in content, process, and product” (p. 162). Thus, teachers must make multiple decisions, including what to teach, how to teach it, and how to assess what is taught (Campbell, 2009). Corley (2005) declared that “the cornerstone of differentiation is active planning” (p.13). Appropriate assessment can be helpful for gathering essential and adequate information that enable teachers to make decisions on the proper content to teach and to inform the teaching process.
Content is a component of instruction that can be differentiated to suit all students’ current levels. Tomlinson and Moon (2013) referred to content as the knowledge and skills to which students need access. In a standardized system, teachers adhere to the course textbooks, which increase the difficulty of attending to students’ individual needs. However, teachers may adjust the degree of complexity to suit the diverse needs of students (Hall, Strangman & Meyer, 2003). In addition to adjusting content, teachers should have the authority to eliminate sections of the book from the course content if students cannot cope with that content. However, teachers should be careful that such elimination will not hinder students’ ability to achieve the course objectives since they must pass the same examinations or meet the same standards (Levy, 2008). On the other hand, some students may be fast learners and may accomplish the objectives ahead of time. Teachers can provide these students with supplementary materials to make time to work with the other students.

The teaching and learning process reflects how teachers teach the subject and how students learn it. It involves the implementation of various activities to deliver and practice the presented content. Levy (2008) mentioned that teachers cannot follow one method for teaching all students since they all learn in different ways. Teachers should always vary the learning activities provided to students to meet the broad range of readiness, interests, and learning profiles in their classrooms. Teachers can implement flexible grouping based on previously determined criteria to distribute different prepared activities appropriate for the diverse groups (Corley, 2005). Hall et al. (2003) stated that grouping must be a dynamic process, changing with the content, projects, and ongoing evaluations. Such flexible grouping will encourage diversity in the classroom and build good relations among students, too. Moreover, teachers’ use of formative assessment or ongoing evaluation to check students’ progress may enable them to vary the content and process based on the results.

Product is the third component of instruction that can be easily differentiated to demonstrate students’ accomplishments and potential. It reflects what content and skills students have learned via pre-assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments (Hall et al., 2003). The results of pre-assessments support the process of differentiating instruction and assist teachers in making decisions regarding instruction pacing, revision time, flexible grouping, and other components of differentiated instruction. Pre-assessment results also enable teachers to choose the appropriate level of challenge to sustain learning. Formative assessments provide teachers with information and feedback for planning future instruction that students can manipulate to boost their progress (Dodge, 2009). Summative assessments show how successful students were in learning what was taught or achieving the course learning outcomes. Summative assessments can vary from standard exams to projects or presentations, and they may be different from one student to another (Tomlinson & Moon, 2013). Tomlinson (2000) pointed out that differentiating products can occur at the level of rubrics or grouping. Tomlinson and Allan (2000) stated that a good product encourages students to reflect on what they have learned and to get “involved in critical and creative thinking” (p. 5). Project-Based Learning (PBL) is one of the methods that respects and responds to students’ diverse needs. It focuses on “engaging students in an investigation” (Blumenfeld et al., 1991, p. 371). This teaching method develops responsibility among students since they are in charge of creating their questions and designing the tasks required to solve them. Blumenfeld et al. (1991) also mentioned that PBL sets students
in a real context where they need to solve a problem, which, in turn, enables them to acquire a better understanding of the underlying concepts and improve their critical thinking skills.

As previously noted, to maximize the potential benefits of differentiated content, process, and product, teachers should cater to learners’ diversity in terms of readiness, interests, and learning styles. Studies have shown that students are successful if instruction is responsive to these criteria (Corley, 2005). Readiness, which is a cornerstone of efficient learning, is linked to the ‘zone of proximal development’ proposed by Vygotsky (1978, 1986). It suggests that learners learn better when introduced to a moderate challenge. However, designing one task for varying levels of readiness fails to facilitate learning for many students whose readiness level is beyond or below the level required for the task. In short, tasks must be at the appropriate level of difficulty to maintain their motivating force for different students (National Research Council, 1996).

Just as readiness must be considered to promote better academic performance, so, too, must interest be taken into account. Modifying instruction to meet the interests of individual students positively affects their learning progress (Renninger, 1998). Amabile (1996) claimed that providing students with a chance to do something they like improves their learning attitude.

Responding to students’ different learning styles is equally beneficial. Learning styles refer to individual preferences within specific categories, such as emotions, interactions and environment (Dunn & Griggs, 1998).

Thus, differentiated instruction is a response to the academic diversity that teachers must consider in order to ensure an effective learning experience for each individual student (Tomlinson et al., 2003). Differentiated instruction invites creativity and respects the diversity of individuals (Strassman, 2005). It makes the teaching and learning process more rewarding for both teacher and student. Teachers will not have a negative attitude about the apparent differences in students’ abilities because they approach the class prepared with a strategic plan to respond to the students’ diversity.

However, despite the great deal of literature on the vital role played by differentiated instruction, very little is known about teachers’ views in the Omani context. This paper aims at addressing teachers’ perceptions of differentiation and their current practices to implement it at UTAS-Rustaq.

Method

This exploratory descriptive study, conducted at UTAS-Rustaq, examined teachers’ perceptions of differentiated instruction and the potential for customising learning in response to the variability of their EFL students.

Participants

The Department of English Language and Literature (ELL) included approximately 33 faculty members. Besides the main courses offered to English language major students, the department offers the foundation program for all English language major students and two general English courses for all students in other majors. Thus, most instructors were experienced in teaching English language courses and courses that focused on different aspects of the English
language and were knowledgeable about the related teaching methodologies. Having the opportunity to teach students across a span of years provided these instructors with good insight into the knowledge and skills with which they need to equip first-year students and English language majors in the foundation of their program. In addition, the ELL department conducts professional development sessions to share teaching experiences and raise the quality of learning. However, this practice is still in its elementary stage, as no needs analysis has been performed to identify teachers’ needs and plan the sessions accordingly. Currently, it serves as a platform for teachers to share their research and teaching experiences.

**Instrument**

A 2-part survey was conducted to collect data from the English instructors at the UTAS-Rustaq. The first part included three-point Likert scale questions intended to gather data to identify the general understanding of differentiated instruction among teachers. In the second part, participants were asked open-ended questions seeking information on the practices they currently follow in their classes to achieve customization. The analysis of the collected data was based on frequency and theme coding.

To improve its validity, the survey was checked by an experienced instructor and then piloted, and improvements were made based on the instructor’s feedback. Zailinawati, Schattner & Mazza (2006) indicated that piloting is an essential stage of survey administration, as it examines the clarity and appropriateness of the intended questions. After the improvements were made, the survey was then distributed to instructors, and 15 were completed.

**Results**

**The Provided Support**

To examine how teachers perceive differentiated instructions in their practice, it was crucial to find out about their perception of the support they receive from their department, English Language and Literature department, towards differentiation. Analysis of the collected data revealed that less than 50% of the teachers surveyed agreed that the ELL department supports their efforts to differentiate instruction in their classrooms. Teachers reported that they are asked to implement remedial plans to support students who are behind in achieving the learning outcomes without being given clear instructions on how to design or implement these remedial plans. The department does not generally interfere in teaching practices, yet it encourages teachers to cater to the needs of their students, according to survey results. Some respondents noted that the department does not provide much support due to the emphasis on textbook completion and large class size.

![Figure 1. The departmental support](image-url)
Teachers’ General Perceptions of Differentiated Instruction

Figure 2 illustrates the results of teachers’ general perceptions of differentiated instruction. Despite reporting receiving insufficient support, the respondents held a positive attitude toward practicing differentiation in their classrooms. About 86% of the respondents agreed that differentiation enables them to achieve their course objectives. Thus, when asked about the impact of differentiation on students’ performance, 80% of the respondents agreed that differentiated instruction does have a positive impact on student performance, while 20% were not sure. When teachers were asked about the positive impact of incorporating differentiated instruction, they stressed the same points discussed previously, including achieving the learning outcomes, interesting classes, and satisfaction amongst students. However, only 60% of the respondents agreed that it is possible to have high expectations for all students in the classroom with differentiated instruction, while some respondents stated that since differentiated instruction classes try to attend to students at all levels, much should be expected from each student. However, other responses called for the adjustment of expectations based on the level of the student. Most respondents identified time, the effort required, and the delay in achieving their objectives as the significant challenges that may make them reluctant to implement differentiated instruction.

Applying the Principles of Differentiated Instruction

The respondents shared similarities in identifying the needed information before applying differentiation. Some participants listed, “language level, abilities, Learning styles”, “learner progress, strengths, weaknesses, learning styles”, “Language proficiency”, “readiness, progress, skills, interest” and “students’ ability, level of commitment to check student autonomy, responsibility.”

The respondents shared diverse techniques to collect the needed data about their students. Some participants stated, “Sometimes through the interaction and participation”, “Through tasks and activities”, “exam results”, “Short interviews: “Assessment such as a piece of writing or oral test to find out about their listening skills abilities”, “Casual conversation, written output” and “Monitoring their work, assessing their outputs, getting students information for majors, tracing performance in class.”
The participants declared a varying level of success to meet the course objectives with differentiating on board. Some respondents reported, “Using different materials/activities that help learners to learn and achieve the target objectives”, “Objectives are attained a bit slower owing to time constraints”, “For as long as the course categories are met, it doesn't matter what process used to get there”, “By taking step by step, clear instructions, by simplifying the tasks into more doable tasks” and “Pretty well, the class has clear parameters, and I stuck to them and encouraged some students to do more.”

When the participants were asked about how they accommodate the students who fail to achieve the course objectives, the majority focus on giving extra tasks and time. Some of the listed actions are, “Allocate specific time for them to check their understanding and guide them”, “give extra work and motivate autonomous learning”, “by giving them more activities (smart objectives), something easy that they can achieve”, “giving office hours”, and one respondent was curious about the reasons indicating that “it depends on why they are falling behind. Those who are trying to meet the program requirements, will get my help to create a pattern of success.”

The majority of the participants activate grouping to incorporate differentiated instruction into their classrooms. The stated that they use, “different types of activities (group work, pair work, individually)”, “homogeneous grouping based on their interest, necessity, and capacity”, “class is divided into segments or smaller units”, “by dividing the class into different levels and giving each group different instruction”, “prepare an activity for the main groups and have advanced task for the good students” and a participant emphasize the use of “different methods when delivering lessons to students”.

When asked about how they assess their students’ progress, the participants reported that they use, “one to one tutorials with each student in order to find out if the student has improved”, “the quality of outputs, the progress of their performance” “oral non-credit feedback for the individual research projects”, “assess them according to their capacity, level and learning outcomes.”

**Discussion**

**The Provided Support**

Teachers need to adjust their teaching practices to ensure every student has an equal opportunity to learn (Tomlinson, 1997). However, teachers may be reluctant to implement differentiation without receiving adequate support from their institutions. It was apparent that teachers at UTAS-Rustaq were dissatisfied with the amount of support they receive from their respective departments. The lack of support, hence, affects the quality of teachers’ performance. Gamoran et al. (2003) asserted that the support provided by institutions, including; the supplied materials, resources and quality professional development sessions provided for instructors, would increase the likelihood of tailoring instruction to meet the needs of students (as cited in Abbati, 2012). Nicolae (2014) argued that most teachers are open to differentiating instruction but are not skilled enough to implement the practice. Teachers need real support and commitment from their schools to enhance differentiated instruction practices, which “can take seven to ten years to institutionalize” (Hess, 1999, as cited in Nicolae, 2014, p. 429). Robinson
(2004) emphasized the importance of having supportive teams and organisations to encourage the implementation of differentiated instruction in classrooms. This declaration reveals that designing and implementing instruction for varying levels is both challenging and complex. It requires collaborative work to facilitate the process; verbal instruction is not enough.

**Teachers’ General Perceptions of Differentiated Instruction**

Teachers’ positive attitude towards the efficiency of differentiated instruction in meeting the course objectives was similar to a finding by Njagi (2014), who found that most teachers were positive towards the support that differentiation provides to achieve lesson objectives. Consequently, the achievement of lesson objectives was reflected in the students’ improving performance. These findings also concur with the results discussed by Njagi (2014), who indicated that teachers opting for differentiation indicated that their lessons were interesting to their learners. On the other hand, high expectations from students were controversial as teachers showed varying views about how much to expect from the student when it came to differentiation. This may be attributed to the challenges faced by teachers while implementing differentiated instruction. Bamburg (1994) established that teachers’ expectations could determine students’ success or failure in class. These expectations, whether high or low, can become a prophecy for students, whose performance will move in the direction of the expectations (Raffini, 1993).

Time is an essential factor in determining the effective implementation of differentiated instruction in the classroom (Van Casteren, Bendig-Jacobs, Wartenbergh-Cras, Van Essen & Kurver, 2017). Therefore, time, preparation efforts, and the delay in attaining the objectives were among the many factors affecting the respondents’ decisions in opting to differentiate. This fact was supported by Jager (2016), who emphasized that teachers struggle to cater to the different needs and interests of students due to time constraints. However, Tomlinson and Imbeau (2010) mentioned that these issues result from the significant changes teachers need to make in their teaching styles and that most can be quickly addressed.

**Applying the Principles of Differentiated Instruction**

**What information about your students should be examined before implementing differentiated instruction?**

The implementation of differentiated instruction calls for a better understanding of students’ academic and personal backgrounds (Robinson, 2004). Ernest, Heckman, Hull, & Carter (2011) pointed out that a pre-assessment of learners’ needs is just as crucial as the self-assessment to reflect on the practice effectiveness. Another reality to be considered is that every student comes to the classroom with varied skills and experiences that compel the teacher to verify the students’ varied levels of readiness for better implementation of differentiated instruction (Fox & Hoffman, 2011). When asked what information respondents should have about students to plan their instruction, respondents agreed on language proficiency, readiness, learning styles, interests and skills. Respondents believed that diagnostic tests could reveal the current status of students and assist in varying instruction. Meanwhile, the strengths, and weaknesses of students, providing sufficient input, learner autonomy, and a sense of responsibility contribute to the significant decision of varying instruction as well.

**How do you assess your students to obtain the necessary information about their prior knowledge to start differentiating or customising your instruction?**
Teachers continually assess students to see how responsive they are to the materials taught. Assessment is also intended to evaluate students’ proficiency levels. Teachers collect data about their students’ performance throughout the day through a variety of methods. Students’ prior knowledge is part of the many areas to be tested in your classes. Thompson and Zamboanga (2003) pointed out the benefits of assessing students’ prior-knowledge, among which is modifying their teaching practice to suit the diversifying class. Cobb, Stallings, Dyer & Wambler (2014) indicated that “prior knowledge assessments are administered before, or at the start of, training and often consist of paper-based or hands-on evaluations of student knowledge and/or skills”. Therefore, when respondents were asked about the means through which they gather information about their students, responses varied; the methods they reported can be classified according to the different types of data collected. Formative data are gathered through mini-tests, short interviews, and oral tests to reveal students’ skills and where they can be improved. Respondents also indicated collecting observational data by observing students during interactions, group tasks and activities. This kind of data informs teachers’ decisions on the pacing of activities and the amount of scaffolding required. The third type of data, summative data, are collected through written assignments and exam results (Garrison & Ehringhaus, 2007). The results of these assessments help teachers reflect on the effectiveness of their instructional practices and make appropriate adjustments where needed. Moreover, data collected through the different forms of assessment can help teachers determine the grouping and differentiation of instruction to enhance students’ growth.

How do you succeed in meeting your course objectives when differentiating your class instruction?

By the end of each course, students are expected to achieve certain objectives. Considering the mixed-ability classes and the different course objectives, teachers are challenged to provide differentiated instruction to enhance learning. Koeze (2007) and Luster (2008) emphasized the positive effects of differentiated instructions on students' achievement. Similarly, respondents conveyed multiple levels of success regarding objective attainment while differentiating instruction. One participant declared that modifying materials and activities that are adequate for the different levels helped learners achieve the target objectives. Another participant pointed out that “goal attainment is a bit slower owing to time constraints”. Time and class size create more significant challenges to implementing differentiated instruction. In another response regarding how successful the teachers had been in meeting objectives, a participant noted “Pretty well, the class has clear parameters and I stuck to them and encouraged some students to do more”. Other respondents agreed that, by modifying tasks and simplifying the instructions, they succeeded in achieving the objectives. Similar results were found in multiple research studies where differentiated instruction practices were able to improve the performance of all students (Fisher, Frey, & Williams, 2003; Lewis & Batts, 2005; McTigue & Brown, 2005; Nugent, 2006; Walker, 2002).

How do you deal with students who are behind in reaching the course objectives?

A powerful contributor to successful teaching practices is teachers’ willingness to walk the extra mile with their students. When flexibility and predictability were two important variables of every class (Tomlinson, 2013), teachers were expected to create a balance to assist
students who fall behind in attaining course objectives. When respondents were asked how they deal with students who fail to attain some objectives, the majority agreed on giving them extra attention and time. Teachers need to understand the reasons why students struggle while simultaneously finding solutions to get them back on track. It is more useful to plan learning experiences that either scaffold or extend learning for students who need extra support or extra challenges to progress (Tomlinson, 2013).

**How do you incorporate differentiated instruction for the whole class?**

Participants indicated that they incorporated differentiated instruction into their classrooms by dividing the students into different groups based on interests and readiness. Some respondents varied the type of activities so they can be accomplished individually, in pairs or in groups. Corley (2005) and Hall at el. (2003) discuss the vital role of flexible grouping in which students are divided into various groups in response to their needs, interests and readiness. One respondent explained that students were given a chance to select topics that matched their interests. Another respondent reported that varying the teaching methods is a form of differentiated instruction, although without specifying how the teaching methods were varied. This was supported by Levy (2008) who asserted that one way does not fit all and teachers are expected to use alternative methods in class. Another respondent stated that differentiation can be accomplished by assigning tasks at varying levels of difficulty. This procedure was discussed by Tomlinson (2000) who stated that teachers can vary the rubrics of tasks. Students’ success depends on the use of various approaches that lead them to relate to and process new materials. Overall, the respondents showed a good awareness of the different procedures which facilitate differentiation.

**How do you assess each student’s achievement with differentiation in mind?**

A teacher’s ability to plan an individualized classroom environment is parallel to their ability to create assessment tools to evaluate the outcomes (Hattie, 2009). Students’ varying levels of interests, learning styles and readiness require diverse assessment approaches to measure achievement of learning outcomes. Responses yielded in the current study showed teachers were highly aware of the need for diverse assessment approaches. Some respondents reported adjusting the question types along with the appropriate lowering or raising of expectations. One respondent stated that assessment is based on the quality of output and the progress of student performance. Two respondents indicated the use of research-based projects which gives students the freedom to pursue topics of their interest. It was argued that this method responds to students’ diversity and acquires them with multiple skills (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). Although it may seem daunting, some teachers responded that they go to the extent of varying the assessment tools to cater to the students’ differing capacities, levels and learning outcomes. Tomlinson & Moon (2013) argued that teachers can manipulate different types of summative assessment to reveal what students have achieved.

**Students’ Reactions to Differentiating Instruction**

Teachers’ attempts to create engaging instruction and elevate learning, although very promising, may be passively received by students. Different factors impact students’ views of differentiated learning. According to some survey responses, some students show little appreciation for group work and are less cooperative at times. Lack of awareness of the possible benefits of differentiated instruction hinders their positive perception and, therefore, effective use
of the varied tasks. However, a good number of respondents highlighted positive student reactions towards differentiation. According to this group of respondents, students felt satisfied with the tasks, activities and content covered. The content was mapped to cover the diversity of students’ needs and to cater to those needs. According to some respondents, students appreciate the modifications and adjustments teachers make to address the different abilities in the class.

Autonomy-supportive teaching plays a major role in enhancing inner motivation and aligning it to the classroom activity (Reeve et al., 2002, as cited in Furtak & Kunter, 2012). This correlates with the respondents’ own practices when fostering autonomous learning environments in their classrooms. The respondents emphasized the importance of clarifying the objectives of the tasks when initiating independent learning. Through differentiating instruction to suit different individuals, they claim that goals can be successfully attained. Other respondents suggested modules and a provision of guidelines to ensure the tasks are completed. It is evident from these responses that the teachers attempt to activate students’ inner motivation by attending to their needs, interests and preferences (Reeve, 2006), representing the core value of differentiated teaching. However, teachers need to set clear guidelines for how autonomy is practiced in their classrooms to avoid its overlap with controlled teaching.

**Recommendations**

Based on the survey results, it can be concluded that teachers are mindful of the potential impact of customising learning by differentiating instruction. They are also aware of the general practices that should pave the way for differentiation in their classrooms. However, teachers report receiving inadequate support where moral support is provided, but structural support is also essential to maintain effective practices for differentiation. The ELL department should seek a way to plan and run professional development sessions to support teachers in building their expertise on this subject. These professional development sessions may educate teachers on introducing differentiation to their students, so they receive it more positively. The current COVID-19 pandemic informs us of the essential need for blended learning in our institutions. Blended learning may be the solution to the main challenge reported by teachers in implementing differentiated instruction, which is time. In a blended learning environment, teachers can upload various materials, run online sessions and design various assessments through the institution platform. This would save classroom time for the teachers and would be more engaging to students, as privacy is more secure.

**Conclusion**

Although all students are expected to achieve the same course objectives, they do not necessarily respond to the same instructional methods. Hence, differentiating instruction in the classroom is no longer an option but necessary in every classroom to ensure successful learning for all. A great deal of research has focused attention on the importance of differentiating instruction in the classroom. The present study examined teachers’ perceptions about differentiated instruction and the practices they use to meet the needs of their EFL students. The study revealed that teachers are acquainted with differentiated instruction, but they report receiving inadequate support from their organisation. It was uncovered that teachers practice differentiation of instruction on at least one if not on all three levels of content, process and product (Tomlinson, 2000). Results also indicated that insufficient support from the organisation
Along with students’ lack of appreciation for differentiated activities were some of the barriers to successful implementation of differentiated instruction in the classroom.

The current study had some limitations that are worth mentioning. The sample size was relatively small with only 15 respondents. More participants would provide various insights into the practices they implement in their classes. Furthermore, along with the questionnaire, a classroom observation of the participants’ practices would be a better indicator of the different activities implemented to cater to the diverse needs and interests of students.

Despite the limitations, this research provides evidence of teachers’ awareness of differentiated instruction and suggests further study is needed on the challenges facing the implementation of differentiated instruction.

About the Authors:
Munira Said Al-Siyabi is an assistant lecturer at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Rustaq with nine years of experience of teaching English as a second language. Munira completed her MA in TESOL at Leeds University, UK in 2011. Her research interests include teaching and learning in higher education and learner autonomy.
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0415-5002

Dalal Abdullah Al-Shekaili is a lecturer at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Rustaq College of Education. She has nine years of experience in the field of teacher preparation program. Dalal is an MA holder in TESOL from the University of Durham, UK.
ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9412-9758

References


Global Issues in ESP Classroom: Challenges and Opportunities in Higher Education

Yana Diachkova
Department of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Economics of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine
Correspondent Author: yanadyachkova@i.ua

Lilia Sazhko
Department of German Philology of the Institute of Philology of Borys Hrinchenco Kyiv University, Ukraine

Liudmyla Shevchenko
Department of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Economics of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine

Anastasiia Syzenko
Department of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Economics of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine

Received: 11/1/2020 Accepted: 3/1/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
In English for Specific Purposes, one of the challenges is to transform teaching and learning into a process, which focuses on the development of professional skills, enables students to become successful learners of the target language, and makes them more aware of the local and global environments. This paper aims to analyse key challenges that teachers and learners face in the classrooms and suggest a way of integrating global issues into the process of development of professional soft and hard skills. The paper studies the existing ESP literature in terms of presence of global issues, explores the perceptions of global issues among university students in Ukraine, outlines the correlation between professional skills and global competence. The findings suggest that there are numerous advantages of introducing materials based on global issues into the teaching process as it has synergetic effect of fusing professional skills, soft skills and global competence. The paper concludes that this fusion improves the skill set of a future professional and has a positive impact on the quality of higher education in general.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, ESP, global education, global issues, professional skills, soft skills, life competences, higher education, classroom challenges, Ukraine

**Introduction**

Since the introduction of global education approach, the focus in a foreign language teaching context has switched to making sure that students not only effectively acquire the foreign language as a means of personal or professional communication, but also gain understanding, skills, and commitment to become truly global citizens and make their contributions to dealing with global problems. It is quite challenging for educators, including foreign language teachers, to transform teaching and learning into a process which focuses both on equipping students to be successful learners of the target language and making them more aware and respectful to their surroundings.

Thus, foreign language classroom is becoming a place where students not only acquire language to communicate effectively in personal and professional settings, but also develop mindset and skills needed for world citizens to be able to contribute to tacking the problems of global scale. This makes it crucial for the future professionals to be engaged in making change happen by means of changing their behaviours (Hogg & Shah, 2010). This is becoming particularly relevant in the times of recent global pandemic that the students and graduates realise the global setting and their role in bringing about positive change to the world.

According to the Global Situation Report (2020), a significant work has been done in the sphere of global problems resolution due to huge progress in health and poverty reduction in recent decades. At the same time there are still challenges connected with unequal growth, a changing climate, world conflicts etc. The world needs citizens who are able to serve communities under these challenging circumstances, that makes global competence be of a crucial importance for labour market. And education is the key to progress. It is the key to the culture of democracy that encourages effective functioning of democratic laws and institutions. Essential to this is ensuring that “the young develop their global competence and acquire the knowledge, values and capacity to be responsible citizens in modern, diverse, democratic societies” (Council of Europe, 2018, p. 5).

However, transforming teaching and learning into a process that goes beyond equipping students to become successful learners of the target language or proficient speakers may turn into a challenge for many educators. Rather than focusing solely on the language required for students’ professional needs, foreign language teachers are now to develop their students’ awareness of the global problems and using language effectively to show more respect and tolerance to their surroundings. Therefore, it is important to identify the role and place of global issues in the ESP classroom and explore opportunities for integrating global issues into the development of skills and competences in the higher education context.

This paper aims to analyse main challenges and suggest ways of integrating global issues into the process of development of professional skills, soft skills, and global competence in the ESP classroom. The premise is that the fusion of professional skills, soft skills, and global competence is likely to improve the employment profile of a future professional and suggests a positive impact of global education approach within ESP classes on learning process and on quality of higher education in general.
Literature Review

In the English for Specific Purposes context, global education is a pedagogical approach that sees peace, human rights, development, and the environment as core content areas of educating a global citizen and aims to develop learners as professionals and committed citizens of the world. The matter is that it is not demanded in ESP context to implement this approach into the teaching practice. That makes contemporary ESP teaching stand still in this respect and creates a gap between the requirements of modern labour market and professional competence of higher education graduates.

Moreover, the view of a language learner in the ESP context is becoming much more complex as well. In his recent publication, Michael Byram considers a language learner from the perspective of three interconnected facets, emphasizing more and more strongly the idea of the language learner as an engaged and responsible citizen:

- a person with an open mind
- a person with the curiosity and courage of the ethnographer
- a person with the engagement and responsibility of the citizen (Byram, 2020, p. 5).

According to the researcher, these facets suggest that learning a language is more than learning a set of skills, it is an opportunity to develop as a person. Therefore, teaching should be designed to offer a learner such an opportunity, to challenge learners’ views of the target language, to make them aware of and reflect on possible stereotypes and prejudices concerning target-language countries and people, etc. According to this very concept, the language learner observes people's practices in a target-language community, interprets narratives and documents, reflects on norms, beliefs and values, and in the process learns something about themselves. That makes the learner more engaged, conscious and responsible for the learning process in itself. Byram's third facet draws on the field of citizenship education – across subjects and including language teaching. In this perspective, the language learner should be seen as an engaged and responsible citizen. And according to the author, “learning a language is an opportunity to develop as a citizen, taking the vantage point of ‘the other’ to analyze one's own country and people, with a view to changing it for the better” (Byram, 2020, p. 5). That instinctively leads the learner to developing global competence and becoming aware of the global citizenship.

Moreover, English for Specific Purposes is a field of language teaching that enjoys quite a specific nature. This gives educators some room for manoeuvre and allows them to orientate their language learners towards global consciousness and awareness. According to Kennedy (2007),

Through its occupational, institutional and subject-specific rigor, ESP potentially offers grounded micro-perspectives on language, power and identity that have, at times, been found lacking in the theoretical adventurism often prevalent in critical texts. Conversely, for ESP, critical theories and pedagogies enhance contextual understanding and potentially expand the linguistic means by which goal-directed ends can be effectively achieved in this context and enhance the possibilities for transformative pedagogies that are invigorated through a fusion of pragmatic and politicized strategies. Such global-national tensions have given rise to contested and competing notions of citizenship in
ESP settings but also to creative and transformational pedagogies in which second language learners can be oriented towards social justice issues of local, national and international consequence. (p. 310)

Indeed, the responsibilities of foreign language educators are not limited only to teaching vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Even without realizing that, ESP instructors worldwide already integrate global issues and global education into their teaching in a variety of ways involving, for example, content used for input during lessons. However, as educators, our mission is to pay attention to problems occurring globally and consciously prepare our students for active participation in tackling the problems or at least showing sympathy and tolerance to those suffering from these issues. Teachers and learners may not be able to solve the global issues directly, still our understanding and compassion toward the situations and problems are critical in helping to reduce the spread of the issues. According to recent studies, global issues are crucial to be introduced and implemented into language teaching. It has been researched and proved that global learning fosters:

- critical and creative thinking
- self-awareness and open-mindedness towards difference
- understanding of global issues and power relationships, and
- optimism and action for a better world (Hogg & Shah, 2010).

In Ukraine, challenges associated with teaching ESP mostly stemmed from the fact that most teachers had no or very little practical training in ESP teaching; the legacy of grammar-translation method has led to teaching mostly decontextualized English having no relation to students’ professional needs and students’ low motivation (Onishchuk & Andrusiak, 2018). Moreover, another recent study suggests that there is a strong relationship between the use of learning models of the ESP language course and improvement of the experimental group students’ critical thinking seen as a combination of such components as affective, argumentative, and reflexive (Karapetian, 2020).

Since this paper aims to explore the existing situation in ESP classrooms in higher education in Ukraine, it should be noted that the country faces several challenges related to global education overall. Not unlike in other countries, they touch upon several dimensions: knowledge, skills, attitudes, and action and include:

- Knowledge about world countries and cultures, and about global problems. If our aim is to educate students able to work for a better world, they must know the nature of world problems, their causes, and solutions.
- Development of soft skills which include communication, critical and creative thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, conflict resolution, decision making, and the ability to see issues from multiple perspectives.
- Global attitudes, which means raising global awareness, developing appreciation of other cultures, respect for diversity, a commitment to justice, empathy and tolerance.
- Action, which means democratic participation in the local and global community to solve world problems, i.e. students, should be able to “think globally and act locally” (Cates, 2000, p. 241).
This study is built on the idea of exploring the above-mentioned dimensions in the context of Ukrainian higher education in general and within the ESP classrooms in particular.

**Methodology**

To see the overall picture of the role and place of global issues in the ESP language education in Ukraine, it was crucial to examine each of the dimensions mentioned above. This research focuses on language learners from leading universities of Ukraine - Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv and Borys Hrinchenko Kyiv University. The components of research included: (1) analysing ESP textbooks for the occurrence of tasks that address global issues; (2) defining students’ awareness of the global issues, their global attitudes and willingness to act – in a survey of 120 students from two universities; and (3) identifying the level of development of professional soft and hard skills that may contribute to the development of global competence.

**Findings and Discussion**

*Source of Knowledge about World Countries and Cultures, and about Global Problems*

In ESP textbooks for the students of Economics, Medicine, Cybernetics, Biology, Philology, and Law, the most frequent global issues addressed are connected with environmental problems, overpopulation, pandemic issues, intercultural communication, and human rights. Yet, the percentage of the tasks in which these issues are mentioned is meagre (see Table one). For the purpose of textbook analysis, tasks touching upon global issues (GI tasks) were divided into two types: the ones that are purely pedagogical and deal with the development of receptive skills, vocabulary and grammar; and the ones that are real-life and touch upon the development of communication skills, critical thinking and awareness, thus sharing the concepts of critical pedagogy and global education.

**Table 1. Analysis of ESP textbooks used in universities of Ukraine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursebook title and publisher</th>
<th>Year published</th>
<th>Total number of exercises and/or tasks</th>
<th>Number of GI tasks</th>
<th>Pedagogic tasks, %</th>
<th>Real-life tasks, %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge English for Scientists, Cambridge University Press</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market Leader (Intermediate), 3 Ed, Pearson-Longman</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Advantage (Intermediate), Cambridge University Press</td>
<td>2103</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Legal English. A course for classroom or self-study use, 2 Ed, Cambridge University Press</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As the result of textbooks analysis, it can be concluded that neither the edition nor the year of publication influenced the number of the GI tasks that make up less than 3% of all the tasks. Even though, reportedly, overall awareness of the global issues has been rising for the last decade, coursebook and textbook writers do not pay necessary attention to the global competence development of the intended learners, leaving a great deal of responsibility for subject teachers as well as giving them some room for manoeuvre in the context sphere.

As seen from the above analysis, ESP textbooks for future graduates in Economics and Medicine contain more GI tasks. The reason might lie in deeper global perspective of the major itself as these subject areas are connected with global interaction of the professionals on different corresponding levels.

**Soft Skills and Global Competence**

Even though globalisation allows free and immediate transfer of information from one corner of the planet to the other one, helping people to develop global competence to become active participants of world events in order to help governments have more impact on critical social issues with fewer resources is quite challenging. Education must surely play a greater role in engaging people in taking care of the planet and tackling global issues we all face. It means engaging people from all the corners of the world and often involves an imperative change in their behaviour. It implies that globalisation and its positive and negative effects cannot be ignored in university classrooms of the 21st century. Bringing global issues into the language classroom is one way of doing this.

As prior research suggests, bringing global issues such as poverty, racism, homophobia, sexism, war conflicts, pandemics among others into the classroom gives students the opportunity of thinking about social topics and being aware of how they affect human beings in different parts of the world (Martínez Lirola, 2015). This is essential to help students become active and global citizens; this involves building their awareness of the social problems of the world and of the differences between various cultures. This also means that students acquire life skills that are vitally important for their career success on the labour market today.

It is necessary to point out that soft skills are quickly becoming the new benchmark for measuring success. As suggested in the study by Harvard Business School, these soft skills account for as much as 85% of an individual’s success, whereas traditional ‘hard skills’ (academics, corporate job training, IQ, etc.) only account for 15%. Stanford Research Institute shared the same opinion and revealed that soft skills play an essential role in one's success. At the edge of core competency and personal traits, soft skills play a vital role in refining one’s behaviour. Soft skills are meant to improve student’s life skills and employability and they make

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textbook Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>GI Tasks</th>
<th>GI %</th>
<th>Non-GI Tasks</th>
<th>Non-GI %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English for Electrical Engineering, Garnet Publishing</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Partner, 2 Ed, Pearson Education Limited</td>
<td>2018</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>332</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>288</strong></td>
<td><strong>7.0%</strong></td>
<td><strong>332</strong></td>
<td><strong>93.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
it possible to deal with different situations meticulously and responsibly. With the help of soft skills, students can survive and sustain in the fierce global competitive spirit (Cabau, 2016).

Therefore, skills represent the second aspect of global education that fits harmoniously into foreign language instruction in the ESP context. The very act of learning a foreign language plays an important role in bringing about global issues, because knowing other people’s language and culture opens doors toward better understanding and communication. Other skills that global education and foreign language education share in higher education are those of collaboration, teamwork, mediation and conflict resolution – skills most sought after in private and public corporations today.

Importantly, teaching methods commonly used in ESP classrooms - projects, role-plays, simulations, and collaborative learning – are particularly well-aligned with global education. Projects give students an opportunity to spend an extensive period exploring a particular topic and use their initiative throughout this exploration. Often, projects become a bridge between classroom learning and real life and help students develop and take actions related to a topic in their lives. Role-plays and simulations contribute to the development of global skills because they give students an opportunity to imagine themselves as other people, in different professional and social roles, and in different situations – this also provides an important link between the classroom and the real world.

Collaborative (or cooperative) learning can involve projects and role-plays and simulations, as they usually are done in groups, but cooperative learning represents a broader range of activities in which students work together (Kagan, 1994). Collaborative learning is primarily based on recognising the indisputable value of student-to-student interaction. Through successful interaction in the classroom, students can develop the skills and attitudes necessary for successful interaction in other spheres and can develop a belief in the power of cooperation (Jacobs, 1998). This is reinforced by a fundamental concept in collaborative learning - that of positive interdependence - the feeling among group members that they sink or swim together, that what helps one member helps all and that what hurts one hurts all (Johnson & Johnson, 1994). This positive interdependence in real life would indeed contribute to making our world a better, more humane place.

Thus, since ESP classroom is a place where soft skills are being developed through the pedagogical perspective anyway, an extra focus on global issues and finding collaborative solutions to those would benefit our aim of educating global citizens.

**Students’ Awareness of Global Issues, their Global Attitudes and Willingness to Act**

Results of the survey of 120 first and second year ESP students on their awareness of global issues and on their level of development of global competence demonstrate that Ukrainian future professionals are not ready to become global citizens because of lack of awareness, intrinsic motivation to contribute to international development and insufficient sources of appropriate knowledge introduced in school.
It is perhaps not surprising that our findings suggest that almost three-fourths of those who have not had a chance to learn about global issues in school or on their own think that it is pointless for them to act on global issues. (72%) (see Figure one). Amongst those who learnt about global issues either at school or by themselves (these are only 15% of respondents), the proportion of people who feel powerless goes down significantly, with only 10% of the respondents agreeing that it is pointless to act.

Learning about global issues can make a substantial contribution to stepping up international development and mutual national support. In our survey, we decided to concentrate on the issues of poverty and the role of international aid and mutual national assistance as this idea is not strange to many Ukrainians as the country is itself a recipient of various international instruments and also engages in mutual national aid mechanisms. According to responses, amongst those who learnt about global issues, 31% agree that there are more important issues to tackle than poverty in developing countries, and 45% of them support the idea of providing help to overcome the problem. However, amongst those who did not learn about global issues, 61% agree and only 7% support the idea of mutual national assistance (see Figure two).

Thus, students who care about global issues are more aware of the necessity to donate to international development (e.g. to NGOs). They are also more likely to understand how they can contribute to global development through their own daily actions (e.g. by purchasing fair trade products).
Global learning is also vital if we are to counter misconceptions about racial and religious differences by encouraging respect and welcoming inclusion and diversity. These are crucial for making this world a more harmonious place. Our findings suggest that amongst those who have not experienced global learning in school, a quarter of the respondents (26%) are not comfortable with there being so many different races and religions living in Ukraine today or studying at their university. Amongst those who have learnt about at least one global issue, only 6% express this discomfort (see Figure three).

![Figure 3](image)

Figure 3. Proportion of respondents who are not comfortable with variety of races and religions around them

This suggests that promoting diversity and inclusion through encouraging a global perspective in universities is an important and effective mechanism for developing a more progressive and tolerant society.

By ensuring that all educational establishments offer opportunities to learn about global issues we will be able to dramatically decrease the number of those unaware or uninterested in the world around them. In contrast, if our universities ignore the need for global learning, this may turn the situation for the worse, as this will only increase the number of those uninterested in taking positive social action.

**Action**

Past research studies from DFID indicate that around 20% of the UK population are “disengaged, inward-looking and uninterested in or unsympathetic to the world around them”. These are the people who are not interested in getting involved in any form of positive social action, such as recycling, volunteering or campaigning on global issues. However, amongst those who have learnt about climate change, poverty or world politics and trade at school, this figure roughly halves (9%, 12% and 12% respectively). Even more strikingly, amongst those who have not had an opportunity to learn about any global issues at school, over a third (34%), are entirely disengaged (DFID, 2008). Interestingly, according to UN-funded research on volunteering in Ukraine, Ukrainians recognize an essential role of volunteering in societal change, 85% of respondents believe that volunteering helps peacebuilding and 81% acknowledge that volunteering should be an indispensable component of civil society. Moreover, 23% of Ukrainians report that they have taken part in volunteering efforts over the last year (Nationwide Research, 2015).
In Ukraine, considerable progress has been made to incorporate global issues throughout school curricular. Such global problems as environmental pollution and the role of humans in it, discrimination, hunger, poverty, etc. have been included in secondary educational establishments as part of the school reform. This has contributed to raising the awareness of students’ social responsibility. All of the above has a direct impact on students being proactive in terms of global awareness and democratic participation in the local and global community to solve world problems. Our findings show that only 5% of respondents are not interested in engagement in positive social actions. Those who have experienced learning about global issues are ready to participate in volunteering projects or actions, have already participated in local volunteer events or are planning to become members of various NGOs trying to tackle global issues. We may see that only 1% of respondents are not interested in or are just indifferent to making a positive contribution through social action (see Figure four).

Finally, there is a significantly large proportion of students who support the idea that all members of society should have the opportunity to learn about global issues either in schools or in universities. Almost nine in ten (89%) of the respondents believe that global learning in university is crucial if these issues are to be tackled in future (see Figure five). These findings indicate that there is a strong mandate for universities and other stakeholders to make global learning in higher education a priority. This leads us to the suggestion that integration of global issues to the professional soft and hard skills development in the ESP context will raise students’ motivation to learn a target language, contribute greatly into the education of future global citizens and improve the requirements profile of a future professional.

**Figure 4.** Proportion of respondents who are not interested in making a positive contribution through social action

**Figure 5.** Proportion of respondents who believe that global learning is crucial in tackling global problems
Summing up all the challenges teachers and learners face while introducing global issues into the ESP classroom – lack of awareness of the importance of global issues; topic-based content as opposed to problem-based; learning outcomes limited to language and skills; insufficient educational policy support; lack of teacher support (professional development); existing materials not providing for a meaningful variety of real-life tasks involving global issues; predominantly mono-cultural classes in Ukraine: ‘cultural awareness’ limited mostly to UK and US stereotypical notions of cultures – it is possible to conclude that Ukrainian graduates might be less competitive on the world labour market with their global competence being underdeveloped. It is also necessary to stress the importance of teaching global contexts in foreign language classrooms with particular attention to:

a) variety of multinational, multilingual, and multicultural contents: authentic materials, structured documents etc.;

b) development of appropriate methodologies for teaching foreign languages in the spirit of global education;

c) improved teacher training programmes with a specific focus on teaching culture and global education (global pedagogy, curriculum development, methodology, etc.);

d) development of coursebooks and learning resources for the purpose of global education and international understanding;

e) stepping up intercultural research with thorough analysis of different forms of cultural contact and cultural exchanges.

Conclusion

In a modern academic environment, educators face a great number of challenges in teaching ESP. Labour market seeks professionals ready to think globally, to operate on an international arena being aware of the global problems, sympathetic and tolerant. This paper concentrated on the analysis of the main challenges in ESP teaching and learning. Taking into consideration ESP context, modern requirements of the labour market and the level of students and teachers' awareness, the ways of integrating global issues into the process of development of professional skills, soft skills, and global competence in the ESP classroom were suggested. It was suggested in the paper that the fusion of professional skills, soft skills, and global competence is likely to improve the employment profile of a future professional and to make a positive impact of global education approach within ESP classes on learning process and on quality of higher education in general.

Recommendations

Therefore, in order to educate global citizens and to meet the requirements of contemporary labour market, ESP teachers need to:

- be aware of their responsibility in furthering international understanding through their teaching;
- make efforts to increase the effectiveness of teaching foreign languages with a view of enhancing mutual understanding, respect, peaceful co-existence and co-operation among nations;
- exploit the possibilities of extra-curricular activities for the development of international contacts and co-operation, such as correspondence, exchange of books and relevant print and audio-visual material, virtual cooperation, exchange programmes, visits, tours, excursions etc.
- stimulate co-operation by language teaching approaches responsive to students’ initiatives, interests and needs, as education for international co-operation must start with co-operation between students and teacher in the language learning task, classroom.

Actions to take include raising educators’ and learners’ awareness of the importance of global issues; complementing core ESP curriculum with targeted content addressing global issues; developing policy guidelines for inclusion and promotion of global education at all levels; designing additional materials dealing with global issues to complement the gaps in the existing ones; involving learners and other stakeholders to the development of materials; encouraging broader discussion of the importance of global issues in the national media.

About Authors:

Yana Diachkova PhD, (in Education), assistant professor in the Department of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Economics of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine. Her research interests touch upon contemporary higher education trends, methodology of teaching English for Specific Purposes and the use of modern technologies and instruments in education. ORCID code: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3145-6695

Lilia Sazhko PhD, (in Education), professor in the Department of German Philology of the Institute of Philology of Borys Hrinchenco Kyiv University, Ukraine. The research interests cover methodology of teaching foreign languages and globalization of higher education. ORCID code: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1565-6091

Liudmyla Shevchenko PhD, (in Philology), associate professor in the Department of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Economics of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine. Her research interests embrace assessment procedures in higher education, the ways of developing cultural competence in teaching English for Specific Purposes. ORCID code: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4543-3876

Anastasiia Syzenko PhD. (in Philology), associate professor in the Department of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Economics of Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Ukraine. Her research interests include internationalisation of higher education, the use of learning technologies and new developments in teaching English for Specific Purposes. ORCID code: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8443-7813

References


The Low Co-occurrence of Nominalization and Hedging in Scientific Papers Written by Chinese EFL Learners

Xiao Liu
College of Foreign Languages
Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics,
Nanjing, China
Email: maggieliuxiao@nuaa.edu.cn

Received: 12/24/2020 Accepted: 3/2/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
This article hypothesizes that one of the reasons for Chinese EFL learners’ rigid use of nominalization and insufficient use of hedging in academic writing can be attributed to the unclear understanding of the relationship between these two expressions. The aim of the research is to first prove and then explain the possible co-occurrence of nominalization and hedging in scientific papers, with the intention of deepening Chinese EFL learners’ understanding of the reasons for their possible co-occurrence. After a corpus-assisted statistical analysis of sixty abstracts selected from leading scientific journals written by native English speakers, it’s been found that there is indeed a tendency for nominalization and hedge to co-occur both at the textual-level and clause-level. Besides, a tentative analysis is conducted to explain the pattern of their co-occurrence. It has been observed that the number of nominalized expressions in clauses is inversely correlated with the probability degree of hedging, and the position of nominalization in the clause (theme or rheme) influences the generalization level of hedging. The research results could shed light on the pedagogic approach in improving Chinese EFL learners’ academic writing by making evident that the elusive Grammatical Metaphor competence could be enhanced by deepening the understanding of the inter-relationship between seemingly different in-congruent expressions like nominalization and hedges.

Keywords: Chinese EFL learners, co-occurrence, hedge, nominalization, Systemic Functional Linguistics

Cite as: Liu, X. (2021). The Low Co-occurrence of Nominalization and Hedging in Scientific Papers Written by Chinese EFL Learners. Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 401-420. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.27
Introduction

Nominalization refers to the process in which any element or group of elements in sentences are made to function as nominal groups in the clauses, which can strengthen the ideational function of language and enhance the objectivity and authority of the argumentation (Fan, 1999; Halliday, 1994). The proper use of nominalization can condense information and improve persuasiveness, which is also why nominalization is recognized as a key feature in academic discourse (Biber, 2006; Charles, 2003; Hyland, 2004a, 2004b; Ryshina-Pankova, 2015). However, prior empirical researches in English for Academic Purpose (EAP) studies in China have shown that the deployment of nominalization in academic writings of Chinese postgraduate EFL learners tends to be either insufficient or redundant (Tan, 2011), which has become one of the major obstacles in improving Chinese EFL students’ academic English writing skills.

According to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), nominalization is defined as the single most powerful resource for creating grammatical metaphors (GM) (Halliday & Martin, 1993), ideational GMs in particular. Guided by the harmonious relationship between the three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal, textual), the enhanced ideational function needs to be balanced with the interpersonal function, of which hedging plays an essential role. Therefore, based on the theoretical complementarity between nominalization and hedging within SFL framework, the current research hypothesizes that there is a pattern of co-occurrence between nominalization (the representative of ideational GM) and hedging (the representative of interpersonal GM) in academic discourse, and the author intends to prove their possible co-occurrence at clausal and textual level with statistical analysis and corpus search results. At the textual level, 60 abstracts of articles written by native English speakers from leading international academic journals of science and engineering since 2014 were collected and analyzed in SPSS. It was verified that there is a positive correlation between the number of sentences containing nominalization and that containing hedging through linear regression analysis. At the clausal level, BNC corpus-assisted analysis found that the frequency of the co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging in scientific papers is higher than in non-academic genres. Finally, within the framework of systemic functional grammar, a tentative reason analysis for the co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging was conducted along with the illustration of typical examples. Through the statistical analysis of the interactions between the deployments of two major GMs in academic discourse, the present study aims to provide pedagogical implications to teaching the appropriate usage of nominalization and hedging in academic discourse to Chinese EFL learners integrating SFL theory with EAP teaching.

Enlightened by the theoretical complementarity between nominalization and hedging, and the pragmatic need for effective academic communication, this study attempts to answer the following questions: (1) Is there a positive correlation between nominalization and the use of hedging in the abstracts of scientific papers? (2) What is the normal frequency of the co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging in the academic genre within BNC corpus? (3) How to explain the co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging within the systemic functional linguistic framework?
Literature Review
The appropriate use of nominalization in academic discourse, especially in the composition of abstracts, is crucial to advanced EFL learners. However, it has been proven that the cultivation of grammatical metaphorical competence, which includes the usage of nominalization, poses challenges to EFL learners (Liadret, 2013); specifically, the application of derivative nouns and nominal phrases or clauses, especially the number of transformations of transitive messages in rheme to nominal phrases in theme through nominalization of the academic writing of Chinese EFL learners is lower than that of native speakers (Li & Guo, 2020). Besides, there are frequent ungrammatical misuses in nominalization, including both “interlanguage” and “inner-language” English nominal errors (Luo, 2006), which may cause confusion and ambiguity in writing.

The Inadequate Integration of GM with EAP Teaching Practice in China
According to the previous studies, reasons for Chinese EFL students’ inefficacy in using nominalization resides in the lack of knowledge about the contrastive language characteristics between English and Chinese, as well as the inaccurate understanding of stylistic features of scientific writing (Tan, 2011). It can be observed that the reasons provided above are in lack of theoretical support and can hardly prove of significant help to English teaching practice in China. Scholars from home and abroad who have taken an interest in studying the EFL teaching status in China have also demonstrated that studies integrating SFL theory with English instruction are much fewer than the descriptive studies about SFL theories (Hu & Fang, 1997; Huang, 2002; Yang, 2008, 2011). Furthermore, Lam (2002) has pointed out that the teaching of GM as a resource for successful writing was completely absent from Chinese universities’ English curriculum. This article concurs with Lam’s claim and contends that even the EAP lessons of Chinese higher education, which are designed to improve postgraduates’ academic writing skills, have not fully deployed GM as a resource to assist students in achieving academically valued writings. Moreover, we believe that one of the neglected reasons for the inappropriate nominalization deployment is that the meta-functions of nominalization as a GM, as well as the ideational and interpersonal meanings of combing different GMs are not disclosed to students in EAP teaching practice. The lack of meta-functional knowledge of nominalization and GMs prevents students from comprehending the functional meaning of formal grammars, resulting in misuses.

In recent years, a number of Chinese scholars have carried out preliminary explorations about teaching GM as a key resource for composing academic discourse in EAP classes for advanced EFL learners(Sun & Shao 2011; Zhang, 2019; Zhong & Chen, 2015), yet most of the studies are limited to the categorization of students’ mistakes concerning one kind of GM usage, with the utmost attention paid to one representative type of nominalization—the transformation from verbs or adjectives to nouns (Zhang, 2016). Very few efforts have been made to systematically analyze the essential factors influencing the language choices made by the students in using various GMs, including nominalization and other forms of GMs. In other words, students’ metaphorical competence is not investigated comprehensively, the focus on using nominalization is not studied together with other grammatical metaphors. While according to SFL, language is viewed as a semiotic system, which considers the hierarchical organization of language system as important as the lexicon-grammatical expressions themselves (Halliday & Mathiessen, 2004). That means, in terms of metaphorical competence, not only the functioning mechanism of various GMs needs to be learned, but also the relationship between various GMs.
A Review of Research on Nominalization and Hedging

Research on nominalization began in the 1980s with the initiation of the analysis of syntactic structure from the perspective of GM (Halliday & Hasan, 1985). According to Halliday, metaphor is formed when the congruence is broken in language. When this rule is broken, a metaphorical expression takes its form. In this way, nominalization has become a potent source for GM since nominal phrases are employed to refer to process itself rather than the participants of the process. Ever since Halliday brought up the concept of GM in the 80s, there has been a growing tendency among Chinese scholars to investigate GM from different perspectives, including its nature, types, functions, ways of realization and its mechanism (Hu, 1997; Zhu & Yan, 2000). In the 21st century, due to the increased inter-disciplinary cooperation between linguistics, sociology, anthropology and psychology, the research on GM, especially nominalization, has gained more momentum, and scholars began to draw on theories from logical semantics and pragmatics to explain the formation and function of it (Martin, 1992; Lemke, 1998; Zhu, 1994). From the perspective of semantics, Zhu (2006) pointed out that nominalization provides a new cognitive perspective through re-categorization, which plays an essential role in condensing information in texts.

For example,

[1a] The driver drove the bus too fast down the hill, so the brakes failed.
[1b] The driver's over-rapid downhill driving of the bus caused brake failure. (Zhu, 2006:84)

1b is the in-congruent form of 1a, since both the three participants and the contextual meaning are turned into attributive components in 1b, the logic meaning is represented as the process, and the process is turned into participant through nominalization. The example given by Zhu (2006) clearly demonstrated the potential possibility existed in the tension between the lexico-grammatical level and semantic level. However, when it’s relatively easier to realize ideational functions through experience re-configuration and re-processing, as well as the substantialization of attributes, things become trickier when emotion and attitude get involved. The re-configuration achieved mainly through nominalization could weaken or even erase the interpersonal function of the language expressions. In order to compensate for the weakened interpersonal function, modality and evaluation are deployed, of which the usage of hedging accounts for a large portion (Tang, 2014). As an essential form of modal structure, hedging focuses on the realization of interpersonal function. The proper use of hedging can realize the transmission of interpersonal meaning through the refinement of the range and value of facts (Lakoff, 1975; Cai & Dai, 2002). As opposed to nominalization, the appropriate deployment of hedging can better reflect the interpersonal function of language without detracting the technicality of the academic discourse, and their use is part of pragmatic competence (Skelton, 1988).

The need to enhance communicative effectiveness of academic discourse by highlighting interpersonal function through hedging against the usage of nominalization is even more urgent when it comes to scientific papers. In scientific papers, writers usually need to make a critical review of the relevant prior literature to be able to establish their own research niche (Swales, 1990). While using nominalization allows the authors to generalize the opinions given by the previous studies with technicality and lexical density, it also tends to reduce negotiability of the text (Hyland, 1998), leaving readers no room for questioning but passively accept the
unassailable argument of the authors. However, it’s very likely for the seemingly authoritative argument fail to realize its effective communicative purpose, the reason of which is associated with the face-saving theory of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978). Politeness strategies help to negotiate and achieve the most favorable outcomes in conversations. Academic writing, despite being highly professional and technical, is still a way of communication, thus the same politeness strategies can also apply to academic discourse. That is, in order to make our criticism of the deficiencies in the previous work more acceptable, the affirmation of the previous efforts and the softening of your wordings in criticisms are required. One of the major ways in realizing that “softening” is through the appropriate use of hedging(Ying & Zhou, 2009).

**The Theoretical Complementarity between Nominalization and Hedging**

It has been mentioned above that although the use of nominalization enhances objectivity, authority and information density, it reduces communication effectiveness at the same time (Zhou & Liu, 2017). In other words, when nominalization is applied, the “ideational” function among the three meta-functions of language is amplified, and the “interpersonal” function is minimized. Based on the harmonious balance between the three meta-functions of language in SFL, it is logical to assume a possibility for expressions stressing different meta-functions to complement each other. One of the most common ways to enhance and compensate the weakened interpersonal function due to nominalization in academic discourse is by the adoption of proper hedging, since by making things less fuzzier, the negotiability of the sentences is usually increased (Lakoff, 1972). However, it needs to be clarified that the subjective interpersonal metaphors, which in a broader sense can be attributed to the group of hedges, are very rarely deployed in academic discourse, due to the fact that the accumulation of explicit subjective meanings foregrounded in a thesis is particularly detrimental to the construction of academically valued texts (Schleppegrell, 2005). The intricacy of using proper hedging increases the difficulty in cultivating the interpersonal metaphorical competence among EFL learners.

In the last two decades, research concerning authorial stance in academic discourse has laid more emphasis on the study of hedging (Hyland, 2005; Jiang, 2016). Different from providing necessary information or required “hard-evidence” to support arguments, which is usually realized through nominalization, hedging is deployed to avoid absoluteness in the meaning-making process, thus facilitating the effective communication of academic ideas. Briefly, if nominalization highlights the ideational function by condensing information and sending the clear message, then hedging is conducive to packaging the messages in a pleasant appearance so that it’s easier for readers to accept your arguments. Corpus-based research has demonstrated that hedging is frequently applied in academic discourse to express authors’ opinions and interpretations of the experimental statistics (Flowerdew, 1997). The diachronic study of the use of hedging in scientific papers conducted by Jiang (2016) also revealed an increasing amount of hedge uses, which reflects that authors in academia are attaching more importance to constructing their stance in academic discourse. However, despite the demand for a higher percentage of hedging, Chinese postgraduate EFL learners tend to overuse only a particular type of hedging, such as attitudinal type and the style-of-speaking kind, which is in lack of diversity (Xu, 2011). Besides, although relevant studies on hedging have started to pay attention to its pragmatic functions(Wang & Sun, 2018; Jiang, 2013), the research on the context of using hedging, and why in certain sentences the possibility and frequency of hedge-using is increased have not been thoroughly investigated.
Through the above discussion of prior works on nominalization and hedging in academic discourse, it is not difficult to observe that the misuse of nominalization and that of hedging in Chinese EFL learners’ academic writings share similar features, namely, the imbalanced deployment of various types, and the repeated overuse of certain lexicon-grammatical expressions, exposing students’ fragmented comprehension of the systemic functions of grammar, which can once again be attributed to the lack of integration of GM knowledge, or SFL theory in general, in EFL teaching practice. In addition, the sudden shift from grammar-centered pedagogy in China’s English education to Communicative Language Teaching also contributed to students’ inadequacy in appropriately using in-congruent forms (Campbell & Yong, 1993).

Apart from the similar ground shared by nominalization and hedging in the common errors regarding the deployment of GM among Chinese postgraduates, both the harmonious relationship between three language meta-functions stipulated by SFL (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013) and the requirement for effective communication (Xu, 2006) call for the investigation on the relationship between the two in academic discourses. SFL has made clear that nominalization and hedging are theoretically complementary in terms of linguistic meta-functions. Specifically, hedging is defined as a strategy or technique to soften the magnitude of the language and enhance acceptability of readers (Nikula, 1997), and hedging can also function as face-saving strategy as well as making things less fuzzier (Lakoff, 1972). Up to now, there have been correspondent corpus-based quantitative studies dedicated to the usage of nominalization or hedging in scientific papers both in China and abroad (Chen & Wen, 2020; Liardet & Black, 2020; Park, 2019; Liu & Chen, 2019; Yoon, 2018; Prasithrathsint, 2014), yet very few corpus-based statistical analyses have been conducted with respect to their possible co-occurrence in academic discourse.

**Methods**

**Corpus-based Methods**

The data for study were collected from sixty abstracts of scientific papers in leading academic journals, such as *Journal of Applied Physics, Information & Computation, Applied Surface Science, Physics in Medicine and Biology*, were selected to form a mini-corpus. The disciplines mainly include material science, engineering design, computer science technology and automation. The number of sentences involving nominalization and those involve hedging in abstracts were counted and a linear regression analysis was conducted between the two groups of data in SPSS to see whether there is positive correlation between the two. Then the frequency of the co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging within academic writing and non-academic writing was compared with the help of BNC. After that, the reasons for their co-occurrence were analyzed within the SFL framework along with typical examples retrieved from the corpus.

**Research Procedures**

The research could be divided into four main steps: firstly the author identified the typical nominal affixes including -ance, -ence, acy, -tion, -ment, -ness, -ity, etc. and used these nominal affixes to search for nominalization in the mini-corpus of abstracts. The representative nominal affixes as well as the nominalization could be found in the following Table one. After that, the author has manually filtered the searching results, excluding nouns referring to concrete objects, retaining only nominalization that are GMs.
The Low Co-occurrence of Nominalization and Hedging

Table 1. The number and percentage of nominalization in the mini-corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominal Affixes</th>
<th>Meanings</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-ance, -ence</td>
<td>Meaning: &quot;nature, condition, process, total, degree&quot;</td>
<td>endurance, importance, obedience</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14.69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-acy, -ency</td>
<td>Meaning: &quot;nature, state, situation, behaviour, process&quot;</td>
<td>frequency, urgency, efficiency</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ity (bility)</td>
<td>Meaning: &quot;action, nature, state, degree&quot;</td>
<td>possibility, feasibility</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>24.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ion, -sion, -tion, -ation, -ition</td>
<td>Representing &quot;process of behaviour, result, situation&quot;</td>
<td>action, solution, conclusion, destruction, expression, correction</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>39.42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ment</td>
<td>Meaning: &quot;behaviour, state, process, means and results&quot;</td>
<td>treatment, movement, judgment, punishment, argument</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-ness</td>
<td>Meaning: &quot;nature, state, degree&quot;</td>
<td>goodness, kindness, tiredness, friendliness</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5.37%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same searching method was employed in the identification of hedging in the collected abstracts. Different forms of hedging were retrieved according to the classification criteria of hedging at the vocabulary level given by Zhu & Xia (2011): including modal auxiliary verbs, such as *may, could, should, would, will, propose*; modal adverbs and adjectives like *possible (ly), probable (ly), often, frequent (ly)*; and some modal nouns, such as *assumption, argument, claim*. The filtered hedging can be seen in the following Table two. The searched hedges are further categorized according to the division of hedge types given by Prince et al. (1982), including the adjectives, adverbs and noun phrases, as well as the lexical verbs that meet the semantic and pragmatic functions of hedging, and the adjectives, adverbs and nouns are further divided into two types: approximates and diffusers. The other categorizations of hedges proposed by Hyland (1998) and Yang (2011) also follow the basic model established by Prince, including *cognitive modal verbs, cognitive adjectives, nouns and adverbs, as well as cognitive verbs*.
Table 2. The categorization of hedging found in the mini-corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modal verbs</strong></td>
<td>will, must, could, may, might...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjectives, adverbs and nouns</strong></td>
<td>really, eminently, enormously, especially, exceedingly, extremely, especially, majorly, vitally, particularly, essentially, critical, necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Approximators</strong></td>
<td>almost, fairly, nearly, practically, comparatively, relatively, most</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diffusers</strong></td>
<td>quite, completely, enough, entirely, exactly, perfectly, soundly, thoroughly, totally, entirely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lexical verbs</strong></td>
<td>probably, likely, possibly, presumably, assumably, doubtlessly, seemingly, apparently, evidently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of sentences containing nominalization and the number of sentences containing hedging were calculated, and the original descriptive statistics for the 60 abstracts were presented in Table three.

Table 3. General descriptive statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive statistics</th>
<th>Average value</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sentences with nominalization</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.758</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences with hedging</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.102</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The linear regression analysis between the sentences with nominalization and those with hedging will be shown in the results section. And after the SPSS analysis of the statistics, sentences that contain both nominalization and hedging were retrieved from scientific and technical academic texts (ac:tech, engin) and non-academic scientific and technological texts (non_ac:tech_engin) of the BNC corpus, and the frequency of their co-occurrence was compared.

The last research step is devoted to the tentative reason analysis of their co-occurrence within the framework of systemic functional grammar, paying special attention to interpersonal pragmatics, and typical example sentences will be analyzed centering on the concepts of negotiability and thematicity.

The Correlation Analysis of Nominalization and Hedging in SPSS

A total of 179 sentences using nominalization were identified in sixty English abstracts, for a total of 279 nominalization. The total number of selected abstract sentences was 441, and the sentences containing nominalization accounted for 40.5% of the total amount, which suggests that nominalization is frequently deployed in scientific papers. The total number of sentences
with hedging is 81, accounting for 18.3%. The total amount was lower than the sentences with nominalization, indicating that there does not exist a one-on-one co-occurrence between the two, but this data does not rule out the possibility that their frequency of use at the textual level is positively correlated. The data were imported into SPSS.26 for correlation matrix analysis, a T-test for the samples, and a linear regression analysis, the number of sentences with nominalization was set as the dependent variable, and the number of sentences with hedging as the predictor variable. The results were shown in the following tables.

Table. 4 *Pearson correlation coefficient square matrix*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sentences with nominalization</th>
<th>Sentences with hedging</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson correlation</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences with</td>
<td>.713</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hedging</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance (single tail)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences with</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nominalization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences with</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hedging</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table.4 reveals that the significance of Pearson correlation coefficients is high (P<0.01), which indicates a significant positive correlation between the number of sentences with nominalization and the number of sentences with hedging.

Table.5 *T test results of the regression model*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Distinctiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eeturn</td>
<td>92.704</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>92.704</td>
<td>59.990</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>89.629</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1.545</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>182.333</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent variable: the number of sentences with nominalization
b. Predictor: (constant), the number of sentences with hedging

c. Model 1: $\text{Sentences with hedging}$

Table.6 Regression coefficient and its significance test result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>UN-standardized coefficient</th>
<th>Standardized coefficient</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Distinctiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><em>(Constant)</em></td>
<td>1.298</td>
<td>.255</td>
<td>5.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>with</td>
<td>1.137</td>
<td>.147</td>
<td>7.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hedging</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.713</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent variable: the number of sentences with nominalization
Model test results in the linear regression analysis of Table.5 and Table.6 show that the number of sentences with nominalization, which is the dependent variable a in the above tables, has a significant effect on the predictor variable b (the number of sentences with hedging) (Distinctiveness < 0.01). Correlation analysis in Table.4 shows that there is a significant positive correlation between the two variables (a and b). Through the statistical analysis, the results reflect that the number of sentences using hedging in abstracts increases with the increase of sentences with nominalization. In other words, there is a positive correlation between the usage of nominalization and hedging in abstracts of scientific papers, and it’s reasonable to hypothesize a pattern for their co-occurrence in academic writing.

The Comparison of Co-occurrence Frequency Using BNC Corpus

The correlation analysis in the section above confirmed the co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging at the textual level; that is, the number of nominalization and the number of hedging employed in abstracts are positively related. The second research question of this study is to prove that their co-occurrence also exists at the sentence level, or clausal level. The BNC corpus was used to verify their co-occurrence at the clausal level. Specifically, the typical suffixes of nominalization and hedging were used to construct the search formula: "[? + [zation, sation, ition]" (for nominalization), and "*ly_A V0" stands for hedging, the frequency of their co-occurrence are searched both from the scientific writing corpus (ac:tech_engin) and non-academic text (non_ac:tech Engin). The corpus search results were listed in the following two tables.

Table.7 Comparison of search results in the collocation of nominalization and hedging in BNC corpora

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Hits</th>
<th>Texts</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ac:tech_engin</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.1120%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non_ac:tech_engin</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>0.0422%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first 100 sample sentences were selected randomly in the academic writing corpus to check whether the adverbs ending with “-ly” in the corpus search indeed belong to the domain of hedging. After the manual screening, we found that there were 27 sentences containing adverbs ending in “-ly” that were not hedging, including sentences using modifying adverbs such as “inversely, secondly, analogously, consequently, automatically and experimentally”. However, although the 27 sentences with nominalization lack adverbial hedging ending with “-ly”, 16 sentences contained other forms of hedging, such as adverbs: “sometimes, often” in Eg. 1 and 2; modal auxiliary verbs: “would, may, must, could” in Eg.3, 4, 5 and 6; adjectives: “many” in Example seven; nouns: “probability” in Eg. 8; verbs: “assume, propose” in Example nine and ten; and hedging in the form of an adverbial phrase: “to a certain extent” in Eg. 11.

Eg.1: The character ‘?’ , or ‘wild card’ character (mentioned previously in section 3.4.1) is sometimes given as output from the pattern recognizer for letter positions where the recognition could not match with any known character encoding.

Eg.2: The coefficient of expansion shows a pronounced peak, similar to that observed experimentally and often confused with a first-order transition.
Eg.3: It was noted at that time that there was low-level information technology utilization in the departments; consequently, the cost of implementation would be a significant factor when considering the design of either system.

Eg.4: Consequently, recognition systems may not show the speed, adaptability and flexibility of the human system until they do.

Eg.5: The size and position of this bolt and hole are as yet undeclared; the only specification is that they must fit together when drawn, so a hole of the wrong size or in the wrong position will be automatically reported.

Eg.6: For example, domains that are closely related may have a large number of collocations in common, such that the recognition of one could be facilitated by a dictionary taken from the other.

Eg.7: Many products contain mechanisms that are interfaced to electronics and with the advances in miniaturization of these products, it is only the special-purpose machines which possess the skills to manufacture and assemble them.

Eg.8: Transition probabilities p(1) top(4) in Table 6.2 are calculated by counting the number of times the business executive stayed in city a and subsequently (i) stayed the next day in the city a, (ii) moved to city b, (iii) moved to city c, (iv) moved to city d.

Eg.9: So far it has been assumed that levels of processing within the system operate serially, from the pattern recognition to the lexical lookup, then onto the syntactic and semantic analysis.

Eg.10: In its original form waveform detection was based on the modulating effect on the phase current of the motional voltage (which in turn is a function of rotor position), but more recently a scheme using the variation of phase inductance with rotor Position has been proposed.

Eg.11: To a certain extent, this process may be seen as part of the more established technology known as OCR (Optical Character Recognition), but OCR has traditionally been associated exclusively with machine printed text rather than handwriting.

(All the sample example sentences are retrieved from BNC corpus)

Therefore, the co-occurrence frequency of the nominalization and hedging in academic discourse excluding non-hedging is 0.997%, which is still much higher than the 0.0422% frequency rate in non-academic texts. The corpus search thus also confirmed a high frequency of co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging at the clausal level.

A Tentative Reason Analysis of the Co-occurrence between Nominalization and Hedging in Scientific Papers

Combined with the example sentences with nominalization and hedging of English academic abstracts, the reasons for their co-occurrence are analyzed from negotiability and thematicity within the framework of Systemic Functional Grammar(SFG). From the perspective of functional analysis, negotiability is reduced when the independent clause is downgraded to a dependent one, and the negotiability of non-finite dependent clauses is even further reduced. For example, by changing the sentence “They arrived after finishing the security check” into “Their arrival after finishing the security check”, the second non-finite dependent clause leaves less room for negotiation compared with the first independent clause, because the nominalization of the process “arrived” has made the “arriving process” an assumed fact, which reduces the negotiability of the clause. As can be seen from the example, nominalization plays a crucial role in the process of reducing the negotiability of clauses. Another concept directly related to negotiability is "distance". A decrease in the negotiability of clauses means that the distance...
between the author and the reader enlarges. The professionalism and sense of distance of academic writing are mainly achieved through nominalization. Compound noun phrases formed through nominalization can meet the need to convey high-density information in scientific and technological texts, but to a certain extent a large number of nominalization has become a discourse marker of power and status (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013). It is therefore necessary to adopt the modal structure of interpersonal functions to minimize the side-effect of nominalization.

**The Relationship between Value of Hedging and the Number of Nominalizations**

As one of the main realizations of modality, the use of hedging in complex sentences can compensate for the negotiability reduction caused by nominalization. Not only does hedging refine the process by the degree of possibility and the scope of influence, they also increase the semantic potential and modal meaning. The primary forms of hedging are adverbs or adverbial phrases, and hedging that refines the sentence from degree to a large extent overlap with modal adjunct, which is one of the three main types of adjuncts according to the adjunct categorization in SFL (circumstantial adjuncts, modal adjuncts and conjunctive adjuncts), the proportion of sentences containing hedging with varying degrees is listed in the following Table 8; and the reason analysis for the co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging of degree will be discussed in the following part of this section. Another category of hedging refers to those that limit the **scope** of certain process, which corresponds to the conjunctive adjuncts in SFL. The reason analysis for the co-occurrence between this category of hedging and nominalization will be investigated in the next section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hedging</th>
<th>Possibility</th>
<th>Intensity</th>
<th>Usuality</th>
<th>Obligation</th>
<th>Inclination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td>37.8%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above Table eight classified a total of 82 sentences containing hedging filtered in the abstract of scientific papers in English. It can be seen that Possibility and Intensity are the most frequent forms of hedging in scientific papers. It is also in consistence with the internal logic of scientific research, since the determination of research questions in the beginning part of the paper usually requires a hypothesis of possibility and the emphasis of topic significance. Besides, the simulation experiments are carried out to verify the effectiveness of a proposed solution, which also requires a higher percentage of intensity hedging.

The following analysis takes the possibility hedge as an example, and further divides the example sentences into four situations according to the subjectivity and explicitness of the expression. The terms subjectivity and explicitness originate from Halliday's categorized analysis modal adjuncts. According to Halliday and Matthiessen(2013), the value of modal judgment can be divided into **high, median** and **low**, and its orientation consists of **subjectivity** and **objectivity**, **explicitness** and **implicitness**, which could compose four choices in modalization and modulation, namely **subjective implicit**, **subjective explicit**, **objective implicit**, and **objective explicit**. The co-occurrence between hedging and nominalization will be analyzed in each situation with example sentences from the selected abstracts.
Situation (1): Subjective and explicit, the form of the sentence usually can be divided into mental clause + idea clause.

a. (Mental clause) This work suggests that + (Idea clause) there could be an expanded role for Cherenkov imaging as a tool to improve treatment protocols efficiently and as a potential verification tool for routine monitoring of unique patient treatments. (H-l^N4)

b. (Mental clause) Rietveld refinement of x-ray diffraction (XRD) data revealed that + (Idea clause) the single-phase, hexagonal wurtzite structure doesn't include any impurity phase. (H-m^N2)

c. (Mental clause) Dose recalculations of clinical proton fields showed that + (Idea clause) metal artefacts cause range errors up to 6 mm distal to regions affected by CT artefacts. (H-h^N1)

(Note: “H” in the bracket stands for “hedging”, “l, m and h” refer to “low possibility value, medium possibility value and high possibility value”; “N” represents nominalization, and “N4” means that there four nominalization in the sentence. The analyzing results of sentences of different situations are presented in the following Table nine)

The above three sentences are all subjective explicit expressions in terms of modality. The subjectivity is reflected through the usage of verbs like “suggest, reveal, and show”. Those verbal hedging in the mental clauses are employed to refine the degree of possibility of the following idea clauses, but due to the variance in the degree of possibility value of the verbs themselves, the degree of refinement on the possibility of the second idea clause also varies. For example, the use of “suggest” in sentence “a” exhibits a relatively lower possibility value compared with “reveal” in sentence “b” and “show” in sentence “c”.

Based on the principle that the a harmonious balance should be reached between the ideational and the interpersonal meta-functions of language, when the possibility value of hedging is low, the credibility or authority of the sentence shall be enhanced by strengthening the ideational function to achieve the purpose of persuasion in academic writing. Nominalization, as the primary source of conceptual GM (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013), is used in the above example sentences to compensate for the low possibility value. For sentence “a”, where the possibility value is the lowest among all three sentences, there are four nominalized expressions applied, namely "Cherenkov imaging", "treatment protocol", "verification ", and "patient treatments", to make up for the lower possibility of the “verbal hedge” : suggest. Accordingly, we can find the co-occurrence between nominalization and “verbal hedging” in the other two example sentences; and the number of nominalization in sentence "b" is fewer than that in "a", i.e. "refinement" and "impurity", two nominalized expressions are used in sentence “b” and only one nominalization- "recalculations" can be found in sentence “c”, of which the verbal hedge “show” expresses the highest value of possibility.

Through the analysis of the above three example sentences that are subjective and explicit, it can be summarized that there not only exists co-occurrence of hedging and nominalization, but the number of applied nominalized expressions is also inversely correlated to the possibility value of hedging. What’s left to be verified is whether the same inverse correlation can also be found in the other three situations of modal adjuncts.

Situation (2): Subjective and implicit modal structure, achieved through modal auxiliaries.

d. The presence of titanium hardware near the tumour may affect the dosimetric accuracy of
In subjective and implicit sentences, we can find the same co-occurrence pattern between hedging like modal auxiliaries and nominalization. When the possibility value is low, such as "may" in sentence "d", correspondingly, more nominalized expressions are adopted in the sentence. In sentence "e" and "f", the possibility value of the modal auxiliary verbs "could" and "would" is relatively high, and fewer nominalized expressions are used, so as to achieve the balance between conceptual and interpersonal function. The same inverse correlation between the possibility value of hedging and the number of applied nominalized expressions can also be observed in the following Situation (3), when the sentences are objective and explicit.

**Situation (3):** The objective and explicit sentence, the modal structure was extracted into a projective clause.

g. In polycrystalline metals, it is taken for granted that the majority of grains are plastically deforming at the macroscopic yield stress. (H-l^N2) 
h. However, it has been shown that fibres may also have negative effects on some properties of concrete, such as the workability, which get reduced with the addition of steel fibres. (H-m^N2) 
i. It may be ascertained that a design change significantly reducing motor cooling would result in elevated bearing temperature, marginal lubrication, premature bearing failures, and reduced motor reliability. (H-l^N3) 

The same inverse correlation is also demonstrated in Situation (4), when the sentences are both objective and implicit. In addition, it can be seen from example sentence “k” and sentence “l” that, when the possibility value of the hedging is similar, the number of nominalized expressions applied in the sentence tends to be the same too. The difference in possibility value between “likely” and “possibly” is not peculiar, correspondingly, the number of nominalized expressions are the same for these two sentences.

**Situation (4):** Objective and implicit sentences, achieved through modal adverbs.

j. Managers have probably sanctioned the purchase of computer hardware and software but have not involved themselves with their use. (H-h^N1) 
k. Together, these are likely to drive an increase in the number of future clinical studies and the range of cancer sites in which US motion management is applied. (H-m^N2) 
l. Facilities such as these will allow the engineer to possibly gain deeper systems understanding and through this to obtain greater diagnostic certainty. (H-l^N2) 

After analyzing the co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging in the above four various situations, it can be deduced that there is a pattern for inverse correlation between the possibility value of hedging and the number of applied nominalized expressions in the sentence. Moreover, this inverse correlation is not influenced by the various forms of the hedging; the pattern has been verified in various situations with different forms of hedging, including “verbal hedging”, “modal auxiliaries”, “modal adverbs” and “projective clauses”. The inverse correlation between the possibility value of hedging and the number of nominalized expressions used in sentences of various situations is summarized in the following Table.9.
Table 9  
Inverse correlation between possibility value of hedging and number of nominalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possibility value of hedging</th>
<th>Number of Nominalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subjective &amp; Explicit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H-high</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M-medium</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L-low</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Influence of Themacity on the Co-occurrence between Nominalization and Hedging of Scope

Guided by the balancing principle between ideational function and interpersonal function of language, the above section has investigated the co-occurrence between hedging and nominalization based on the categorization of modal adjuncts. The following part of the paper will investigate the relationship between hedging and nominalization depending on the position of the nominalization in message clauses, in other words, whether the location of nominalization in a message clause, in theme or rheme, could have different influence on the correlating pattern between hedging and nominalization. As stated in the introduction to functional grammar (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2013), the discourse is usually considered unmarked when nominalization is located in the theme, and it belongs to marked discourses when it’s positioned in the rheme, and the marked discourse normally has an enhanced ideational function. According to the balancing principle of language meta-functions, an intensified ideational function needs to be matched with a highlighted interpersonal function to maintain the balance, which is also claimed as related to the balance of semantic force by Talmy (1988).

When nominalization is in the theme of the clause, it is unmarked and the ideational function is not intentionally strengthened. Thus it is not particularly necessary to use hedging with high generality value, or relatively weak scope-refinement, to reach a broader interpersonal influence. For example, in the following sentence “m”, the primary process - “addition”(nominalization) is located in the theme of the sentence, which is considered as unmarked, and it can be seen that the hedge used in the rheme is “particularly”, which ranks low in the generality value scale.
Sentence m.
Theme: The addition of fibres in high-performance concrete
Rheme: has been proven to improve the mechanical properties of concrete, particularly the TS, flexural strength, and ductility performance.

Sentence m. shows that when nominalization is located in theme, it’s more likely for hedging with low generality value to appear in the rheme; whether there is difference when nominalization is located in the rhemes will be demonstrated through the analysis of following example sentences. When nominalization is in the rheme, it is marked and the ideational function is strengthened. The balancing principle of language meta-functions would require a hedge of higher generality value to magnify the interpersonal influence. And the following Sentence n. and o. further proved this argument. In the following sentences “n” and “o”, primary nominalization such as “modifications”, “registration” and “fusion” all appear in the rhemes, which is considered as marked and would enhance ideational function. Correspondingly, scope
hedging with higher generality value are used, such as “some” and “most”, enhancing the interpersonal function to counterbalance the amplified ideational function, so to achieve coordinated balance between meta-functions of language.

Sentence n.
Theme: We present
Rheme: some of the reported surface and bulk modifications of the scaffolds, which positively affected cell performance.
Sentence o.
Theme: Most treatment planning systems
Rheme: support some form of image registration and fusion to allow the use of multimodality.

In the following Sentence “q”, two parallel clauses are connected by “and”. The first clause has nominalization within the theme, and the only scope hedge found in the clause is “particularly”, which has low generality value. While in the second clause, nominalization is embedded in the rheme, then the scope hedge with high generality value- “some” is applied. Sentence “q”. is also in consistent with the hypothesized pattern for the co-occurrence between hedging and nominalization: when nominalization is located in the theme, there’s a higher possibility that hedging with low generality value will appear in the clause; when nominalization is the rheme, then hedging with high generality value are more likely to be found in the clause. The deep-rooted reason for this co-occurrence pattern also dates back to the balancing principle between conceptual and interpersonal functions proposed in SFL.

Sentence q.
Theme1: The addition of fibres, particularly steel fibres,
Rheme1: due to their conductivity leads to a significant reduction in the electrical resistivity of the concrete.
Theme2: and it
Rheme2: also results in some reduction in the chloride penetration resistance of the concrete

Conclusion and Implications
This article has applied both quantitative and qualitative methods in verifying the hypothesis that nominalization and hedging tend to co-occur in scientific papers, abstracts in particular, both at the textual level and clausal level. Based on the min-corpus made of 60 academic abstracts of leading international journals written by native English speakers, we found that the number of sentences with nominalization is positively correlated to the number of sentences containing hedging through a linear regression analysis. Besides, the BNC corpus search has further proven that the frequency of the co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging at the clausal level in scientific papers is significantly higher than that of non-academic texts. After the corpus-based statistical analysis, a tentative reason analysis of their co-occurrence at clausal level was carried out under the coordinated balance principle of language meta-functions in SFL. The example sentences were analyzed in terms of negotiability and thematicity, and it is revealed that the number of nominalization in clauses is inversely correlated to the possibility value of the hedging; in addition, the position of nominalization in a message clause (in theme or rhyme) has impact on the generality value of hedging, theme-oriented nominalization usually indicates hedging with lower generality value, and rhyme-oriented nominalization tends to co-occur with hedging of high generality value.
Language is considered as an evolving integrated system made of conceptual, interpersonal and textual meta-functions in SFL. In terms of academic discourse, which is featured by authority and information density, it is necessary to appropriately highlight interpersonal function to dilute the side-effect of enhanced ideational functions resulted from the increased percentage of nominalization- the key resource to reach and maintain the academic authoritarian characteristics. The approaches to amplify interpersonal functions include the use of degree hedging and scope hedge to increase negotiability, balance thematicity, and finally achieve coordinated balance between language meta-functions. The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging in scientific papers could lend supporting evidence to these arguments.

Besides, by trying to explain the ideational and interpersonal functions of lexicon-grammatical structure, by highlighting the interactions between authors of the scientific papers and the readers through zooming in on the meaning production and interpretation procedures, this article has brought some inspirations to the traditional English grammar teaching in EAP teaching in China. The analysis of the linguistic meta-functions and the disclosure of the interpersonal meanings of the co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging can give students a deeper understanding of the functions and interactions between Grammatical Metaphors and the author's deep-lying communicative purpose underlying the superficial form, providing a cognitive-pragmatic angle to interpret the embedded interactions between scientific paper writers and their potential readers. In this way, it’s hoped that Chinese postgraduates who are under the pressure of international publications can be released from the cognitive load in memorizing all the fixed sentence patterns in academic discourse, and can really improve both their metaphorical competence and the capability in producing academically valued texts, which is the key in joining the international academic community of certain professional domain. Furthermore, by looking into the relationship between various common GMs in academic discourse, the current study provides a new route to deepen the integration of SFL theory in EFL instruction in China. However, this article’s implication in pedagogy is limited by the size of the corpus, the number of analyzed example sentences, and it is merely devoted to a tentative reason analysis of the possible co-occurrence between nominalization and hedging in abstracts within the theoretical framework of SFL, more profound practical analyses of various patterns in academic writing guided by theories in cognitive linguistics, sociolinguistics, as well as pragmatics are needed.

Acknowledgment:
This paper is funded by the project “International Communication English Curriculum Design Based on Critical Thinking and Culture Studies”(5645006) of NUAA

About the Author:
Dr. Xiao Liu received her Ph.D. in linguistics from Lomonosov Moscow State University. She has been teaching at the College of Foreign Languages in Nanjing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics since 2016. Her primary research interests lie in metaphor, discourse analysis, and English for Academic Purposes. She was funded by the university to investigate EAP teaching for postgraduates. ORCID iD:0000-0001-6365-1191
References
Contemporary research in philosophical logic and linguistic semantics (pp. 221-271). Springer, Dordrecht.


1023/h.2018.03.014.
Uncovering New Paths to Adaptation: A Case Study of Malaysian English as a Second Language Pre-service Teachers

Taghreed El Masry
English and Literature Department, Al Israa' University
Gaza, Palestine
Correspondence Author: nijim2@hotmail.com

Eman I Alzaanin
Faculty of Languages and Translation
King Khalid University
Abha, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Received: 12/23/2020 Accepted: 3/4/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
This study aims to explore how English as a Second Language ESL Pre-Service Teachers (PSTs) employ adaptation strategies in response to the surrounding constraining context to develop their professional identities. The research question is "How do pre-service teachers (PSTs) employ adaptation strategies to develop their professional identity (PI) during their simulated teaching class and practicum?". Qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews and classroom observation from PSTs in a Malaysian university and public secondary schools in Kuala Lumpur. Findings showed that the positive notions of belonging to a Community of Practice (CoP) proved to be applicable in the simulated teaching class context, so PSTs used their adaptation process of observation-experimentation and evaluation to attempt different teaching practices. Nonetheless, the positive notions of the CoP were inapplicable in the teaching practicum context. Hence, PSTs struggled to construct their Professional Identity (PI) and had to alter their adaptation strategies to negotiate PI construction. The study concludes with some recommendations for further use. Program designers need to consider social interaction and integration within the professional context. That could enable adaptation processes to enhance PSTs' PI development.

Keywords: Adaptation strategies, English as a second language, pre-service teachers, possible selves, professional identity

Cite as: El Masry, T., & Alzaanin, E. I (2021). Uncovering New Paths to Adaptation: A Case Study of Malaysian English as a Second Language Pre-service Teachers. Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 421-442. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.28
Introduction:

Teacher Preparation Program (TPP) is crucial in PSTs' professional life (Grow, 2011). It provides the necessary environment for PSTs to translate theory into practice, to form a PI and to prepare them to move on smoothly to their future career as teachers (Friesen & Besley, 2013; Harun, 2019). However, TPP still face the challenge of preparing PSTs to be effective teachers who are able to cope with the changing contexts of schools (Cooper & He, 2012). Notably, PSTs find that moving from a university to a school context is a stage full of tensions and conflicts. Well-developed PI will serve as basis to handle and interact with the continuous changes in educational sites/policies (Afrianto, 2015).

Timoštšuk and Ugaste (2010), Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) highlighted that learning to teach is experimental. While going through the simulated teaching and practicum stages, PSTs are offered different possible selves (i.e., teacher images and roles such as knowledgeable, compassionate, innovative, follower, conformer, etc.) to negotiate and from which to select what will be part of their core teacher identity or what to discard. Previous and recent literary work was sought to understand what factors contribute to, or hinder the process of teacher identity development (e.g., Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Khalid, 2014; Salinas & Ayala, 2018) and student teachers' changing beliefs regarding the teaching profession during their teaching practice (e.g., Maaranen & Stenberg, 2020; Van der Wal-Maris, Beijaard, Schellings, & Geldens, 2019). However, rare are the studies that examined how PSTs experiment with their different possible selves during their teaching practice.

Trainees in different fields are expected to have adequate chances to "encounter, enact, and evaluate their possible selves" (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008, p. 51), which would facilitate the process of developing professional identities despite the obstacles encountered in the practice setting. Nonetheless, the case of PSTs is complicated further. Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) admitted that tensions in teacher preparation are greater due to the differences in value systems between what universities hope to prepare and what is expected at school sites. PSTs may not be given opportunities to try out possible selves and obtain good feedback to enable developing their professional identities (Hamman, Gosselin, Romano, & Bunuan, 2010; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) contended that the PSTs' case still needs further investigation to express ideas and perceptions regarding professional identity development. Hence, the current study investigates how ESL PSTs adapt within the context of the journey of becoming teachers.

This study can contribute to PST's research by providing detailed descriptive accounts of how PSTs develop professional identities utilizing their adaptation processes (Izadinia, 2013). In addition, understanding PSTs' PI construction during TPP can better help program designers to base their programs on activities that enhance and support PI development at universities and practicum sites (Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004; Olsen, 2008). Researchers, such as Beijaard et al., 200; Izadinia, 2013 and Lerse, 2013, argue that PSTs' PI development can directly impact PSTs’ future decisions to join and remain in the teaching profession, as well as their practices and motivation to teach and seek development. Hence, focusing PSTs’ attention on the adaptation strategies on which they can rely to develop their identities can inform professional development programs. This study attempted to answer the following research question:
How do pre-service teachers (PSTs) employ adaptation strategies to develop their professional identity (PI) during their simulated teaching class and practicum?

**Literature Review**

This study is framed by Cross and Markus’ (1991) conceptions of possible selves and Ibarra’s (1999) adaptation process. Cross and Markus (1991) proposed that possible selves are psychological resources (i.e., motivators and defenders of the now self) to explain the continuous changes across life. The social and cultural contexts around a person direct them to decide what selves to keep and develop, what selves to discard and for what selves to opt. Cross and Markus (1991) indicated that “in the process of successfully negotiating the changes and transitions, individuals must construct possible selves that help motivate toward desired ends and away from undesired outcomes” (p. 234). The possible selves are standards that help calibrate the professional identity to match personal and social context expectations (Ibarra, 1999).

Individuals handle any shifts and changes in their lives utilizing their adaptation process which represents the critical part of the cognitive development. Through the adaptation process, individuals experience new roles (here, possible selves) and encounter new knowledge upon changing sociocultural contexts. Their adaptation process can help them take in new knowledge, form new ideas and change existing one and adopt new behaviors that make them better prepared to deal with changes and complexities they face in the world around them (Berger, 2017).

An influential study that was conducted by Ibarra (1999) forms the basis of integrating a social and psychological approach to investigate PI construction within a CoP. Going through a cycle of trying out, revising and rectifying the possible selves can help construct new identities (Ibarra, 1999). As long as this process takes place within a Supported Community of Practice (SCoP), PSTs may have the chance to negotiate their identities to shift from a student to a teacher (Oruç, 2013).

Within the developmental framework of constructing PI in a SCoP, three adaptation strategies are investigated. Through the adaptation strategies of observation, experimentation and evaluation, Ibarra (1999) suggested that using the possible selves concept can guide novices to construct their own PI (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). Though it appears to be a linear process, the cycles are recursive as repetition will continue under the effect of one's experience within the social context (Ibarra, 1999).

The first strategy of observation is aimed to build "a repertoire of possible selves." This repertoire is affected by student teachers' prior experience as school students, their experience with university courses and with the simulated teaching course and practicum stage (Chong, Ling, & Chuan, 2011). The observation strategy includes two sub-strategies: (1) role prototyping and (2) identity matching. Novice practitioners observe professionals in action to learn more about role model traits. PSTs may have their supervisors, instructors, cooperating teachers and classmates teach in front of them. They can compare and contrast different teacher roles or practices to decide what role model to follow in their teaching. Once novices build role models, they decide on the feasibility, attractiveness and suitability of those roles to their own identities and personal traits (Ibarra, 1999).
The second strategy is experimenting with possible selves, which may be provisional or transitional selves. Two types of strategies characterize this stage: (1) imitation and (2) true-to-self strategies. Imitation strategies include (a) wholesale imitation, in which a learner copies the model style without much amendment. Imitation strategies also include (b) selective imitation, which implies being eclectic in selecting bits of identities from different models to create one's own style. Observing different role models including those of their supervisors, instructors, cooperating teachers and classmates may enable moving more confidently to selective imitation to create their own PI. True-to-self strategies are used next by learners to craft a provisional self that corresponds to their authentic personalities. The provisional self will "be refined with experience and internalized as enduring aspects of a coherent professional identity" (Ibarra, 1999, p. 778). Chou, Shen, Hsiao, Shen, and Shen (2019) contends that "self-adjustment affects the individual's response to the environment" (p.530), hence resulting in improving their teaching performance. Chou et al. (2019) reported in their study that "the pre-service teachers of the experimental group showed significant improvement in the areas of curriculum development and design, pro-teacher communication and professional leadership in the cross-disciplinary teaching specialization" (530).

At this stage, teacher educators need to be aware that exposing PSTs to 'existing routines' rather than 'new alternatives' may limit their growth. This may result in constructing a thin repertoire of selves (e.g., styles and tactics) to select from during the practice stage (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). Alelaimat, Ihmeideh, and Alkhawaldeh (2020) reported that their participants were dissatisfied "with their preparation for technology integration into classroom" (p. 299). They believed that they needed more exposure to innovating strategies to learn "more about technology integration in practice, and how to engage children in activities using technology and digital media" (p. 300). On the other hand, Ledger, Ersozlu, and Fischetti (2019) concluded in their study that exposing PSTs to "a high level of teaching quality" (p. 2) improved their self-efficacy to "plan, teach and assess" (p.2) their performance.

The last stage is evaluation using internal and external feedback (implicit or explicit) in the learning community to decide on an acceptable PI. Teacher educators and supervisors are recommended to handle this stage cautiously. Conformity to the practicum environment and the power authority within it may not construct the agents of change aspired by TPP (Fairbanks et al., 2010).

Based on the previous discussion of Ibrarra's, Cross' and Markus' conceptions of possible selves and the adaptation cycle within the community of practice of TPP, Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) provided a model depicting the different interfering elements within the SCoP in a TPP. More importantly, the model shows the three stages in the adaptation process that learners follow to advance in participation and develop their PI. It also indicates that learners repeat the cycle of interaction with the context, try possible selves and adjust provisional selves to craft their PI. This model will inform the findings presentation and discussion in this study.
Methodology

Since the intention is to describe, understand and interpret (Merriam, 2009) the students’ journey of constructing their identities as ESL teachers utilizing their adaptation processes, the qualitative case study is a more realistic lens for this research. The data gathered will lead to the emergence of theory (or model) construction, however crude it may be. That model corresponds to the peculiarities of the context and people studied since the research relies on the participants' views of the situation under study (Creswell, 2009).

Participants

In the educational context of Malaysia, the status of English is controversial, and this has led to many changes in educational policy, which swings between using English as a medium of education and diminishing it to merely a school subject (Darmi & Albion, 2013). In an effort to cater to the needs of a multicultural and multiethnic population, the Malaysian Ministry of Education has formulated a philosophy of teacher education that emphasizes teacher quality (Jamil, Abd. Razak, Raju, & Mohamed, 2011). Training colleges and universities are expected to prepare teachers to be able to realize the philosophy and survive the continuous curriculum changes (Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025: Executive Summary, 2012). Teachers with a clear and solid professional identity can adapt to the tensions and turbulence occurring in the school context due to reforms imposed through the Malaysia visionary policy (Goh & Matthews, 2011; Khalid, 2014).

*Figure 1. Professional Education Program and its Interfering Elements (Adopted from Ronfeldt and Grossman, 2008, p. 43)*
This study was conducted at a public research Malaysian university and public secondary schools in Kuala Lumpur. The TESL program integrates theoretical knowledge of English (skills and literature) with professional aspects (practical knowledge of classroom teaching practices). The program aims to prepare competent and skilled teachers in teaching English. Being good communicators in English with excellent social skills is another objective of the TESL program. Such skills could help PSTs negotiate their understanding and development in the professional context of the simulated teaching course, the practicum and future career.

From the end of the second year, PSTs are given three consecutive opportunities to link theory with practice. Firstly, they attend one week at a school of choice where they observe teachers teaching using various teaching strategies and class management techniques. Secondly, during the second semester of the third year, ESL PSTs join a simulated teaching class. Within the safe environment of the university, PSTs can transfer their theoretical knowledge about teaching methods and practices into a practical one. They engage in hands-on sessions to plan and implement lessons.

Thirdly, during the first semester of the fourth year, PSTs are placed in a secondary school, a real context where they work with real students under normal public-school conditions. Each class has about 32 students, including Malay, Chinese, Indian and a minority of other nationalities. PSTs are expected to teach 10 periods of English a week and two periods of a second method subject (moral class). TESL program's 'Guidelines for Teaching Practice' states that PSTs will have support from supervisors, mentor teachers, the principal and peers in school, who comprise the sociocultural context of the SCoP. Their actions, words and standards will direct how PST's PI is developing. The aims highlight creating a comfortable teacher-student relationship, improving PSTs' evaluating skills, building skills pertaining to extra-curriculum activities and building self-confidence. Most importantly, teaching practice is expected to enable them to observe and appreciate teachers' roles in class.

The 5 five participants were 22-24 years old, coming from different urban and rural areas around Malaysia. Participants were invited to sign a consent letter to participate in interviews and to be observed during their classes. Pseudonyms were used to preserve anonymity. Moreover, the schools where they practiced were also not named for confidentiality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aisha</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damia</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zara</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aida</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interview and classroom observation Interpretive researchers emphasize understanding the world through first-hand experience, truthful reporting and quotations of actual conversations from inside perspectives (Merriam, 2009). Hence, interview and classroom observation were the data generation methods because they are more likely to enable rich and detailed, or thick descriptions (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2008) of the role of the social context and individual
adaptation process in constructing PSTs' PI. These methods have the potential to encourage participants to speak freely about their lived experience regarding the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 2009).

The interview questions were piloted with two participants, Zara and Aida, who helped develop the questions to probe the participants' perceptions and thoughts more easily. Next, in-depth one-to-one interviews were conducted, all of which were in English. The participants were interviewed three times during their simulated teaching class and three times during their practicum. Besides, they were observed while teaching twice in each stage. This strategy enabled researchers follow the developmental line of their PI construction and compare generated data with the study theoretical framework concepts.

**Constant Comparative Analysis Method**

Following Saldana (2009), the researchers utilized the constant comparative method using three major steps in data analysis: open coding (i.e., reading and identifying codes), focused coding (i.e., grouping the descriptive codes to develop categories) and theoretical or selective coding (i.e., identifying central interpretable themes in data).

**Findings**

Supported with substantial data, this section reports on how the five participants used personal adaptation strategies to respond to the opportunities or challenges they were exposed to during simulated teaching stage and school practicum.

**The Adaptation Cycle in the Simulated Teaching Context Facilitates PI Development**

The simulated teaching classes offered the PSTs a supportive community of practice with strong relationships to facilitate PI development. During this stage, the PSTs underwent three adaptation strategies to grow professionally: Observation, experimentation, and evaluation.

**Observation**

Observations of peers' model lessons enabled the participants to build a number of professional images pertaining to teacher character, teacher ability, teacher language performance, and classroom management. They felt well-guided during the microteaching observations because the supervisor provided an observation sheet to use as a reference. Aishah described liking Sophia's teacher’s character when Sophia delivered her model lesson:

She was totally confident using her power point presentation of ideas and moving on the stage in front of us. Even when she missed explaining the activity to the learners, she didn't panic. She simply explained it and engaged her students again in the activity. She was enthusiastic and inspired us a lot.

Participants indicated that observing their peers' model lessons enhanced their teaching skills through exposure to different teaching strategies. Zara said she developed a repertoire of attention grabber strategies by observing her peers teaching: “I learned a number of strategies to arouse my students' interest in the lesson. I learnt to use a song, a short video or a photo”.
Damia stated that she learnt different techniques of giving feedback to her students by observing her peers' model activities: “Observing my peers' strategies, I developed a number of feedback strategies”.

Additionally, the participants reported improvement in their language performance by observing peer model lessons as well as improvement in using appropriate classroom language. Aisha commented that “I built a list of words and sentences to use during teaching. For example: Ok students let's open the book at page …. I found those sentences excellent to learn.”

The PSTs also identified hated selves they would like to avoid in teaching. Aida expressed that she hated the strict image presented by one of her peers: “One of my peers was really strict while teaching. She didn't smile or show positive interaction with her learners…. I think this is a type of teacher that I would hate to become”. Thus, the participants appreciated what they learnt about classroom pedagogy through observing simulated teaching classes. They found that observing their peers’ classroom management techniques opened up horizons for thinking of different possibilities to choose from.

**Experimenting with Different Possible Selves**

The second strategy the participants employed in developing a PI identity is selecting models from their repertoire of possible selves and trying them while teaching. Participants felt that their experimentation strategy was not to literally imitate a teacher model whom they had encountered previously. Instead, participants, such as Zara, reported selecting different possible selves from their repertoire to construct an appropriate synthesis to apply in their classes:

I thought that I can combine different practices, which I observed, in my lesson. For example, I picked Sophia's way of attention grabbing. The writing task, I picked from Aishah's class.

Ibarra (1999) defined three sub strategies of experimentation: wholesale imitation, selective imitation and true-to-self strategy. For our participants, selective imitation was a successful sub strategy to adopt, as they could select different possible selves to construct a well-synthesized lesson to apply in class. The participants also revealed that the selected professional images aligned with their own personalities. Zara found that her built teacher character was similar to her own personality as a cheerful person, while Aishah experimented with different possible selves and constructed her own style. Trying to teach apparently improved the PSTs’ teaching performance and confidence in themselves as teachers; hence, they moved on to a higher step in the PI construction journey.

**Evaluation Using Internal and External Feedback**

The third adaptation strategy that PSTs used to develop a PI was to evaluate their teaching performance by using internal and external feedback. Evaluation strategy was vital for PSTs to assess and modify their pedagogical practice experimentation. The participants used self-evaluation to compare and contrast what they hoped to become as teachers and what they had become or practiced. Ibarra (1999) contended that congruence between individuals' self-conception of what they hoped to be and their practices can facilitate internalizing those practices (possible selves) to be part of self-representations. Our participants used their hoped-to-be selves as a reference for internal assessment. The participants evaluated their strengths and weaknesses.
and felt satisfied when their practices were in accordance with what they hoped to be. Damia revealed using such comparison and contrast to evaluate her teaching activities:

I tried to prepare my lessons and deliver them in a way I thought perfect for me as a teacher. I always wanted to be an innovative teacher. But while trying out teaching, I sometimes found that I didn't feel comfortable using technology in class. For example, I wasted five minutes to adjust the volume. I didn't show the innovative person I wanted.

For Aishah, self-evaluation enabled her to realize her strengths and weaknesses:

I hoped to be a compassionate teacher. I admired my previous teachers who built good relationships with us. I wanted to be like them. Then, on my first lesson, I found myself unable to create such rapport with my students.

At the end of the simulated teaching session, the participants reported a high sense of PI. Sophia believed that she achieved the self she chose, "I'm satisfied with what I achieved here. I wanted to be an innovative, enthusiastic and active teacher and I became what I wanted".

In summary, the adoption, alteration and rejection of various possible selves were all found in the interview data. The participants believed they modified their professional images to match their observers' expectations, which helped them grow as teachers. When the PSTs had adequate opportunities to observe, try out and get feedback on their teaching performance, they succeeded in developing a confident and motivated PI.

Alterning Adaptation Strategies in the Challenging Teaching Practicum Context

As the PSTs moved from the simulated teaching classes at university to the real classroom context at public secondary schools, they began encountering a number of difficulties and tensions. The PSTs reported being sent alone to class with no support or guidance on how to solve the problems faced. The participants discovered that the adaptation strategies of observation, experimentation, and feedback utilized during the simulated teaching classes were not applicable at the practicum sites. Hence, the participants exerted efforts to adapt to the constraints faced in PI development by deliberately replacing the observation-experimentation-evaluation cycle with new mechanisms to overcome the PI crisis.

Responding to Inadequate Observations via Images from Prior Experience & Imagined Images

The participants apparently had very limited access to practical knowledge at the practicum sites. Their mentors and peers were overloaded with burdens; hence, the participants could not exchange regular visits with peers and mentors. To respond to lack of observation opportunities, the participants employed images from prior experience and imagined pictures of their mentors and peers based on unseen observations to guide PI construction.

Recalling pre-constructed possible teacher selves was one of the PSTs' means of developing their PI and mitigating the challenges they encountered at the real classrooms. They used prior experience to respond to their students' lack of interest and motivation. Aida used her recollection of her role model teacher to face her own students’ lack of motivation to learn:
My form four (10th grade) English teacher used interactive activities. She was enthusiastic, encouraging, and altered her teaching styles to suit the students. I loved her classes because they were energetic and full of life. I used this memory to motivate me to create different activities to encourage my students to come to class. It took me great effort and time, but eventually the strategy succeeded.

Additionally, the participants reported that their prior experience stimulated them to consider having closer relationships with their students as a strategy to overcome classroom management problems. Zara considered the memory of her Form four grade teacher a reason for her to work towards building rapport with her students to face classroom disorder:

My teacher was compassionate and had great relationships with us. She always encouraged students to articulate their ideas. I decided to use her strategy to handle my students’ discipline problems. When I became friends with them and maintained my authority at the same time, I managed to convince them to listen to me. Now when I call their names, they listen to me. Not always….

The findings highlighted the power of memories on PSTs’ practice and the value of recalled memories in guiding PSTs' development in the absence of live professional images.

The second mechanism employed by the PSTs in the current study to compensate for the absence of mentors and peers from their classes was to construct imagined images based on talks with mentors or peers outside class. The participants reported having limited opportunities to see their mentors outside classes. These opportunities helped participants build imagined images of their mentors in action. Damia, for example, referred to such imagined images as a way to construct new professional images on which to caliper her practice:

When my mentor explained to me how she taught a speaking activity, I'd imagine that. When I go to my class, I keep this memory alive in front of my eyes and I start teaching using those imagined images. This strategy helped me a lot since I couldn't go to observe my mentor's classes.

Participants also reported seeking peers' suggestions on how to manage classes. Through those suggestions, participants constructed images of their peers in action. Zara found that her peers' suggestions helped her handle noisy students:

I found my students very noisy, so I asked my peer trainees what I should do there. They gave me very useful suggestions….

**Experimenting Alone in Class**

Participants reported they could not escape the fact of working alone in their classes. They revealed struggling with classroom management and lesson plan execution. The participants expressed they felt insecure, confused and unguided in their classes. They believed that the absence of their mentors encouraged students to take advantage of the PSTs. Moreover, the participants believed they were inadequately supported, which led to a professional identity crisis. To overcome this PI crisis, they attempted different teaching strategies that helped them...
eventually gain PI awareness and understand their strengths and weaknesses. PSTs used two strategies to adapt to the challenging context: selective imitation and modified practices.

According to the participants, they started teaching at the practicum sites using the practical knowledge gained through microteaching in the simulated teaching classes. Soon, they discovered that the simulated teaching context differed from the realistic context of secondary schools. Aida mentioned that she experimented with many teaching strategies that she either practiced or observed in her simulated teaching classes:

I tried out different strategies in my classes, such as an inductive strategy of teaching grammar. I prepared educational games similar to those we prepared for simulated teaching.

The current study findings reveal that the participants decided to follow another strategy (modified practices) to amend practices and behaviors in response to their students' interests. When Aida noticed that her students liked to express ideas in debating activities, she engaged them more in such activities:

I found out how much my students liked debating. I think it's their nature as they are very active and all the time, they object to whatever they don't like. I started to try out more debating activities and I think they enjoyed that a lot.

Zara attempted calling students by their names. That reflected positively on her relationship with them, and consequently affected her classroom management. Such discoveries evidently enabled PSTs to regain confidence and make progress in PI development.

**New Mechanisms of Evaluation and Feedback**

Not exchanging observation visits with peers and mentors on the practicum sites deprived participants of receiving adequate and constructive feedback. Instead, they had to alter their feedback sources to respond to the lack of mentor and peer feedback. They adopted an internal feedback strategy and altered the external feedback strategy to include mentor and peer feedback based on unseen observation and students' nonverbal and verbal feedback.

The first mechanism available for the participants to evaluate their practices was their internal feedback based on their possible selves' repertoire (prior images and personal standards). Damia, for example, used her role model teacher images to judge to what extent her practices were good, "Comparing what I do to what my teachers did in our secondary school classes was the first strategy that I relied on to assess my work." Aida believed she used her standards to evaluate her own teaching performance: "I used my hoped-to-be self to judge my practices and character to match my hoped-to-be self and to avoid my feared-to-be self."

As the participants faced more difficulties in their classes, they believed internal feedback was not sufficient. However, external feedback during classroom practicum was not as effective as when used during the simulated teaching classes. The participants sought their
mentors and peers’ comments outside class. They would try to take a few minutes from their mentors' time to describe the lessons taught by the participants and get the mentors’ evaluation and suggestions for improvement. Damia took advantage of assembly time to consult her mentor:

During the assembly time, I would take five minutes talking to my mentor. I tell her what happened with me in my lesson the previous day. She would tell me what was good and what I could do better. Her comments helped me.

Aida took advantage of the shifting time between classes to seek her mentor's feedback, "If I saw my mentor around during the shifting between classes, I would hurry to her and tell her what I taught the other day and get her comments".

In their evaluation, the mentors relied on what the PSTs chose to report within a very limited time. Participants believed this kind of feedback was inadequate and did not reach their standards of what feedback represented. Our participants felt lost and isolated and suffered a PI crisis in the absence of such influential feedback. Consequently, they attempted to secure some constructive feedback from peers. They reportedly saw their peers more in the staff room or during extracurricular activities to obtain feedback on their performance. Zara talked about her class with a peer to help sort out what was wrong that led to so much noise in Zara's class:

I described my lesson to Aishah and the others. In that lesson, I used group work with my students, but I ended up with much noise and fights. My friends commented that my instructions were not clear for my students and that was why they felt angry. I developed my group activity instructions for the next class and that worked better.

Practicing under such challenging practicum conditions, the participants considered their school students as the third resort for seeking feedback. At the beginning, the participants relied mainly on students' nonverbal reactions to decide whether their teaching strategy or behavior was appropriate. Nonverbal reactions guided participants' teaching performance in terms of adopting, discarding or modifying teaching practices as needed. Similar to the other participants, Aishah relied on her students' nonverbal reactions to caliber her teaching strategies:

I look at the students. If they show they understood and they were interested in my lesson, then I'd say it was a good lesson. But if they were bored, it would be a sign that the lesson wasn't well-done.

Later, the participants decided to act deliberately and obtain their students' oral or written feedback. Aida sought her students' oral comments on her classes; Zara asked her students to write comments on paper. These findings demonstrate that the PSTs managed to understand their students' needs, build good rapport with them, and most importantly, manage classroom problems to a good extent. Despite the depletive role of the students in participants' professional growth journey, it seems that students were a motivating and supportive factor in
participants’ PI construction. Participants worked hard to come up with activities and procedures that would help gain students' friendship and attention.

To sum up, though participants' opportunities to experiment and receive feedback in the practicum context were limited, they managed to amend their adaptation strategies to respond to the challenges. By the end of the practicum, they achieved a new shift in their PI towards PI awareness by leaving the PI crisis, which they experienced due to a lack of guidance and support with practicum teaching. They became more aware of their strengths and weaknesses.

Discussion

As reported in the findings above, the simulated teaching classes offered the PSTs a supportive community of practice with strong relationships to facilitate PI development. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009, p. 177) argued that PI is “a constantly evolving phenomenon involving both a person and a context.” Since the contextual factors were facilitative of PI development in the simulated teaching classes, the PSTs underwent three adaptation strategies to grow professionally. The first strategy, observation, had two main outcomes: building professional images and matching identities to build one's style. This finding supports those of Ogeyik’s (2009) where 57 ELT PSTs in a Turkish university benefited from observing peers' model lessons by promoting the PSTs' effective teaching strategies. Similarly, Benton-Kupper (2001) rightly recognized that peer observation was beneficial and helped PSTs learn about the teaching craft. The current study is also consistent with Ismail's (2011) study as it provides empirical evidence that observing peers' model lessons can enhance the participants' language skills in terms of using appropriate classroom language, correct pronunciation and a clear voice. Since the adaptation cycle is iterative (Ibarra, 1999; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008), an individual tries out learned practices and then observes others in professional roles to match identities between oneself and the others. PSTs construct tentative images through apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975) during their educational experiences while observing teachers (at school and university) teaching.

Experimentation was the second adaptation strategy PSTs adopted in trying various possible selves to develop their PI. The participants referred to the possible selves they constructed while observing their peers' model lessons as a vivid source for trial. This finding aligns with the participants in Ronfeldt and Grossman's (2008) study who reported that the different PI models encountered in their TEP were valuable for them to attempt themselves. Maria L. Fernandez and Robinson (2006)The third adaptation strategy that PSTs used to develop a PI was to evaluate their teaching performance by using internal and external feedback. The participants used self-evaluation to compare and contrast what they hoped to become as teachers and what they had become or practiced. Ibarra (1999) contended that congruence between individuals' self-conception of what they hoped to be and their practices can facilitate internalizing those practices (possible selves) to be part of self-representations. According to the participants, they used their hoped-to-be selves as a reference for internal assessment. The value of the internal feedback mechanism is understudied in literature, whereas focus is on the value of external feedback (Britton & Anderson, 2010; Maria Lorelei Fernandez, 2010; Maria L. Fernandez & Robinson, 2006; Ismail, 2011; Korkko, Kyro-Ammala, & Turunen, 2016; Ogeyik, 2009; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008).
Furthermore, external feedback from supervisors and peers effectively influenced PSTs’ PI development. Observing others’ practices and trying out different possible selves may not be as effective without immediate and constructive feedback from those observing PSTs in action. Such feedback helps novices to correct practices and underlying conceptions of those practices (Ibarra, 1999; Ismail, 2011; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). The feedback offered by SCoP members enabled participants to adopt, modify or discard teaching strategies based on positive or negative feedback on their teaching performance. Britton and Anderson's (2010) study is in agreement with the fact that PSTs alter their pedagogical practices based on peer feedback.

The participants in the current study reported readiness to receive feedback from peers and supervisors. They revealed they were open-minded to others' comments and sought even more help to grow professionally. In contrast, Amobi (2005) studied the reflective journals of 31 PSTs during their microteaching classes. Apparently, the PSTs were defensive and passive towards their peers’ comments because they felt their peers were competitive and unfair in their evaluation. The argument is that the presence of a facilitating supervisor helps PSTs imagine how negotiating with peers and reacting positively to their feedback may promote professional growth (Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

Similar findings on the value of immediate feedback from supervisors and peers were reported by Korkko et al. (2016), who emphasized that such feedback needs to be constructive. Korkko et al. thematically analyzed 13 PSTs’ reflective journals to investigate how external feedback resulted in the development of the PSTs' practical theories. Korkko et al.’s (2016, p. 202) study demonstrated that "the feedback and dialogical reflections with their supervisors and peers provided a learning opportunity to further develop their practical theories" (p. 202). Constructive feedback is necessary for PSTs to learn how they act and explore the underlying assumptions or preconceptions behind these actions (Beijaard et al., 2004).

As the PSTs changed contexts by moving from the simulated teaching classes at university to the real classroom context at public secondary schools (i.e., practicum sites), they began encountering a number of difficulties and tensions caused by socio-contextual factors. The PSTs reported being sent alone to class with no support or guidance on how to solve the problems faced. The participants discovered that the adaptation strategies they used during the simulated teaching classes were not practical at the practicum sites. Hence, the participants exerted effort to adapt to the constraints faced in PI development by altering the observation-experimentation-evaluation cycle. They deliberately added new mechanisms to overcome the PI crisis.

The participants recalled prior experience of learning from their secondary school teachers' practices to teach and manage classes. They referred to their model teachers' images in adopting their practices in class and for classroom management techniques. PSTs' reactivating educational memories of school and university teachers to create visions of desired teacher selves echoes Flores and Day's (2006) and Cook's (2009) findings. More recently, Miller and Shifflet (2016) analyzed the reflective journals of 69 PSTs who were asked to write about their school memories and reflect on the meanings. Their participants
claimed those memories enabled them to create their desired selves. They also recognized some conflict between memories and sound teaching practices they learnt during the TEP. The findings indicated the power of memories on PSTs’ practice with teaching. The current study findings support the value of recalled memories in guiding PST development in the absence of live professional images.

The second mechanism employed by the PSTs in the current study to compensate for the absence of mentors and peers from their classes was to construct imagined images based on talks with mentors or peers outside class. Unseen observation and its role in building imagined professional images has not been reported in literature on PSTs. Only one study by Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) with a number of novices resonates with the current study findings pertaining to imagined professional images. The researchers noted that their clinical psychology PST, Quise, had a high opinion of her mentor, as the kind of clinical psychologist Quise hoped to become. She described her mentor with positive qualities as kind, confident and competent. Quise admitted she had almost no chance to observe her mentor in real practice. The researchers concluded that their participants "were often making inferences based on what they imagined rather than what they observed" (Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008, p. 47).

Teaching classes alone, the participants reported struggling with classroom management, which affected their teaching performance negatively. They felt unconfident, confused, unguided and burnt out at the practicum sites. Despite the absence of observers (i.e., mentors or peers), the participants kept trying different teaching strategies and solutions to eventually gain PI awareness. They employed two mechanisms of experimentation: selective imitation during the simulated teaching classes, and modified practices as solutions to the challenging context. As discussed earlier for the observation strategy, the participants found previous images as sources of more feasible practices to try in the secondary school context. This strategy helped them overcome the lack of resources and educational aids at the practicum sites. The participants sometimes faced difficulties when trying out practices that were appealing to them as students. Some of the practices were not welcome by current students. It is argued that when PSTs recall memories to help accept or reject certain strategies, they base their judgment on what worked and was suitable with their current students (Castañeda, 2014; Fairbanks, Freedman, & Kahn, 2000; Miller & Shifflet, 2016).

The study findings regarding PSTs’ journey through the teaching practicum indicate they were unguided and unsupported, which resulted in a PI crisis. Halfway through making sense of their journey, the participants declared they started to find their own ways to improve their practices and adjust to the challenging secondary school context. Not exchanging observation visits with peers and mentors also deprived them of receiving adequate and constructive feedback. According to the participants, they had to alter their feedback sources to respond to the lack of mentor and peer feedback. They adopted an internal feedback strategy and altered the external feedback strategy to include mentor and peer feedback based on unseen observation and students' nonverbal and verbal feedback.

From the participants’ perspective, internal feedback was not as effective as when used during the simulated teaching classes. According to the findings, the participants sought
their mentors and peers’ comments outside class. The participants could not devote much time for such feedback, as they had only few minutes to talk to their mentors. Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008) noted that PSTs had opportunities to try out teaching strategies, but they received little evaluation. Without meaningful and constructive feedback, whether oral and face-to-face or written, novices cannot judge whether their practices are up to professional standards and achieved the learning outcome (Ali & Al-Adawi, 2013; Ronfeldt & Grossman, 2008). Constructive feedback can motivate PSTs and encourage them to exert more effort on improving their teaching performance (Ali & Al-Adawi, 2013; Copland, 2010, 2011; Davis & Dargusch, 2015; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; White, 2007).

The result from the current study that PSTs could not secure meaningful feedback from mentors contradict with many other studies that investigated the types and value of feedback the participants received. For example, White's (2007) PSTs participants from New Zealand revealed that oral feedback from their mentors was given most often and was the most useful mode of feedback. Owing to such effective modes of feedback they were able to focus and direct their teaching practices and professional growth. In a similar vein, Ali and Al-Adawi (2013), conducted a study with Omani EFL PSTs of the type and value of practicum feedback. The majority of participants perceived practicum feedback, whether written or spoken, positively. Unlike White's (2007) participants who preferred spoken feedback, Ali and Al-Adawi's PSTs considered written feedback as more effective than oral feedback, because they could refer to it any time and that improving PSTs' pedagogical skills and knowledge. Feiman-Nemser (2001, p. 23) postulated that concrete and constructive feedback enables PSTs to "visualize their evolving style, clarify what they need to work on, and concretize their own vision of good teaching" (p. 23). In contrast to the participants in the two aforementioned studies, those in the current study felt lost and isolated, and suffered a PI crisis in the absence of such influential feedback.

In the current study, the participants claimed that the feedback received from their mentors was inadequate and inappropriate. Consequently, they attempted to secure some constructive feedback from peers. They met peers more in the staff room, thus having a better chance to get feedback on their performance based on their descriptions of their classes. In the literature, direct observation of peers’ lessons and immediate feedback proved to be more fruitful (Anderson, Barksdale, & Hite, 2005; Feiman-Nemser, 2001). One of the findings in Anderson et al.’s (2005) study is that the PSTs expanded peer observation and feedback from once weekly as required by the TEP, to a daily basis. They believed this strategy to be effective in enhancing their pedagogical and classroom management skills. Another study conducted by Starkey and Rawlins (2011) in New Zealand revealed that 90% of PST participants reported finding peer feedback (face-to-face feedback during staff room discussion) influential and supportive along their teaching practicum journey. About 70% of PSTs found informal face-to-face feedback from peers more effective than formal university organized sessions (15%). The researchers recommended that PSTs exchange more constructive feedback with peers using different social networking tools such as Facebook or Twitter. This can help PSTs, for instance in the current study context, to compensate for the minimal opportunities available at the practicum sites to meet and reflect on their practices.
Practicing under such challenging practicum conditions, the participants kept attempting to obtain feedback that could direct and give them a sense of achievement during the practicum. This study shows that the participants considered their school students as the third resort for seeking feedback. These findings demonstrate that the PSTs managed to understand their students' needs, build good rapport with them, and most importantly, manage classroom problems to a good extent. Many studies reported that building rapport with school students soothed PSTs' tensions and increased their motivation to work harder in class (Shafer, 2015; Sueb, 2013). However, those studies did not refer to PSTs' deliberately seeking students' verbal or nonverbal feedback to improve their teaching skills. Sueb (2013) and Shafer (2015) reported only that their PSTs tried to resolve the challenges with students' misbehavior and lack of motivation by creating fun activities, memorizing the students' names, punishing negative behaviors, and rewarding positive ones, and becoming friendly with students.

This research contributes to current knowledge on language teacher professional identity by proposing alterations to Ibarra's (1999) adaptation cycle of observation-experimentation and evaluation to respond to the contextual challenges. Ibarra’s adaptation cycle proved to be applicable to the simulated teaching class SCoP. The PSTs had the opportunity to engage in interactions and negotiations with the other SCoP members and work on developing their PI using their adaptation strategy extensively. However, the study findings proved that Ibarra's (1999) model, which was adopted by Ronfeldt and Grossman (2008), was impracticable when the PSTs were confronted with the challenging teaching practicum context. Because they felt isolated and alone in classes with no guidance, feedback or support, the PSTs altered their adaptation strategies and created others to manage PI crisis. Hence, the study contributes to literature by adding new adaptation strategies to Ibarra's cycle to respond to challenging contexts. Table (2) shows the applicability and alterations of Ibarra's model of the adaptation cycle in the current study context. Three symbols serve to show if the strategy in Ibarra's (1999) adaptation model was applicable in the study context (√) or if the strategy was not applicable (X). The table also shows what new strategies were added to replace strategies in Ibarra's adaptation cycle model (+).

Table 2. Applicability and alterations of Ibarra's (1999) model in the current study context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adaptation cycle</th>
<th>Supportive context of simulated teaching class</th>
<th>Challenging context of teaching practicum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>observation</td>
<td>Observing and being observed in the SCoP √</td>
<td>No observation then reverted to + Images from prior experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Matching identities to build one's style   + Imagined images of mentors and peers based on unseen observation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimentation</td>
<td>Experimenting in the presence of supervisor and peers √</td>
<td>Experimenting alone in classes √</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selective imitation of others' performance √</td>
<td>Selective imitation of previously constructed images +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>True-to-self strategy</td>
<td>Modified practices to suit students' interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wholesale imitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Adequate and constructive feedback √</td>
<td>Absence of adequate and constructive feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal (based on one's standards) √</td>
<td>Internal (based on prior images and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key of symbols: (√): strategy in Ibarra's (1999) model is applicable; (X): strategy in Ibarra's (1999) model is not applicable; (+) new strategy that replaced Ibarra's (1999) model strategies.

This study recommends that program designers need to recognize how to enable adaptation processes to enhance PSTs’ PI development. There should be more focus on social aspects in building teacher preparation programs. Besides focusing on individual teacher's tasks in teaching, more value should be given to social interaction and integration within the professional context. Perspectives of collegial and mutual relationships between PSTs and mentors, supervisors, peers and other teachers could help inform identity construction positively. In addition, PSTs should be taught about the self as a teacher (Alsup, 2006) and the possible adaptation strategies that could mitigate the impact of the constraining contexts upon PST professional identity development during practicum.

**Conclusion**

The study was aimed at exploring the way five Malaysian ESL PSTs employed adaptation strategies during the simulated teaching class and teaching practicum stage to respond to contextual affordances or challenges in developing their PI. This study demonstrated how PSTs develop a sense of professional identity through their simulated teaching classes at university and student teaching practicum. The positive notions of belonging to a community of practice (i.e., collaboration, mutual and collegial relationships) prove to be applicable in the simulated teaching class context. In such a supportive training context, PSTs use their adaptation process of observation-experimentation and evaluation to attempt different teaching practices. Nonetheless, the positive notions of the community of practice are inapplicable in the teaching practicum context. Hence, PSTs struggle to construct their PI and negotiate their understanding and teaching practices. PSTs must alter their adaptation processes to find other strategies to negotiate PI construction.

**About the Authors:**

**Taghreed El Masry** is an assistant professor of Applied Linguistics at the English and Literature Department at Al Isra’ University. Her areas of interest are teacher education, teaching English as a second language, teacher identity, curriculum design and assessment. ORCID [https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1201-6371](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1201-6371)

**Eman Alzaanin** is an assistant professor of Applied Linguistics in the English language program at the Faculty of Languages and Translation - King Khalid University. Her areas of interests include language pedagogy and teacher education, teacher emotion, curriculum design, and program evaluation. ORCID [https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9332-233X](https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9332-233X)

We have no known conflict of interest to disclose.
References


Shafer, D. J. (2015). *Preservice teacher understanding and implementation of caring teaching-learning student relationships*. (PhD). University of Nebraska - Lincoln, (58)


Abstract
This paper aims at demonstrating the effectiveness of modern methods of formation of English language communicative competence of those students who study at non-language specialties. The experimental work was carried out at the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, the Faculty of Physical Education and the Faculty of History of Ternopil National Pedagogical University named after Volodymyr Hnatyuk, Ukraine. The authors present their experience of conducting a three-year-long training using game technology, project-based technology, interactive technologies, tasks in the electronic system Moodle, etc. and discuss the benefits of using those means at university. The core question of the given study is whether these means are effective in the formation of students’ foreign language communicative competence. The authors demonstrate the benefits of studying with the help of modern lingua-didactic and technical means. The results of the survey indicate that these tools are effective in their integrated application for the formation of English language skills. To conclude, the findings of the study can be applied while teaching English to the students of non-language specialties.

Keywords: electronic source, foreign language communicative competence, game technology, innovative forms and methods of work, interactive teaching, project-based technology, student-centered learning

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.29
Introduction

Language of the functioning of a developed progressive society is a suitable means of understanding, expressing and interpreting notions, facts, feelings, thoughts both orally and in written form. Language is an integral part in boosting individual potential and development, expanding person’s employment possibilities, social integration and active citizenship. At the same time, intensive expansion of Ukraine’s international relations and its active involvement to the world of foreign languages have caused increased attention to academic mobility as a factor in the country’s integration into the scientific and educational world. Academic mobility is available and effective if there is knowledge of a foreign language as a means of communication, knowledge of foreign culture, education, professional realization.

It is quite natural that these factors cause the priority of communicative competence among dominant competences of the 21st century for lifelong learning in the world (ANNEX, 2018) and in the Concept of the New Ukrainian School (Bibik, 2017), which has become the basis for all students of general secondary education in Ukraine.

At the same time, there is a growing interest in forming communicative competence as both national and foreign language ability of social, personal and educational interaction.

The formation of foreign language communicative competence of future teachers is a sign of their professionalism. Knowledge of a foreign language allows you to communicate with colleagues from abroad, to study the scientific experience of other countries. Both foreign language teachers and students face a difficult problem. The process of language acquisition for Ukrainian-speaking students is quite complex, as their native language (Ukrainian) and foreign language (English) are not genetically related. Foreign students also have problems learning the Ukrainian language.

The purpose of this article is to describe the experience of using tools (game technology, project-based technology, interactive technology, tasks in the electronic system Moodle, etc.) in the formation of foreign language communicative competence of bachelor students in non-philological specialties.

The tasks of the article:
1) to analyze the scientific literature on communicative competence;
2) to define communicative competence;
3) to experimentally identify the effectiveness of game technology, project-based technology, interactive technology, tasks in the electronic system Moodle, etc. in teaching English to the students of non-language specialties.

Literature Review and Theoretical Background

The notion “communicative competence” is one of the most critical scientific categories the study of which began in the 60-70s of the 20th century. A significant amount of research work has already been dedicated to this problem. Scientists point out the importance of defining this notion as “the representatives of different spheres describe this term taking into consideration their interests and dwell upon its most essential components as relevant to this or that sphere” (Barton & Haydn, 2006, p. 261).
The term “communicative competence” (from Latin community – make general, connect, communicate and competent (competent) – able) means the summation of knowledge about norms and rules of leading a natural communication such as dialogue, conflict, negotiations, etc. (Beh, 1998). Communicative competence is the basis of education using both the means of a native and foreign language.

Nowadays there is a large amount of research dedicated to this problem. At the same time, scholars constantly point to the exceptional importance and accuracy of the definition of this term, “because the representatives of various fields of knowledge describe this concept from the standpoint of their interests and emphasize what is essential for this science” (Hez, 1985, p. 17).

The American linguist N. Chomsky first introduced the term “competence” into scientific usage in 1965. The scientist noted that the fundamental difference between competence (knowledge of one's language by a speaker) and usage (actual use of language in specific situations) is that competence can be represented in the form of a set of knowledge, skills, abilities acquired by students during training, and the application of acquired knowledge, skills, abilities is the content of the student's competence: his/her ability to perform a speech act based on established competence (Chomsky, 1972). In Slavic lingua-didactics, the term "communicative competence" was first introduced by M. Vyatutnev. The scientist defined communicative competence as follows: “the choice and implementation of a program of speech behavior, which depends on a person's ability to navigate in communication situations and the ability to classify situations depending on the topic, tasks and communicative guidelines” (Vatuitniev, 1977, p. 39).

Studies of the scientific literature on the meaning and essence of communicative competence show two approaches to defining the closest generic concept about communicative competence. Some authors explain communicative competence with the help of the idea “ability” and view it as the ability to use the language in a specific sphere of communication (Izarenkov, 1990; Savignon, 1995; Vatuitniev, 1977; etc.).

The representatives of the second approach define communicative competence through the prism of such concepts as “knowledge,” “skills” and “abilities” (Fedorenko, 2002; Hez, 1985; Hymes, 1966; Kazartseva, 1999; etc.).

Consequently, communicative competence appears as a structural phenomenon that contains such components as values, motives, attitudes, socio-psychological stereotypes, knowledge, skills, abilities.

Nowadays scientists and instructors define communicative competence as the ability of the person to apply the language knowledge in a definite situation, ways of interaction with the surrounding and distant people and events, skills of group cooperation, knowing various social roles.

Communicative competence belongs to the group of critical notions, has a specific role in a person’s life. Thus one must pay special attention to its formation.
Firstly, this feature influences the level of performance. The simplest example: if a student is shy to answer in front of the group or feels extremely worried, his/her answer will be worse than the possessed knowledge, and his/her mark, consequently, will be lower. The obtained negative experience will influence the further studying of a student in a wrong way.

Secondly, the process of student’s adaptation to studying in an educational establishment, mainly his/her emotional wellbeing, among other students depends on communicative competence in lots of ways. Transformation, as we all know, is divided into educational and social-psychological. A student must get used to studying and to the people around. If it is easy for him/her to find common ground with group mates, he/she feels psychological comfort and pleasure. At the same time the inability to communicate with peers makes the circle of friends smaller, causes the feeling of solitude and can provoke asocial forms of behavior.

Thirdly, students’ communicative competence can be viewed in an educational process as the resource of effectiveness and wellbeing in his/her future professional life (Bodnar, 2007).

There are the following components of communicative competence:
– orienting in various situations of communication which is based on knowledge and personal experience;
– the ability to effectively cooperate with the surrounding thanks to the understanding of yourself and others in constant change of psychic states, interpersonal relations and conditions of social surrounding;
– adequate orientation of a person in oneself – own psychological potential, partner’s potential and situation;
– readiness and ability to build contacts with people;
– inner means of regulation of communicative actions;
– knowledge, skills and skills of constructive communication;
– internal resources necessary for the construction of effective communication in definite situations of interpersonal interaction.

The development of foreign language communicative competence require
– define the notion and structure of competence and also the essence on other stages of life;
– apply systemic approach, ensure the cooperation between different participants, directions and techniques to get a result;
– choose a method, make a program, directions, technologies and techniques of developing students’ communicative competence.

There are three closely connected dimensions of verbal communicative competence: thematic, proactive, practical-value-based (See Table one) (Lomakovytch et al., 2011).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Formed property</th>
<th>Cognitive level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thematic</td>
<td>Acquiring the subject about the language and speech foresees the demonstration of awareness in different science spheres</td>
<td>Knowledge (operating the terms and facts in different spheres concerning language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Abilities (capability to carry out communicative actions, mainly such as reading and writing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive</td>
<td>Mastering different types of activities with language and speech units. Ability to operate with language units in communication in accordance with the communicative purpose and based on knowledge of the laws and principles of the language system.</td>
<td>Ability to carry out communicative actions, mainly such as reading and writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical-value-based</td>
<td>Demonstration of the ability to conduct verbal communication to achieve goals that are relevant and valuable to man, society and humanity in accordance with the values of a society of sustainable development.</td>
<td>Value-based attitude to speech as the main means of communication in all spheres of activity (understanding the role of language and communication in man and society, the use of language knowledge and communication skills to solve practical problems).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following instructor’s tasks in the formation of students’ communicative skills have been formulated taking into consideration verbal-communicative competence:
- to ensure the language environment for students: listening to instructors’ speech, reading books, listening;
- to make sure communicative situations are created and students have communicative practice;
- to guarantee the students’ acquisition of lexical units, grammar forms, syntactic constructions, logical connections; to activate the use of vocabulary units and grammar constructions; to ensure that all necessary abilities in the sphere of speech development are formed;
- to conduct constant work connected with the language development and professional field-related classes (Pedagogics, Psychology, History) while practicing students’ skills in grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening;
- the atmosphere of fight for the high level of communication, for the implementation of demands concerning the speech correctness.

There are such details in the structure of communicative competence:
- cognitive,
- value-based notional,
- personal,
- emotional,
- behavioral.
They are not a part of the whole, but they presuppose interfluence and the existence of each of them which means:

– the essence of a separate component is revealed through others, relates with them;
– all the components must be included in the work;
– the components which aim at the student’s development in all the stated directions are considered to be more effective.

Cognitive component makes up the knowledge about value-based sides of transmission, about personal qualities which help and interfere with communication, about emotions and feelings which always accompany it, about operational (behavioral) sides of communication.

Value-based component consists of values that are activated in communication.

Student’s communicative competence must be based on confidence, optimism, kind treatment and respect to people, justice, altruism, frankness, emotional stability, lack of aggressiveness, absence of conflicts.

The emotional components of communicative competence are related to the creation and maintenance of positive emotional contact with the interlocutor, self-regulation, the ability not only to respond to the changes in the state of the partner, but also to anticipate them. The emotional temperature creates the feeling of psychologically fortunate or unfortunate, comfortable or uncomfortable communication.

Behavioral component consists of communicative skills, ways of action and experience which integrates all the manifestations of communicative competence. Communicative skills as elements create communicative behavior. Their peculiarities and the level of formation can be studied and measured and can also become definite tasks in students’ development and correction.

The organization of communication is the most crucial aspect for the formation of foreign language communicative competence.

Parchin believes that communication is a complex multi-layered process, which can also be a process of human interaction, exchange of information. In addition, communication is how people treat each other, the process of their influence on each other, how they experience each other and understand each other (Hez, 1985).

There are three sides in the structure of communication: communicative, interactive and perceptive.

Communicative side of communication is the information exchange and its understanding.

Interactive side of communication consists of the interaction between partners. Here we distinguish:
- collaboration;
- confrontation;
- evasion from cooperation.
Perceptive side of communication takes place when partners perceive each other while communicating. It depends on personal qualities of the person who perceives his/her personal experience, moral values, situations of interaction, etc.

Speech culture plays a vital role in foreign language communicative competence. Speech culture takes place when people adhere to the set norms of oral and written literate language. When they consciously and brilliantly use language means depending on the aim and conditions of communication.

The following criteria of speech culture are defined:

- communication object-matter (connected with specific aim, important information, valuable idea, etc.);
- logics – consistency, validity, absence of repetitions, absence of anything inappropriate, presence of findings which come from the expressed points. Logically correct address must have appropriate conclusions (if any), presupposes the ability not only to start but also to finish the utterance;
- accuracy is connected not only with the ability of a speaker to convey exact facts, observations and feelings, but also to choose the best language means for doing that;
- abundance of address presupposes the use of various language means, the ability to choose the words appropriate to the situation;
- expressiveness is the ability to convey the thoughts in a bright, persuasive and concise way; this is the ability to influence people with the help of intonation, by choosing facts, making appropriate constructions, by the mood of one’s utterance;
- purity of address deals with the absence of filler words, dialect words, etc.;
- correctness of speech is the correspondence to literate norm; one distinguishes between grammatical, orthographic, punctuational (for the written speech) and orthoepic (for the oral speech);
- communicativeness presupposes accessibility to those people to whom it is directed. Any speech has addressee. When writing or speaking, one must take into consideration intellectual potential, interest, the level of education, age peculiarities of the person the speech is aimed at.

Communication is always motivated. Nevertheless, studying the motive is not always present. It is necessary to create conditions thanks to which students will have a wish and necessity to say something, express their feelings in a suggested setting. One must create comfortable psychological conditions during the classes, enhance friendly relations, interest in the work which will keep the students interested in what they do.

Situational character is one of the most vital peculiarities of speech. Moreover, situations can be defined by person’s social status, activities and role as a subject of speech. When teaching students to communicate, it is necessary to use all the possible kinds of activities to develop vocabulary. This principle is realized by the character of an imaginary communicative situation.

One of the components of communicative competence is the ability to understand and overcome communicative barriers which can arise, for example, when there is lack of understanding of the situation. There are misunderstandings between partners (social, political, religious, professional which cause different ways of interpreting and are connected with
ideology and our vision of world). The barriers in communication can have psychological character reflecting individual psychological peculiarities of those who communicate, reflecting their current views: ranging from friendship to hostility towards each other.

Summing up, the described ideas are essential for testing the effectiveness of innovative means of forming foreign language communicative competence of students.

The most essential means in students’ foreign language communicative competence formation were interactive approach (interactive classes, interactive methods of education), remote forms of teaching (electronic distant learning system Moodle), student-centered learning, problem-based learning, games, etc.

Interactive approach can be explained as the ability to interact while having a conversation, dialogue. Consequently, one can view a method as interactive when the person who studies is a participant who does something: speaks, manages, models, writes, paints; thus he/she is not only a listener, but also takes an active part in what is going on being an active participant of the studying process. Interactive teaching happens when an instructor using a particular system of approaches, methods, techniques based on equal subject-subjective relations of a teacher and student organizes the educational process using communication, self-assessment, positive feedback, constant students’ activeness (Hryshchuk, 2014). Interactive teaching is precious as students are taught to do the work effectively in a group. Interactive methods are part of student-centered approach and they help students to perceive themselves as a part of a group, to understand their role and potential. Working in pairs turned out to be influential among all interactive technologies. One of the advantages of this technology is the fact that all students have the opportunity to exchange views with their partners and only then express them to the whole group. These are the attempts not only to be heard but also to learn to listen to others. The following are the examples of such work: discussing the text, making sentences using the given parts (as a puzzle), making rules and pieces of advice, checking the performed tasks of each other. Working in small groups students get a chance to communicate, compare, express the thought freely, make common conclusions.

Project-based method has also increased the level of communicative competence among students. Working on projects students learn to think critically and to realize where and how they can apply the knowledge, to generate new ideas, use information appropriately, be sociable and work constantly on self-perfection.

Distant learning system Moodle helped check the obtained knowledge; this platform united instructors and students into one integrated system for creating personalized educational environment. Thanks to this electronic system students did the tests individually, wrote essays, chatted online. They had the chance to see test results right after finishing them. Besides, they could be consulted on all the questions either in Moodle chat communicating with the instructor or using this platform for the answers they needed (all the necessary information and the list of recommended sources were put on the system by the instructor).

Games foster unconstrained communication of students with the group. While playing a game one’s imagination develops, the images of one’s fantasies and ideas settle, products of activity are created, they are emotionally attractive for students. Games are crucial as they give students
an opportunity to dream and show their imagination; games make the platform for creativity, leadership skills and responsibility. Everything mentioned is an excellent source for enriching students’ vocabulary and developing communicative qualities.

Communicative situations are among the most essential means of forming students’ communicative competence; they stimulate active mental activity and make students express their thoughts using a foreign language.

Situation is a basis of such tasks. It deals with the conditions of communication; the relations of that person who is talking to that person who is listening; general direction of the utterance. A situation in which a person talking because of his/her desire and need is called a communicative situation. If a teacher pushes a student to communication, the situation is stimulating.

Communicative situations appear by themselves in a natural process of communication. These are the so-called natural situations. Artificial situations are a reflection of external conditions and are aimed at dialogic communication, when students express their thoughts and emotions.

One of the main features of communicative situations is the presence of a speech stimulus, which arises student’s speech reaction and determines the choice of this or that speech unit.

**Methods**

**Participants**

300 bachelor students of non-philological specialties (Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology, Faculty of Physical Education, Faculty of History) of Ternopil National Pedagogical University named after Volodymyr Hnatiuk took part in this empirical study. The experimental study was conducted during the 2016–2017, 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 academic years. The participants were divided into two experimental groups.

**Apparatus and Materials**

Experimental learning resources consisted of 1) tests for students' independent acquisition of linguistic knowledge during their extracurricular activities and 2) professional methodological functions and activities using various teaching methods and technologies (game method, project-based technology, interactive technologies, tasks in the electronic system Moodle, etc.). The training materials were taken from various training sources (see training materials: Grammar Way, 2016; SpeakOut).

**Procedure**

The experimental study included the identification and rethinking of research problems. Next, we formulated a hypothesis, and organized an experiment. Then we analyzed the data, made statistical calculations and formulated conclusions. In the end, tested the hypothesis, formulated conclusions.

The ascertaining stage comprised the studying of the problems in pedagogical theory, and practice; the analysis of psychological, psycho-linguistic and scientific-methodical literature in terms of the given sphere; research tasks were defined; the students in control and experimental groups showed the level of foreign language communicative competence which was almost the same in both groups.
At the formal stage, students of the experimental group were taught using innovative techniques. The students of the control group were taught in the traditional way.

During the summarizing stage control tests were conducted to check the efficacy of the used methods of education; qualitative-quantitative analysis of the research results was performed; the effectiveness of the applied approaches to teaching in foreign language communicative competence formation was defined.

The levels of methodological knowledge and skills among the participants were measured by the formula \( K = \frac{A}{N} \), where \( K \) is the coefficient of learning outcomes, \( A \) is the number of points obtained for correct answers, and \( N \) is the maximum number of points assigned for correct answers (Bespalko, 1968). Learning outcomes of 0.7 and above were considered acceptable according to Cronbach's alpha reliability factor (Cronbach, 1951).

Results
The experimental research was carried out thanks to the students of such faculties: Pedagogics and Psychology, Chemistry and Biology, Physical education, History. Ukrainian as a native language and English or German as foreign languages are not field-specific for those students.

Functions of Communicative Situations:
1) orientation to the stage of forming author’s intention: facilitate the desire to utter; arouse a visual picture about the addressee;
2) situations which lead students to the place where thoughts appear: stimulate the process of creating monologue, dialogue; need constructive activity with the elements of creativity; program the construction of own creative free utterances (collective, group, individual).

The aim of communicative situations is to urge students to solve different aspects of communication with language means. A teacher collects a bank of facts while making communicative situations. The “Bank of Facts” is a collection of unusual cases that can be turned into tasks.

There are permanent communicative situations: reporter, author, leader, pessimist, optimist, skeptic, famous person, famous book characters. Thus, the tasks of the communicative situation emphasize the communication situation, name all its components (topic, purpose, addressee, conditions, etc.).

One of the most effective means of influencing students’ communicative competence is the usage of a system of cognitive tasks the basis of which is the performance of intellectual actions: analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization, analogy, classification. The conduction of nonstandard classes fosters the formation of communicative competence.

The types of classes can be various: disputes, conferences, research, etc.
Research classes create conditions for individual work of students in learning material thanks to the development of intellectual abilities. Mainly, the ability to operate information individually obtained from different sources, present information in a precise or detailed way. Such classes have some peculiarities: a) students get new knowledge in the process of individual work; b) students learn to apply this knowledge, skills, abilities in different problems; c) students
construct and solve such situations which require creative approach, individual work and corresponding emotional state.

Classes-reports are held at the end of semester (academic year) with the aim of checking students’ knowledge and skills in one or several topics. New pedagogical thinking requires preparation and conducting classes in the center where there should be separate students, micro groups or whole groups. A teacher in such an academic process is a helper. Such non-standard classes are based on the trust and support of students' learning efforts. The program is planned. Students or a teacher choose an announcer, emcee, journalists, opponents, academic board, etc. The topic is related to a field of study, for example, “Perennial plants”, “Ukraine in Cossacks’ era.” It is vital to keep to lexical and grammatical speech correctness. Such classes are critical: revision of the learned material and widening students’ outlook. They also foster creativity, thinking, speech, the ability to communicate, bring speech culture.

Classes-discussions consist of classes-dialogues, classes-disputes, classes-court trials, etc. Such classes are held after learning a specific topic to deepen and systematize students’ knowledge. Classes-discussions can result from students’ previous research work, individual study of specialized literature on a definite issue. Such classes give a possibility to see different positions concerning a complex problem, involve students to active work, foster the development of their interests, enrich vocabulary which is necessary. Classes-discussions deepen the experience in communication since special attention is paid to the formation of such skills as asking and relying.

Interactive technologies, Moodle, student-centered teaching which were implemented in the experimental group helped to increase foreign language communicative competence of students. Students in experimental group were much better at performing suggested tasks than the students in control group (see Table two).

**Table 2. Level of students’ foreign language communicative competence in control and experimental groups at the beginning of research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development of communicative skills</th>
<th>Speech norms deviation</th>
<th>control group</th>
<th>experimental group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech norms adoption</td>
<td>orthoepic correctness</td>
<td>17 %</td>
<td>20 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>grammatical correctness</td>
<td>19 %</td>
<td>19 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formation of the skills of active work with a word</td>
<td>speech accuracy</td>
<td>25 %</td>
<td>21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>speech purity</td>
<td>19 %</td>
<td>21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>speech abundance</td>
<td>18 %</td>
<td>19 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-point of errors in foreign language competence</td>
<td>19.6 %</td>
<td>16.6 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analyzing the results provided in the table we can conclude a low level of the formation of students’ foreign language communicative competence in both control and experimental groups.

The second stage of research consisted of the approbation of creative means of communicative competence development.

The works of students of both groups were analyzed during and after the research. The results show that there have been positive changes in the formation of communicative competence among the students in experimental group. The number of errors (both in oral and written speech) has decreased among the students of experimental group (see Table three).

Table 3. Level of students’ foreign language communicative competence in control and experimental groups after research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development of communicative skills</th>
<th>Speech norms deviation</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>control group</td>
<td>experimental group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>%</td>
<td>number of students</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech norms adoption</td>
<td>orthoepic correctness</td>
<td>19 %</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>grammatical correctness</td>
<td>21 %</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formation of the skills of active work with a word</td>
<td>speech accuracy</td>
<td>17 %</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>speech purity</td>
<td>19 %</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>speech abundance</td>
<td>23 %</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-point of errors in foreign language competence</td>
<td>19,8 %</td>
<td>7,8 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The third table shows that the level of deviations in foreign language communicative competence among the students in experimental group has decreased.

The purpose of research work was to test the effectiveness of game technology, project-based technology, interactive technologies, Moodle, personality-oriented learning, etc., aimed at forming foreign language communicative competence of students of non-philological specialties.

Only 59 students out of 150 students in experimental group had deviations in some speech norms indicators. 91 students (61%) showed the formed foreign language communicative competence which proves the methodological effectiveness of the applied innovative teaching means.

Discussion

We have completed all the tasks of the article:
1) analyzed the scientific literature on communicative competence;
2) defined communicative competence;
3) experimentally found the effectiveness of game technologies, design technologies, interactive technologies, tasks in the electronic system Moodle, etc. in teaching English to students of non-language specialties.

The diagnosis of the English language competence after the use of innovative teaching aids (interactive technologies, Moodle, student-centered learning) showed that students improved their products.

The following conclusion is interesting: learning tools determine the result, not the learning material. Students of the control group and the experimental group studied using the same material. Students had different results through teaching aids.

Interestingly, the level has improved in both language and speech skills. Students' vocabulary has expanded, grammar knowledge has improved, and so on.

Students of the control group mastered the same phonetic, lexical, grammatical material. We checked reading, talking, writing, listening. We worked with these students using a single textbook and homework notebook. Methods of work: checking new words, constructing sentences, reading new texts and their translation, questions to the test, etc.

We noticed that the students of the control group began to lose interest in classes after several months of study.

Instead, the students of the experimental group showed more interest in English classes: they asked questions, wanted to study even during breaks, actively communicated with each other in English.

There are several implications derived from this study. Firstly, game technology, project-based technology, interactive technologies, Moodle, personality-oriented learning, etc. have improved language competence of students of non-language specialties. It is necessary to study how these tools will affect the study of a foreign language by the students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages.

Secondly, the question arises as to which of these tools are effective in distance learning.

Thirdly, we plan to determine the effectiveness of technical means of teaching and illustrations in the formation of foreign language communicative competence formation. Technical teaching aids have become relevant in the context of distance learning caused by the incidence of COVID-19.

**Conclusion**

The results of the study will contribute to the development of communicative competence of bachelors, social adaptation, speech culture, development of critical thinking. The results can also be helpful for other academic institutions, improving the content of teaching in various fields and outlining new methodological areas for the development and conduct of foreign language classes.
About the Authors

Olha Turko is a Lecturer of Pedagogy and Psychology at Ternopil V. Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ukraine. She got her PhD (Candidate of Philological Sciences). Her scientific interests are higher education, foreign language teaching methods, syntax, linguodidactics. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4178-0483
Olha Turko (0000-0002-4178-0483) orcid.org
Zolotogorska str., 8/20, Ternopil, 46012, Ukraine, olha.turko@gmail.com

Tetiana Kravchuk is a Lecturer of Foreign Language at Ternopil V. Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ukraine. She got her PhD (Candidate of Philological Sciences). Her scientific interests are higher education, foreign language teaching methods, German as a Second Language. ORCID ID https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1396-4573
Kravchuk Tetiana (0000-0003-1396-4573) orcid.org
Kulisha str. 4/54, Ternopil, 46016, Ukraine, tanchik454@gmail.com

Oleksandra Kashuba is a Lecturer of Foreign Language at Ternopil V. Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ukraine. She got her PhD (Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences). Her scientific interests are higher education, foreign language teaching methods, German as a Second Language. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5478-2875
Kashuba Oleksandra (0000-0002-5478-2875) orcid.org
Pushkina str. 5/90, Ternopil, 46016, Ukraine, lesiakashuba@gmail.com

Halyna Navolska is a Lecturer of Foreign Language at Ternopil V. Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ukraine. She got her PhD (Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences). Her scientific interests are higher education, foreign language teaching methods, Latin as a Second Language. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4196-0123
Halyna Navolska (0000-0003-4196-0123) orcid.org
Vilhova str. 27/12, Ternopil, 46003, Ukraine, navolska9@gmail.com

Ivan Kutsyi is a Lecturer of Faculty of History at Ternopil V. Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University, Ukraine. Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor. His scientific interests are Ukrainian national movement, historiography, civilizational identity. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3556-1962
Ivan Kutsyi (0000-0002-3556-1962) orcid.org
Berezhanska str. 55/44, Ternopil, 46027, Ukraine kutsyy@ukr.net

References


Student Teachers’ Listening Fluency Interaction Patterns: 
The Use of Similar News Stories in Narrow Listening

Refi Ranto Rozak
Post Graduate Program, English Education Department, Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES), Indonesia
Under graduate Program, English Education Department, IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, Indonesia
Correspondent Author: refi.ranto@ikippgribojonegoro.ac.id

Mursid Saleh
Post Graduate Program, English Education Department
Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES), Indonesia

Dwi Anggani Linggar Bharati
Post Graduate Program, English Education Department
Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES), Indonesia

Djoko Sutopo
Post Graduate Program, English Education Department
Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES), Indonesia

Received: 11/6/2020       Accepted: 1/12/2021       published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
This article reports the use of similar news stories in narrow listening in an Extensive Listening course to promote student teachers’ listening fluency in an Indonesian initial teacher education context. This study was to investigate: (1) What is the patterns of interaction of Indonesian student teachers of English regarding their listening fluency when exposed to slow, moderately slow, and normal speech level texts?; and (2) What are the challenges and opportunities of promoting listening fluency through narrow listening using news stories in an Extensive Listening course? The aims of this article are to portray student teachers’ listening fluency interaction patterns through similar news stories in narrow listening and to investigate the challenges and opportunities of promoting listening fluency using narrow listening. This sequential mix-method study reported 40 student teachers’ engagement in extensive listening activities over 12 weeks, such as: (1) the choice of the news stories using online extensive listening material selection survey, (2) repeated listening tasks for fluency development at a lower to a normal speech rate level, and (3) linked-skills fluency development activities scaffolded by the teacher educators. The study found that similar news stories in narrow listening as extensive listening material helped student teachers familiarize similar structures and vocabulary of the spoken texts from similar topics/themes. The article portrays the inclusion of narrow listening in an Extensive Listening course can help the development of student teachers’ listening fluency in Indonesian initial Teacher Education context.

Keywords: Extensive listening, initial teacher education, interaction patterns, listening fluency, narrow listening, news stories, repeated listening, student teachers

Introduction

In recent years, promoting listening fluency has been of great concern among language teachers. Listening fluency inclusion in language teachers’ listening curriculum allows students to process the spoken texts effortlessly, accurately, and comprehensively to reach a reasonable degree of comprehension. In this regard, students need a lot of spoken inputs and continuous practices to attain this level of proficiency (Rost, 2006). Extensive listening provides students abundant exposure to spoken texts as the language input and simultaneous practices that lead to listening fluency. Ducker & Saunders (2014) pointed out that extensive listening is a process by which language learners can increase their proficiency in listening and acquire a second language (L2) through access and exposure to texts which are simultaneously understandable and enjoyable. The fundamental principle of extensive listening is listening might be best learned through listening. This is relevant to Ridgway (as cited in Renandya, 2011) that practising listening for communicative purposes is important to develop students’ listening skills and automaticity.

Promoting listening fluency in an Extensive Listening course is a novel idea. Even though extensive listening to second language (L2) teaching has been widely researched worldwide (Alm, 2013; Bidabadi & Yamat, 2014; Blyth, 2012; Bozan, 2015; Chang, 2012; Chang, 2018; Lee & Cha, 2017; Masrai, 2019; Pamuji, Waring, & Kurniawan, 2019; Renandya, 2012; Renandya & Jacobs, 2016; Renandya & Ivone, 2019; Takaesu, 2013; Yeh, 2013; Zeng & Goh, 2018) and the impacts of extensive listening on the L2 and English as a foreign language (EFL) students’ listening fluency (Chang, 2011; Chang & Millet, 2014; Chang & Millet, 2016; Chang, Millet, & Renandya, 2018; Tsai, 2019), it is unfortunate that there are minimal data found in the literature discussing extensive listening in Indonesian initial teacher education contexts. Not until recently did Widodo & Rozak (2016) conducted a qualitative investigation into the use of online videos for extensive listening coupled with reflective practice and online discussions. However, although extensive listening starts to be a promising study in an Indonesian initial teacher education context, promoting listening fluency as the primary goal of extensive listening has not been discussed and documented in this context. Additionally, although listening fluency is an important strand in language proficiency, it has not been incorporated into listening instruction because it is not a legitimate institution curriculum yet.

To fill the literature gaps, it is indispensable for teacher educators to inserting listening fluency in an Extensive Listening course in an initial teacher education context. Listening fluency inclusion purpose in an Extensive Listening course is to train student teachers’ automaticity in processing the various spoken texts found in a real-life situation using authentic materials. In this case, they practice how to decode aural elements automatically between the speakers and listeners for sharing the ideas in a two way communication. During the process of communication, listeners have no time to stop what is being said by the speaker because the listening process is completely automatic (Chang & Millet, 2016). Therefore, they do not only learn some comprehension skills and strategies in the classroom but they should develop their language proficiency by practicing how to process spoken language with ease and automaticity. Listening fluency training approaches in an Extensive Listening course is considered to help students practice processing a fast rate found in real life listening.

Narrow listening (derived from narrow reading) is one of approaches to develop students’ listening fluency. Krashen (1996) defined narrow listening as listening to a lot of comprehensible input through repeated listening, self-selection of samples, and familiarity with the topics.
Repeated listening (repeatedly listening to a text until the learner can fully understand without referring to the written text) is regarded as a useful support in facilitating students’ comprehension in the teaching of listening and doing the listening tests (Chang & Read, 2006). Besides, topic familiarity coming from one single author or topic is also stressed in narrow listening. It is helpful for building learners’ comprehension by allowing them to recognize similar structures and vocabulary of spoken texts (Rodrigo, 2003). Narrow listening also enables learners to listen the exciting topics at their pace so that they take care of their language acquisition. Regarding to listening fluency development, narrow listening can be molded by the multiple exposure to the same input, multi-channel exposure (audio and text), and spaced repetitions.

To extend this scholarship, this article is framed as listen fluency development tasks reaped from the principles of extensive listening and narrow listening. More importantly, student teachers’ listening development is trained through engaged and scaffolded repetitions for developing their automaticity using understandable and enjoyable listening inputs for making meaning. This study used similar news stories as authentic materials through engaging various extensive listening activities. To frame a prominent picture of how teaching listening fluency for student teachers using narrow listening in an Extensive Listening course, this article highlights such critical issues as: (1) What are the patterns of interaction of Indonesian student teachers of English regarding their listening fluency when exposed to slow, moderately slow, and normal speech level texts?; and (2) What are the challenges and opportunities of promoting listening fluency through narrow listening using similar news stories in an Extensive Listening course?.

The results of the study can be beneficial contribution for both teacher educators and student teachers in recognizing the interaction patterns of listening fluency through similar news stories in narrow listening and in investigating the challenges and opportunities of promoting listening fluency using narrow listening.

Literature Review

Previous Studies

The previous studies related to the effects of extensive listening on learners’ listening fluency in L2 and EFL listening are reported by recent articles in the past ten years. Although the empirical reviews of listening fluency in extensive listening is a relatively novel idea in both L2 and EFL listening instruction (Chang, 2011; Chang & Millet, 2014; Chang & Millet, 2016; Chang, Millet, & Renandya, 2018; Tsai, 2019), there is still a small body of previous research on the use of narrow listening in university students, especially student teachers of English in initial teacher education institutions. More specifically, there has not been a research done to examine and investigate the patterns of interaction of Indonesian student teachers of English regarding their listening fluency in graded speech rate levels. Drawing on library databases, some relevant studies were reported.

First, a most recent study by Chang (2019) looked into five fixed factors (time, frequency of word occurrence, glossing, word frequency levels, and four dimensions of vocabulary understanding from narrow reading and listening). Both understanding of written and aural meaning significantly improved rather than spelling and using the target word appropriately. The low-frequency word levels are well-acquired and maintained than those in high frequency word levels. Words containing glosses are acquired better than those with no glosses. Overall, this study suggests that narrow reading and listening helped students comprehend the texts smoothly.
from level one to level three by reading one related text at each level. Second, narrow listening’s effect on ninety-five first-year tertiary-level students of English as a second language (ESL) in Hong Kong was reported by Tsang (2019). This three-month experimental research revealed that experimental groups’ pronunciation and fluency in reading aloud, performing dialogues, and free production significantly improved after the experimentation than control group. Third, Mayora (2016) reported the implementation of a small scale of narrow listening among 24 student teachers of English and French in a Colombian university during 11 weeks. The study looked into the process, the product, and the perceptions of the small scale of narrow listening scheme. This study found that the process of the learning scheme used authentic similar news report videos self-selection, videos information collection by using extensive listening worksheets, and audio journal completion via podcasts. Fourth, Shahrokhi et al. (2013) investigated voicing strategies employed in narrow listening among 12 Iranian female freshmen. The result of the participants’ selection revealed that Iranian EFL female freshman university learners’ top-down, bottom-up processing and listening strategy awareness should be cultivated and integrated into the teaching of listening to improve the learners’ listening ability.

On the other hand, the empirical reviews of listening fluency in extensive listening is a relatively novel idea in L2 even in the EFL language instruction (Chang, 2011; Chang & Millet, 2014; Chang & Millet, 2016). Chang (2011) reports 26 weeks investigation of 19 Taiwanese EFL students in a listening course. She investigated the effect of reading while listening (RwL) than usual formal listening instruction on students’ listening fluency and vocabulary gain. The findings showed that RwL class outperformed the control group in both vocabulary gain and listening scores in vocabulary level test and listening test delivered at a speech rate of 160 word per minute (wpm). Similar issue by comparing three different inputs, such as reading only, reading while listening, and listening only to audio-graded readers was reported by Chang & Millet (2016). She conducted the study among 113 a low-intermediate EFL university students in English proficiency courses over a 13-week period. The post-test result after the intervention indicated that reading while listening group score in listening fluency items (180 items) is significantly better than reading only and listening only group. Simultaneous reading plus writing is very helpful to support students word recognition and aural discrimination. Tsai (2019) also researched the importance of digital audiobooks in enhancing 112 undergraduates’ listening fluency. Drawing on reading and while listening to audiobooks as authentic materials, this study found that students’ listening fluency and comprehension improved after pedagogical mediation. Lastly, Chang & Millet (2016) investigated the effects on developing L2 listening fluency through extended listening-focused after reading and listening to audio graders. The study concluded that the amount of input and the frequency of practice from simultaneous input and single input in listening led to the higher improvement of listening.

Even though the reported studies show a positive enhancement regarding the use of narrow listening in the various ESL/EFL contexts, the need for examining narrow listening on learners’ listening fluency remains non-existent. Thus far, no empirical evidences have critically looked into how narrow listening is able to improve student teachers’ listening fluency in an Extensive Listening course in the ESL/EFL contexts from quantitative and qualitative approaches. To fill this gap, the current study attempts to continue this scholarship of narrow listening, especially in an Indonesian initial teacher education institution. To better understand the benefits of narrow listening, this study is framed as linked-skills listening fluency development activities in an Extensive Listening course using in-and out-of classroom activities.
Methods

The current study employed an explanatory sequential mix-methods design (Cresswell, 2014). The rationale of using this design because this study garnered the data from the participants’ responses from the extensive listening material survey and weekly and the final listening fluency tests. Furthermore, the qualitative data obtained from follow-up interviews were collected for an in-depth understanding of the participants’ perceptions and experiences to the study as well.

Research Context and Participants

The study was conducted from April to July 2018 in English Education and Training Department at an initial Teacher Education in East Java Province, Indonesia. There are three prescribed listening courses offered in the department: Intensive Listening, Academic Listening, and Extensive Listening. In Intensive Listening, student teachers are trained to listen to short bits of spoken language intensively which adopts comprehension approach, spoken language features, and simple conversations. In Academic Listening, they are provided with listening practices by identifying general and specific information from long lectures in the various fields, such as seminars, conferences, and academic debates. In Extensive Listening, student teachers learn how to enhance their listening fluency through the various authentic listening materials at an upper-intermediate and pre-advanced level using a top-down approach with different speech rates for developing student teachers’ listening fluency.

The current study was part of Extensive Listening course. This course took a quarter of class time or approximately 1.5 of 6 odd semester duration in academic year 2018/2019. This course was offered in the third term (Year 2). As language student teachers are prepared to be professional English language teachers, they needed to experience with how listening fluency could be included in the learning activities. The study aimed to portray student teachers’ listening fluency training through scaffolded similar news stories from slow (120 wpm), moderately slow (130, 140, and 150 wpm), and average or a normal (160 wpm) speech level.

Out of 57 student teachers, 40 participants (15 males and 25 females) consented to engage voluntarily in the project. They were well-informed of the project and duly signed a consent form before their participation in this study. The participants were multilingual with competencies in Javanese and Bahasa Indonesia. Their English proficiency was at low-intermediate level. It was shown by their TOEFL scores when they first entered the department. The age range of the participants was between 19 and 22 years old. They previously experienced with extended listening activities in extensive listening, such as viewing English videos via TedTalks and Youtube. They attended a three-days second-semester courses every week offered by the English Department. 15 participants agreed to attend one to one interview after the project to report their reactions to the extensive listening project using similar news stories and scaffolded fluency development activities. For ethical consideration, their names were given pseudonyms in this paper.

Instruments

Similar news stories were preferred as the materials in this article because they fulfilled the extensive listening material requirements, such as: authentic, unmodified, famous, and spontaneous. The main consideration of choosing similar news stories as the learning materials was also because they contained serial information for similar topics as they were anchored in narrow listening principle. In this respect, the topics of the news stories were related to the
Mount Agung Eruption news headlines broadcasted by national and international renowned mass media between August 2017 to February 2018. For the sake of listening audio materials, the authors recruited a native speaker of English as a human reader who was assigned to read the written news stories in a professional dubbing studio. To set the speech of each news story production, the operator of the studio converted the speech to speed up and slow down to achieve the desired wpm (words per minute) counts. To put it another way, the speech rates of the audio were converted into slow (120 wpm), moderately slow (130, 140, or 150 wpm), and average or a normal (160 wpm) speech level. All the converted news stories audio with different speech rate levels were then stored in Extensive Listening course online platform called Canvas for student teachers’ listening material references.

The empirical data were collected through the extensive listening material survey using Google doc., listening logs, listening comprehension tests, and interview sheets. The extensive listening material survey was used by the participants to select their preferential news story topics. Furthermore, listening logs were used to record the number of repetitions of the news stories in different levels of speech rate. In this regard, they marked their comprehension in each repetition among 5= (100-90%), 4= (89-70%), 3= (69-50%), 2= (49-30%), or 1= (below 30%). If they felt that their comprehension was fewer, they could repeat listening to the whole audio of the news story or listen some problematic parts of listening and scored their comprehension in the later repetitions. As suggested by the authors as the teacher educators in the study, the participants should ensure that their comprehension was above 90% which means that the preferred news stories were suitable for extensive listening materials. If after repeating the news story several times and their comprehension scores were below 90% means the news stories were not recommended to be selected as extensive listening materials.

To measure the participants’ listening fluency test after listening each news story, the participants also should answer some multiple choice questions. It aimed to score their comprehension in each speech rate after listening to news story. There were three indicators in this test, such as listening for gist, listening for specific information, and listening for inferences. These indicators were all distributed in 10 multiple choice items for each news story. Lastly, the interview sheet was used as a guideline in interview sessions conducting in the end of the study to investigate participants’ perceptions and experiences regarding to listening fluency development activities in an Extensive Listening course using narrow listening. Totally, there were ten questions in the interview but, for the purpose of the study, responses to the challenges and opportunities of promoting listening fluency through narrow listening using similar news stories in this study were the main issues of the interview.

**Procedures**

In the beginning, the participants took part in a course orientation. In this course stage, the participants were introduced the learning objectives, the concept of extensive listening and narrow listening, and the practice of self-selecting similar news stories as extensive listening materials on Google Survey. In particular, filling out the survey was the important stage of this study. They should determine which news stories were suitable for their comprehension level. There are six criteria in the survey: 1) the significance of the news story; 2) the interest in information available in the news story; 3) the language level of the news story (whether between 90 - 95); 4) the ability of the participants without having to stop the audio; 5) the difficulty level of news story content; and 6) the engagement of the participants in the news story.
language features. To match the principle of extensive listening material, the survey helped participants to self-select the appropriate extensive listening materials. They should tick 'yes' or 'no' in each criterion in the survey after listening to the news story audio and ensure whether or not it had been met their language proficiency levels. A ‘yes’ answer to all criteria would mean that the news story was suitable for extensive listening activities. On the contrary, a negative answer to the criteria means that the news story is incomprehensible or uninteresting. Therefore, the participants should re-select other news story and marked all criteria in the survey again until the understandable news story was preferred.

They should self-select ten different news story topics as their extensive listening materials. From the preferred news story topics, the author then classified the participants according to their topic selection interest. Furthermore, they engaged in listening fluency development tasks using linked-skills activities within three stages of listening instructional scenario which consisted of the pre-listening stage (background understanding activation of the topic), the whilst-listening stage (repeated listening and collaborative reading and speaking), and the post-listening stage (collaborative writing) (See Table one). In particular, in the beginning of the core classroom activities, they were given questions to activate their background understanding about the news story topic in the pre-listening stage. In the whilst-listening stage, they self-listened to the topical news stories at slow (120 wpm), moderately slow (130, 140, and 150 wpm), and average or a normal (160 wpm) speech rate level using listening logs. They should also mark their comprehension whether below 30%, 49-30%, 69-50%, 89-70% or 100-90% in each repetition using listening logs. They could repeat some points that they did not understand and then mark again their listening comprehension level in the listening logs.

Table 1. Linked skills activities in listening fluency development tasks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Weekly linked-skills activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Orientation course | 1. Familiarizing participants with learning objectives and the concepts of narrow listening and extensive listening;  
2. Practicing self-select news stories as extensive listening materials using Google Survey;  
3. Self-selecting news stories as extensive listening materials in the course online platform database;  
4. Classifying the participants according to the selected news story topics for collaborative learning |
| Pre-listening stage | Background knowledge activation  
Lists to graded similar news stories from slow to normal speech rate levels (listening)  
The participants listened to graded similar news stories at slow (120 wpm), moderately slow (130, 140, and 150 wpm) and average or a normal (160 wpm) speech rate level using listening logs to check their comprehension. In this listening log, they should mark their comprehension whether below 30%, 49-30%, 69-50%, 89-70% or 100-90% in each repetition. |
| Whilst-listening stage | Collaborative reading (reading)  
The participants grouped collaborative reading with similar news story topics. They read aloud their news story transcripts and selected a group representative to read aloud to the whole class in turn. |
| Post-listening stage | Dictogloss collaborative (speaking)  
In pair, similar news story topic groups took turns telling and checking the main points of the selected news stories they had just listened to. |
Preliminary Course

1. Familiarizing participants with learning objectives and the concepts of narrow listening and extensive listening;
2. Practicing self-select news stories as extensive listening materials using Google Survey;
3. Self-selecting news stories as extensive listening materials in the course online platform database;
4. Classifying the participants according to the selected news story topics for collaborative learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Weekly linked-skills Activities</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>writing (Writing)</td>
<td>the previous news stories and rewrote them into the other similar news stories</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final evaluation</td>
<td>The participants individually had an evaluation by listening to the topical similar news story in normal speech rate level (160 wpm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative approaches. There are three kinds of quantitative data in this article, i.e., the number of participants’ responses from news stories material selection via Google Survey, the number of listening repetitions and listening fluency scores in each weekly graded listening sessions, and the final listening fluency tests. Specifically, in analyzing the number of participants’ responses from Google Survey, out of 30 available Mount Agung Eruption-related to news stories headlines were available in the Extensive Listening online course material database to select. 10 out of 30 news story headlines were then automatically analyzed by Google Survey. These 10 preferred Mount Agung Eruption-related news stories headlines had fulfilled as good extensive listening materials criteria indicated by total positive responses ('yes' selection).

The analysis of participants’ listening repetitions and their listening fluency scores in each graded listening session were analyzed by counting the total number of participants’ listening repetitions and the total listening fluency in each graded listening divided by the number of participants to obtain the average participants’ listening repetitions and listening fluency scores. Moreover, the final listening fluency test scores were analyzed by counting the total number of participants’ listening comprehension test scores (160 wpm) and divided by the number of participants each group. On the other hand, the qualitative data were obtained from participants’ interview responses. There were two steps of analysis. Firstly, the data collected from participants’ responses were analyzed and then the main thematic categories were identified. Secondly, the data from their responses were then compared and contrasted and larger thematic categories were extracted.

Findings

The patterns of interaction of Indonesian student teachers of English regarding their listening fluency

The result of the participants’ extensive listening material survey

Drawing on a mix-method study, we identified some emergent quantitative and qualitative findings. However, before main findings related to the questions of the study are presented, the following Table 2 is the result of preliminary data collection in terms of the participants’ extensive listening material survey preference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>News stories (NSs) main titles</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>C1</th>
<th>C2</th>
<th>C3</th>
<th>C4</th>
<th>C5</th>
<th>C6</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327
Based on the extensive listening material survey distributed to the respondents, there were five news stories main headlines which they likely chose according to the extensive listening material selection criteria. The total average percentage of respondents’ news stories selection is 96.008%. It means that the preferred news stories had been comprehensible and suitable to the respondents’ proficiency levels. Furthermore, we provided similar news stories topics relevant to the respondents’ preferred news stories headlines for in- and out-of classroom learning as described in Table 3.

Table 3. The topical similar news stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Main news stories (NSs) headlines</th>
<th>Weekly similar news stories (NSs) topics</th>
<th>Similar news story topics for the final listening fluency test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Local News Report Hoax on Eruption</td>
<td>1.1 Hoax Not Helping as Mount Agung Eruption Looms in Bali</td>
<td>Bali Accuses Competitors of Spreading Hoaxes about Volcano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 BNPB: Do Not Believe Hoax about Mount Agung Eruption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 Indonesian Police Hunts Individuals Spreading Hoax on Mount Agung</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 Keep Calm and Enjoy Bali: Tourism Association</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.5 Fake News and Mount Agung</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Bali Offers Up to 50 Percent Discounts to Stranded Tourists: Minister of Tourism</td>
<td>1.1 Tourism Minister Angry that Hotels Are Not Discounting Room Rates Enough During Mount Agung Eruption Period</td>
<td>Indonesia’s Tourism Minister Urges Hotels to Give Special Discounts to Tourists Stranded in Bali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.2 Indonesia Offers up to 50 Percent Discounts for Tourists Traveling to Bali</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3 32 Hotels in Lombok Offer Discounts of up to 50 Percent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4 Tourism Minister Urges Discounts for Tourists Trapped in Bali Due to Mt. Agung Eruption</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.5 Tourism Minister Asks Bali Hotels to Give Discounts to Stranded Guests after Mt. Agung Erupts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Government</td>
<td>1.1 10 Alternative Airports Prepared</td>
<td>Indonesia Prepares 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prepares 5 Airports Near Bali Island

1.2 Nine Airports Prepared in Anticipation of Mount Agung Eruption

1.3 Airnav Sets 10 Backup Airports Nearing Mt. Agung Eruption in Bali

1.4 Nine Airports Prepared by Transportation Ministry Anticipating Volcanic Activity of Mount Agung

1.5 10 Alternative Airports Prepared Anticipate Gunung Agung Situation

Bali Volcano Latest: Eruption Imminent-Mount Agung about to Blow at Any Moment

1.2 Bali issues Red Alert Fearing Imminent Larger Eruption of Mount Agung Volcano

1.3 Bali Volcano-Indonesia Fears Imminent Mt. Agung Eruption

1.4 Bali Volcano-Larger Eruption Could be Imminent

1.5 Mt. Agung Eruption Could be Imminent: Agency

Indonesian Condemns Tavel Advisory as Excessive amid Bali Volcano Eruption

1.1 Singaporeans Urged to Postpone Travel to Bali amid Mount Agung Eruption

1.2 Defer Travel to Bali amid Unpredictable Situation on Mount Agung: MFA

1.3 Indonesia Irked over Singapore Excessive Travel Advisory for Bali

1.4 MFA Advises Singaporeans to Defer Travel to Bali as Situation on Mount Agung Remains Unpredictable

1.5 Singapore Government Made a Travel Warning about Mount Agung Eruption

The first student teachers’ listening fluency interaction pattern: repeated listening frequency and graded speech rate levels of average weekly similar news stories in narrow listening

The first interaction pattern found that the average listening repetitions per news story (NS) for all groups showcased graded listening repetitions results. The study results showed that the average number of participants’ listening repetitions on weekly similar news stories topics in group 1 \((n= 8)\), group 2 \((n= 10)\), group 3 \((n= 5)\), group 4 \((n= 9)\), and group 5 \((n= 11)\) were decreasing as the speech rate levels of the audio were sped up. In this case, the average number of listening repetitions were smaller as the speed of listening was sped up from slow \(120 \text{ wpm}\), moderately slow \(130, 140, \text{and} 150 \text{ wpm}\), and average or a normal \(160 \text{ wpm}\) speech level. Therefore, it can be concluded that the more they listened to similar news stories from slow to a normal speech rate level, the fewer their listening repetitions are. The pattern of interaction between participants’ average number of listening repetitions and graded speech rate levels on similar news story topic can be seen in Figure 1.
The second interaction pattern pointed out that the average listening fluency scores on graded speech rate levels to weekly similar news stories also showed an important finding. The participants (n=40) in all groups indicated positive listening fluency scores in each stage listening fluency development activities. With this in mind, their listening fluency scores got improved when they listened to graded similar news. Notably, the groups’ average listening fluency scores in similar news story topic 1.1 (120 wpm) were 58. In second similar news story topic 1.2 (130 wpm), the average listening fluency scores were 66. Besides, the average listening fluency scores in the third similar news story topic 1.3 (140 wpm) were 73. More additionally, in similar news story topic 1.4 (150 wpm), the average listening fluency scores were 82. Finally, the average listening fluency scores in similar news story topic 1.5 (160 wpm) were 90. This finding showed that the more they listened to graded similar news stories, the better their listening fluency scores are. The summary of this interaction pattern can be seen in Figure 2.
The third interaction pattern found that repeated graded listening in similar news stories in all groups affected the participants’ final listening fluency scores. This finding specifically pointed out that they were mostly able to comprehend similar news stories topic in a normal speech rate level (160 wpm). The average listening fluency scores were above 90. In this language proficiency level, they have obtained good listening fluency in processing the content of similar news stores in a fast rate level. In addition to repeating the process of listening or repeated listening several times in each similar news story, they also listened to repeated structures and vocabulary for subsequent similar news stories. The summary of the third pattern can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3. The groups’ average listening fluency scores of similar news stories topics in a normal speech rate level (160 wpm)

The challenges and opportunities to promote and include narrow listening using similar news stories in an Extensive Listening course

Investigating the challenges and opportunities of narrow listening using similar news stories in Extensive Listening course is the second issue addressed in this study. Since extensive listening is a new approach to teaching listening, especially in an initial teacher education context, its existence should be regarded as an innovation in listening instruction. Although it is still novel, the benefits of extensive exposure to meaningful language learning have been proven to support student teachers’ language proficiency. However, during the implementation of a two-month extensive listening program in the present research setting, there were several challenges and opportunities encountered by the participants. The findings were obtained from a one-to-one interview between the teacher educators and participants in the end of the study.

The challenges

The responses obtained from interview found that few participants \((n=12)\) expressed the challenges of narrow listening using similar news stories in their Extensive Listening course. The first challenge deals with the preferred headlines as the course materials. Similar news stories as authentic materials had alternatively enriched the exposure of their listening learning. However, the understandable authentic inputs that were mostly emphasizing on student teachers’ needs and
their language proficiency levels not manageable. For instance, in the case of narrow listening using similar news stories, in the beginning, teacher educators should guide student teachers to self-select authentic similar news stories from different sources and then ask them to identify using extensive listening material survey to ensure whether the preferred news stories had been comprehensible or not. However, the implementation of this preliminary task was time more consuming and made some student teachers bored. For instance, in Excerpts 1, 2, and 3, three student teachers perceived the material selection issue in this course.

**Excerpt 1**: “The idea of learning extensive listening using news headlines is much appreciated. I didn’t learn such materials before in this course. I am happy to choose the news headline I liked most under your [teacher educators] supervision. However, I felt bored in the beginning of news headlines selection. I should ensure that the selected news headlines were really understandable using the survey. I should listen the headlines many times until I got the right ones.” [Alberth/Group 1]

**Excerpt 2**: “Mm, I was not quite good at listening. Moreover, I tried to repeat more and more news headlines when they didn’t meet my expectation. Unfortunately, I was easily demotivated when I failed to comprehend the headlines after some repetitions. Although I was finally able to collect ten headlines, for me, it’s a hard effort.” [Yulia/Group 2]

**Excerpt 3**: “Well, to reach understandable level is not that easy. I am sorry for telling you a lie that I tried to make some headlines were comprehensible. I ticked “yes” option so that I didn’t need to listen more headlines.” [Vita/Group 3]

Additionally, nearly from the total participants (n= 22) admitted that in the implementation of repeated listening in narrow listening, listening in slow speech level (120 wpm) and listening in moderate speech level (130 wpm and 140 wpm) were the most challenging parts although the topics had previously been discussed in the classroom. Some student teachers felt the speaker spoke too fast, while others thought that the speakers’ speech was slow (120 wpm) and the spoken vocabulary were unfamiliar. Therefore, in the beginning of listening fluency development activities via narrow listening, they needed more listening repetitions so that their listening comprehension scores were satisfying. Excerpts 4, 5, 6, and 7 showed how the participants struggled for comprehending the news headlines in the beginning of listening repetitions:

**Excerpt 4**: “It’s quite hard to comprehend the general meaning of the news story headlines in the first listening. It seems impossible without repeating some difficult parts of news story. I just comprehended a bit in classroom listening and more listening repetitions were conducted online after classroom hours.” [Regita/Group 2]

**Excerpt 5**: “The first listening was challenging. The second listening was challenging too. The third listening was a bit easy. The fourth listening was easier. Each listening helped me comprehend the latter listening activities.” [Antonius/Group 4]

**Excerpt 6**: “My listening scores in first and second listening were not satisfying. I also repeated some parts of phrases and sentences many times. I used dictionaries, browsed the information on the internet, discussed them with my peers to check my comprehension. I think approaching a normal speech level as the target of this learning is impossible if we just listen without repeating some parts of the audio.” [Rosita/Group 5]
Excerpt 7: “In the first listening, I attempted to listen to from the beginning to the end to get an initial description of the news story. In the second listening, I listened some parts that I could not understand. Each evaluation could be seen in the result of listening comprehension scores. If my score was not good [below 70], I attempted to locate on the difficult parts and listen again. When the speech levels were increased in each news story, I needed more repetitions.” [Hira/Group 3]

The Opportunities

Although some challenges have been identified, there are some opportunities in promoting listening fluency using narrow listening in an Extensive Listening course in an initial teacher education context. Several participants \( n = 9 \) highlighted the importance of their freedom to choose their listening materials. In active listening, student teachers are positioned as the agents of learning. In this case, they also contribute to the process of learning. In Excerpts 8, 9, and 10, they revealed their perceptions on this issue:

Excerpt 8: “I loved to get involved in this program as our teacher educators trusted us to choose the news stories topic we’d love to so much. The news stories stored in LMS listening audio library were also very popular in recent TV news. We were also free to choose the news stories that appropriately easy and ignore some difficult news stories.” [Deksi/Group 4]

Excerpt 9: “As suggested by the teacher educators, my friends and I should participate in learning material selection by paying attention on the learning guidelines. Although this activity was too tiring in the beginning, but I was so happy because the main topic was quite famous. Therefore, when choosing similar news headlines, I should determine which one is understandable for my language proficiency and which one is not.” [Hamdan/Group 2]

Excerpt 10: “Choosing our news story headlines were not difficult. We have been familiar with the main topic as they had been broadcasted lately. My topical background understanding helped my understanding a lot, especially when the audio speed in every text was increased.” [Rizki/Group 1]

Excerpt 11: “I knew some of the news stories and I had also ever visited Mount Agung years ago. I knew how it’s like. I was trying to connect what I was listening to and what I had experienced. This was the way I was choosing the news stories. I liked these news stories because I monitored so often this natural disaster on TV and online news portals.” [Malik/Group 2]

As the above excerpts show, the participants claimed that they enjoyed the learning because they were involved in material selection. Their responses represented their views about their satisfaction on their involvement in extensive listening materials selection. They felt confident because the available news stories were up-to-date and popular in some local and international mass media. They could select the suitable news story headlines according to their language proficiency levels and teacher educators scaffolded and gave feedback to them so that they created a positive learning environment.

Meanwhile, repeated listening to similar news stories could mediate participants’ listening fluency development. The data found in the listening logs indicated that repetitions helped them comprehend similar topics of new stories for different speech rates starting from a slow to a
normal/average rate. This finding was supported by the participants who mentioned that the more they listened to, the more they enhanced their fluency and comprehension, and the less they repeated similar news stories so that they could process the language input automatically in a normal speech rate level. \( n = 10 \).

**Excerpt 12:** “In listening class, most of the time I could not comprehend the spoken texts expressed by native speakers of English in one listening session. I think most of my colleagues did the same. Usually, the teacher educators let us repeat playing and self-listen to the audio several times until we understood. I did note-taking during self-listening and when there were several words/phrases I didn’t understand, I tried to listen to again until I caught the main points and made predictions. What I liked most was, I could self-listen to overtime so that I could control and monitor my learning.” [Indra/Group 5]

**Excerpt 13:** “I have got two benefits from this program. First, repetitions would help me enhance my comprehension of similar news stories while developing my listening fluency. Second, because the identical vocabulary and structures among similar news stories were used many times, I could guess what came next when I should listen to similarly spoken texts. This experience guided me to listen to the actual information in the future.” [Alif/Group 5]

As the above excerpts illustrated, the representative participants commenting the issue believed that the course helped them a lot improving their listening fluency and comprehension through repeating similar news stories in narrow listening. Additionally, the linked skills sequence in narrow listening could engage student teachers’ participation in Extensive Listening course. It provided preparation and support for the later activities. It enabled student teachers to collaboratively use the language items from receptive to productive skills to create a communicative learning atmosphere. Some student teachers \( n = 5 \) recalled the benefits of linked-skills listening fluency development activities. Excerpts 14 and 15 show these perceptions:

**Excerpt 14:** “Frankly, listening is a boring course. But what I liked most following this course is I could express my ideas in speaking sessions both in the early pre-listening stage and while-listening stage so that I could negotiate what I had learned from previous listening stages productively with a peer. In the post-listening stage, my group and I could compose other written similar topics. It’s fun.” [Sonnya/Group 4]

**Excerpt 15:** “My listening comprehension was better when firstly the teacher educators introduced the topic by asking us some questions and showed pictures related topic. We also had small discussions with peers to share our arguments about the topics. Also, we read the transcripts and checked some cues on dictionaries and browsed the internet. Then, we were listening to the audio while reading its written transcript. These activities helped us a lot for future out of self-listening in narrow listening.” [Yusuf/Group 2]

Overall, student teachers’ perceptions were very positive. They were engaged in a series of listening fluency development tasks. In this regard, they actively selected their extensive listening materials, involved in linked-skills listening fluency development tasks, and worked in groups in classroom learning, practiced improving their listening fluency independently after classroom hours, and did the evaluation to monitor their progress.
Discussion

Drawing on quantitative and qualitative data in a mix-method approach, participants’ responses on extensive listening material survey, listening logs, listening fluency tests, and interview data, five central findings are discussed in this section. The discussions included the result of extensive listening material survey selection, the participants’ listening fluency interactions patterns, and their perceptions on the opportunities and challenges to promote and include narrow listening using similar news stories in an Extensive Listening course.

Extensive listening material survey selection

This study looked at the importance of similar news stories in narrow listening. For language development, similar news stories as the authentic texts in extensive listening provide learners to afford more opportunities to develop their lexico-grammar in different communicative situations. Vandergrift and Goh (2012) argued that “learners should listen to as many different types of authentic texts as possible, on a wide variety of themes, and topics”. In this study, the selection of similar news stories as extensive listening material via Google Survey was the point of departure for listening fluency development tasks. They preferred the news headline entitled “Mount Agung Eruption” reported by some local and international mass media. This headline was reported many times in late November 2017 and in the early months of 2018. During this natural disaster, some topic-related news stories headlines were also reported to become national and international attention. The main reason of choosing similar news stories was because the participants had been familiar with some related similar topics so that they could improve their background understanding for the input. Background knowledge activation while listening to the same topic helps them pay more attention to the linguistic features (Chang & Read, 2006, 2007).

The student teachers’ listening fluency interaction patterns

More specifically, the study found some interaction patterns of participants’ listening fluency using similar news stories in narrow listening. The interaction patterns were dealing with the frequency of listening repetitions in each the level of speech rate, participants’ listening fluency scores improvement in each speech rate level, and the proficient level of participants comprehension in listening fluency tests in the final evaluation. The more student teachers listened to similar news stories from slow to a normal speech rate level, the less their repetitions are. Chang & Read (2006) showed that the number of repetitions were required for adequate comprehension, especially for low proficiency level students and more repetitions would help their comprehension. In this case, after they repeated some problematic parts of the news stories several times, they did not need to listen to the features of spoken language so that their listening repetitions would be decreased. In this phase of listening processing, they had been able to process the language automatically so that it influenced their global comprehension (Chang, 2011). Apart from their listening repetitions, texts familiarity and self-select news stories material selection and speech rate control were both influential in determining their frequency of repetitions. Mayora (2017) in his study found that students’ freedom to select their listening materials based on the familiarity of the text genre and the repeated practices over times would aid comprehensibility while offering them the chance to be exposed to natural and realistic spoken English. Therefore, multiple exposure of similar words inter-related texts would ease their spoken lexical burden during listening process.

Another interaction pattern is student teachers’ listening fluency scores in each speech rate level. This finding showed that the more they repeated graded similar news stories, the better
their listening fluency scores are. This repeated practice mainly helps learners perform listening fluency (Nation & Newton, 2009). This finding showcased that most of the participants likely listened to similar news stories starting from slow to a normal speech rate without teacher educator’s control. This idea included in the principles of extensive listening in which they did not only self-select similar news stories in the beginning of the study, but they also self-controlled their listening repetitions over the times. Zao as cited in Chang (2018a) argued that students might have better comprehension when they control their speech rate during listening sessions. In the meantime, the ultimate goal of fluency development activities in this study is to reach natural speech delivered at a normal speech rate. Therefore, they needed to be scaffolded processing similar news stories from slow to a normal speech rate level. In processing slow speech rate news stories, teacher educators introduced the topic and some related vocabulary, activated their background knowledge of the topic, repeated listening, and recycled the topical vocabulary through linked skills fluency development. With this in mind, they became more efficient in word recognition which increased the speed of the listening process and thus lead a higher comprehension in each speech rate level (Chang, 2011).

Lastly, the third listening fluency interaction pattern showed that student teachers’ average scores of listening fluency got improved in listening to similar news stories in a normal speech rate. This finding indicated that through scaffolded listening fluency development tasks, they were finally able to reach a normal speech rate level. Chang (2011) stated that when learners can comprehend the spoken texts in a normal speech rate, they will be more fluent in processing the listening. In this case, they could process the aural input automatically and effortlessly, restructure the words and background knowledge among texts with less hesitations. In this study, the reasonable listening performance they had reached were above 90. Chang et al. (2018a) and Dupuy (1999) argued that fluent listeners can maintain reasonable comprehension above 90% of all elements of global language processing. Furthermore, Chang (2011) also found that repeated listening practice via extensive listening is believed to gradually help L2 listeners become accustomed to listening to speech at a native speaker rate. In the same vein, monitoring student teachers’ listening fluency in each speech rate level requires them to have multiple exposure to spoken form in similar news stories. Answering comprehension questions after repetition practices with different speech rate helps them ensure that their comprehension was correct (Chang & Millet, 2013).

The challenges and opportunities

The qualitative data obtained from interview portrayed the participants’ feelings, perceptions, and experiences during participating in this study. In the beginning of the study, some participants were stressful in self-selecting their news story headlines as their extensive listening materials. They should ensured that the preferred news story headlines should be at the right level. Specifically, the preferred materials should be understandable and under their respective language proficiency in extensive listening. However, choosing the appropriate learning materials according to the criteria of extensive listening material is not manageable. For some participants, the preferred authentic materials (similar news stories) are incomprehensible (Mayora, 2017). Therefore, they considered the hectic times sorting the listening materials because they were too challenging and demotivating. In contrast, the challenging materials for lower proficiency student teachers were often perceived manageable for their higher counterparts. Zhao (as cited in Chang, 2018a) argued that different individuals might perceive the same rate differently due to varying learning styles and language proficiencies. Additionally,
the challenge of comprehending similar news stories in the slower speech rates was because some participants were not familiar with the content. Therefore, for some lower proficiency participants, they need more repetitions than their higher proficiency counterparts (Chang & Read, 2006). However, a higher degree of comprehension (95% and above) is possible only after listening to the same listening materials three or four times (Renandya & Jacobs, 2016).

Although few challenges were perceived by the participants in this study, another perspective positively revealed that they were motivated to learn extensive listening because they were involved in self-selecting their similar news stories. In extensive listening, they engaged in decision-making on what, why, and how to learn in a context both in a prescribed curriculum and a negotiated classroom curriculum because they understand better their learning needs (Widodo & Rozak, 2016). More importantly, participants involvement in learning materials selection was relevant to extensive listening material selection guidelines in which they knew best what to learn according to their proficiency levels. Chang (2018b) highlighted two most considerations when learners were involved in determining their learning materials, such as the input materials should be exciting and appropriate to their language levels. Also, the linked skills sequence in narrow listening could engage and motivate student teachers’ participation in Extensive Listening course (Nation & Newton, 2009; and Chang & Millet, 2013). For example in earlier activities, they were introduced the news story topics to generate their background knowledge by firstly pre teaching the keywords of the topics. With much-spoken vocabulary and background knowledge, the learners’ easily comprehend the language (Chang, 2018b). Further, participants repeated each similar news story assisted by reading its transcript for reading aloud, topic-related discussions in speaking, and recycled the keywords for collaborative writing. Chang (2009) found that aural-written verification in other skills helps learners develop auditory discrimination skills, refine word recognition, and gain awareness of form-meaning relationships.

**Conclusion**

Anchored in narrow listening and extensive listening principles, this study looked into student teachers’ listening fluency patterns of interaction by using similar news stories in narrow listening in an Extensive Listening course. Listening fluency development has been of interest in the area of English language teaching both in the ESL and EFL contexts in the last ten years. Notably, it has a significant role in developing student teachers’ language proficiency in an initial teacher education in the EFL context. As they are accustomed to socializing into comprehension-based listening instruction in the classroom, they need to learn also how to process authentic spoken texts to train their automaticity for daily communicative situations. The current study raises listening fluency development tasks issue through self-selection of extensive listening materials using similar news stories, repeated listening in graded speech rate levels, and scaffolding linked-skills activities. The findings of the present study revealed that there were significant interactions patterns of participants’ listening fluency using similar news stories in narrow listening. Three indicators of interactions lie on the number of listening repetitions in each speech rate level, listening fluency scores in slow and moderately slow speech rate level, and listening fluency scores in a normal speech rate level. The more the participants’ listened to similar news stories from slow to a normal speech rate level, the less they made listening repetitions and their listening fluency scores become significantly increased. In this phase of listening fluency development tasks, they could improve their listening fluency scores up to a normal speech rate level. Also, some participants felt the self-selection of similar news stories in the beginning of the study was stressful and time-consuming. They also perceived repeated
listening in slow and moderately slow speech rate levels was not manageable because they were not familiar with the spoken vocabulary and the speakers spoke fast. Conversely, participants’ involvement in materials selection and scaffolded listening fluency development through repeated listening were their positive perceptions regarding to the opportunities of the study.

The implications of the study may enrich student teachers’ listening learning in an initial teacher education context. In addition to examine their listening fluency patterns of interaction, the findings of the study may raise student teachers’ critical awareness how to learn best listening for developing their communicative competence. Their learning listening experiences hopefully sharp their pedagogical and language content for building their beliefs and competencies. Listening fluency inclusion in a listening curriculum is also a positive contribution in English language teaching. Apart from comprehension, listening fluency could be listening output for advanced listening instruction. With this reason, teacher educators are the important actors for curriculum reform by gradually making innovations in their classrooms. Therefore, they should change their listening instruction paradigm from teaching for comprehension or intensive listening to teaching extensive listening for communicative purposes. Although some new insights in the current study are promising, further works are required on the effectiveness of listening repetitions on similar news stories in different inputs in large scales of population. Experimental and the mix-method studies may be needed to investigate the effects of different inputs for lower and higher proficiency student teachers. Similar studies may also explore the use of listening repetitions in other authentic genres and their impacts on student teachers’ listening fluency.

Acknowledgment
This article is a part of dissertation work of the first author. It was supported by a grant obtained from Direktorat Riset dan Pengabdian Masyarakat, Direktorat Jenderal Penguatan Riset dan Pengembangan, Kementrian Riset, Teknologi, dan Pendidikan Tinggi (Contract Number:083/SP2H/LT/K7/KM/2018.)

Disclosure Statement
The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest concerning the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

About the Authors
Refi Ranto Rozak, M.Pd. teaches pre-service teachers at the Department of English Education of IKIP PGRI Bojonegoro, East Java, Indonesia. He is also currently doing a Ph.D in the English Education at Universitas Negeri Semarang, based in Central Java, Indonesia. His research interests lie in the teaching of intensive and extensive listening, intensive and extensive reading, bilingual learning, and technology-enhanced language learning (TELL). ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7240-3149

Prof. Mursid Saleh, M.A., Ph.D is a professor in English Department of Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES). He has special interest in Language Teaching Methodology and Language Teaching Materials Development. His research entitled “The Teachers’ Selection of Materials and Methods in EFL Teacher Education Classes” has brought him to get Ph.D. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4049-5322
Dr. Dwi Anggani Linggar Bharati, M.Pd is a lecturer of English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES), Indonesia. She completed her English Education and got her doctorate in 2006. Her specialties are curriculum material development (CMD) and teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL).

Dr. Djoko Sutopo, M.Si a lecturer of English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES), Indonesia. He is the author of “Journalism: Theory and Its Application”. His major is in Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis, and Language Philosophy. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7529-2728

References


Renandya, W. A., & Jacob, G. M. (2016). Extensive reading and listening in the L2 classroom. In Renandya, W.A., & Widodo, H. P. (Eds.), English Language Teaching Today (pp. 97-


Tsai, K. J. (2019). Supporting extensive listening with mobile technologies. The Journal of Asia TEFL, 16(2), 711-717. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2019.16.2.19.711


Widodo, H. P., & Rozak, R. R. (2016). Engaging student teachers in collaborative and reflective online video-assisted extensive listening in an Indonesian initial teacher education (ITE) context. Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 13(2), 229-244.

Yeh, C-C. (2013). An investigation of a podcast learning project for extensive listening. Language Education in Asia, 4(2), 135-149. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5746/LEiA/13/V4/I2/A04/Yeh

The Effects of Situational and Perceived Interest on EFL Reading Comprehension: A Gender-Based Study at the University of Algiers 2

Mohammed Akhrib
English Department, Faculty of Foreign Languages
University of Algiers 2, Algiers, Algeria
Correspondent Author: akhribmoh@gmail.com

Fatma Zohra Mebtouche Nedjai
High School of Fine Arts, Algiers, Algeria

Received: 11/11/2020   Accepted: 3/13/2021   Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
This study aims to investigate gender differences in English as a foreign language (EFL) reading comprehension, situational and perceived interest for gender-oriented passages. It also examines whether any gender variances in situational or perceived interest in those passages cause gender differences in EFL reading comprehension. Throughout this research, clear insights about individual differences and the unexplained variance in foreign language reading are provided. Two main research questions were formulated: (a) Do gender differences in EFL students’ situational interest explain gender differences in EFL students’ reading comprehension? (b) Do gender differences in EFL students’ PI explain gender differences in EFL students’ reading comprehension? In this concern, EFL freshmen students at the University of Algiers 2, including 35 females and 24 males, were conveniently selected. The selected materials were two tests of reading comprehension with male and female texts. Each of these tests was followed by the questionnaires of sources of interest and perceived interest, adapted from Brantmeier (2006). Findings revealed significant gender differences in tests with male and female passages. Besides, significant gender differences found in cohesion, prior knowledge, ease of recollection, and perceived interest for both male and female passages in addition to engagement for the female text did not account for gender differences in reading comprehension of their respective tests. In this way, other factors than situational and perceived interest would explain gender differences in reading comprehension.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language, gender-based study at the University of Algiers 2, gender-oriented passages, perceived interest, reading comprehension, situational interest

Cite as: Akhrib, M., & Nedjai, F. Z. M. (2021). The Effects of Situational and Perceived Interest on EFL Reading Comprehension: A Gender-Based Study at the University of Algiers 2. Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 480-497. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.31
Introduction

Reading evokes mental representations drawn out of textual features and discourse in print (Kintsch, 2013). This assumption had raised debates over the nature of EFL reading; these debates implied whether already existing reading skills in the first language are sufficient or a minimum threshold in the foreign language is required (Alderson, 1984). As a matter of fact, the compensatory model of reading reveals that half of the reading comprehension encompasses first language (L1) literacy and second language (L2) knowledge; while, the remaining part embarks unexplained variance, which is idiosyncratic involving, for instance, engagement, gender, and interest (Bernhardt, 2011).

Both gender and interest may deem important in EFL reading comprehension. Restricted with particular beliefs and perceptions about gender stemming from their cultural background, EFL male and female students’ reading comprehension and interest are characterized by variation (Deckert, 2004). In other words, bringing mental representations and background knowledge together may ascribe schema as an explanation of gender variation in L2 reading of gender-oriented passages (Brantmeier, 2001). The latter also account for gender variation in reading (Maehara, 2010). Furthermore, due to gender variation in background information and interest, the topic of reading passages is relatively affecting EFL students’ reading comprehension (Bugel & Buunk, 1996).

Regarding schema as linguistic, formal, and content (Hedgcock & Ferries, 2009), part of research in gender and EFL reading considered interest and background knowledge as distinct with respect to the impact of passage-orientation. (Bugel & Buunk, 1996); similarly, other researchers implemented multi-component models of interest, including perceived (PI) and situational interest (SI), yet those models were for L1 (Ainley, Hillman & Hidi, 2002) or without taking into account gender differences in EFL and L2 reading (Brantmeier, 2006).

In addition, EFL first year university students at the University of Algiers may come with various perceptions and attitudes acquired from reading EFL texts in the secondary school textbook in Algeria. To enable students to develop intercultural communicative competence, the reading texts include culture-specific and global themes (Rezig, 2015). Moreover, gender variance is at a glance for not only at the secondary school texts, but also for teaching-learning processes and classroom interaction (Maehara, 2010). In this way, gender differences in reading comprehension might be prevalent among university students (Brantmeier, 2003). These differences, in turn, can be explained by interest (Carrell & Wise, 1998).

This study provides clear insights about EFL students’ individual differences in reading comprehension tasks. It examines previous assumptions about linking foreign language reading to the language proficiency level. Drawing upon this claim, this study attempts to explain why males and females differ in EFL RC, and what are the factors accounting for any possible variance. In this concern, five research questions were formulated as follows:

a) Are there gender differences in EFL students’ reading comprehension of gender-oriented passages?
b) Are there gender differences in EFL students’ situational interest cross gender-oriented passages?
c) Are there gender differences in EFL students’ perceived interest across gender-oriented passages?
d) Do gender differences in EFL students’ situational interest explain gender differences in EFL students’ reading comprehension?
e) Do gender differences in EFL students’ perceived interest explain gender differences in EFL students’ reading comprehension?

The aim of this study, then, is to investigate gender differences in EFL students’ reading comprehension while reading various gender-oriented passages, and it explores whether PI and SI account for any gender differences in the students’ reading comprehension.

Literature Review

Gender and Reading Comprehension

Owing to the linguistic threshold and short-circuit hypotheses, debates on whether language proficiency in foreign language or gender affects reading comprehension have been sustaining (Brantmeier, 2003). For the linguistic threshold hypothesis advocates, Bugel and Buunk (1996) asserted that language proficiency is worth considering than gender since the first is necessary in early stages of learning, while, background knowledge may account for gender variance in advanced stages; yet, in the interactive compensatory model, all factors including gender, contextual factors, and background knowledge contribute together to facilitate comprehension (Bernhardt, 2011).

Reading researchers can control and measure variables other than linguistic knowledge, in terms of background and cultural knowledge of the language learned (Alderson, 2000). This complies with earlier views of Rumelhart (1980), confirming the variation of schemata possessed by individuals which are constantly changing and modifying. Likewise, Carrell (1987) concluded that schema and background knowledge are similar as long as the reader acquires content schema for ideas and information and formal schema, related to the pattern of organization of texts.

In studies exploring gender, reading comprehension and background knowledge, interest, and gender-orientation of passages appear as indispensable aspects to examine for their potential impact (Brantmeier, 2003). Therefore, the possible explanation of gender variation in EFL reading may be schema theory. In few words, texts with different gender orientations launch schemata related to the reader’s interest, facilitating or debilitating the process of comprehension (Bugel & Buunk, 1996).

Passage Content

According to schema theory, a reader affords prior knowledge peculiar to the text (Rumelhart, 1980). In other words, knowledge structures, formal and content schemata are brought by the reader for the macrostructures and content domains of texts (Carrell, 1987). More notably, the gender of readers with texts of different gender orientations tend to reveal significant interactions with reading comprehension (Brantmeier, 2001)

Accordingly, previous researches considering schema theory have shown gender differences in reading comprehension owing to passage content. Bugel and Buunk (1996) examined gender differences in reading among EFL learners using neutral, male- and female-oriented passages,
which encompass various topics and genres. Findings indicated males outperformed in tests containing neutral and male-oriented texts, while females achieved higher in female texts. Furthermore, Brantmeier (2003) used a male-oriented passage, a boxing match short story including male characters only, and a female-oriented passage, a short story of a frustrated mother and wife including solely female characters. Confirming the linguistic threshold hypothesis, she concluded that passage content influences male and female comprehension of texts.

**Situational and Perceived Interest**

In studies examining gender differences in reading, interest appeared as the possible explanation for any variance owing to gender or passage content. (Brantmeier, 2001; Bugel & Buunk, 1996). Defining the construct of interest in reading is rather problematic due to previous researches confining it to motivation (Bernhardt, 2011). Nevertheless, Bugel and Buunk (1996) affirmed: social and psychological factors such as motivational constructs and task-specific beliefs seem inadequate for explaining sex differences in FL reading comprehension” (p. 16). On the other hand, some studies regarded interest and content as two categories of motivation (Hidi & Baird, 1988); while, Hidi (2001) contended that interest increases the motivation to read and can be regarded as distinct from motivation.

First, Kintsch (1980) explained interest in terms of cognitive and emotional proportions as the first is of three components: reader’s knowledge of the text content, surprising elements with ‘postdictability’, cohesion of the text’s macrostructure. On the other side, emotional interest refers to the direct feelings aroused by the text’s cognitive structures, or the latter are already emotive for readers regardless of the text but accounting for their culture.

Subsequent researches deconstructed interest in reading to situational and individual or personal interest. On the assumption that interest tends to affect reading comprehension, salient factors of SI are task environment, students’ self-regulation, and textual features such as ease of comprehension and vividness (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). On the other hand, individual interest is regarded as enduring traits existing in readers associated with their schemata and opposed to the shortly lasting SI as Alexander (1997) stated: “Individual interest, or personal interest, has been described as an association or a deep-seated investment in a specific topic, object or event (i.e. avocational or vocational pursuits)”(p. 221); in few words, situational and PI are not opposite but related to each other since both of them evolve through exposure to various reading tasks (Hidi, 2001)

Drawing upon schema theory, Bugel and Buunk (1996) argued that passage content accounts for gender differences in EFL reading as learners are acquainted with topics interesting to them. According to them, prior knowledge is related and not contained in interest. They asserted that there are gender differences in interest and prior knowledge of gender-oriented passages; however, in the analysis of covariance, gender differences in reading comprehension were related to prior knowledge and interest, mostly in reading habits. These findings emphasize the role of text topic in gender differences in reading.

Carrell and Wise (1998) supported Bugel’ and Buunk’s (1996) views on interest and prior knowledge in ESL reading, assuming that these variables can be examined separately. As the
researchers presumed, there was no relationship between prior knowledge and interest. Males slightly achieved higher than females as the first outperformed in topics they had interest in, but this was not the case for females, who did not achieve higher in topics interesting to them. Likewise, there was a correlation between gender and interest, but no significant effect of gender was found. In addition, there was a significant effect of English proficiency level on reading comprehension.

The previously mentioned empirical researches by Bugel and Buunk (1996) and Carrell and Wise (1998) may be open to criticism. Interest cannot be simply narrowed-down to topic interest to be measured before or after reading. Besides, interest in those studies was kept distinct from background knowledge. However, interest stimulated by the text is just one type of interest, SI (Hidi, 2001). Whereas, the overall feeling apart from the text is individual interest (Hidi & Baird, 1988); the latter is confined to the individual’s schema (Alexander, 1997; Kintsh, 1980). Even SI, referred to as knowledge triggered interest, raises from the interaction between background knowledge and new knowledge of the text (Hidi & Baird, 1988). Besides, SI contributes significantly in overcoming the students’ lacuna in pre-existing individual interest (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). In other words, through accretion, tuning, and restructuring modes, learners can develop new schemata (Rumelhart, 1980). In this way, students’ values, knowledge, and positive affect in particular subjects and texts increase (Hidi & Baird, 1988; Kintsch, 1980).

Considering the components, situational and individual interests, Schraw, Bruning and Svoboda (1995) suggested a model for measuring SI and PI based on early conceptions of interest. Accordingly, they constructed two questionnaires for these variables. The situational interest questionnaire (SIQ) includes 17 items proceeding factor analysis, and the perceived interest questionnaire (PIQ) contains 10 items.

For SIQ, six categories were labeled as the sources of SI. First, *ease of comprehension* items indicate to what degree the text was easy to focus on and to recall; the set of questions for *prior knowledge* retrieves the reader’s familiarity with the text information proceeding reading. *Cohesion* category involves items for clarity and text structure, *vividness* reporting whether the text is exciting to read; *engagement* measures the extent to which “the text was thought provoking, stimulating, and timely’’ (p. 3); lastly, *emotiveness* reveals any emotional reaction evoked from the reading. In PIQ, the items were measuring issues stemming from the reading and the overall interest in passage content.

Schraw et al. (1995) concluded that both SI and PI explained variance in text recall, and PI mediates the relationship among text recall and SI components. Besides, ease of comprehension, vividness, engagement, cohesion yielded significant relationships with PI, but prior knowledge and emotiveness did not. Eventually, they contended that interest is affected by various features of readers and texts. This supported Hidi and Baird’s (1988) views on the importance of implementing multiple genres when researching interest in reading.

Using Schraw et al.,’s (1995) inventory in the L2 context, Brantmeier (2006) disregarded vividness as it interacts with other sources of interest. Moreover, she contended that PI and ease of recollection engagement and cohesion are correlated. She added that PI accounted for the variation in sentence completion and multiple choice tasks only. Once the PI effect had been
controlled, ease of recollection was significantly correlated with all assessment tasks in contrast to prior knowledge, which had shown no relationship with any task.

There may have been a scarcity of accurate studies discussing gender, interest, and EFL reading. Some studies examined the impact of interest in EFL reading, referring to interest as reading habits and subject choice; while, few research works conceptualized interest in relation to the text topic. However, investigating interest in reading should account for the reader and text variables. These variables may be explored using the perceived situational interest questionnaire. Furthermore, no previous research attempted to explain gender differences in EFL using SIQ, PIQ, and gender-oriented passages.

Methods
Sample
The selected sample included 59 undergraduate EFL first-year students at the University of Algiers 2 during the academic year: 2019-2020. Owing to the small ratio of male to female students amid first year students, the sample was conveniently selected, including 24 males and 35 females; their ages’ means were respectively (18.6) and (18.8). Age may be deemed a crucial factor triggering interest in reading (Bugel & Buunk, 1996). It was necessary to control it in this study. These participants received explicit instruction in numerous reading techniques by the same teacher.

Research Tools
Reading Comprehension Tests
Ten multiple choice questions were formulated in each test. The questions were ordered as follows: Two questions for predicting, a question for the general idea, two questions for supporting details, two questions for inferring the meaning of words, two questions for inferences, and one question for summarizing. Each of these questions contains four distracters. The estimated time for responding to the tests was 45 minutes for the first test and 40 minutes for the second.

Reading Passages
The selected passages for each test were labeled as male- and female-oriented passages. This classification complied with the socio-cultural context of the participants. That is, the occupational roles and sport tasks assigned to males and the domestic roles of females were peculiar to the Algerian context, which were even emphasized at early stages of EFL learning (Abdelhay & Benhaddouche, 2015). Besides, Porreca’s (1984) model was used to evaluate the passages’ orientation in tests. It encompasses omission, firstness, masculine generics, occupational roles, and adjectives.

In the first test, the female text was an excerpt from a Mexican novel translated to English entitled “Like Water for Chocolate” by Esquivel (1989). The novel is about cooking, household, and childcare. The text is about a young girl, born prematurely, and her father died. This obliged
her mother to run their farm and to let another woman take charge of her and teach her cooking. The passage contains 538 words. Four of five characters were female, and no features were referring to masculine generics or firstness. The occupational roles were three, exclusively for female characters; for adjectives, physical appearances were not found, while the remaining sorts were 100% for females except for intellect/education, an adjective out of four was a male one.

In the second test, the male text was extracted from the conclusion of the book” CRISTIANO AND LEO: The Race to Become the Greatest Football Player of All Time” By Burns (2018). The text is comparison/contrast with 518 words about Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo. The characters of the texts were purely males, even the occupational roles with no firstness or masculine generics. In addition, along with the various adjectives, there were no adjectives modifying females. This text may be appealing to males for mentioning a controversial topic in sports about which one is the best footballer.

Sources of Interest Questionnaire
The questionnaire of the sources of interest, SI, was adapted from Brantmeier’s (2006) questionnaire. Three questionnaires were designed for each reading comprehension test. Each questionnaire contains 16 items dispersed along with five categories, namely cohesion four items, prior knowledge three items, engagement three items, ease of recollection four items and, emotiveness three items. Also, some changes were made for the second and third questionnaires, which were respectively for male and neutral passages as the word “story” was substituted by “text”.

Piloting this questionnaire yielded some wording issues. Thus, item four in cohesion was restated as follows: “The text/story had a refined style”, and item two in prior knowledge became: “The information in the story/text were well known to me”. In engagement, item one was changed to “The text/story made me thoughtful”, and the term “relevant” in item two was turned into “important”. Lastly, the word “eeriness” of the third item in emotiveness was changed into “creepiness”.

Perceived Interest Questionnaire
The questionnaire of perceived interest was adapted too from Brantmeier’s (2006) questionnaire. For each reading comprehension test, a questionnaire was administered to the participants. Each questionnaire includes nine Likert scale items from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”. Slight changes took place preceding the administration of the questionnaire. In item eight, English was written instead of Spanish, and for all items, the word “story” was changed into “text” for the tests including male and neutral passages. Furthermore, pilot testing was conducted, revealing a problem with wording for item nine. Thus, the latter became as follows: “This story really attracted my attention.”.

Procedure and Methods of Analysis
The study took place in the second half of February 2020. This period was congruent with the second week of the second semester. Along that period, students received instruction in the reading strategies being investigated in the reading comprehension tests. In addition, the two questionnaires of SI and PI were fused as one questionnaire since it would be difficult for participants to understand the multiple components of interest.
Time sequences were of paramount importance during the administration of the tests and the questionnaires. The administration of the tools lasted three hours, including short breaks between each phase, comprising one of the tests with their questionnaires. It was indispensable to administer the corresponding questionnaires directly once the participants had finished any test.

After the tools’ administration, data was inserted in SPSS 26.0 for analysis, and the total scores for each test were put in separate columns. Besides, for each category in the questionnaires, variables were computed. Then, means scores of males and females in the tests and the questionnaires’ categories were computed separately, yet the standard deviation was not computed since there would be another measure of spread, the sum of squares, in subsequent analysis for the same data.

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was fulfilled for the tests, PI and SI questionnaires data to find out whether the results significantly differ across genders. After that, an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) would reveal whether gender differences in the SI and PI, if any, as covariates can explain any variance in male and female participants’ reading scores in the two tests.

**Results**

**Gender Differences in EFL Reading Comprehension**

Analysis of reading comprehension tests’ scores yielded distinct findings for both female and male participants either in descriptive statistics or in the analysis of variance. Computing the means and the standards of deviation of both genders revealed the following results.

In the first reading comprehension test, female participants outperformed with an average score (5.88), compared to males who scored (4.97); in the second reading comprehension test, the difference between male and female scores was clearly viewed as the first mean was (5.12) and the second (3.68).

To ensure whether the previous differences in the tests are significant, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) took place, yielding these results.
The Effects of Situational and Perceived Interest on EFL Reading

Table 3. Analysis of variance for males and females’ reading comprehension

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test01</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>17,041</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17,041</td>
<td>4,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>239,501</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>4,202</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>256,542</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test02</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>29,493</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>29,493</td>
<td>10,629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>158,168</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>2,775</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>187,661</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of variance for male and female participants’ reading comprehension scores demonstrated significant differences in the first and second tests. In the first test, the differences of the mean squares between groups were relatively high over within groups with an F statistics (4.056), yielding a p-value (.049) < (.05). In the second test, the F statistics value was even higher (10,629) with a p-value (.002) < (.05).

**Gender Differences in Situational and Perceived Interest**

Analysis of the questionnaires of PI and SI for each reading passage demonstrated inconsistent results of which the means of male and female participants’ responses were computed along with the categories of each questionnaire. For the first questionnaires, results were shown in the figure 2.

![Figure 2. Male and female participants’ mean scores in situational and perceived interest questionnaires one.](image)

Regarding the SI means, differences were found between males and females except for engagement in which the difference is slight with (3.04) for males and (3.30) for females. Furthermore, females indicated high degrees in cohesion, prior knowledge, and ease of recollection, yet the difference was trivial in emotiveness with (2.96) for females and (2.72) for males. For PI, females scores (3.21) were higher than males (2.69). In few words, gender differences in SI save engagement and PI related to the female text were higher amid female participants.
Similarly, ANOVA confirmed the previous results found in mean computing. The table below unveils the ANOVA for gender differences in the second questionnaires of SI and PI.

Table 4. *Analysis of variance for males and females’ situational and perceived interest one*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohesion_female text</strong></td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2,770</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,770</td>
<td>4.884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>32,328</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.567</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35,097</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priorknowledge_femaletext</strong></td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>4,159</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4,159</td>
<td>4.066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>58,297</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1,023</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>62,456</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement_femaletext</strong></td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3,164</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,164</td>
<td>4.133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>43,638</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.766</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46,802</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Easeofrecollection_femaletext</strong></td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3,053</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,053</td>
<td>4.643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>37,485</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.658</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40,539</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotiveness_femaletext</strong></td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>21,119</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>.377</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21,128</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PerceivedInterest_femaletext</strong></td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>4,080</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4,080</td>
<td>4.269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>54,475</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.956</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>58,555</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant gender differences were found in some SI as in cohesion (F: 4.884; sig. 0.031), prior knowledge (F: 4.066; sig .048), engagement (F: 4.133; sig .047), and ease of recollection (F: 4.643; sig .035), yet gender variance was not significant in emotiveness (.874) owing to its F statistics, which was (.025). These values report that differences between males and females in engagement and emotiveness are mostly null. In PI, differences among males and females were high with F-statistics (4.269), yielding a significant p-value (.043).

In the second set of questionnaires of SI and PI for the male-oriented passage, differences were found in the mean scores of male and female participants.
The mean values of males and females were distinct in SI and PI. Differences were high in cohesion, prior knowledge, and ease of recollection, yet findings in engagement did not reveal high differences as males’ mean was (3.04) and females (2.62). Besides, emotiveness means were almost close wherein males’ average was (2.51), and females indicated (2.46). In PI, male participants’ mean was elevated higher than females as the first was (3.24) and the former (2.47).

ANOVA findings comply to a large extent with means comparison based on gender.

Table 5. Analysis of variance for males and females’ situational and perceived interest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cohesion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2,604</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,604</td>
<td>8,850</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>16,773</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.294</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19,377</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Priorknowledge</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>10,655</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10,655</td>
<td>8,039</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>75,545</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1,325</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86,200</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Engagement</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2,430</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2,430</td>
<td>3,461</td>
<td>.068</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>40,019</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.702</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42,448</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Easeofrecollection</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>5,519</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5,519</td>
<td>7,055</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>44,590</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.782</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50,109</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotiveness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>.100</td>
<td>.753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>18,040</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.316</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18,072</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Perceivedinterest</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>8,253</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8,253</td>
<td>11,139</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>42,233</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>.741</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50,486</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANOVA for SI yielded significant differences by gender in cohesion (F: 8.850; sig .004), prior knowledge (F: 8.039; sig .006), and ease of recollection (F: 7.055; sig .010). Although engagement results demonstrated a considerable difference owing to the high F statistics (3.461),
this difference was not significant as the p-value was (.068); besides, similar to previous findings, no difference was found in emotiveness as the F value was (.100), with a low level of significance (.753). In PI, the F value was (11.139) yielded a p-value (.001). This indicates a significant variance by gender.

**Gender Differences in SI and PI Accounting for Gender Variance in EFL Reading**

Considering the ANOVA for the SI and PI questionnaires, the ANCOVA revealed whether variance in reading comprehension was caused by gender differences in SI and PI. In this concern, it would include PI alone and categories of SI indicating gender differences in terms of cohesion, prior knowledge, engagement, and ease of recollection for the female passage as well as cohesion, prior knowledge, and ease of recollection for the male text. Thus, ANCOVA for the effect of these categories on reading comprehension by gender for the female text appears as follows:

Table 7. *Analysis of covariance of situational interest effect on reading by gender- test 01*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>11,887a</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2,972</td>
<td>.813</td>
<td>.527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>6,741</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6,741</td>
<td>1,844</td>
<td>.185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion_femaletext</td>
<td>.824</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.824</td>
<td>.225</td>
<td>.638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priorknowledge_femaletext</td>
<td>.947</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.947</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement_femaletext</td>
<td>3,588</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3,588</td>
<td>.982</td>
<td>.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easeofrecollection_femaletext</td>
<td>7,580</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7,580</td>
<td>2,074</td>
<td>.160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>109,656</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>3,655</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1334,000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>121,543</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. R Squared = .098 (Adjusted R Squared = -.022)

The R squared is almost null (.098), indicating that all the variables included in the corrected model depict very few sum of squares compared to the error sum of squares (109.656). Besides, the F statistics and level of significance in cohesion (F: .225; sig .638), prior knowledge (F: 259; sig .614), engagement (F: .982; sig .330), and ease of recollection (F: 2.074; sig .160) revealed no effect of these variables on gender differences in reading comprehension of the first test. Thus, gender differences in those sources of interest did not account for gender variation in the first test.

ANCOVA for PI effect on gender differences in reading comprehension for the first test yielded the following results.
Table 8. *Analysis of covariance for perceived interest effect on reading by gender* - test 01

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>7,302</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7,302</td>
<td>2,109</td>
<td>.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>62,179</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>62,179</td>
<td>17,961</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Interest female text</td>
<td>7,302</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7,302</td>
<td>2,109</td>
<td>.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
<td>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>114,240</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3,462</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1334,000</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>121,543</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. R Squared = .060 (Adjusted R Squared = .032)

The sum of squares type III of PI was slight (7.302) compared to the total sum of squares (1334.0). This could explain the R squared value (.060), indicating that the error sum of squares was high (114.240). Furthermore, the F statistics of PI was (2.109), revealing a low level of significance (.156). In this way, gender differences in PI did account for gender differences in reading comprehension of the female text.

ANCOVA for the effect of cohesion, prior knowledge, and ease of recollection by gender on variation in reading comprehension of the second test demonstrated similar results in the first test.

Table 9. *Analysis of covariance of situational interest effect on reading by gender* - test 02

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Type III Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>30,610</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7,652</td>
<td>2,631</td>
<td>.044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>23,324</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23,324</td>
<td>8,020</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohesion male text</td>
<td>.334</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.334</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior knowledge male text</td>
<td>.753</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.753</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easeof recollection male text</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>22,196</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22,196</td>
<td>7,632</td>
<td>.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>157,051</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>2,908</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1264,000</td>
<td>59</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>187,661</td>
<td>58</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. R Squared = .163 (Adjusted R Squared = .101)
The R Squared value (.136) indicated that the residual sum of squares was less than the total sum of squares type III since the error sum of squares type III was even higher than the corrected model. That is, cohesion, prior knowledge, and ease of recollection did not explain the variation in gender in the reading comprehension test 02, not to mention the intercept variable with a high mean square (23.324) yielding a significant p-value (.006). In addition, there is no perceived impact of the differences in the categories of the SI on gender differences in reading as their F statistics and p-values were as follows: cohesion (F: .115; sig .736), prior knowledge (F: .259; sig .613) and ease of recollection (F: .000; sig .984).

ANCOVA for the impact of gender differences in PI in the male text on gender differences in reading comprehension revealed no significant of effect of gender variation in PI on gender differences in reading.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tests of Between-Subjects Effects</th>
<th>Test02</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Type III Sum of Squares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>33,770*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>57,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived interest_maletext</td>
<td>4,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>17,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>153,891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1264,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>187,661</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. R Squared = .180 (Adjusted R Squared = .151)

The type III sum of squares of PI was trivial (4.277) compared to the error sum of squares (153.891), and the R squared was (.180). This means that PI did not explain the variation in reading comprehension. Besides, F statistic of PI (1.556), yielding (.217) level of significance. In few words, gender variance in PI did not cause gender differences in reading comprehension.

**Discussion**

Findings in this study yielded gender differences in the reading comprehension tests and in SI and PI for the passages of those tests. Moreover, ANCOVA has been used to examine whether any potential gender variance in SI and PI of the passages account for gender differences in their respective tests.

Using multiple-choice tasks, males and females’ achievement differ significantly in reading tests containing female and male passages. Similarly, Brantmeier (2003) affirmed that there were gender differences in multiple-choice reading tests for L2, including male- and female-oriented passages; Besides, the current study findings comply to some degree with Bugel and Buunk’s (1996) results, in which males outperformed in male texts, while, females achieved in five out of six female texts; however, in Carrell and Wise’s (1998) research, ANOVA revealed no
significant effect of gender on ESL reading comprehension as males slightly achieved higher than females across texts including topics interesting either for male or for female students.

Measuring interest using SI and PI questionnaires for each passage in the tests demonstrated partial consistent results. Gender differences were significant in cohesion, prior knowledge, ease of recollection, and PI in both female and male texts and engagement for the female passage too; the findings for these passages confirm Hidi’s (2001) assumptions about the evolving nature of SI and PI across various texts. Furthermore, emotiveness was not affected by gender in the three passages, meaning that the texts tend not to be evoking emotional impact on both female and male readers. Therefore, legibility, genre, and appropriateness, as suggested by Carrell and Wise (1998), may not solely account for gender differences in SI.

On the other hand, Bugel and Buunk (1996), using another measure of prior knowledge and interest, pointed out significant gender differences in the gender-oriented passages, with high rates of females in female passages. Accounting for the schema theory, it can be suggested that both genders developed particular schemata for female and male passages. These findings confirm Brantmeier (2001; 2003) and Bugel and Buunk’s (1996) assumptions about the relationship between schema and interest in reading.

The findings in SI and PI questionnaires lead to reconsider the selection criteria of gender-oriented passages in EFL contexts, although this study adhered to Brantmeier (2003), who selected two texts based on characters, male or female, and of what may be specific for each gender such as boxing match and housewives. Using one item, her results comply with the findings for the female and male passages. For instance, both females and males had high means in SI and PI for their respective passages. In this concern, the use of Porreca’s (1984) model resulted a relevant selection of gender-oriented passages.

Moreover, participants tended to indicate expected attitudes in this study owing to their early stages of EFL learning in which specific gender roles such as household and cooking for females and sports for males had been instilled in learners through middle school textbooks (Abdelhay & Benhaddouche, 2015). Accordingly, in addition to to Porreca’s (1984) model, Carrell and Wise’s (1998) selection of passages according to ratings of males and females should be reconsidered in this case since those ratings also indicate a high correlation with gender and including as well reading habits as in Bugel and Buunk’s (1996) research.

ANCOVA included only cohesion, prior knowledge, ease of recollection, and PI for the female and male texts in addition to engagement of the female passage. It indicated that gender differences in those factors and variables did not affect gender differences in their respective reading comprehension tests; nevertheless, Brantmeier (2003) concluded that gender differences in interest account for gender differences in L2. Likewise, Bugel and Buunk (1996) asserted that gender differences in all EFL reading comprehension tests were due to gender differences in prior knowledge and interest.

Carrell and Wise’s (1998) study might unfold consistent findings with the current research. Gender, prior knowledge and topic interest significantly interact; they, in turn, did not affect reading comprehension. Instead, language proficiency had the major impact on reading comprehension.
comprehension. Attempting to explain the variance in reading comprehension by gender, more variables should be considered in terms of familiarity (Brantemeier, 2003; 2001) and language proficiency. Besides, more factors in SI should be regarded, such as task environment (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000). Expanding the type of tasks in the tests to written recall and sentence recall may evoke different results similar to ANCOVA in Brantmeier’s study (2003).

Limitations and Future Research

Regarding the mean squares for ANOVA or ANCOVA, the mean square for within groups includes few degrees of freedom (59-1), which might affect the accuracy of the results as the categories were (2-1) for the mean square between groups. Another aspect to point out is the choice of tasks, which was narrowed to multiple-choice questions; this limits the scope of inquiry. Indeed, other tasks such as written recall or sentence completion might yield different results since they differ in approach, process versus product.

Any further research should reutilize Porreca’s (1984) model in text selection and consider familiarity with students’ language proficiency level, and exploring topic as well as genre preferences, appropriateness, and legibility of texts taking into account gender before administering any reading test are of paramount importance. Moreover, varying tasks such as multiple-choice questions, written recall, and sentence completion tends to promote validity for any future research. At last, more research should include large samples with an accepted ratio of male to female participants.

Conclusion

EFL reading is characterized by complexity. It embraces a wide range of variables, which may have an impact on readers’ achievement. In foreign language reading, many variables are part of unexplained variability such as gender and interest (Bernhardt, 2011). This study investigated gender differences in EFL reading comprehension with SI and PI in gender-oriented passages. It also examined the effects of the variations in SI and PI over gender differences in reading comprehension.

There were gender differences in EFL students’ reading comprehension of male and female texts in multiple-choice tasks. When Porreca’s (1984) model had been deployed in the selection of gender-oriented passages in tests, significant gender differences were found in cohesion, prior knowledge, ease of recollection, and PI for both female and male text, as engagement for female text. In this way, text selection based on Porreca’s (1994) content analysis evokes high interest in EFL students.

Gender variance in the first and second reading comprehension tests was not due to gender differences in factors of SI and PI of their passages. Furthermore, the triggered schemata related to those texts did not affect reading comprehension. This may raise many questions about what would account for gender variation in reading comprehension. In addition, familiarity with the text genre and participants’ proficiency level were disregarded although a pilot testing was conducted for the tests, which included glosses for difficult words.
The Effects of Situational and Perceived Interest on EFL Reading

Akhrib & Nedjai

About the Authors:
Mohammed Akhrib is a Ph.D. candidate in Applied Linguistics and Teaching English as a Foreign Language at the University of Algiers 2, Algeria. His areas of interest are teaching English as a foreign language, gender, EFL reading comprehension and Affect in EFL learning. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9487-4777

Dr. Fatma Zohra Mebtouche Nedjai is a professor in Language Sciences and a lecturer at the High School of Fine Arts of Algiers. Her fields of interest are EFL, Linguistic Anthropology, Language and Gender, Translation Studies, and Arts

References
Deckert, G. (2004). Guidelines for the selection of topical content in ESL programs. TESL Journal Canada, Special Issue, 4, 73-88. https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v0i0.1041


Challenges and Strategies in Teaching Speaking Skills to the Yemeni EFL Learners at Aden University: A Case Study

Abdulbari Mahboob Ahmed Al-Hassaani
Department of English, College of Education, University of Aden, Aden, Yemen
&
Department of English, College of Arts, University of Bisha, Bisha, Saudi Arabia
Correspondent Author: barihasani9@gmail.com

Abdulkarim Fadhl Mahmood Qaid
Department of English, College of Education, Saber, University of Aden
Aden, Yemen

Received: 11/22/2020 Accepted: 1/26/2021 Published: 3/24/2021

Abstract
This study focused on Yemeni EFL learners of second-year level, Department of English, College of Education/Saber, Aden University. Yemeni learners started to study English in class seven at the age of about 14, and this is a problem for Yemeni EFL learners. Besides, Yemeni EFL learners' problems were inadequate syllabus and inappropriate teaching materials of English-speaking skills course. The researchers identified a problem existing in the classroom. The learners in this college faced difficulties in their study of English-speaking skills at Aden University. This was because of their limited background in English. They felt anxiety and fear of making mistakes. The study's main objective was to examine the difficulties faced by the Yemeni EFL learners in English-speaking skills course at Aden University. The study contributed to finding remedies to the Yemeni EFL learners' problems in English-speaking skills. It would also help syllabus designers, teaching materials writers, learners, and teachers at Aden University. We conclude that the Yemeni EFL learners need enough time to practice English-speaking skills at Aden University. The current syllabus and teaching materials for teaching English-speaking skills need to be changed and developed to match the learners' needs in the labor market.

Keywords: Aden University, challenges, English language, speaking skills, strategies, Yemeni EFL learners

Introduction

This study was concerned with a case study of challenges and strategies in teaching English-speaking skills course to the second-year Yemeni EFL learners, English Department, College of Education, Saber, Aden University. Despite the long period of learning English as a foreign language, the Yemeni EFL learners still face difficulties in English-speaking skills when they speak at university. They lack motivation and enough practice of English-speaking skills. They were exposed to the English language late at level seven of intermediate school. Inhibition refers to the students being afraid of making mistakes. Fearing criticism and being shy also inhibit the learners from speak the second or foreign language. This factor affects the speaking fluency of the Yemeni EFL learners. When the learners are afraid of mistakes, they are probably more hesitant, Al-Ghazali (2019). Any speaking performance plan to practice phonological or grammatical features of language can be self-initiated or pair-work (Brown, 2007). Therefore, speaking a foreign language was not as easy as our mother tongue language because of its different complex rules in applying and constructing English sentences.

The rationale of the study

This study would help to understand the problems and factors that hinder the learning process of English-speaking skills at Aden University. It would also help to improve the situation in teaching the "English Speaking Skills." Besides, it might also help raise awareness of teachers and learners in mastering English speaking skills at Aden University. Concerning the study's significance, the current study will identify the problems encountered by the Yemeni EFL learners, and it will help syllabus designers, teaching materials writers, learners, teachers, and other concerned people. This study will befit both the teachers and the learners.

The research questions

The research questions were designed keeping in mind the objectives of the study. The current study attempted to find an answer to the following research questions:
1. What are the problem areas that encounter the Yemeni EFL learners in English-speaking skills?
2. How adequate is the syllabus for the course English-speaking skills at Aden University?
3. To what extent are the teaching materials appropriate for the Yemeni EFL learners in learning English-speaking skills at Aden University?

The Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the challenges encountered by Yemeni EFL learners in English speaking skills at Aden University.
2. To investigate the appropriateness of teaching materials for English-speaking skills, tasks, activities, and strategies used in teaching English speaking skills.
3. To investigate the syllabus' adequacy for English speaking skills in the learning process.

Review of Literature

Yemeni EFL learners face challenges in English-speaking skills at Aden University. No one can deny that English language speaking is essential for all EFL learners because it is the way to communicate orally with others. Lack of environment, interest, and motivation are the most critical factors that affect learners’ speaking skills, Ali (2019).
Challenges and Strategies in Teaching Speaking Skills to the Yemeni

Al-Hassaani & Qaid

English speaking skill needs a high-level experience and a good background. Dewi (2015) pointed out that English was used in every corner of the world as a medium to interact among people from different cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds. Al Hosni (2014) clarified that anxiety and unwillingness in speaking skills lessons are the two main obstacles to learning English. University instructors who teach English should focus on essential features such as fluency and accuracy in their teaching. They should be fluent and accurate in learning English language speaking skills, focusing on grammatical structures, vocabulary, and pronunciation. Strategies of speaking skills were considered to be strategies of communication. One of the purposes of English language teaching in the Yemeni universities is to improve the learners' comprehensive ability, especially the oral expression, and to encourage them to have adequate opportunities to use the foreign language fluently, Al-Tamimi (2014). Yemeni learners were less exposed to the English language because it was introduced to them later. English speaking skill was considered one of the most challenging aspects of the language for EFL learners in the Arab world. Most of the Yemeni EFL learners found difficulty to express themselves correctly in spoken English. Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) identified that learner-centered classroom activities, including story-telling, speeches, debates, and group discussions, could alleviate the problem of poor oral skills. The student-centered approach allows the learners to work together, feel free of fear, correct each other, and practice English-speaking skills in the classroom rather than teacher-centered. Of course, they need the teacher's corrective feedback during the speaking lessons.

As university researchers, we realized that motivation and encouragement are the most critical factors to improve the Yemeni EFL learners. If English learners are well-motivated to practice different real-life situations, their oral communication in English-speaking skills would be improved. Motivation and encouragement are two faces for one coin. Al-Hosni (2014) observed that some learners lack the motivation to speak English because they do not see the need to learn or speak English. Therefore, teachers of English language should explain to their learners the great significance of learning English-speaking skills.

Speaking is an essential part of communication, especially in learning a language for social interaction and other communicative purposes on different occasions. Richard (2006) said the ever-going need for good communication skills in English has emerged in high demand around the world. Speaking is one of the essential skills in English, because it occupies a superior status. Therefore, English teachers must give priority to English-speaking skills in the classroom. This indicated that a real communicative approach should be adopted when teaching English classes. Besides, English-speaking skills are of vital importance for the learners in and outside the classroom. In communicative approach, language is essentially or an instrument of communication. Brown (2007) indicated that communicative language teaching is an approach to language teaching methodology that emphasizes authenticity, interaction, student-centered learning, task-based activities, and real-world communication. Effective communication of speaking skills creates many benefits for communicating in both languages, the targeted language and mother tongue language. The foreign language learner has had the experience of another mother tongue language. He tries to learn the foreign language how he obtained the first language but finds that the environment and the surroundings in which he received his mother tongue (first language) are not available for him now. He now tries to learn consciously, Al-Ahdal (2014).
The communicative syllabus was classified into three categories: 1) A situational or contextual syllabus. 2) A topical or thematic syllabus. 3) A notional (functional) syllabus (Shaw, 1982). A finished syllabus is an overall plan for the learning process. The ultimate aim of language teaching is to improve the learners' communicative ability to use the language at ease and with confidence. Therefore, the present-day English syllabus should focus on communicative English to attain the desired teaching objectives of speaking skills.

**Communicative Language Teaching Materials**

Teaching materials in a communicative instructional system have the primary function of promoting communicative language use; this teaching strategy will help teachers and will have an excellent contribution to the improvement of the Yemeni learners' level in English speaking skills. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986), there are three kinds of materials used; 1) Text-based materials. 2) Task-based. 3) Realia. Teachers at Aden University should provide a variety of authentic communicative materials in teaching English-speaking skills to improve their learners' level at Aden University.

**Methods**

This research used a quantitative questionnaire research method for data collection. According to Sarantakos (1998), questionnaires, as ways of data collection, have many advantages, and some of these include the following:

- They produce a quick result.
- They offer greater assurance of anonymity.
- The use of questionnaires promises comprehensive coverage since researchers can approach respondents more quickly than other methods.

**Population**

The respondents who participated in this study were from the English Department, second-year level, College of Education / Saber; Aden University. The total number of respondents was 60 students, the female respondents were 40 girls, and the male respondents were 20 boys.

**Research Design**

The researchers designed the research tool a questionnaire for the learners. The researchers gave it to ELT experts in English Departments at three different universities before distributing and administering it, to ensure the validity and standard of the research tool. The questionnaire distributed and administered in classrooms during the second semester, in 2019, College of Education, Saber, Aden University.

**Discussions of the Study**

The research tool was a quantitative scientific method for collecting data and information, and it was classified into four parts. The first part was about the general background knowledge of the learners. The second part was about learners' main difficulties when they speak English with others; the third part was about the reasons behind learners' English-speaking skill problems and students' motivation to learn English. The fourth part was about the learners' exposure to the English language and speaking; and the learners' opinion about the appropriateness of the syllabus and teaching materials for English speaking skill course at Aden University.
Table 1. *Sex of the Learners*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table showed the sex of the respondents who participated in this study, of whom forty respondents, 66.7 %, were female, and twenty respondents, 33.3 %, were male.

Table 2. *Educational Background of the Learners at High School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural area</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers asked the learners about their educational background at the high school level. Twenty-four of the learners, 40%, had their schooling in urban areas, while thirty-five of the learners, 58.3%, in schools of rural areas. Only one learner, 1.7%, not replied. It indicated that the rural regions are keeping pace with urban areas in providing education to learners.

Table 3. *Schools of the Learners at High School*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government school</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private school</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We asked the learners at which school they went to at high school. Forty-five of the learners, 75%, answered that they went to government schools. In comparison, fifteen of the learners, 25%, answered they went to private schools when they were at the high school. It implied that most of the Yemen learners had no money to afford the education costs in private schools because of their family financial problems.
Table 4. *Learners Began Studying English in Yemeni Government Schools*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers asked the learners which class they began to study English. Sixty of the learners, 100%, answered they began to study English in class seven, and no one of them opted for other classes. This indicated that all the learners in Yemeni government schools learned English at a late stage, which would not enable them to handle English courses in the College of Education, Department of English, Aden University.

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of seven items. They were about the challenges that the learners faced. If they speak English with others, they suffer from many challenges and force them to avoid speaking English. The first item asked the learners about the sufficiency of vocabulary, as shown below.

Table 5. *Sufficiency of vocabulary*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With this item, we asked the learners about their sufficiency of vocabulary in English. Twenty of the learners, 33%, answered strongly agree. In comparison, thirty of the learners, 50%, replied simply agree.

Only one of the learners, 1.7%, did not reply. Five of the learners, 8.3%, responded disagree, while four of the learners, 7%, answered strongly agree. This indicated that most learners had no sufficient vocabulary in English to help them use it in English-speaking skills.

In the following item, the researchers asked the learners about their ability to recall grammatical rules.
Table 6. *Recalling of grammatical rules*

Second item: I cannot recall grammatical rules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers asked the learners whether they can recall the grammatical rules or not. Twenty-eight of the learners, 47%, strongly agreed that they could not remember grammatical rules. Also, sixteen of the learners, 26.7%, agreed that they could not remember the grammatical rules. Two of the learners, 3.3%, did not respond. At the same time, eight of the learners, 13%, disagreed that they could not remember the grammatical rules and six of the learners, 10%, strongly disagreed that they could not remember the grammatical rules.

In the third item, the researchers asked the learners if they felt difficulty in speaking English on the phone.

Table 7. *Feeling Difficulty to Speak English on the Phone*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Strongly agree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Agree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Strongly disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this item, the researchers asked learners if they felt difficulty when they speak English on the phone; twenty-seven of the learners, 45%, strongly decided that they felt a problem in speaking English on the phone, while thirteen of the learners, 21%, just decided that they faced problem to speak English on the phone. Six of the learners, 10%, opted for a neutral response. Eight of the learners, 13.3%, disagreed that they faced problems to speak English on the phone. Six of the learners, 10%, strongly decided that they faced problems to speak English on the phone. This indicated that only some of the learners could speak English on the phone, while most of the learners felt it was a problem to speak English on the phone. This was because of their poor background knowledge in English and insufficient practice to speak English and communicate with others.
Table 8. The Shyness of Learners to Speak English with Others

The fourth item: I feel shy to speak English with others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Strongly agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Agree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Strongly disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this item, most learners agreed that they felt scared to speak English with others; twenty of the learners, 33.3%, strongly decided that they felt scared to speak English with others. Twenty-five of the learners, 41.7%, decided that they felt scared to speak English, while three of the learners, 5%, opted for a neutral. Five of the learners, 8.3%, decided for the same thing, and seven of them, 11.7%, strongly disagreed that they felt shy to speak English with others. Most of the learners felt shy to communicate in English with others, which referred back to their lack of motivation and practice.

The other item asked the learners if they usually think in Arabic, then try to get the exact English match. The following table shows the responses of the learners.

Table 9. Learners' Thinking in Arabic Before Trying to Get an English Match

The fifth item: I usually think in Arabic, then I try to get the English match

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Strongly Agree</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The learners felt strongly that they typically think in Arabic, then they try to get the exact English match. Twenty-eight of the learners, 46.7%, strongly decided that they typically think in Arabic, then they try to get the exact English match. Twenty of the learners, 33.3%, decided on this item. Only two of the learners were neutral, 3.3%, to this point. Seven of the learners, 11.7%, disagreed that they think in Arabic and try to get the exact English match. Three of the learners, 5%, opted strongly disagree for this item. This indicated that most of the learners usually think in Arabic to speak a specific sentence, then they try to get the exact English match words for it. This revealed that the learners had no enough experience in English-speaking skills. The following part discussed the reasons behind the problems of the learners in English-speaking skills.
Table 10. The significance of the Language Skills
The sixth item: How necessary the following skills for you when you study English?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill / Evaluation</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Less Important</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Freq.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers asked the learners how necessary the four skills of the language Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing. Regarding listening skill, only ten of the learners, 16.7%, opted for very necessary; while twenty-five of the learners, 41.7%, replied importantly; three of the learners, 5%, not answered. In comparison, fifteen of the learners, 25%, answered that listening is less essential, and seven of the learners, 11.6%, opted for not important. Concerning speaking skills fifteen of the learners, 25%, opted essential and fifteen of them, 25%, said important; while twenty-five of the learners, 41.7%, said that speaking is less important and five of them 8.3% opted not important. In reading skill fourteen of the learners, 23.3%, said it is very significant and sixteen of them, 26.7%, said important and five of the learners, 8.3%, did not reply and fifteen of them, 25%; while ten of the learners, 16.7%, responded not important. About writing skill only fifteen of the learners, 25%, said it is very important and twenty of them, 33.3%, said important; while seventeen of them, 28.3%, opted less important and only 8 of the learners, 13.4%, replied not significant. This indicated that most of the learners had no recognition of the significance of the four language skills, which was clear from their answers above.

Table 11. Attending any English Classes in a Private Institute
Did you attend any English classes in a private institute?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
a. Yes           | 15        | 25         |
b. No            | 40        | 66.7       |
c. No response   | 5         | 8.3        |
| Total           | 60        | 100        |

The researchers asked the learners if they attended English classes in a private institute. Only fifteen of the learners, 25%, said they attended English classes in a private institute. In comparison, forty of the respondents, 66.7%, said not attended any English classes in a private institute and five of the respondents, 8.3%, not answered. This indicated that most of the learners not participated in any English classes in a private institute. They could not afford the costs in private institutes and this reflected their actual performance in English-speaking skills.
Table 12. Primary Focus of English Teacher at High School Level

What was the primary focus of your English teacher at the secondary school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. To make you memorize vocabulary and grammatical rules.</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. To make you use English for speaking according to the context.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. No response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers asked the learners what their English teachers' primary focus at the secondary school level was. Fifty of the learners, 83.3%, said that the primary focus of their English teachers was to make them memorize vocabulary and grammatical rules, while eight of the learners, 13.4%, said that the primary focus of their English teachers was to make them use English for speaking according to the context. Only two of the learners had no answer. This indicated that only the minority of the learners said that they used English for speaking according to the context and the majority of the learners said that they used English only for memorizing words and rules of grammar.

Table 13. Evaluating speaking English of the Learners when they Entered to Aden University

How can you evaluate your speaking English when you entered to Aden University?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Very good</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Good</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Average</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Poor</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Very poor</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this item, the researchers asked the learners to evaluate their speaking English when they entered Aden University; only nine of the learners, 15%, said they were perfect and six of the learners, 10%, said they were right, ten of the learners, 16.7%, replied with average. In comparison, twenty of the learners, 33.3%, said they were poor and fifteen of the learners, 25%, said they were very poor in speaking English when they entered university. This implied that most of the learners were poor and very poor in speaking English when entering Aden University.
Table 14. Choosing the Learners English as their Major of Study

Why did you choose English as your major of study?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. I want to speak English, and I like it very much.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. I just want to get a degree in order to get a job.</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. English is essential to me because I like to have a good relation with people who speak English.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this connection, the researchers asked the learners why they chose English as their major. Eleven of the learners, 18.3%, said they want to speak English and they liked it very much, while forty of them, 66.7%, said they just want to get a degree to get a job. Nine of the learners, 15%, said English is vital because they like to have good relations with people who speak English. This statistical figure shows that the majority of the students just want to get a degree to get a job; besides, there was not right motivation towards learning the English language itself from the side of English teachers.

The other item asked if the learners think that good English knowledge gives them room for the world and modern technology.

Table 15. Good English Knowledge

I think good English knowledge gives room to the world and modern technology.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Strongly agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Disagree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Strongly disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this item, the researchers asked the learners if they think a good understanding of English gives room to the world and modern technology; twenty of the learners, 33.3%, strongly agreed that a good understanding of English gives room to the world and modern technology. Twenty of the learners, 33.3%, agreed on this point and two of the students, 3.3%, were neutral. Ten of the learners, 16.7%, disagreed that a good English knowledge gives room to the world and modern technology. In comparison, only eight of the learners, 13.4%, strongly disagreed on this point. This statistical figure revealed that most of the learners understood the importance of learning English to enable them to communicate with the outside world.
The fourth part of the questionnaire dealt with exposure of the learners to English, and their opinions about the effectiveness of the syllabus and teaching materials of English-speaking course at Aden University. In the first item of this part, the researchers asked the learners how often they speak English.

Table 16. *Speaking English in the classroom*
How often do you speak English in the classroom?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Very often</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Often</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Sometimes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Rarely</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Never</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this item, the researchers asked the learners about how often they speak English in the classroom. Five of the learners, 8.3%, replied they very often speak English in the classroom and five of them, 8.3%, answered they often talk English in the class, while twenty-eight of the learners, 46.7%, replied they sometimes speak English in the classroom and twenty of them, 33.3%, said they rarely talk English. Only two of the learners, 3.4%, responded they never speak English in the class. This implied that most of the learners had no enough practice in English-speaking skills.

Table 17. *Watching English Movies and News Channels*
How often do you watch English Movies, News Channels, or Reading Newspapers?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Very often</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Often</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Sometimes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Rarely</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Never</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers asked the learners to respond whether they watch English movies, news channels, or reading newspapers. Only two of the learners, 3.3%, said they very often do those things, and three of them, 5%, said they usually follow that; ten of the learners, 16.7%, replied they sometimes do it, fifteen of the learners, 25%, said they rarely watch and read those things mentioned above. Thirty of the learners, 50%, responded that they never watch English movies, news channels, or reading English newspapers. The statistical data revealed that most of the learners were not interested in watching or reading English items. This indicated that there were
no motives to push the Yemeni learners towards learning English through displaying at least simple English movies or even simple conversations on the screen.

Table 18. Methods Employed by the Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are your English-speaking skills classes student-centered or teacher-centered?</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. a student-centered</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. a teacher-centered</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>83.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this item, the researchers asked the learners if the method of teaching in the classroom was student-centered or teacher-centered; ten of the learners, 16.67%, said it was student-centered, and fifty of the learners, 83.33%, responded that the method of teaching English classes in the classroom was teacher-centered. This indicated no effective participation at the side of the learners in learning English-speaking classes, and the teacher role only was dominated in the classroom.

The final section of the questionnaire was about the learners' opinion in: 1) The appropriateness and sufficiency of the current syllabus, as in table 19. 2) The appropriateness and sufficiency of the current teaching materials, as in table 20. 3) The sufficiency of time allotted for teaching English-speaking skills, as in table 21.

Table 19. Appropriateness and Sufficiency of the Current Syllabus Topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I think the current Syllabus topics of speaking are not appropriate and sufficient.</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Strongly agree</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Agree</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Neutral</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Strongly disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the researchers asked the learners if they thought the English-speaking skills course's current syllabus topics were not appropriate and sufficient, thirty of the learners, 50%, strongly decided that the current syllabus issues were not appropriate and sufficient. Twenty of the learners, 33.3%, decided about that. Three of the learners, 5%, were neutral and not answered. In comparison, five of the learners, 8.3%, disagreed about this point, and two of the learners, 3.4%, strongly disagreed that the current syllabus issues were not appropriate and enough for the learners at Aden University. Therefore, these responses revealed that the current syllabus topics need to be developed and changed by a new to match the learners' needs at Aden University.
Table 20. Appropriateness and Sufficiency of the Current Teaching Materials
I think the current teaching materials of English-speaking skills are not appropriate and sufficient.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Strongly agree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Agree</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Strongly disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers asked the learners to respond if they thought that the English-speaking skills course's current teaching materials are not appropriate and sufficient. Twenty-four of the learners, 40%, strongly agreed that the teaching materials are not appropriate and sufficient and twenty-six of the learners, 43.4%, said the same thing, while two of the learners, 3.3%, had no response, and only five of the learners, 8.3%, disagreed that the teaching materials are not appropriate and sufficient and three of the learners, 5%, strongly disagreed for the same thing. This indicated that there are shortages of teaching materials and are not adequate to prepare the learners for English-speaking skills. Therefore, supplementary materials are needed for the learners to learn how to communicate in English with others. Generally speaking, an appropriate communicative language teaching syllabus and relevant materials go a long way in making the learning of English-speaking skills useful, constructive, and practical.

Table 21. Sufficiency of Time Allotted for Teaching English Speaking Skills
I think the time allotted is not sufficient to give the learners a chance to speak English in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Strongly agree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Agree</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Strongly disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the final item, the researchers asked the learners if they thought that the time allotted was insufficient to give them a chance to speak English in the classroom. Twenty-seven of the
learners, 45%, strongly agreed that the time allotted was not enough to give the learners a chance to speak English in class, and twenty-six of the learners, 43.4%, approved for the same thing, while two of the learners, 3.3%, were neutral. Three of the learners, 5%, disagreed and two of them, 3.3%, strongly disagreed for the same thing. Therefore, these responses revealed that the learners had no enough time to practice English-speaking skills in the classroom.

Findings of the Study

The findings of this study revealed that the English classes were teacher-centered rather than student-centered. There was a clear teacher dominance in English-speaking skills classes. The current study revealed that the Yemeni EFL learners suffered from not getting enough time to practice in different real-life situations. The learners can hardly observe the motivation of the teachers. The existing methods of teaching English-speaking skills at Aden University were not practical and needed a change. The majority of the learners felt that if they tried to speak, they might make mistakes and the other students laughed at them in the classroom. Teachers of English-speaking skills must adhere to new methods and techniques in teaching English-speaking skills at Aden University. The current teaching materials and the syllabus of the English-speaking skills are not appropriate and effective.

Recommendations

Teachers of English-speaking skills at Aden University should use the appropriate tasks and activities to improve the learners' level. Besides, the Yemeni EFL learners should have the desire to learn English at the early stages. Learning English at early stages in Yemen would directly enhance Yemeni EFL learners' improvement in English-speaking skills. Teachers of English-speaking skills at Aden university should provide second-year learners with various real-life situations in learning and accurate materials for teaching English-speaking skills.

There is a necessity for using a communicative syllabus and communicative materials for teaching English-speaking skills at Aden University. The Yemeni EFL learners should have more time to practice the English-speaking skills to improve their proficiency and fluency. Some of the teachers ignore the learners' involvement in authentic and real situations and oral communication activities during the language learning classes in speaking lessons. Teachers at Aden University should provide the learners with real-life situations and accurate materials in teaching English-speaking skills to improve their level.

Yemeni learners of English Department at Aden university should know to master the essential elements of English-speaking skills. English teachers at Aden University should create a good environment for interaction to improve Yemeni EFL learners' level in English-speaking skills. Teaching strategies in teaching English-speaking skills should use a student-centered approach instead of a teacher-centered one. Communicative teaching materials and communicative syllabus topics should replace the current syllabus and teaching materials for teaching English-speaking skills at Aden University. WhatsApp was found as a useful tool to motivate students and reduce their anxiety during speaking English (Ali & Ben-Hadi; 2019). Therefore, technology should be used to motivate EFL students at Aden University to speak English with no or less anxiety.
Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the Yemeni EFL learners need help to overcome their English-speaking skills challenges. Thus, using a communicative language teaching approach in teaching and learning English-speaking skills would benefit both the teachers and the learners. Teachers should play a significant role in teaching the Yemeni EFL learners the strategies of English-speaking skills. The teachers at Aden University should also help the learners to improve their English-speaking skills and overcome their challenges when speaking in English. The syllabus and teaching materials need a change in College of Education, Saber, Aden University. If the reforms are meticulously implemented, there is absolutely no doubt that teachers will find meaning, significance, and relevance in teaching and learning the English-speaking skills at Aden University.

About the Authors

Dr. Abdulbari Mahboob Ahmed Al-Hassaani is a Ph.D. holder. He graduated from India, in 2009. He is an assistant professor of applied linguistics, English Department, Aden University. He is currently teaching in English Department, College of Arts, University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia. He taught many courses in English Department https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0017-4436.

Dr. Abdukarim Fadhl Mahmood Al-salmi is a Ph.D. holder, graduated from India, in 2008. He is an assistant professor in methods of teaching, English Department, Aden University. He is currently working at Aden University. He is also an assistant dean for the academic affairs, Community college in Yemen https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4204-7176.

References


A Comparative Study of Boosters between Genders in the Introduction Section

Mazlin Mohamed Mokhtar  
Faculty of Languages and Communication  
Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia  
Correspondent Author: mazlin@fbk.upsi.edu.my

Harwati Hashim  
Faculty of Education  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Selangor, Malaysia

Puteri Zarina Megat Khalid  
Faculty of Languages and Communication  
Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia

Intan Safinas Mohd Ariff Albakri  
Faculty of Languages and Communication  
Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia

Norfaizah Abdul Jobar  
Faculty of Languages and Communication  
Sultan Idris Education University, Perak, Malaysia

Received: 7/31/2020  Accepted: 3/8/2021  Published: 3/28/2021

Abstract
Although there are several studies conducted by linguistics researchers on the differences between the linguistic styles of female and male writers, there are not many studies conducted on the use of boosters in academic writing. Boosters are used to convince and emphasize statements made. This study analyzes the regularity of boosters used in the Introduction section of Ten Research Articles (RAs). The influence of gender differences in the use of specific boosters will also be looked at. A document analysis method was chosen as the 10 RAs were analyzed as the corpus in this study. The findings showed that male writers used more boosters than female writers. Even though the number of words for the female writers was more than the male writers, it did not affect the number of boosters used in the Introduction section of those articles. In conclusion, it can be deduced from the analysis that both the female and male writers used boosters to highlight their claims or their beliefs regardless of their gender, while the use of boosters was more evident among the male RAs as the male writers seemed to be more direct in illustrating and mentioning their claims.

Keywords: belief, boosters, gender, solidarity

Introduction

There are several studies by linguistics researchers on the differences between the linguistic styles of female and male writers (Mahamod, 2019; Ali & Krish, 2016; Keong, Gill & Noorezam, 2012; Hamid, Yasin, Bakar, Keong & Jalaluddin, 2008; Amir, Abidin, Darus & Ismail, 2012). A simple comparison on the use of some elements of academic discourse could also elucidate this issue. Hewings, Lillis & Vladimirou (2010) stated that,

“research on aspects of the interpersonal nature of academic writing has focused on features such as hedges, boosters, pronoun choices, and citation variously categorized under labels such as evaluation, stance, and metadiscourse. These textual features are a manifestation of scholarly practices which help to constitute and maintain academic communities.” (p. 102)

However, compared with the other features, there are not many studies conducted on boosters in academic writing. According to Hyland (1998), boosters are words that are used to support a writer's statement or argument. There are two ways to do this:

“Firstly, it served to emphasize the strength of the writer’s commitment to a proposition and thereby sought to convince the reader by their belief in the logical force of the argument. The second way that writers employed boosters was to comment impersonally on the validity of their propositions. Boosters were either used to stress the strength of warrants, suggesting the efficacy of the relationship between data and claims” (Hyland 1998, pp. 21-22).

Boosters are generally used to convince other people about the claim that a writer is making and also to give emphasis on the statement made.

Lorés-Sanz, Mur-Deñas, and Lafuente-Millán (2010) mentioned that boosters are generally seen in applied linguistics rather than business reports. The use of ‘stance markers’ is frequently found in reports rather than Research Articles (RAs). There is still a gap in this area of research as little research has been conducted on boosters. Therefore, in this study, the analysis examines the regularity of boosters used in the Introduction section of ten RAs. The influence of gender differences in the use of specific boosters was also examined.

Hence, this study was conducted to analyze the regularity of boosters used in the Introduction section of ten RAs; to examine the influence of gender differences on the use of specific boosters of ten RAs; and, to determine how boosters influence the way of writing in the ten RAs. The significance of this study is it could shed light on the differences in academic writing styles, particularly on the use of boosters in the academic writing of both male and female writers.

Literature Review

Boosters and hedges are often seen being discussed together by most researchers (e.g., Bacang, Rillo & Alieto, 2019; Akbas & Hardman, 2018; Zafar, 2018; Batool, Majeed & Zahra, 2019). Hyland (2009) stated that hedges are often employed by writers to create “a credible representation of themselves and their work by claiming solidarity with readers, evaluating their
material and acknowledging alternative views in some appropriate ways” (p. 74) while Hyon (2008) identified both hedges and boosters as linguistic strategies deployed by writers who wish to convey their stands (as cited in Hyland, 2004). They are used to ‘strengthen claims’ by elucidating the writers’ stance of certainty and stressing the statement that they are making with three primary functions which are “Function 1: strengthening the evaluation of the faculty member; Function 2: entertaining readers; and Function 3: expressing solidarity” (p. 183). Yeung (2007) mentioned that boosters are used in business reports specifically to make them sound logical. They are also generally used to add emphasis on adverbs or adjectives to strengthen any claim made.

As mentioned by Kuteeva (2011), based on the analysis of some corpora, not many boosters were found, as she was only able to identify ‘of course’ and ‘obvious’ as the frequently used boosters. According to Vassileva (2001), Salager-Meyer's (1994) classification of boosters is not that clear to her either, so she has used

“Chafe's (1985) treatment of the means of knowledge representation and include classes of boosters termed as ‘solidarity’ (the case when the author claims shared knowledge with the audience) and ‘belief’ (when the author states unequivocally that he/she is convinced of what he/she is saying)” (p. 4).

It allows writers to express their beliefs and solidarity with the audience. Undoubtedly boosters are less commonly used by academic writers. Although it is not a very common sight, it indicates the writers’ confidence and certainty in generating and compiling their ideas and claims that they made.

An example given by Lewin (2005) to differentiate hedges and boosters on both certainty and uncertainty, for examples, ‘I am sure the earth is round’ as well as ‘I am not sure the earth is round,’ where Lewin concurred with Halliday (1985) and Skelton (1997) who believed that those are examples of hedges. However, Hyland (1998) regards it as a way to express confidence or certainty as boosters rather than hedges. The different views are more of subjective interpretation by researchers whose actual intention of using either hedges or boosters, are only known by the writers of the articles themselves.

Boosters may occur at different parts of the sentences which could also set the tone of an article that the writers would like to highlight. Recski (2005) had used tone ranks introduced by Halliday (1970) in his study to identify boosters which are:

i) at clause rank: through mood and modality
ii) at group rank:
   a) in the verbal group: through a person
   b) in the nominal group: through attitude
   c) in the adverbial group: through a comment
iii) at word rank: through lexical register (p. 12)

Recski added that comparatives and boosters are used to stress certainties that the writers would want to convey by using boosters like ‘greater, better, more, desirable, really and extremely.’
Hyland (2008) did a study on Swales’ writing where the latter was found to use boosters to modify his way of conveying what he was writing as what Martin (2000) referred to as ‘turning up the volume’ to stress the strength of his certainty (as cited in Hyland, 2008). In a study on graduates’ writing styles, Tardy (2005) noticed a qualitative change in most of the students’ writing. The students used more hedges in their early years of studies as they were unsure how to write appropriately rather than to conceal any weaknesses that they had. They used more boosters later as they became more confident in their writing, indicating their certainty in the statements made.

Examples of boosters are 'obvious and of course' (Kuteva, 2011); 'greater, better, more, desirable, really and extremely' (Recski, 2005); and 'will, the fact that, show (that), it is clear/clearly, actually, indeed, always, obvious(ly)' and 'of course' (Hyland, 1998). Therefore, for this particular study, the examples of the 21 boosters that were gathered through various RAs, like Kuteva (2011), Recski (2005), Hyland (1998), and other books are 'greater, better, more, desirable, really, extremely, certainly, obviously, clearly/clear, show (that), the fact that, prove/proven, undoubtedly, definite, confirm, always, will, actually, of course, indeed' and 'demonstrate'. These examples are categorized under two (2) categories which are ‘solidarity’ and ‘belief’ categories (Chafe, 1985, as cited in Vassileva, 2001), as shown in the Results section later. Thus, it would also be interesting to see the regularity of boosters used in the Introduction section of ten RAs and whether there is an influence of gender differences in the use of specific boosters. As mentioned by Lorés-Sanz, et.al (2010), boosters are generally seen in applied linguistics rather than business reports. The use of ‘stance markers’ is also frequently found in reports rather than in Research Articles (RAs) and thus, boosters in this area are less and it would be significant that the gap is addressed in this research.

Methods

A total of ten RAs were used as the corpus in this study. The corpora were taken from several journal websites (refer to Appendix A). Five (5) of the journals were written by female writers and the other five (5) were written by male writers. Only the Introduction section in all journals was selected to be analyzed. An in-depth analysis of the function and regularity of boosters was carried out to verify the distinction between female and male writers in writing RAs. The influence of gender differences in the functions and the use of specific boosters were also highlighted. All findings will be discussed in the Discussion section of this study and the results are highlighted in tabulated forms (please refer to Tables 1 and 2 in the Result section of this study) for ease of understanding. Table 1 consists of boosters that are found in the selected ten RAs where the list and categories of boosters are gathered from Kuteva (2011), Recski (2005), Hyland (1998), Chafe (1985) cited in Vassileva (2001), and other researchers as well, based on their research that has been carried out before. Table 2 consists of the number of words in the Introduction section of all the ten RAs, the Mean, and the number of boosters’ occurrences according to gender.

Results

Based on several scholars and other previous studies, for examples like Kuteva (2011), Recski (2005), Hyland (1998), and Vassileva (2001); which Vassileva’s categories of boosters were cited from Chafe (1985) that have been mentioned earlier; boosters can be categorized into two (2) categories which are:
i) 'solidarity' (the case when the author claims shared knowledge with the audience) – for examples: greater, better, more, desirable, really, extremely, always, will, and actually.

ii) 'belief' (when the author states unequivocally that he/she is absolutely convinced of what he/she is saying) – for examples: undoubtedly, definite, confirms, prove/proven, demonstrate, certainly, obviously, clearly, show (that), the fact that, of course, and indeed.

The percentage of boosters as listed above that are used in the Introduction section of the ten RAs are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 Frequency of boosters found in the Introduction section of the ten RAs between female and male writers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% F1</th>
<th>% F2</th>
<th>% F3</th>
<th>% F4</th>
<th>% F5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% M1</th>
<th>% M2</th>
<th>% M3</th>
<th>% M4</th>
<th>% M5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'greater'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'better'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'more'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'desirable'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'really'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'extremely'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'always'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'will'</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'actually'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Belief

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% F1</th>
<th>% F2</th>
<th>% F3</th>
<th>% F4</th>
<th>% F5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% M1</th>
<th>% M2</th>
<th>% M3</th>
<th>% M4</th>
<th>% M5</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'undoubtedly'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'definite'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'confirm'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'prove'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'demonstrate'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'certainly'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'obviously'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'clearly'</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'show (that)'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'fact that'</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'of course'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'indeed'</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Total | 3 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 16 | 39.0% | 5 | 10 | 1 | 8 | 1 | 25 | 61.0% |

Note 1. The boosters that were identified in the ten selected RAs

In Table 1, it can be seen that boosters were used forty-one times in total by both female and male writers based on the ten RAs that were analyzed. The boosters identified were greater, more, extremely, always, will, definite, demonstrate, certainly, clearly, show (that), the fact that, and of course. Out of the twenty-one boosters listed in the table, however, only twelve of the boosters found in the ten RAs were analyzed. The boosters that were used frequently were ‘will’ which occurred eleven times (26.8%), followed by ‘more’ about ten times (24.5%), ‘always’ and ‘the fact that’ with four occurrences (9.8% each), ‘greater’ which occurred about three times
(7.4%), ‘clearly’ and ‘show(that)’ occurred two times (5% each), and ‘extremely, definite, demonstrate, certainly and of course’ which only occurred only once each (2.4%).

In the analysis of the selected ten RAs that are listed in the Appendix section of this study, it can also be seen that the male writers used more boosters with twenty-five occurrences (61.0%) whereas female writers used sixteen occurrences of boosters (39.0%). There are differences between female and male writers with the choice of boosters’ category where females tended to use more of the ‘belief’ category which occurred eight times (19.5%) than male writers with only four occurrences (9.6%). For the ‘solidarity’ category, the male writers used more boosters in this category with twenty-one occurrences (51.4%) than females with only seen about eight times of usage (19.5%).

The total word count for the Introduction section of the ten selected RAs, the Mean, and the occurrence of boosters according to gender are shown in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Word counts, Mean and number of boosters’ occurrences according to gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RAs</th>
<th>Word counts for Introduction section</th>
<th>Total no. of words (by gender)</th>
<th>Mean of boosters (by gender)</th>
<th>Occurrence of boosters (by gender)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female 1 (F1)</td>
<td>458</td>
<td>3277</td>
<td>Mean = 3.2 (based on 5 female writers)</td>
<td>1 booster for every 204.81 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 2 (F2)</td>
<td>696</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 3 (F3)</td>
<td>1073</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 4 (F4)</td>
<td>631</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 5 (F5)</td>
<td>419</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 1 (M1)</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>2976</td>
<td>Mean = 5.0 (based on 5 male writers)</td>
<td>1 booster for every 119.04 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 2 (M2)</td>
<td>935</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 3 (M3)</td>
<td>283</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 4 (M4)</td>
<td>1109</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 5 (M5)</td>
<td>215</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although F3 and M4 showed a high number of word count for their Introduction sections, the number of word counts did not actually affect the number of boosters used since both F4 and M2 had the highest number of boosters used in their gender group respectively although their word counts were not that high.

A comparison between female and male writers in this small-scale study shows that the total number of words for all the female writers was 3277 words with a Mean score of 3.2 occurrences of boosters, whereas for male writers, the total number of words was 2976 words. The Mean score for male writers was 5.0. It is interesting to see that although the female group yielded a higher number of word count in their articles, the male writers’ Mean analysis for boosters yielded higher than that of the female writers’.

For the female writers, a booster occurred every 204.81 words and for the male writers, the occurrence of boosters was at every 119.04 words per boosters. Although the male writers had fewer words in their articles, they used more than half of the total boosters identified from the ten RAs than the female writers.
However, this result should not be generalized into a universal assumption or conclusion that all other articles will have the same result as this study only analyzed ten RAs. This is just a preliminary study and a platform for other large-scale corpora to be analyzed for future research.

Discussion

**The Regularity of Boosters Used in the Introduction Section of ten RAs**

From the analysis of the ten RAs of both female and male writers, there are only twelve most frequently used boosters out of the twenty-one identified by other researchers with a total of forty-one occurrences of boosters. This particular study which only used a small number of corpus shows that the number of words and their length does not affect the actual number of boosters used. Moreover, in comparison to hedges, boosters are relatively few found in RA as stated by Kuteeva (2011). The examples of boosters that were used in the analyzed ten RAs are as follows:

‘Solidarity’ category:
5) My informants quickly came to the belief that university study made greater demands of reading, writing and listening than it did of speaking. (F4)
ii) I begin by considering how patterns of attitude correspond to different kinds of arguments and then attend more closely to how attitudinal meanings radiate out from any explicit expression of attitude. (F5)
iii) The investigation of both of these can be extremely useful in ESP curriculum design. (M2)
iv) Vocabulary items are not always single items or simply “content words”. (M5)

‘Belief’ category:
5) The last two decades of research on academic writing have demonstrated that written academic genres are not purely objective, impersonal, and informational as had once been believed. (M3)
ii) As such, the functions of lectures include, but are certainly not limited to, introducing key theories, concepts, and research. (M4)
iii) This shortcoming is lexicalized in the previous sentence and serves as a cohesive device; at the same time, it clearly expresses the attitude of the writer towards the Guidelines. (F1)
iv) Supported by this methodology, other studies also show that North American university classes display linguistic features of both face-to-face conversation and written academic prose. (F2)
v) The fact that the concepts of genre, discourse analysis, textography, community, and consciousness-raising have now established themselves, and in many cases supplanted these earlier ideas, is testament to Johns’ defining influence on the field. (M1)

The functions of boosters are to elucidate claims, state findings, and also to show the writers’ level of confidence and clarity on certain issues including statements that they have made. Hyon (2008) also stated that boosters are generally used to strengthen claims and stress the statement that they are making concerning three main functions (strengthening the evaluation of the faculty member; entertaining readers; expressing solidarity). However, in the study of the ten RAs, only Functions 1 and 3 are applicable. There are only twelve boosters found to have been in use (29.3%) which shows the belief that the writers have in strengthening their evaluation. On
the other hand, the highest number of boosters comes from expressing solidarity with 29 occurrences (70.7%) altogether.

**The Influence of Gender Differences in the Use of Specific Boosters of ten RAs**

From Table 1, the male writers used more boosters with twenty-five occurrences (61.0%) whereas female writers used sixteen boosters (39.0%) of both categories. In this analysis, female and male writers had different choices of booster categories where females tended to use more ‘belief’ categories of boosters which occurred eight times (19.5%) than male writers with only four occurrences (9.6%). On the other hand, the male writers used more boosters in the ‘solidarity’ category with twenty-one occurrences (51.4%) than females with only about eight occurrences (19.5%). Since this is a small-scale study where only ten RAs were analyzed, some data may contain extreme values that could affect the total percentage of booster occurrences.

The reasons for the differences in boosters' occurrence could be that the female writers would prefer to be unambiguous in their statements of which they were absolutely convinced. They wanted to make it clear to the readers that they were confident with the research carried out especially when most of the Introductions included some literature reviews to support their beliefs.

In five of the RAs written by the male writers, the ‘solidarity’ booster category was more frequently deployed as they wanted to claim that they had shared knowledge with the audience. It could be that they wanted to make the Introduction sections ‘friendly’ to prevent readers from being overwhelmed with the content of the RAs. It is done by introducing something that the readers are usually familiar with, before moving on to a new idea or concept.

It is interesting to note that in this study particularly, the female writers used the same number of boosters in both the ‘belief’ and ‘solidarity’ categories, with eight occurrences. This practice could have been motivated by their wish to keep a balance of using both categories of boosters rather than sticking to only one category of boosters, like the ‘solidarity’ category preferred by the male writers.

It would be much better if a further study could be carried out with a larger corpus to see whether the same results are similar or not.

**The Use of Boosters in Influencing the Way of Writing in the ten RAs**

Although there were differences in the way female and male writers use boosters in their RAs, the gap for the usage of boosters in writing RAs was quite comprehensive as male writers tended to use 25 times of boosters, which constituted 61% of frequency in total. It is more than half of the number of booster occurrences in all the selected RAs. However, this is a small-scale study using only ten RAs as the corpus. Extreme value could also affect the total number of boosters between female and male writers.

In the analysis of the ten selected RAs, the male writers used more boosters as they wanted to show that they were specific with what they were writing than the female writers. Perhaps, this could be because female writers were more cautious in making risky claims and announcing any uncertainties which could be attributed to their politeness. In contrast, male writers seemed to be
more forceful in emphasizing their statements and beliefs. This corroborates a study by Holmes (1990) which stated that men would use intensifiers or boosters more frequently than women. Thus, that could be the reason for male writers to have used more boosters in writing the Introduction sections of their RAs.

A common reason that can be deduced from the analysis of the ten RAs is that both the female and male writers could have used boosters to highlight their claims or what they believe in regardless of their gender. As Afros and Schryer (2009) stated ...

“almost all the literary scholars (eight out of ten) buttressed their claims with intensifiers. The writers tried to persuade readers that their expectations had been met or even exceeded. This purpose was achieved by restating the central theses put forward in Introduction, often strengthened by boosters” (p. 65)

Nonetheless, in this study of the analysis of the Introduction section of ten RAs, the use of boosters was more evident in the RAs written by the male authors as they seemed to be more direct in illustrating and making their claims.

**Conclusion**

To conclude, in addressing the gap in the area of using boosters in research writing, this research has examined the regularity of boosters used in the Introduction section of ten RAs. The influence of gender differences in the use of specific boosters was also examined. There were differences in the choice of boosters used by female and male writers that have been discussed in the previous section of this particular small-scale study. There was also a difference in the occurrence of boosters between male and female writers. Both female and male writers did use several boosters in the Introduction sections of their RAs although the male writers seemed to be using them more frequently in the Introductions section of their RAs. The purpose for reinstating the primary idea was being reinforced by using boosters. Thus, that could be another reason why both female and male writers used boosters in the Introduction section of their RAs.

**Recommendation**

In the future, it is suggested that a larger number of corpora would be encouraged to ensure the significance of the result in reducing the occurrences of any extreme value. Further research could also be done to determine the differences between novice and experienced writers, as well as between native and non-native writers about the style used in writing especially in using boosters. Using linguistic features like boosters would help in achieving a ‘successful research career’ or it may help to increase our writing and speaking skills especially for the novice writer either in the ‘native or non-native English-speaking academic contexts’. Since not much research has been carried out on boosters and their different usage in different contexts, it could somehow give some ideas to other writers, either the beginner or even the experienced ones, to use boosters more effectively especially for academic writing purposes.

**About the authors:**
**Dr. Mazlin M. Mokhtar** is a Senior Lecturer at the Sultan Idris Education University. She is an experienced TESL lecturer who has taught previously in school and polytechnics. Her research interests are Sociolinguistics, ESP, ESL and ICT in Education. She had also written a few books.
from Oxford Sdn. Bhd. and journals in UJER, Creative Education, TEFLIN, as well as part of the Editorial Board for AJELP, IJEISR and JPPKK Journals. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8231-2678

**Dr. Harwati Hashim** is Senior Lecturer at the Research Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching, Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). Her areas of concentration are ESL, Mobile-assisted Language Learning (MALL), technology acceptance as well as language pedagogy, and the use of technology in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL). ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8817-427X

**Dr. Puteri Zarina Megat Khalid** is a senior lecturer currently attached to Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Malaysia. Among her research interests are TESL, genre analysis, modality analysis, pragmatics, TVET, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and Systemic Functional Linguistics. She is also a member of the International Association of Applied Linguistics, Malaysian Institute of Applied Linguistics, International Systemic Functional Linguistics Association (ISFLA), Malaysian Society for Engineering & Technology (MySET), and Institute of Marine, Science and Technology (IMAREST). ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9296-8662

**Associate Professor Dr. Intan Safinas Mohd Ariff Albakri** is an Associate Professor at Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia. Her areas of expertise are materials and methods in teaching the English Language. She is currently leading a research on mentoring pre-service and beginning teachers and a member of research on Developing a Quality Teacher Education Framework under the Ministry of Education Malaysia. She is also the Editor-in-chief for the Asian Journal of English Language and Pedagogy. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5499-1709

**Dr. Norfaizah Abdul Jobar** is a Senior Lecturer in UPSI. She was a secondary school teacher for 15 years before joining the university. She is a Ph.D. graduate in Malay Language from UPSI. She was a subject coordinator and speaker for SPM Malay Language and she is still an instructor in Mualim District. She has also presented nationally as well as internationally and has also published a few research papers in her field of study. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5888-5492

**References**


Proposed Model to Assist Saudi Postgraduate Students in their English Academic Writing

Noof Saleh Alharbi
English Language Centre, Taibah University
Madinah, Saudi Arabia

Abstract
This current research forms part of a broader investigation into the problems Saudi postgraduate students face in English academic writing. The study used the interpretive paradigm to investigate and interpret the perceptions of Saudi postgraduate students and their supervisors in relation to the difficulties they encountered regarding academic writing in English. Therefore, the study adopted a sequential mixed-methods design. The quantitative phase of the research employed a questionnaire whereas the qualitative phase employed semi-structured interviews and document analysis. In total, 275 students completed the prepared questionnaire whilst 15 students, both male and female, and 9 supervisors participated in the semi-structured interviews. The research also used ten samples of written feedback students had received from their supervisors. SPSS descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data quantitatively, and MAXQDA software was used to analyse the data qualitatively. The study identified that Saudi postgraduates encounter a range of difficulties in their academic writing, which were due to several underlying causes. Therefore, to address this issue and to contribute to knowledge in the field, the author of this study devised a theoretical model to assist Saudi postgraduate students overcome their difficulties with English academic writing. The main focus of the current study is to explain this model in detail.

Key Words: academic writing, postgraduate students, writing difficulties

Cite as: Alharbi, N. S. (2021). Proposed Model to Assist Saudi Postgraduate Students in their English Academic Writing. Arab World English Journal, 12 (1) 527-542. DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol12no1.34
1. Introduction

A significant number of United Kingdom universities and colleges offer English for academic purpose programmes. Such programmes tend to offer two different types of credit-bearing courses. The first option is that of non-credit-bearing courses that students attend before the university term begins. The aim of these courses is to ‘fine tune’ students’ proficiency before they begin to study at the university. Alternatively, they offer intensive programmes, the aim being to improve students’ level of English to a standard sufficient for university admission. The second option is credit-bearing courses that are offered as part of the university curriculum. This current research has opted to focus on the non-credit courses that offer pre-university intensive EAP programmes. In addition, in EAP courses, rather than being viewed as an authority or as a source of knowledge, the teacher assumes the role of advisor or mentor (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 167).

2. Academic English courses

To assist students who have graduated from secondary schools to develop their English language skills in their academic courses while at university, some of the higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia, for example, King Fahad University (KFU), King Saud University (KSU), and King Abdul Aziz University (KAU), provide intensive English courses for such students. The aim is to help them improve their English and so achieve better marks in their academic courses.

For instance, KFU uses English medium instruction (EMI). Thus, all of the courses are taught in English, as it is envisaged that the students will need a good level of English for their future employment (Alqahtani, 2011). Therefore, KFU offers the students an English language teaching programme before they enrol in their academic courses. The intention is to help the students to speak fluently and accurately in English. In order to achieve this, in 1975, KSU established a language centre to help students develop their proficiency in English before they begin their academic studies and to ensure they have the basic language skills they are going to need in their academic and professional lives. Currently, more than 2,000 students attend courses at the centre (Alqahtani, 2011).

In Saudi Arabia, it is possible to find many English courses that provide general English and English for specific purposes (ESP) and that aim to teach only a basic knowledge of the language system. This is in contrast to teaching specific courses, such as EAP courses. However, Saudi students have indicated their dissatisfaction with such courses, which neither satisfy their needs or capture their interest. Furthermore, these courses tend to use a teacher-centred approach instead of learner-centred methods (Alqahtani, 2011). In addition, it has been found that the teachers do not transfer to their students the best skills regarding the practice of teaching (Al-Ansari, 1995).

Hence, I argue that the EAP courses that are currently provided in Saudi Arabia do not give students any practical skills in real English-speaking environments. Nonetheless, it is not only the English language programme that is at fault. Instead, the students, the instructors, and the material that is taught must bear some responsibility for these programmes’ lack of success (Alqahtani, 2011), as each plays a specific role in the learning process.
3. The Preparatory year Programme

In 2007/2008, the MoHE developed what was called “the preparatory year programme”. This is a new university system whereby once students have finished secondary school and before they enter university, they must be enrolled in this programme. They have to complete the requirements of the programme in a single academic year. The majority of Saudi universities aim to give their students who have enrolled in the programme an opportunity to achieve the following:

- to fill the gap between what students learn in the state education system and what they need to flourish at university level.
- to prepare students for higher education
- to direct each student towards the college that would be most appropriate to his or her academic abilities and interests.
- to rationalize the use of the potential of the university
- to enhance the university’s inputs and outputs
- to develop thinking and learning skills and develop scientific debates.
- to increase the number of students that enrol in the university.
- to ensure graduates leave university with the skills they need for the labour market and for development plans (MoHE, 2008)

4. The English Language Centre (ELC)

In the majority of universities, the MoHE has established a centre for teaching English, usually in the preparatory year. The aims of the English Language Centre (ELC) are as follows:

- to give all university students a preparatory general curriculum and provide them with ESP teaching services.
- to give university administrative staff and teaching assistants specialised courses and general English literacy.
- to offer customised courses for TOEFL and to provide local applicants with a scholarship for graduate studies.
- to provide language teaching services via the most up-do-date educational technologies, in particular, Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and E-Learning (Mursal, 2005)

In addition, the MoHE gives the ELC the necessary support regarding building a language laboratory, employing faculty members from across the globe with the relevant qualifications, and signing contracts with English language teaching (ELT) publishers for devising book series.

Extensive efforts have been made by the Saudi government to improve the quality and provision of English language teaching and, to achieve this, has significantly increased the funding spent on education (Javid, Farooq & Gulzar, 2012). However, despite this, Saudi students still have a poor level of English proficiency; indeed, according to the Cambridge Examination Centre, Saudi Arabia ranks “39 out of the 40 nations participating in general and academic training tests” (Al-Seghayer, 2011, p. 45).
While the above programmes have many advantages, they have been criticised by a large proportion of students graduating from the public education system, who argue that not only are all the subjects taught in English but also that they do not relate to disciplines that can help students determine their orientation (Al-Hussiani, 2012). Students have also raised concerns regarding the duration of the course as well as what they consider to be excessive amounts of homework. They argue that four hours of English every day is counterproductive, as they are unable to focus on and assimilate all the information they are given.

Having proficiency in written English and being able to master the other language skills (reading, listening, and speaking) would help Saudi students to succeed not only in their academic courses but also in their examinations, and to function at a much higher level within English-speaking societies. Therefore, the Saudi government made the decision to send students to study abroad. This was due to what was considered to be a need for well-educated people to participate in improving the Kingdom.

5. Problem of the Study

Given that I am very familiar with the system of higher education in Saudi, I can confirm that an extremely small number of universities offer courses that allow students to acquire the skills they will need to succeed at academic writing in L2 at not only the undergraduate but also the postgraduate stage. As a result of this lack of suitable courses, when postgraduate students begin to attend universities in the UK, they are faced with significant problems not only with their general academic skills but also when they have to use academic writing in L2 and even once they have finished the EAP course in the UK.

The reason for this is that the focus of such courses is more on general language skills, and little or no attention is paid to what students actually need in order to carry out their academic research; for example, in writing programmes, students lack knowledge regarding how to conduct a literature review; they have little or no experience of engaging critically with either the theories or the theoretical framework that they require for their postgraduate studies. The factors that have been identified as restricting the students' progress in these courses include the differences in the culture and the education systems between Saudi Arabia and the UK, and students’ low level of proficiency in the English language (Alqahtani, 2011; Mostafa, 2006).

These problems are exacerbated by the poor communication from the EAP courses with regard to the previous knowledge and proficiency of students who travel abroad to study, as well as by the lack of any EAP courses in the KSA that could induct students sufficiently into how to learn in English (Alqahtani, 2011). Thus, the aim of the current study is to improve understanding of Saudi students’ specific needs when they arrive in the UK, and so to help bridge the gap in the academic preparation programmes that are provided for postgraduate students from Saudi Arabia. This study attempted to answer the following question: What is the effect of the lack of EAP preparation in Saudi Arabia on Saudi postgraduate students’ proficiency in academic writing?

6. Methodology

Given the nature of the research questions in this study, it was decided that an exploratory methodology would be used. This decision was supported by the assertion by Creswell (2009)
that an exploratory methodology "is useful for a researcher who wants to explore a phenomenon" (p. 212). Ritchie and Lewis (2003) also recommended the use of an exploratory methodology, as it permits the researcher to uncover the participants’ cultures, values, and perceptions whilst aiming to reveal the true meaning of their participants’ words and behaviours. Therefore, I felt that an exploratory methodology would give me a better understanding of the phenomenon I was researching.

7. Participants

Two types of sampling strategies were employed in this study: a probability and a non-probability sampling strategy. The former involved randomly selecting 275 postgraduate Saudi students from various UK universities. These participants were asked to complete the questionnaire. It was decided to administer the questionnaire to students online. This is because research has indicated that doing so "enables a wider and much larger population to be accessed" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 280). However, a type of non-probability sampling, namely, convenience sampling, was used to select 15 postgraduate Saudi students. To participate in the study, the students had to fulfil two criteria, namely, accessibility and purposiveness (Silverman, 2001). Therefore, those students who were considered as possibly belonging to the sample were both female and male students who were studying at universities in the UK in order to obtain either an MA, a PhD, or an EdD degree in a range of specialisations; the aim was to create a sample of Saudi postgraduate students that was as representative as possible. The students selected for the research had some common characteristics; these included their socio-cultural background and age, with most students being in the age range of late twenties to forties.

8. Data collection methods

The current research employs both quantitative and qualitative instruments to collect data in order to answer the research questions. In the qualitative phase, both semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions in the questionnaires were used, while the structure of the questionnaire demonstrates the use of quantitative data collection measures. The use of both qualitative and quantitative data made it possible to broaden the understanding of the difficulties Saudi postgraduate students face regarding their academic writing when studying in the United Kingdom.

9. Data Analysis

In the quantitative phase of this investigation, SPSS descriptive statistical tests were used to analyse the results of the closed-ended questionnaire items. Percentages and frequency counts were calculated for each category in the questionnaire. Furthermore, the percentages of the five-point Likert scales (very difficult; difficult; neutral; easy; and very easy) are presented separately in tables.

Two items were analysed qualitatively, namely, the semi-structured interviews, and the answers to the open-ended questions included in the questionnaire. The analysis was performed in accordance with the procedures recommended by Creswell (2007). This form of data analysis is non-linear, and the researcher has to become involved in the several stages of the research and move back and forth between the original collected data and the coding process not only to create new codes but also to test the existing codes against the original data.
Therefore, MAXQDA software was used in the research; MAXQDA is a multifunctional software system that is used for managing and developing data. There were several advantages to using MAXQDA in the data analysis process. While reading the data, I could make codes, generate themes, devise categories, highlight segments, and add memos easily.

10. Results

Students were asked to indicate how frequently they had encountered a range of aspects during EAP courses in academic writing that they had attended in the UK before beginning their postgraduate studies. Students gave their answers by completing a questionnaire. There were (10) items representing a range of writing skills, planning and gathering ideas, writing critically, writing in a range of genres, summarising the text, paraphrasing the text, structuring assignments, using drafts, using instructions for self-assessment, using appropriate materials, and giving helpful feedback. The details of which are given in Table (10.1) The skill with which they had the most experience was “useful materials” (M=3.98), with nearly 74% having worked with that skill either often or very often. “Summarising” was the second aspect that was experienced frequently (M=3.89), as indicated by the high percentage of students (69%) that stated that they had encountered this aspect either often or very often. “Planning & collecting ideas” was the third aspect students rated as an additional aspect of EAP that they had experienced often or very often(M=3.86). These findings indicated the importance of the pre writing stage regarding the quality of students’ writing; this is because to produce a coherent text, students need to demonstrate a complex mental process. Therefore, in Saudi education, when teaching writing, it is important to place a greater emphasis on the stages of composition and of rewriting rather than focusing on the final product of the text.

“Writing in various genres” and “writing critically” were the least frequently experienced aspects, with (M=3.37, 44%) and (M=3.15, 35%) respectively. This discrepancy could be because the majority of the English programmes in UK institutions take a general approach to teaching English skills. An example of this is in teaching writing, where the focus is on teaching students the best way to structure an essay and to organise their ideas. Another possible cause is that such courses use general topics when teaching writing, rather than focusing on topics related to students’ actual requirements for academic writing.

Table 1  Descriptive Statistics for Items within EAP Usefulness Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very often</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Sd.</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. EAP in academic writing in UK: planning &amp; collecting ideas</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>1.264</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. EAP in academic writing in UK: writing critically</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.248</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. EAP in academic writing in the UK:</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.114</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Arab World English Journal
ISSN: 2229-9327
Furthermore, the responses some students gave to the open–ended question and during the semi-structured interviews indicated that while the majority of students were happy with the EAP courses in the UK, these courses had certain limitations. One particular limitation was that in such courses, the writing elements are not linked to the students’ areas of research. As Noura said:

> From my experience, teaching writing in EAP is based on writing an essay about various topics, such as global warming or technology, which is not helpful. Furthermore, students in these courses are required to do many assignments, which makes them frustrated and does not improve their writing.
Furthermore, the responses of four students made clear that the methods used for teaching writing in the EAP courses do not correlate to the students’ requirements. For example, Maha made the following comment:

The methods of teaching writing in the EAP [courses] are different from what the actual students need in their disciplines. Therefore, there should be a cooperation between the administrations or instructors in these courses and the departments of students' subjects, as some disciplines have different styles of writing. For example, writing in arts subjects is completely different from science topics. I think most EAP courses are mostly focused on the arts subjects.

In a similar vein, Karim stated that the EAP courses do not give international students the knowledge they require regarding the cultural and academic differences between the UK and their home country:

The EAP courses, I think, do not know the real needs of international students. For instance, the Saudi students need more time to adapt to the new culture and academic life. That means that the students need to be independent, which they are not used to in their country, and that is a challenge in itself.

Lina’s comment also showed students experience significant levels of stress due to the requirements of English language tests, for example, the IELTS exam, and the requirements of the EAP course. These levels of stress prevent students from being able to concentrate on their studies:

Many students when they return to Saudi Arabia have weak language skills unless those students are proficient in English before they start their study…… In addition, the IELTS exam causes a lot of pressure for students during the EAP course, which affects their success in the courses. Students cannot find enough time to cope with the requirements of the course and the exam together.

Other students felt the EAP courses in the UK had several shortcomings; specifically, they are too general and do not take sufficient account of students’ needs in their academic fields. Ahmed underlined this view with the following comment:

An EAP course mostly tends to be more general; they might do some work on academic writing, but even that is not discipline-specific. There are different conventions for different disciplines. Some disciplines depend on the methodological framework. Other disciplines would want the writing to be very much in the passive voice, would want no mention of the researcher in the thesis, and would want no subjectivity throughout the writing whereas other disciplines, for example, in many of the social sciences including in education, it would not be appropriate to erase the researcher from the research. So that it is something that is very discipline specific, and EAP courses can’t be expected to address that.

Khalid also highlighted that EAP courses do not adequately prepare students regarding the need to demonstrate critical thinking in their writing:

I do not believe that the EAP courses are sufficient in terms of what I call critical thinking skills, and I think students struggle with their critical thinking skills for their PhDs; in
particular. They find it difficult to engage critically with facts, theories and the theoretical framework that they need for the PhD.

The Saudi government provides students with the chance to study language courses during their time in the UK for either one or two years irrespective of whether their major is TESOL or non-TESOL. Nonetheless, the students revealed in the interviews that irrespective of the length of their stay, they still did not feel adequately prepared for the academic requirements of studying for a postgraduate degree.

11. Discussion

This section considers the effect on Saudi students of their lack of academic preparation before they travel abroad to take up their postgraduate studies. In addition, the section explores how effective EAP courses in the UK are. For instance, in the current study, students commented on how a lack of academic preparation in Saudi Arabia means Saudi postgraduate students struggle with academic writing when they begin to will in the UK.

Therefore, a theoretical model has been devised as a contribution to knowledge in the field to help Saudi postgraduate students overcome their difficulties with their English academic writing. However, this theoretical model is considered only to be a guideline rather than a fixed line of action (Figure 1).

![Figure 1. Proposed Model to Assist Saudi Postgraduate Students in their English Academic Writing](image-url)

As seen in Figure 1, the proposed model has four main points of focus: the Saudi Ministry of Education, improvement of teaching quality (including lectures at university and pre-service English teacher education), UK universities, and students. An assessment of these factors demonstrated clearly that writing skills are concerned not only with language, but, in addition, they describe a process of several stages that the writing must pass through until the student reaches the final stage of composition. In this regard, Bukta (2013) states, “The ability to write is not […] innate. Compared to listening and speaking, people need to reach a certain level of
cognitive development before they can acquire writing skills’ (p. 18). In particular, the ability to write academically is linked to the ability to develop a range of skills, for example, higher-order thinking skills; these include critical thinking, communication, and research skills (Scarcella, 2003). For this process to be successful, continual co-operation is needed between these elements to help students regarding their writing abilities. The next section gives the major elements of the proposed model in more detail.

**11.1 Saudi Ministry of Education**

Saudi postgraduate students who wish to study abroad should first experience academic preparation in the Kingdom; participants suggested that such preparation should last a minimum of one year. The content of such preparation should also include cultural aspects “to raise participants’ awareness of cultural issues and social interactions in the target country” (Jin, 1992, p. 432). Moreover, for the preparation to be effective, the learning environment provided must be multifaceted. These aspects may include the following: interactive elements with clear objectives, a focus on independence, a range of assessment methods, and interaction between student and teacher; all of these can have a major influence on the outcomes (Lizzio et al., 2002).

It is important that highly qualified specialists are employed to present the academic preparation, as these will be able to cope with students’ needs and weaknesses, and they will be able to “reconsider their different roles including the affective ones and shouldn’t confine their roles solely to providing information” (Al-Zubaidi, 2012, p. 44). Based on the results of the study, overseas students can often find their academic success hindered by their lack of familiarity with the UK’s academic environment. Therefore, before students travel abroad, lectures and workshops should be set up to help the students understand the differences between Saudi Arabia’s academic culture and that of the UK. For instance, the organisers of these workshops could invite guest speakers, for example, experts in education, or researchers and/or professors to “discuss British academic culture” (Jin, 1992, p. 432). Furthermore, institutions could suggest that Saudi students who have already had the experience of studying abroad might come and discuss their time studying in the UK; in this way, other students would receive a first-hand account of how the teaching methods in the two cultures differ, and they could then compare what these students say with their own experiences and expectations.

Students should be encouraged to extend their reading to widen their knowledge, as in this way, they will be exposed to a range of ideas, and this will help them improve their writing skills. To assist them in their second language academic writing, students should also be exposed to a wide range of rich writing contexts in academic settings, and this will encourage them to gain writing practice in various academic genres (Atkinson, 1993).

To help students write academically and to improve their writing skills, the methods used for teaching need to move to a process-oriented approach that “provides effective instruction in what is often called the ‘prewriting stage’ of the composing process” (Leung, 2008, p. 24). In the prewriting stage, the activities are brainstorming, drafting, revising, and editing (Yan, 2005). In this approach, the teacher acts as a facilitator to guide the students and provide them with feedback during these stages; however, they should not make ‘correctness’ a priority. Moreover, Leung (2008) claims that “students must be allowed to work independently and explore their
own interests, rather than being forced to write traditionally and with a high level of formality” (pp. 28-29) in order to maintain their attention and motivate them to produce their best work.

The results of the current study found academic preparation is essential to enable students to "be ready to meet the minimum requirements in dealing with the tasks for completing their Ph.D. without having language problems” (Son & Park, 2014, p. 9). Hence, while high quality learning and students’ success are desired, it is not possible to achieve either without qualified teachers; therefore, it is essential to invest in teachers and recognise that they are one of the most important elements of any educational program (Khan, 2011). This investment in teacher quality “starts at the earliest stages of a teacher's career and continues throughout a professional lifetime” (Moir & Gless, 2001, p. 114).

11.2 Improvement of Teaching Quality

11.2.1 Lecturers at University

Providing university lecturers with effective training is crucial to give the pre-service teachers the skills they require; if a lecturer’s teaching practice is developed, this can help to improve the quality of the teaching of pre-service teachers (Elghotmy, 2012). This training can be provided in several forms. For example, it could involve meetings between lecturers to share their views and experiences of teaching and thus "keep themselves updated about the latest development in language theories" (Leung, 2008, p. 182). Lecturers need to remain abreast of developments and innovations regarding strategies in feedback, as they ought to focus not only on the accuracy of the grammar but also on the meaning of their students’ writing. Choosing alternative methods of delivering feedback, for instance, conferencing between teachers and students, is "an absolutely worthwhile investment in student motivation and hence engagement" (Leung, 2008, p. 184).

Moreover, lecturers in L2 writing are likely to benefit from creating collaborative learning environments to raise their students' confidence in their L2 writing. Indeed, Kamil (2011) notes that “in group work, students not only compose their own written texts but read and criticize texts written by their peers and interact with each other to elaborate better texts” (p. 219). Moreover, it is important that “adequate library resources and services, physical facilities and a supportive reading environment should be available to enhance students’ intellectual, cultural, and technical development” (Ahmed, 2011, p. 245). In addition, by including L2 writing lectures when devising the curriculum plan and designing L2 writing courses, universities are given a valuable opportunity to improve their understanding of students’ interests and to identify their needs.

In order for the above elements to function successfully in the training programme, it is crucial to administer a follow-up process; this would allow teachers the freedom to experiment with a range of approaches and to create a useful dynamic between the students and themselves. The process of examination followed by reassessment can be incredibly beneficial for teachers in helping them remain aware of their teaching environment and in helping them learn the best way to encourage their students to remain engaged and to find their own learning style (Leung, 2008). If the abovementioned training strategies are to fulfil the aim of improving the quality of the lecturers’ teaching methods at universities, a pre-service programme must be developed.
Therefore, the next section offers a closer examination of pre-service English teacher education in Saudi Arabia.

11.2.2 Pre-Service English Teacher Education

In the proposed model, it is recommended that pre-service English teachers receive effective training in both the linguistic and the pedagogical aspects of writing. In this way, they will develop their teaching practice and, at the same time, meet their students’ needs. For instance, teachers require training not only in translation and applied linguistics but also in methodological courses (Al-Seghayer, 2014). Furthermore, teachers should be trained in how best to use contemporary approaches, such as learner-centred approaches and research skills. Pre-service teachers also require training in “using contemporary test styles (e.g., open-book tests), how to assess students based on their research skills, and how to diversify student assessment methods” (Al-Mandhari, 2011, p. 286). They should also have knowledge about the theories of second language writing, as an improved understanding of these theories will help them become “critical and reflective practitioners, researchers of their own professional life, and agents of change” (Van Lier, 1994, p. 7).

Furthermore, it is important for English teachers in pre-service programmes to encourage the use of technology to enhance their pre-service learning. It is also helpful to assist English teachers to engage with the creation of cooperative and collaborative learning activities that enable them to share their knowledge, experiences, and ideas; this can then lead to “serious questioning and critical reflective thinking” (Al-Issa & Al-Bulushi, 2010, p. 58). Additionally, it is important for pre-service teachers to be exposed to critical pedagogy as a fundamental element of the pre-service programme for English language teachers in the KSA. Regarding this issue, Troudi (2005) highlights that “we need to develop a teacher education framework that prepares teachers not only in the technical knowledge of language and the various discourses of the related fields, but especially in the cultural and socio-political issues that come with teaching English” (pp. 118-119). Similarly, Habbash (2011) points out that it is important for teachers in the KSA to acknowledge political, economic, and social issues regarding the teaching processes and teacher/student interaction. Thus, these alterations in the pre-service training of English teachers can help stimulate teachers’ professional development.

Taking this into account, the Ministry of Education has been considering how to develop the educational process in the KSA, thus showing an understanding of the importance to the country of having a well-educated workforce to contribute to the improvement of the Kingdom. Therefore, in 2005, “the King Abdullah Scholarship, Saudi Arabia “, a sponsorship scheme, was established by the government with the aim of assisting Saudi students who wanted to study abroad in English-speaking countries (Ministry of Higher Education, 2006). However, it has been acknowledged that “studying overseas has always presented students with unique challenges as well as benefits, ranging from socio-economic and academic to individual “(Alzahrani, 2016, p. 1). Therefore, the next section gives an outline of the suggested orientation programmes in the UK to help international students cope with the difficulties they face in their academic studies in the UK.
11.3 Universities in the UK

The proposed model suggests, with regard to the support the universities in the UK offer to international students, that it would be beneficial for UK universities to provide orientation programmes for international students to assist them to overcome the difficulties they face in their academic studies in the UK; these difficulties include the challenges regarding students’ academic writing. Kingston and Forland (2008) suggest the following:

Students may gain insight into the expectations of the UK’s education system and university’s policies of learning and teaching before, or early on in their courses. It was suggested that this could be remedied by sending information to students before they came to the UK. (p. 216)

This is because currently, the orientation programmes in the UK do not give importance to cross-culture preparation. Instead, most of the focus is on the procedures of or introduction to the system, for example, healthcare, immigration rules, and police registration as well as what courses are available and what is expected from students. Therefore, the way these courses are structured has certain inherent limitations; in particular, postgraduate Saudi students are not given the opportunity to obtain information about and become familiar with the British system, even though undergraduate students can do this.

Thus, academic staff and supervisors need to give more consideration to cultural differences and previous learning experiences. In addition, to improve, international students need support and guidance as well as regular tutorial sessions and constructive feedback from their supervisors. Furthermore, to ensure that students and teachers are “aware of their own values, styles of communication, cognitive orientation, as well as emotional reactions” (Swanson & Watt, 2011, p. 22), knowledge regarding international students’ culture is crucial. Therefore, an understanding of these issues can contribute towards the establishment of effective communication between international students and their supervisors.

Although such orientation programmes are needed to assist international students to adapt to the academic environment abroad, these programmes will be ineffective unless students are made aware of the potential challenges, and they must accept a certain degree of responsibility for making the necessary improvements themselves. The following section discusses this responsibility.

11.4 Students

The proposed model recommends that students play a major role in improving their academic writing and assume a degree of responsibility for their own problems. Strategies students can use to help themselves include making use of online resources and reading both the relevant literature and academic journals more frequently. Furthermore, they should search for the necessary information independently and so contribute to their sense of autonomy and not remain dependent on their teachers for all aspects of their education (Shukri, 2014). In addition, they can obtain access to exemplary pieces of academic writing to help them learn the best way to structure an academic paper, to present their ideas, to construct a logical and cogent argument, to organise paragraphs, and to make links between ideas. Students also need to take advantage of the facilities provided to them from abroad to improve their writing skills; these include
academic workshops, international student support centres, and personal tutors. In addition, students should not feel anxious about communicating regularly with their supervisors and asking for any clarification they might require. For students, “Taking ownership of the writing process can help them to understand that effective academic writing is a process which requires effort and commitment” (Pineteh, 2014, p. 20).

12. Conclusion
This study has demonstrated that academic preparation is crucial for Saudi students. The data collected from both the semi-structured interviews and from the questionnaire indicated that most of the students who participated in the research felt that they had benefited from the EAP courses as their academic writing skills in L2 had improved. In addition, the study showed that it is essential to give students robust and appropriate academic preparation in Saudi Arabia to help them overcome problems with their academic skills in L2 when they go abroad to study. On the other hand, universities in the UK should consider the needs of both Saudi and international students regarding culture and language and the expectations of both the UK and the international education systems. It is recommended that further research be conducted to study academic preparation that targets other skills, for example, academic reading.

About the Authors:
Noof Saleh Alharbi is an assistant professor at English Language centre (ELC), Taibah University, Saudi Arabia. She obtained her Ph.D. from University of Exeter, UK. She also obtained a Master’s degree in Curriculum and Methods of Teaching English language from Taibah University. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4745-9156

References


