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Investigating the Effects of Speaker Variability on Arabic children’s Acquisition of English Vowels

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Abstract
This study investigated whether speaker variability in phonetic training benefits vowel learnability by Arabic learners of English. Perception training using High-Variability stimuli in laboratory studies has been shown to improve both the perception and production of Second Language sounds in adults and children and has become the dominant methodology for investigating issues in Second Language acquisition. Less consideration is given to production training, in which Second Language learners focus on the role of the articulators in producing second language sounds. This study aimed to assess the role of speaker variability by comparing the effect of using High-Variability and Low-Variability stimuli for production training in a classroom setting. Forty-six Arabic children aged 9-12 years were trained on 18 Standard Southern British English vowels in five training sessions over two weeks and were tested before and after training on their vowel production and category discrimination. The results indicate that Low-Variability stimuli may be more beneficial for children, however, High-Variability stimuli may alter some phonetic cues. Furthermore, the results suggest that production training may be used to improve the perception and production of Second Language sounds, but also to inform the design of Second Language pronunciation learning programmes and theories of Second Language acquisition.

Keywords: Arabic Children’s acquisition of English, articulatory training, classroom setting of L2 learning, production training, vowel learning, speaker variability

Introduction

Learning to perceive and produce the sounds of a second language (L2) is a significant challenge for L2 learners, due to the influence of the mappings between acoustic-phonetic properties of first language (L1) speech and abstract-categories (phonemes) formed during L1 acquisition. Models of L2 speech learning such as the Perceptual Assimilation Model of L2 speech Learning (PAM-L2, Best & Tyler 2007; Tyler, 2019) and the Speech Learning Model (SLM, Flege 1995, 2002; Flege & Bohn, 2021) characterise this influence according to the acoustic-phonetic similarity between L2 sounds and L1 phonemes. SLM classes L2 sounds as being identical, similar, or dissimilar to L1 phonemes: L2 sounds that are similar, but not identical, to an existing L1 phoneme are more challenging to learn (i.e., perceive and/or produce) accurately as they are perceived and produced as the L1 phonemes (e.g., English speakers producing the unaspirated Spanish consonants /p/, /t/, /d/ with the increased aspiration found in English, González Lopéz & Counselman, 2013; Gorba & Cebrian, 2023). PAM-L2 considers contrasts (rather than individual phonemes) and predicts L2 contrasts will be more challenging to learn if both phonemes in the contrast are similar to a single L1 phoneme, as they will be perceived and produced as the L1 phoneme (e.g., the difficulty that L1-Japanese speakers have with L2-English /r/-/l/ contrast due to the perceived similarity of both /r/ and /l/ to the Japanese /ɾ/, Bradlow, Pisoni, Akahane-Yamada & Tohkura., 1997).

The influence of the L1 phonological system on L2 speech learning can be overcome by increased exposure to L2 sounds, which helps a listener focus on more salient cues for L2 sounds or contrasts (Iverson, Hazan & Bannister, 2005; Yuan & Archibald, 2022), resulting in more native like perception and/or production, regardless of whether exposure comes from real-world communication (Flege, Takagi & Mann, 1996; Ingvalson, McClelland & Holt, 2011), formal instruction in the classroom (Camus, 2019), or from phonetic training in the laboratory (Logan, Lively & Pisoni, 1991; Kvasyuk, Putistina, & Savateeva, 2021). In particular, exposure from laboratory-based phonetic training has been shown to produce considerable improvements in perception and production (Thomson, 2018), and is increasingly used to investigate issues in L2 speech learning research, such as (i) the extent to which L1-attuned perceptual systems can adapt to L2 sounds (Hattori & Iverson, 2009), and (ii) how this adaption varies by age and/or experience (Ingvalson, Lansford, Federova, & Fernandez, 2017), (iii) how the organisation of L1 perceptual systems can influence L2 perception and production (Iverson & Evans, 2009), and (iv) the extent to which L2 perception and production are linked (Melnik-LeRoy, Turnbull, & Peperkamp, 2021).

The current study aimed to train Arab children, who are learning English as a second language, to pronounce Standard British English vowels giving them articulatory instructions with the aid of computer assisted learning for vowel interface. Given that Training on L2 phonemes, improves learning, and that speaker variability has been mostly used in perceptual training, this study is incorporating speaker variability in production training which has been given less consideration in the literature compared to perceptual training. Moreover, to the authors’ knowledge, a few studies, if any, have investigated the role of speaker variability in training Arab children to articulate English vowels using low vs. high speaker variability stimuli with a child-friendly computer assisted learning interface.

The main objective of the current study is to help Arab children learn English vowels production and perception by giving them some articulatory instructions on how to produce these vowels. Another objective of this study is to test whether high or low speaker variability might be
more beneficial for vowel learning with children. An additional objective is to build a teaching tool that can be used in a classroom setting to improve L2 pronunciation skill. The following questions were asked. To what extent does articulatory instructions help children learn English vowels? and what is the effect of speaker variability on learning English vowels by Arab children who are learning English?

Literature Review

Phonetic Training

Phonetic training requires participants to focus explicitly on either their perception of L2 phonemes (perception training) or their production of L2 phonemes (production training).

Perception Training

Perception training uses a forced-choice task where participants listen to words containing L2 phonemes (/iː/ as in peel) and identify the word from a closed set of alternatives (e.g., peel, pill, pail, pile). Feedback consists of a binary correct/incorrect visual (or audio-visual) response after every trial and an overall accuracy score presented at the end of each session. Laboratory-based perception training is effective in improving L2 perception in both adults (Iverson & Evans, 2007; Shinohara & Iverson, 2013b) and in children (Shinohara & Iverson, 2013a). In addition, perception-focused training has been found to improve L2 perception, and the improvement proceeds to improvement in phoneme production (e.g., Thomson, 2011; cf. Sakai & Moorman, 2018; Shinohara & Iverson, 2021). However, production-focused training, has been found to improve production (the trained domain), but the improvement in perception (the untrained domain) is not always consistent. Some studies found that production training improves productions and perception (e.g., Kartushina, Hervais-Adelman, Frauenfelder, & Golestani, 2015; Cibelli, 2022), while others found that production training only improves phoneme production, but not perception (e.g., Baese-Berk, 2019; Zhang, Cheng, Qin, & Zhang, 2021).

Production Training

In production training, participants listen to words containing L2 phonemes and repeat them out loud. Feedback focuses on accuracy in pronunciation rather than perception, and can take many forms, including (i) participants’ self-correction from listening to recordings of their imitations and comparing them to the productions of native speakers (Hattori, 2010), (ii) examining visual feedback derived from the participants’ productions such as spectrograms (Olson, 2014), formant plots (Kartushina & Martin, 2019) or ultrasound images (d’Apolito, et al., 2017), (iii) direct feedback from co-participants accuracy in identifying productions in a classroom setting (Linebaugh & Roche, 2015), and (iv) corrective feedback derived using automatic speech recognition (Neri et al., 2008; Evers & Chen, 2022, see also Cucchiarini, & Strik, 2018, for review).

Production training has been shown to improve the production of L2 sounds (Lopéz & Counselman, 2013; Taimi et al., 2014). For example, Taimi et al., (2014) trained 7–10-year-old L1-Finnish girls on the L2-Swedish /yː/ – /ʉː/ contrast using listen-and-repeat production training and found that after short training sessions of only two days, participants’ productions of the L2-Swedish vowel /ʉː/ was closer to L1-Swedish productions in the F2 dimension. However, the effects of production training on L2-perception are limited (e.g., Kartushina et al., 2015), and in a study comparing three groups of perception training, production training and a hybrid perception-and-production training focussing on the SSBE vowels /i/ and /ɪː/, Wong (2013) found that the
production training group did not improve their perception after training. More positive results, however, were reported by Linebaugh and Roche (2015), who used production training with L1-Arabic speakers on the L2-English contrasts /æ/-/ʌ/, /g/-/ʤ/ and /ɜ/-/ɔ/, including visual and verbal instruction regarding the position of vocal tract articulators. After only one training session, participants’ accuracy in the perception of the /æ/-/ʌ/ and /g/-/ʤ/ contrasts had improved.

Variability in Phonetic Training Materials

A key issue in phonetic training is developing training materials that are optimal for training (Carlet & Cebrian, 2019). In particular, being able to generalize learning to new speakers and new words has been shown to depend on the variability in the training materials, with most perception training research showing an advantage for ‘High Variability’ (HV) training materials (Lively, Logan & Pisoni, 1993; Kartushina & Martin, 2019), where variability can be introduced by a variety of means: using signal processing to manipulate specific acoustic cues of a phonetic category (Kondaurova & Francis, 2010; Iverson et al., 2005; Cheng, Zhang, Fan & Zhang, 2019), using different phonetic contexts (Strange et al., 2007), presenting multiple versions of the same token produced by multiple speakers (Giannakopoulou et al., 2017), a combination of using multiple phonetic contexts with multiple speakers (Sadakata & McQueen, 2013), or by manipulating specific acoustic cues in tokens that are produced by multiple speakers in multiple contexts (Giannakopoulou, Uther & Ylinen, 2013). Although HV training using multiple speakers has become the dominant approach in laboratory-based approaches to L2 learning (Thomson, 2018), differences in operationalisation of ‘high variability’ make it difficult to draw conclusions about the advantages of HV across different studies, or to determine what aspect of variability confers an advantage (Kartushina & Martin, 2019; Zhang, Qin, & Zhang, 2021). Some studies found that speaker variability does not affect learners’ performance (e.g., Zhang et al., 2021; Wiener, Chan & Ito, 2020). Furthermore, HV training materials may not yield greater benefits for some phonetic categories, transfer to different tasks (Thomson, 2011) or be effective for all age groups (Hwang & Lee, 2015; Giannakopoulou et al., 2017). For example, Giannakopoulou, Brown, Clayards & Wonnacott (2017), investigated whether adults and children would benefit in the same way from HV or Low-Variability (LV) training materials and found that children’s perception only improved with LV materials.

Very few studies have focused on the role of variability in training materials using production training. For example, Kartushina and Martin (2019) contrasted HV (five speakers) and LV (one speaker) in L2 production training for the L2-French /e/-/ɛ/ contrast using an imitation task. Participants received visual feedback in the form of a formant plot comparing the first two formants of the participants’ vowels compared to those of the target speaker. They found that only LV production training resulted in more accurate vowel productions. These results suggest that children may not benefit from HV phonetic training.

The Current Work

As outlined above, increased exposure to L2 sounds using perception training with HV training materials in the laboratory has been given considerable attention in L2 research, primarily with adults. Less attention has been given to production training and the role variability in training materials may play with this type of training. Furthermore, a few production-training studies have been carried out with children. Finally, most phonetic training has taken place in the laboratory and usually focuses on one or two phonetic contrasts considered difficult for particular L2 learners.
The current work describes the Computer Assisted Learning of Vowels interface (CALVin), software designed to be used for production training in a classroom with children. A group-training programme in the classroom was chosen over traditional laboratory training, to partly overcome the artifice of laboratory training, but also to try and retain the children’s engagement with the training over multiple training sessions. Furthermore, it would be valuable to demonstrate if production training based on L2 research can translate into classroom environments, and whether data collected from classroom environments can be of value to L2 researchers (Linebaugh & Roche, 2015), as the use of such training in the classroom is not widespread (Barriuso & Hayes-Harb, 2018), and only a few studies (Wang & Munro, 2004; Ueda & Hashimoto, 2019) have attempted to bridge the gap between laboratory research findings and the techniques used in teaching programs.

The production training in the current study operationalised variability using multiple speakers, using four speakers for High-Variability (HV) and one speaker for Low-Variability (LV). The training focuses on the learning of 18 SSBE vowels as most production training studies have trained only a small number of contrasts (Taimi, Jähi, Alku, & Peltola, 2014; Kartushina et al., 2019), and previous work has shown that perception training with a full set of vowels produces better learning outcomes (Nishi & Kewley-Port, 2007).

Participants in the training study were native Arabic speakers from Saudi Arabia, who speak the Hijazi dialect found mainly in the western region of Saudi Arabia. This dialect has 8 monophthongs: /i:/, /ɪ/, /a:/, /a/, /u:/, /u/, /e:/, /o:/, and two diphthongs /aj/, /aw/ (Jarrah, 1993). Standard southern British English (SSBE), has twenty vowels: /iː/, /ɪ/, /e/, /ɜː/, /æ/, /ɑː/, /ɒ/, /ɔː/, /ʌ/, /uː/, /ʊ/, /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /aʊ/, /əʊ/, /ʊə/, /ə/, /eə/, /ɔɪ/, and /ɪə/ (Wells, 1982), which are more confusable for Arabic learners of SSBE than consonants (Evans and Alshangiti, 2018), and therefore form the focus of this study. The current study aims to investigate the effect of speaker variability in production training on vowel perception and production. Given the difference in the vowel inventory between Arabic and English, it can be assumed that some vowels would fall into new vowel categories which may make learning the L2 vowels easy according to SLM. On this account, learners may assimilate two different vowels into two different categories, which leads to an accurate perception of L2 phonemes. We hypothesised that children might benefit from lower speaker variability and that training would help children learn to produce L2 vowels more accurately, but maybe their vowel perception would not improve.

Methods

The current study used articulatory training with the aid of a child-friendly computer assisted learning interface to investigate the effect of speaker variability on SSBE vowels acquisition by Arab children. The data was collected using a quantitative approach presented by pre- and post-test to measure any possible improvement after the training.

Participants

Forty-six native Arabic-speaking children aged 9-12 years old (median=11, mean age=10.7, SD=0.9) were recruited for the training study and randomly assigned to one of 2 training conditions, LV (one speaker) or HV (four speakers). Participants were recruited from a public girls’ school in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and had little exposure to English input. They learn English at school from non-native English teachers, and they started learning the English alphabets and basic reading when they were eight years old. Therefore, orthography and identification tasks were
avoided, so they were asked to repeat words, presented with child friendly visual aids to help them produce certain vowels, and categorise vowels in an oddity task that does not involve orthography. None of the participants reported any speech, hearing, or language impairments. All participants and their parents gave informed consent in writing, and the study was carried out with the permission of the ethics committee of King Abdulaziz University.

**Research Instruments**

**Training materials**

The training materials consisted of SSBE words (see Appendix A) and isolated SSBE vowels. The words were derived from 18 SSBE vowels (/iː/, /ɪ/, /e/, /ɜː/, /æ/, /ɑː/, /ɒ/, /ɔː/, /ʌ/, /uː/, /ʊ/, /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /aʊ/, /əʊ/, /eə/, /ɔɪ/, /ɪə/) embedded in monosyllabic words, selected to represent objects that would be familiar to the children, and informally judged to be imagable (Ellis and Beaton, 1993). In the training software words and vowels were grouped according to vowel clusters shown to be highly confusable for Arabic learners of English (Evans and Alshangiti, 2018):

- **High/front**: /iː/, /ɪ/, /e/;
- **Open**: /æ/, /ʌ/, /ɒ/;
- **Central/low-back**: /ɪə/, /eə/, /ɜː/; /ɑː/, /ɔː/;
- **Back**: /ʊ/, /uː/, /aʊ/, /əʊ/;
- **Diphthongs**: /eɪ/, /aɪ/, /ɔɪ/.

Words were arbitrarily assigned as ‘keywords’ and ‘example words’.

**Audio and Video Stimuli**

All audio and video stimuli were recorded in sound attenuated recording booths at University College London. The audio and video recordings of the keyword and example words were recorded simultaneously. Four native SSBE speakers (2 male, 2 female) recorded each word three times and the best recording (i.e., free of vocal artefacts) was selected for use in training. The words were presented to the speakers via a computer in a random order to avoid list intonation. The audio stimuli were recorded using 16-bit resolution at 44.1 kHz, bandpass filtered using PRAAT (Boersma & Weenink, 2016) between 60 Hz – 20 kHz with 10 Hz smoothing, downsampled to 22,050 Hz, and equalized for amplitude at 70 dB. The resulting audio was also used to replace the lower-quality audio in the video recordings: the replacement audio and video were manually aligned using Lightworks (https://lwks.com/) and the video was cropped for display in CALVin using FFMPEG (https://www.ffmpeg.org/).

The isolated vowels (audio-only) were recorded by one of the SSBE male speakers at the same time as the word list, and post-processed in the same way as the audio for the keyword and example words. In addition, all speakers recorded a short extract from *A Bear Called Paddington* (Bond, 1958). For the HV condition, sentences from each speakers’ recording were spliced together to form a single ‘multi-speaker’ extract used to familiarise participants with the speakers’ voices.

**Image Stimuli**

The images for the keywords, example words, and the mid-sagittal section animation of the isolated vowels, were created by the third author using Inkscape (Harrington and Engelen, 2004; images for the keywords and example words are available from https://github.com/mwibrow/CALVin-images).
Pre-test and Post-Test Stimuli

Recordings of English $hVd$-words, and $bVd$-words (see Appendix B and C) covering containing the 18 vowels used in the training materials were recorded by 4 SSBE speakers (two males, two females). None of these speakers had recorded the training materials, so the pre-test and post-test measured generalization to new stimuli and speakers. The speakers recorded each word three times, and the best recording (i.e., free of vocal artefacts, etc.) was selected.

Research Procedure

Training

Participants were randomly assigned to groups made up of four to five children for each session. This setting was particularly designed to give pronunciation feedback in classroom setting rather than restricting the training to laboratory settings. Participants in both training groups (HV vs. LV) completed five training sessions, a maximum of one session per day, with all training sessions were completed over two weeks. Participants in the HV training condition were trained with four speakers: one per session for the first four sessions and then a mixture of all four speakers in the final session. Participants in the LV training condition were trained using a single speaker for all training sessions.

All training sessions were facilitated by an instructor (the first author), a native Arabic speaker who is fluent in English. All sessions used ‘CALVin’, training software based on (Alshangiti, 2015) rewritten and adapted for use with children (source code available from https://github.com/mwibrow/CALVin) and was presented via a laptop controlled by the instructor.

Before training, participants were familiarised with the speaker(s) by listening to the Paddington Bear story (single speaker version for LV training; multi-speaker version for HV training) while looking at pictures of the story on slides. Then the instructor explained how opening the jaw, and moving the tongue and lips affect the way different vowels are produced. This part of the training aimed to enable participants to become aware of how their articulators move and how this changes the vowel they produce.

In each training session, participants sat around a table, facing the laptop, which was connected to a high-quality speaker and a microphone. The instructor selected the appropriate speaker, vowel group, and keyword, to ensure that no vowel group or keyword was repeated. Within each vowel group, the instructor selected a keyword and presented it to the participants (Figure one, top-left), followed by the isolated vowel for that keyword, explaining (in Arabic) how to produce the vowel using the vocal tract animation in the software (Figure one, top-right). Then, for each example word (Figure one, bottom left), participants watched video recordings of the speaker producing an example word (Figure one, bottom-right). Participants took turns to record their production of the keywords, isolated vowels, and example words, so they could compare their recordings to those of the native speakers as this "self-perception" (i.e., listening to one’s own production) has been argued to help in learning L2 sounds (Baker & Trofimovich, 2006).

These steps were repeated for the other vowels in the vowel group. Each session ended with a review of the vowels covered, led by the instructor, and lasted approximately 45 minutes. Each training session then proceeded in the same way. The training procedure was the same for all training groups, the only difference was the number of speakers, in the HV group (four speakers) and in the LV group (one speaker).
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Figure 1. Selected screenshots from CALVin with keywords, the animated vocal tract, example words and native-speaker videos.

Pre- and Post-Tests

Participants completed all pre-test and post-test tasks individually in a quiet room. Participants were familiarised with the tasks by completing a short practice session before the tests, and there was a short break between each task.

Category Discrimination Task

Category discrimination was measured using an oddity task. On each trial, participants heard 3 bVd-words where two words were the same and one was different. Participants were asked to judge which one was different, giving their response by clicking on a box labelled ‘A’, ‘B’ or ‘C’, where the first word was ‘A’, the second as ‘B’, and the third word as ‘C’. They received no feedback and were not able to replay the stimuli. There were 15 pairs of vowels e.g., /ɒ/–/ɔ/ each played six times, three times with /ɒ/, and three times with /ɔ/ as the odd stimulus, with the odd stimulus played first, second or third, giving a total of 90 trials. The vowel pairs were /e/-/ɪ/, /o/-/ʌ/, /ʊ/-/uː/, /ɒ/-/ɔ/, /ʌ/-/ɔ/, /ɑ/-/ɜː/, /ʌ/-/ə/, /ɜː/-/e/, /əʊ/-/aʊ/, /eɪ/-/e/, /eɪ/-/aɪ/, /aɪ/-/ɪ/, /æ/-/ʌ/, /iː/-/ɪ/, /ɪə/-/eə/, /ɔɪ/-/ɔː/.
Word Imitation Task.
Participants listened to recordings of 18 $hVd$-words (produced by one SSBE female speaker), and after each word they waited until they heard a tone, and then repeated the word out loud (the tone was added to avoid children relying on using the phonological loop (Baddeley et al., 1984).

To assess production accuracy, five monolingual native-SSBE speakers (22-46 years old, median 30 years old) were recruited from the University College London Psychology subject pool to carry out a listening task using recordings of the children’s $hVd$-word productions as stimuli. To avoid listener fatigue, 10% of the stimuli were played to all listeners and the remaining 90% were split evenly between the listeners. For each stimulus, listeners identified the word from a closed set, and then rate how ‘native-like’ the stimulus was on a Likert scale from one (poor) to seven (native-like). Each listener identified and rated 460 stimuli and was only able to hear each stimulus once.

Results
Independent samples t-tests on the pre-test category discrimination % correct and vowel intelligibility proportion correct scores, showed that all children, regardless of age and training condition performed similarly, confirming that there was no significant difference between the groups at pre-test, $p > .05$. All further analyses therefore investigate potential differences as a result of training conditions.

Perception task: Category Discrimination
As displayed in Figure two, the training groups performed differently from pre-test to post-test in category discrimination accuracy. To test for potential effects of training, a linear mixed effects model was fit with the score as an outcome variable, with fixed effects of test (pre vs post), group (HV vs LV) and their two-way interaction. The model was fit with a maximal random effects structure, which includes the random slope of the participant. The model indicated that the main effect of the test was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 9.122$, $p<.05$. The planned contrast showed that the performance was better at the post-test, $b= 0.045$, SE=0.0143, $z=2.161$, $p<.01$, indicating a change in the category discrimination accuracy after training. The effect of the training group was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 6.5$, $p<.05$. The model also showed that the interaction between the training group and the test is reaching significance, $\chi^2(1) = 3.60$, $p=.05$. The contrast between factors confirmed that the LV group performed slightly better at the post-test than the HV group, $b=-0.1998$, SE=0.0924, $z=2.161$, $p<.05$.

To investigate vowel improvement in percentage after training, confusion matrices were built for each group at the pre- and post-test (see tables one to four in Appendix D). As shown in the matrices, for the HV group, there were some improvements in vowels ranging between 3%-7%, but for the vowel /iː/ as in beat, there was an 11% improvement in accuracy after training. For the LV group, there was a noticeable (more than 10%) improvement for six vowels after training. There was a 15% improvement for /eɪ/ as in bared, 16% improvement for /æ/, as in bat, 14% improvement for /ɜː/ as in bert, 18% improvement for /əʊ/ as in boat, 11% improvement for /ɒ/ as in bot, and 12% improvement for /ɔɪ/ as in buoyed. These percentages confirmed that participants in the LV improved their vowel learning better than those in the HV group. To see if the difference in these six vowels (/æ/, /eɪ/, /ɜː/, /əʊ/, /ɒ/, /ɔɪ/) are significant, a linear mixed effect was built with
the vowel pairs that include these six vowels (/æ/-/ʌ/, /ɪə/-/eə/, /eə/-/ɜː/, /ɑ:/-/ɒ/, /ɑ:/-/ɜː/, /ɔɪ/-/aʊ/). The model was built with test, group and their interaction as fixed factors and random slope of vowel pair and participant as random factors. The effect of test was significant, $\chi^2 (1) = 8.67$, $p<.05$, at the post test, $b=0.0715$, SE=0.019, $t=3.58$, $p<.001$. There was no significant effect of the training group, but there was a significant interaction between test and group, the LV group performed slightly better at the post-test than the HV group, $b=-0.057$, SE=0.029, $t=-1.978$, $p<.05$.

![Boxplot](image)

*Figure 1.* Boxplot to show category discrimination accuracy percent correct at the pre-test (white boxes) and post-test (grey boxes) split by training group.

**Production: Word imitation task**

**Acoustic Analysis**

The acoustic measurements were made in PRAAT (Boersma & Weenink, 2016). The stimuli were located manually, and then the first formant (F1) and the second formant (F2) were extracted using hand corrected LPC analyses. Formant frequencies were measured from the midpoint of the vowel (as mentioned above). All F1 and F2 raw values were checked for any value 2 standard deviations outside the range, and these measurements were hand corrected, as necessary. All duration measurements were taken from the beginning of the F2 transitions to the end of the F2 transitions.

**Spectral Analysis**

To accommodate age related differences in vocal tract size between the children and SSBE speakers, each speaker’s formant data were normalised according to Lobanov (1971), using the equivalent formulation described in Flynn and Foulkes (2011), where the normalized formant values were calculated as the z-scores for each formant for each speaker.
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Figure three displays the average F1 and F2 vowel measurements produced by the participants at the pre and post-tests. The vowel plot shows some subtle changes from pre-test to post-test; /ɔ/ and /o/ shift closer to the SSBE reference vowels, the /u:/ vowel is more fronted after training especially for the LV group, and the central vowel /ɜ:/ appears to be more centralised at the post-test. A linear mixed model was fit with test (pre, post) and training group (LV, HV) as fixed factors. The random factors were crossed intercepts for participant and stimulus with a random slope for test. There were no significant differences in either F1 or F2, p>.05, confirming that there were no reliable changes in the F1 and F2 values from pre to post-test in either training group.

![Figure 2](image)

**Figure 2.** F1/F2 plot of monophthongs produced in hVd-words at pre-test (smaller, grey filled circles) and post-test (larger filled black circles). SSBE speakers used in training diamonds are included as reference points. Data from children in the HV condition is displayed in the right-hand panel, and data from children in the LV condition is displayed in the left-hand panel.

**Duration**

Figure four displays the duration of monophthongs at the pre and post-tests. As shown in the figure, participants produced longer vowels in the post-test. A linear mixed model showed significant effects of test $\chi^2(1) = 32.771$, p<.05, indicating that there was a change in the overall duration of the vowels from pre-test to post-test. There was also a significant effect of group, $\chi^2(1) = 4.185$, p<.05 and a significant interaction between test and group, $\chi^2(1) = 8.615$, p<.05.

Post-hoc analyses comparing the training effects from pre-test to post-test demonstrated that vowel duration was significantly longer at the post-test for the two training groups, p<.001, such that the duration range changed to better match native speakers after training. Participants in the HV group produced longer vowels at the post-test than those in the LV group, $b=16.69$, SE=6.007, $z=2.54$, p<.001. However, the difference between groups was small.

To investigate which vowels changed in duration after training, the vowels were divided into two groups: G1(i, e, æ, ʌ, ɒ, u) and G2 (æ, æ:, ɔ:, ɔ:, ʊ, u:), and were analysed separately in comparison to the vowel duration produced by SSBE speakers. For both vowel groups, a separate
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A linear mixed model was fit with the test, group, and their interactions as fixed factors, and random intercept of vowel and participant as random factors.

For the G1(i, e, a, o, u), The effect of the test was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 20.83$, $p<.05$, but the effect of the group was not. However, the interaction between test and group was significant, $\chi^2(1) = 12.4$, $p<.001$, in which participants in the HV group produced longer vowels at the post test, $b=29.939$, $SE=8.502$, $t=3.52$, $p<.00$. This may indicate that the variability aspect helped learners to change their vowel duration to better match that of the native speakers.

For the G2(æ, ã, ɜ, i, ɔ, u), There was a significant effect of test, $\chi^2(1) = 145.6$, $p<.001$, at the post test, $b= 55.408$, $SE=7.18$, $t=7.8$, $p<.001$. There was no significant effect of the training group or the interaction between test and group, which indicates that for this vowel group, learners changed their vowel duration after training regardless of their training group.

![Boxplot to show the duration of monophthongs at the pre-test (grey boxes) and post-test (black boxes) for children in the LV and HV training groups. SSBE speakers are included for reference.](image)

**Figure 3.** Boxplot to show the duration of monophthongs at the pre-test (grey boxes) and post-test (black boxes) for children in the LV and HV training groups. SSBE speakers are included for reference.

**Vowel Intelligibility and Goodness Ratings**

![Boxplot to show intelligibility of Arabic children’s vowel production accuracy at the pre- white boxes and post-test black boxes.](image)

**Figure 4.** Boxplot to show intelligibility of Arabic children’s vowel production accuracy at the pre- white boxes and post-test black boxes.
Due to a large number of stimuli, listeners identified and rated a common 10% of the recordings. To test the level of inter-rater-agreement (i.e., whether the raters used the scale in the same or similar way), a Pearson’s correlation was calculated between the 5 raters to see if they were using the scale in the same way. There was no correlation between the raters scores, r=.09, p>.05, indicating a poor consistency in ratings amongst the raters. Therefore, for the following models, the ‘rater’ was added as a random factor.

Figure five displays vowel intelligibility accuracy at the pre-test and post-test for both training groups. Both groups performed similarly but there appears to be a subtle advantage for LV group in the post-test. A linear mixed model fit by maximum likelihood was built for the identification data based on the correct/incorrect binomial responses, with Test and Group and their interactions as fixed factors and the random intercept of participants and vowel as random factors. The model indicated that there was a significant effect of test $\chi^2 (1) = 10.97$, p<.05, which indicates that participants improved their vowel production from pre-test to post-test. The planned contrasts indicated that participants were more intelligible at the post-test, b= 0.447, SE=0.032, z=3.55, p<.05. The model also showed a significant effect of the training group, $\chi^2 (1) = 7.65$, p<.05, and the orthogonal contrast showed that LV group were slightly more intelligible than the HV group, b= 0.374, SE=0.141, z=2.645, p<.05. However, there was no significant interaction between test and group, p>.05. This model showed an overall accuracy for all the vowels.

To investigate which vowels have improved after training, confusion matrices were created (Appendix D) to show the percent correct of each word. As these matrices show, there was a difference in vowel improvements after training. For the HV group, there were some improvements for most of the vowels averaging from 4%-7% improvements, but some vowels had more than 10% improvements. There was 12% improvement for the vowel /æt/ as in *hayed*, 25% improvement for /ɜː:/ as in *heard*, 16% for /əʊ/ as in *hoed*, and 26% improvement for /ʊ/ as in *hood*. For the LV group, there was a general improvement in most of the vowels ranging from 4% to 10% improvement, but for some vowels the improvement was more than 10%. There was a 22% improvement for /əʊ/, as in *haired*, 20% improvement for /æt/, as in *hayed*, 25% improvement for /ɪ:/ as in *heed*, 15% improvement for /ɔː:/ as in *hoard*, and 15% improvement for /əʊ/, as in *hoed*, 14% for /ʌ/, as in *hod*, 13% for /ɑː/, as in *hur*, and 20% improvement for /uː/, as in *who'd*. Given that participants in both groups improved their vowel production for these 8 vowels (/iː/, /ɜː/, /ɔː/, /ʌ/, /ʊ/, /əʊ/, /eə/), a mixed-effect model was built for the accuracy of this vowel group with test, group and their interaction as fixed factors and random intercept of vowel and participant as random factors. There was a significant effect of group, $\chi^2 (1) = 7.07$, p<.05, where the LV group performance was significantly different from that of the HV group, b=0.085, SE=0.033, t=2.52, p<.05. There was also a significant effect of test, $\chi^2 (2) = 15.6$, p<.05, at the post test, b= -0.106, SE=0.034, t=-3.12, p<.05, but there was no significant interaction between group and test.
Goodness Ratings

Figure 5. Boxplots of accent ratings for the SSBE listeners. The stimuli were the h-V-d words at the pre-test (light grey) and post-test (black) produced by Arabic children.

Figure six shows the vowel rating produced by Arabic children, the figure shows that there is a slight difference between pre-test and post-test, but no big difference between training groups. A linear mixed effects model was built for the rating scores. The best-fitting model indicated that there was a significant effect of the test, $\chi^2(1) = 9.522, p < .05$, which suggests a difference in performance between the pre-test and the post-test. The contrast showed that the rating at the post-test was slightly higher, $b=0.308$, SE=0.095, $p<.05$. There was no significant effect of group, and there was no significant interaction between group and test, which indicates that participants improved their accent after training regardless of their training group.

In short, the results showed that articulatory effected vowel learning. For the category discrimination and vowel intelligibility, there was an advantage for the LV condition, which indicates that the LV was possibly more beneficial for children who learning a second language. The results from the acoustic analysis showed a small change of the formant values after training, however, participants’ vowel duration seemed to improve to get closer to the vowel duration values produced by SSBE speakers. This might indicate that children used their L1 cue, duration, to acquire L2 vowels.

Discussion

The current study investigated the effect of speaker variability in production training on SSBE vowel learning. Arabic children were trained to produce 18 SSBE vowels by receiving articulatory instructions using a computer assisted vowel learning interface (CALVin). The training was either with multiple HV, or a single talker, LV. Their production was assessed by an
objective (acoustic) and a subjective measure (native speakers’ ratings), while their perception was measured by a category discrimination task.

To answer the first research question of whether articulatory instructions helped in vowel learning, the training helped the participants to improve some vowels. Inspection of the acoustic data showed that participants made small changes to certain monophthongs, /ɜː, ɑː, ʊ/ and the closing diphthongs /eə, ɪə/ in the F2 dimension, in that these vowels were produced with more native-like realizations. Although this change was not significant overall, it might indicate that children had started to acquire vowel targets that do not exist in their L1. This is possible because none of these vowels exist in Arabic, they found these easier to acquire than those where there is a competing, nearby Arabic vowel, such as /e/. This is in line with the predictions of theories of L2 learning such as the SLM (Flege, 1995) which proposes that the greater the distance between the L2 and L1 categories is, the more likely it is that the phonetic differences between the sounds will be detected, and a new phonetic category will eventually be established.

Why was the amount of improvement so small, particularly in terms of changes in acoustic measurements? One possibility is that the task we used to measure production, an imitation task, over-estimated performance at the pre-test. Although we designed our imitation task so that children could not rely on using the phonological loop when repeating the words, it is possible that they were still able to use what they heard to support their own production. However, Cleland, Scobie, Nakai & Wrench (2015) used a similar imitation and subsequent identification task to assess the production of unfamiliar vowel contrasts at the pre-tests; children were not able to accurately imitate at the pre-test only 5% of sounds identified correctly, but production improved to 32% accuracy at the post-test. Another possibility is that the number of training sessions limited improvement. Participants only completed 5 training sessions, and although previous studies have found improvement both in intelligibility with this number of sessions in children (Evans & Martin-Alvarez, 2016), it is possible that children, in the current study, of a similar age but with less English experience may require more sessions in order to show any greater improvement. The number of vowels trained may also have affected learning. Previous studies have shown that for adults, training with a full set of vowels is more effective than learning with a subset (Nishi & Kewley-Port, 2007). Consequently, we decided to train children with the full vowel inventory, rather than focusing on a smaller number of challenging contrasts. However, some studies that have trained with a small number of contrasts (e.g., Cleland et al., 2015; Evans & Martin-Alvarez, 2016) have shown much larger improvements and so it is possible that if we had trained children on a subset of vowels, children would have shown greater improvement. Another reason for the small changes in vowel production might have to do with the richness of input. Although children were trained with all 18 vowels, the number of different stimuli was relatively large: 54 words, alongside AV recordings produced by between one and four SSBE speakers depending on training condition. It may be that, coupled with the relatively small number of training sessions, meant that children did not receive enough training to show a significant change in vowel formant values.

Although the acoustic analysis of vowel production showed no significant change, children were more intelligible after training. This shows that despite the advantage of using objective measures for production accuracy (Delvaux, Huet, Piccaluga & Harmegnies, 2013), providing information about native speakers’ perception of vowel quality is also important. Especially since the objective measures showed a slight change and the subjective measures confirmed that change to be significant. The findings for production training are in line with previous studies that showed that children can benefit from production training (cf. Cleland et al., 2015; Taimi et al., 2014).
Though these studies have used different measures (using ultrasound as a visual feedback and listen and repeat method), and therefore any differences in results might have to do with the methods used to assess participants’ production.

The second research question was whether speaker variability affects vowel learning. Our results indicated an advantage of the LV group (cf. Evans & Martin-Alvarez, 2016), while both HV and LV groups were able to generalize their learning to the imitation of unfamiliar speakers and words, participants in the LV were more intelligible. This is in contrast to production training studies with adults where only HV training has been shown to generalize to the imitation of a new speaker (Kartushina & Martin, 2019). A possible explanation for LV advantage is that learners might find it easier to remember how a particular speaker produces a given sound and can use this as the basis for their own production. This might be particularly true for children, who find it harder than adults to adapt to variations within their own language, due to an increased processing cost (Bent & Atagi, 2015, 2017). Adapting to multiple speakers, even those with a similar accent, may therefore introduce an added processing cost which means that children have fewer cognitive resources for learning a new articulatory target (cf. Antoniou & Wong, 2015). This may have been still harder for our children who were tested in a non-immersion setting, where they do not regularly hear native English speakers.

That being said, the HV training showed some advantage on the phonetic cue level, where children in the HV group improved their vowel duration to better match that of the SSBE speakers more than the LV group. This might indicate that HV training helps children change some cues that are salient for discriminating L2 phonemes, as has been shown with adults (e.g., Iverson et al., 2005). Therefore, we can argue that adaptation to different speakers could have an initial processing cost, but with more training sessions, children may benefit further from exposure to multiple speakers. For practical reasons, it was only possible to conduct a relatively small number of training sessions. One possibility is that if children completed more training sessions, all children would have improved more, but those in the HV training condition might have improved in their production as much as, or perhaps more than those in the LV condition.

Unlike our hypothesis, Production Training appeared to improve vowel perception: both HV and LV groups improved in their performance on a category discrimination task. Participants in the LV group improved their perception in a number of vowels (/ɜː/, /ɒ/, /ɑ/, /æ/, /ɔɪ/) more than those in the HV group (tables one to four, in Appendix D). These vowels improved more than the rest of vowels, perhaps because they are not assimilated to any L1 vowel category. Given that this group of vowels do not exist in participants’ L1 vowel inventory, which is according to the perceptual assimilation model leads to better phonemic perception (Best, 1995). Participants in the LV group might have used the articulatory information they received during training to learn to perceive this group of vowels accurately.

A previous study with adults using a similar training paradigm (Alshangiti, 2015) found that production training led to improvements in production but not in perception (cf. Hattori, 2010; Baese-Berk, 2019). Based on these studies, one might hypothesize that training is domain-specific and therefore any improvements in production as a result of training, would not lead to improved performance on a category discrimination task. However, in the current study, all children improved in their performance on this task after training. Additionally, those in the LV group appeared to improve more than those in the HV group. However, while improvement was very small for both groups: 5.3% for the LV and 0.8% for the HV group, this result offers a modest
suggest about a link between the two speech domains, and that production training may improve perception.

Our results from the perception task are in line with results reported by (Kartushina et al., 2015) who trained adult French speakers with no experience of Danish, in their production of two Danish vowel contrasts, and found a subtle change in their perception. Their participants also received five training sessions of similar duration to ours. However, because they were trained on a smaller number of contrasts, this meant that they received approximately one hour of training per vowel. Even so, adults only showed a very small amount of improvement in perception, 4.56%, consistent with other training studies (e.g., Akahane-Yamada et al., 1998; Bradlow et al., 1999) and similar to what we find with a much smaller amount of training per vowel. Kartushina et al. (2015) argue that their participants may have shown reduced training benefits in perception because their category discrimination task contrasted speakers from male and female voices, but in training participants had only been exposed to vowels produced by a speaker of their own gender. They argue that to have been able to succeed at the discrimination task, participants needed to have established abstract, speaker-independent representations for the new vowel contrasts, and that the single-speaker training is not sufficient for learners to be able to do this. Our results suggest that at least for children this may not be the case; LV training may instead mean that they have the cognitive resources needed to start to establish new representations or learn to map the incoming signal to their existing underlying representations (cf. Iverson & Evans, 2009).

Conclusion

This study investigated the effect of speaker variability in training Arab children on producing SSBE vowels. The current work shows that children can benefit from production training. After training, children improved in their production and perception of SSBE vowels, suggesting a modest link between the two speech domains. However, these improvements were small, probably due to the number of vowels covered and the limited number of training sessions. Likewise, it is unclear whether children might benefit from variability in training. Children in the LV condition improved more in terms of intelligibility, and category discrimination, while children in the HV showed some subtle cue shifting after training. While the current study presents some benefits or production training with children using LV training, further research could investigate the benefit of training material variability with fewer vowel contrasts in different learning environments (e.g., contrasting immersion vs. non-immersion settings) and what the implications of this are for L2 learning.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Word list

ball, bears, bees, bike, book, boys, cake, card, cat, clock, coat, coin, cot, cow, cup, cut, food, foot, gate, gears, hat, house, kite, knife, knot, leg, lid, loaf, mat, men, mouse, nurse, nuts, park, paws, pears, piers, pin, ring, road, room, seed, shark, shirt, skirt, spade, squares, suit, sword, tears, teeth, ten, toys, wood.

Appendix B

hVd-words

heed, hid, head, heard, had, hard, hod, hoard, who’d, hood, hud, hayed, hide, how’d, hoed, haired, hoyed, hear.

Appendix C

bVd-words

The bVd-words include some additional words in /bVt/ and /pVt/ contexts as some vowels do not form real words in the /bVd/ context: beat, bit, bet, bait, bite, bart, bat, bot, but, bird, bought, bout, boat, bared, beard, buoyed, bet, booed, poot, put, port, port, pout, beard.

Appendix D

Table 1. A confusion matrix for the HV group at the pre-test showing the percent correct of the category discrimination task, the matrix shows the expected and the actual response.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected/Actual response</th>
<th>bait</th>
<th>bared</th>
<th>bart</th>
<th>bat</th>
<th>beard</th>
<th>beat</th>
<th>bert</th>
<th>bet</th>
<th>bird</th>
<th>bite</th>
<th>board</th>
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<th>bot</th>
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<th>buoyed</th>
<th>but</th>
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<tr>
<td>bart</td>
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### Table 3. A confusion matrix for the LV group at the pre-test showing the percent correct of the category discrimination task, the matrix shows the expected and the actual response.

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### Table 4. A confusion matrix for the LV group at the post-test showing the percent correct of the category discrimination task, the matrix shows the expected and the actual response.

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Investigating the Effects of Speaker Variability on Arabic children’s Acquisition

Alshangiti, Evans & Wibrow
Challenges and Strategies Taken by English Language Educators in Tertiary Institutions during Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning (ERTL)

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Abstract
The strike of COVID-19 pandemic has affected various sectors tremendously, including the education sector around the globe. This situation has forced the closure of most educational institutions, which include higher learning institutions. Since the Movement Control Order announcement, most teaching and learning processes in higher learning institutions were transferred online. The shift to online learning brings different challenges for teachers in higher learning institutions, including English teachers, regarding technological skills and assessment. In this study, the researchers adopted a multiple case study to explore the strategies of 34 English teachers from nine universities in Malaysia, Indonesia and Maldives to overcome the challenges during Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning. The data was collected through focused group interview sessions, individual open-ended responses via Google Forms and Whatsapp discussion threads. The recorded sessions were transcribed verbatim and analysed using NVIVO software to identify the common categories and themes. The findings showed that the teachers of English overcome problems concerning their technological skills by seeking help from their colleagues, attending courses, training and webinars and choosing suitable platforms for online learning, also conducting better online assessments. The faculty could also provide more webinars, online training, and courses to help teachers to perform better during online learning. This study is believed to shed some light on aspects that need to be considered while planning and executing a meaningful ESL online teaching and learning experience in higher learning institutions, particularly in developing countries.

Keywords: challenges, English language teachers, interventions, remote online teaching and learning, strategies, tertiary institutions

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol14no1.2
Introduction

The pandemic caused by the Covid-19 virus has impacted several industries worldwide and temporarily shut down many educational sectors, including higher institutions. Higher education institutions face significant challenges in addressing the impact of COVID-19 on teaching, learning, research, student mobility, campus culture, and more (Loganathan et al., 2020). As a result, most higher instruction frameworks work through E-learning (Azzi-Huck & Shmis, 2020, as cited in Shahzad et al., 2021). This includes the National University of Malaysia (UKM), where online teaching and learning were conducted in Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning (ERTL), as well as a temporary solution to allow students to continue their studies. ERTL represents an essential and stimulating moment for educators worldwide (Filipa, Marta, António & Luisa, 2021). This includes using comprehensive distance learning solutions for teaching or education, especially in teaching the English Language.

Considering this, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced universities to cancel in-person classes and send students back home. In Malaysia, implementing the Movement Control Order (MCO) in mid-March 2020 enabled a complete transition to online learning with unprecedented challenges. This forced colleges to offer courses through online portals and started embracing technologies such as Zoom, Microsoft platforms, Webex Blackboard, and digital video conferencing platforms such as Google Classroom (Larry, 2020).

Hence, due to the MCO, all the lessons and evaluations were carried out online for English teachers at the university level. This has not been the case since 2020. Due to the spread of COVID-19, universities have to close down to prevent further infections. A lockdown has been implemented where people are no longer permitted to freely go to public places to curb the contagious spread of the virus (Ferguson et al., 2020). As a result, teachers and students have had to quickly alter their teaching methods, regardless of whether they were experienced in and prepared for online education (Wu, 2021). It has been asserted that the only way to ensure education continuity during ERTL is through online learning (Daniel, 2020).

Based on the above-mentioned discussion, it could be seen that there is a gap in language teachers’ readiness towards online learning mode. This, in turn, affected their teaching performance in the sense that the educators struggled to teach remotely due to the shift from face-to-face interaction to virtual learning (Macintyre, Gregersen, & Mercer, 2020). Thus far, there are limitations in elaborating on teaching English during ERTL as there are limited studies conducted in the Malaysian context which limits the writings to this study. The studies conducted were generally describing online learning with no specifications for the English Language. Adding to the point, there were limited studies conducted on the teaching of the English Language during ERTL, specifically in the Malaysian context of the tertiary level of education. Hence, this study will link the context of online learning during ERTL specifically to the strategies taken by English language teachers during ERTL. It needs a concerted effort to help and empower educators in planning and handling virtual learning (World Economic Forum, 2020). Therefore, this study aims to explore the strategies to overcome these challenges faced by the English teachers serving nine universities from three different countries in their online teaching and learning during the ERTL period. It is also believed that this study could shed some light on aspects that need to be considered while planning and executing a meaningful ESL online teaching and learning experience in higher learning institutions, particularly in developing countries. Accordingly, this study was designed to answer the following research question:
This paper will briefly discuss past related studies on the challenges and strategies taken by educators in tertiary institutions, methods used in this particular study, the study findings, the discussion on the results and finally, the conclusion.

Literature Review

**Challenges faced by educators in Tertiary Institutions**

Online teaching and learning are the most suitable approach for educational institutions since students are mandated to study at home due to the pandemic (Mohmmed et al., 2020). This situation has led to a lot of challenges faced by educators and students in developing countries where online learning is not a common practice (Berita Harian, 2020). Despite the government's rapid outreach campaigns, there are still some limitations in the online teaching and learning environment, such as broadband networking, regulatory systems support, educator trends, and obtaining materials online (Ugnich, Meskhi & Ponomareva, 2019; Sadeghi, 2019).

Virtual teaching and learning could not be effectively delivered if the teachers were not mentally and physically prepared to assess whether online education supports and facilitates teaching English during ERTL. Challenges facing English teachers include familiarising themselves with the appropriate equipment and infrastructure, such as computers, smartphones, and Internet connectivity, as well as good technical skills and knowledge, the ability to maximise the benefits of the environment, the ability to have educators available when needed, and the ability to receive feedback and respond quickly from students. Lack of computer, Internet, mobile network access, and ICT-trained teachers in developing countries are observed (O'Hagan, 2020). The uneven internet infrastructure between East and West Malaysia creates gaps in educators' access to and performance in online teaching. In this context, from the perspective of English teaching by teachers who teach in rural areas, the challenge in conducting online teaching is greater compared to English teachers who teach in urban areas.

How educators manage online learning through mentoring and distance learning especially in teaching the English Language is crucial. Some English teachers have never been involved in online teaching and learning (Merler, Pastore, Mu, Rossi & Sun, 2020). Hence, the online teaching and learning environment has resulted in some complications based on the teachers’ feedback. English teachers are not prepared for the sudden shift to online-only teaching and learning, but they are trying to find strategies to adapt and meet the new challenges.

**Measures taken by educators in Tertiary Institutions**

In overcoming the challenges faced during ERTL, teachers in higher learning institutions including the teachers of English, took different measures to ensure that the online teaching and learning process continued. In overcoming the challenges they faced concerning their technological skills, studies showed that English teachers seek help from their colleagues with better technological skills. Winter, Costello, O’Brien and Hickey (2021), in their research, explained that experienced colleagues could be used as role models. Working with and observing them utilising different technologies would positively affect other teachers’ attitudes, beliefs and confidence in using technology during online learning. This can also be explained by one of the sources of self-efficacy by Bandura (1998), namely vicarious experience. As teachers observe their
colleagues’ successes and failures, these people will become role models for them to imitate (Bandura, 1998). Teachers who see their colleagues who have successfully carried out an online class may feel they can accomplish the same and positively increase their self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is defined as one’s judgement on their ability to organise and perform necessary actions to achieve the required performance (Bandura, 1977). Thus, teacher self-efficacy refers to how well a teacher can affect and influence students’ success (Corry & Stella, 2018). According to Hampton et al. (2020) and Horvitz, Beach, Anderson and Xia (2015), teachers with a high level of self-efficacy are resilient as they work with extraordinary effort and find ways to overcome challenges. Apart from asking for help from others, teachers also upgraded their technological skills and knowledge by attending online training, courses or webinars to acquire better technological skills. Lee and Bailey (2020) stressed that educators should consistently participate in professional development and training courses to increase their knowledge and skills using digital learning resources such as e-books and e-notes. Inadequate knowledge and skills of ICT on behalf of the educators would put the available resources to waste. At University Teknologi Mara (UITM) in Malaysia, English educators were provided with training through a series of courses to assist the educators in conducting their online teaching instructions successfully during ERTL (Othman, Kadar, Umar & Ahmad (2020). By acquiring effectual teaching practices and utilising various pedagogical tools and technologies such as chat, games, blogs, videos, quizzes and forums, teachers can gauge students’ interest and encourage them to learn faster (Carrillo & Flores, 2020).

Furthermore, considering students’ current learning situations, teachers also had to find suitable online and social learning platforms. In their study, Gao and Zhang (2020) mentioned that an educator gathered students’ responses about their current learning situation to determine students’ preferable online learning platforms and appropriate assessments during ERTL. This would eventually promote students’ participation in online learning. In their study, Siah, Huang, Poon and Koh (2022) discovered that teachers increased students’ participation and engagement during online learning by offering different communication and learning platforms.

Additionally, the teachers also needed to address challenges concerning conducting assessments during ERTL. Although Utting and Legeard (2020) disclosed that online assessment reduces operational time and makes the marking process easier since this can be done automatically using embedded tools, teachers still face some challenges due to internet connectivity. According to Nasri, Husnin, Mahmud and Halim (2020), another way of accommodating the needs of teachers and students with inadequate internet coverage and no proper devices is to conduct their lessons via WhatsApp and Telegram. The students could also watch the lesson recording, which is sent to them via WhatsApp or Telegram. They could also send their assignments via the same social media. This is consistent with the study conducted by Aroonsrimarakot, Laiphrakpam, Chathiphot, Saengsai and Prasri (2022), where they found out that students preferred recorded videos and audio to be uploaded and be available online so that they could watch them repeatedly as they need. This portrays that proper assignments, planned activities and tests can assist teachers in assessing their students and can also help students grow and improve (Das, 2022). Additionally, it is also indispensable for teachers to practice an interactive teaching approach (Das, 2022) as online presentations and the combination of various assessment methods were preferred by the students since some of them were struggling with problems especially in regards to internet connection (Guangul, Suhail, Khalit & Khidhir, 2020).
Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach in which a multiple case study was conducted. This study involved nine public universities in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Maldives. A multiple case study was chosen as the researcher believes that this issue of this study is a contemporary phenomenon and needs further in-depth investigation within its real-life context (Creswell, 2014). Due to the pandemic, there was a restriction movement order globally. Hence, educators need to carry out their lessons online. Thus, they faced many challenges throughout the ERTL. They also employed many strategies or treatments to conduct online lessons more effectively. Hence, this study was carried out to explore the challenges faced and the interventions or strategies taken by the English teachers of these universities in teaching English courses during ERTL.

Participants

Due to the pandemic, there was a restriction movement order globally. Therefore, the researchers need to carry out this study via online interviews. Zoom was selected as the online platform as the researchers’ university paid for the subscription fees and it has recording features. The semi-structured interviews were conducted once or twice for each university. Besides the interview, the researchers used a Whatsapp discussion thread and an open-ended questionnaire which was administered through Google Form for data triangulation. Abbreviations were used for Focus group interviews (FGI), and Online Responses (OER). The universities were chosen as the dean or the director of the university volunteered to participate in this study. Indonesia, Malaysia and Maldives were chosen because English is considered a second or foreign language in these countries. As these countries are also developing countries, many citizens face almost similar challenges particularly financial constraints which resulted in the insufficient number of devices to learn and teach online during ERTL, financial constraints in purchasing mobile data and internet accessibility, particularly in suburban and rural areas.

The participants were chosen via purposive sampling to ensure that rich data from selected participants could be obtained. They were chosen as they fulfilled characteristics that the researcher had determined and were in accordance with this study’s research objectives, a) English teachers serving at a public university and conducted online learning during the time; b) their students are English as a Second language/ English as a Foreign Language learners, and c) willing to be interviewed. In total, 34 teachers of English from nine different universities in three countries volunteered to participate in this study. Pseudonyms (P1-P34) were given to all the participants to replace participants’ names for privacy and confidentiality.

Research Procedures

The institution authorities were contacted via email to obtain their permission to conduct this study. The authorities of those institutions permitted us to contact the English teachers. The teachers who volunteered in this study were briefed about the study’s objectives. The participants have given their consent to participate in this study and they have signed the consent letter. They could withdraw from the study at any time they wished. They agreed to be interviewed, participated in Whatsapp discussions and responded to the open-ended questionnaire via Google Forms. Each focus group interview took approximately 120 minutes. There was one Whatsapp group for each university. The participants posted some pictures of the workshop posters, relevant documents and answered questions that were not asked during the interviews in the Whatsapp groups.
First, the researchers designed the semi-structured interview questions. The interview questions were based on the research questions. Dodds and Hess (2021) mentioned that there is not much difference between online and face-to-face interviews in qualitative research as long as the ethical procedures are fulfilled. The interview questions were validated by three experts. These experts possess a Ph.D. in TESL/TESOL and have more than 10 years of working experience in teaching English at tertiary institutions. The interview questions were amended based on the experts’ comments. Then, letters were sent to all participating universities to obtain the gatekeeper’s permission to conduct the research. The participants from each university were added to a Whatsapp group of that particular institution created by the researchers. Any necessary information regarding the research was sent to the Whatsapp groups. All participants were given a consent letter to seek their permission to be interviewed. Only two researchers took part in this interview session to ensure that the participants did not feel pressured by the presence of many researchers. The interview sessions were recorded and later transcribed. The participants were given the transcriptions for them for member checking to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the data collected. The transcription was written the same words as were used originally or verbatim. In other words, the transcriptions consist of grammatical errors as there are no changes are made to the transcriptions. Two weeks after the semi-structured interview sessions were conducted, each participant was asked to answer the open-ended questions through Google Forms.

Three research instruments were employed in this study for triangulation purposes in order to ascertain data reliability.

**Data Analysis for Qualitative Data**

The process started by importing the data from all three research instruments into Nvivo 12. Multiple data sources are vital for triangulation (Yin, 2017). Nvivo 12 is a tool to analyze a rich and large amount of data (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). The data from the research instruments were analyzed using six steps of thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006). NVIVO 12 was used to find the codes and categories before conducting a thematic analysis. The researchers read the transcripts a few times to familiarize themselves with the data. Subsequently, the data were explored to find the keywords, and they were coded through a query in which all the keywords of the data were displayed. Thematic analysis was carried out to identify the common themes. The themes were later reviewed and defined. Next, the themes were named to produce a written report. The coding and themes were checked by the experts. Three experts checked the coding of the data. Cohen Kappa values above 0.8 were obtained.

**Results**

**Overcoming the Challenges Concerning their Technological Skills**

In overcoming the challenges concerning their technological skills, the participants took a few measures:

a. Seeking help from colleagues who are better in technological skills
b. Upgrade their knowledge by watching YouTube and Tik-Tok
c. Upgrade their knowledge by attending online courses, webinars, training and courses
d. Finding suitable online learning/social media platforms

a. Seeking help from colleagues who are better in technological skills
During the first few weeks of ERTL, many teachers were not familiar with online teaching, especially the online platforms. Thus, they needed someone to teach them before they could practice the skills on their own. Most of the participants sought help from their colleagues and form small groups. The department also conducted a mentor-mentee program whereby the tech-savvy lecturers would guide their colleagues who need guidance. Their sought help from their colleagues especially in teaching them about the features offered by the online platforms. They needed this knowledge in order for them to use and select the appropriate platform for their own learners. They learned how to handle assignments, post notes, tick students’ attendance and log in. They also discussed with their friends their ways of using technology. They stated that they would remember what they have learned and practice them.

“We tend to have talking circles where those who are good at it like Bella, okay..(laugh) will teach us, in a very small group. Okay one by one how to handle assignments, how to post notes, how to..aa..aa tick students’ attendance” (P3, FGI)

“Its just that sometimes those little things I would ask Bella or (laughs). Those are the little things that.. you know like.. ok Bella, could not log in. How? Those little things.”(P1, FGI)

“...and then I would also umm discuss with my friends like Puan Hazlina and also Puan Farhanah. In terms of you know their own ways of using certain technology.” (P7, FGI)

b. Watching videos on YouTube and TikTok

The participants also watched many videos on YouTube and TikTok to learn more about the new technology in teaching, designing games, and how teachers in other countries deliver their lessons using technology. P1 stated that TikTok is very resourceful and helpful. By watching videos on TikTok, the participant can learn new hacks for teaching and learning for students and teachers. The participant also learned how students plagiarised their assignments based on the students’ acts in the videos.

“I would look on YouTube especially on how you know teachers umm in other countries deliver their lessons using technologies and I learn a lot from them.” (P7, FGI)

“But I also uhh.. I think TikTok nowadays is very resourceful. Yes. Because when you have TikTok, you can see the students act. You know? Those act that students can do is very useful. Because I will know the students what they do in terms of assignments. If they plagiarize things and then you know they just copied things. So, TikTok is very useful.” (P1, FGI)

“Watching TikTok videos for new hacks of learning and teaching for students and teachers.”(P1, OER)

c. Attending webinars, online tutorials, courses, training and workshops

The participants also attended webinars, online courses, online tutorials, training and workshops which were mostly provided and managed by the university. They stated that it was because they wanted to improve their capabilities to handle online learning and also their technology related skills.
“Sometimes I would attend webinar. By, usually UiTM lecturers would share their skills. Okay? For those who have skills and knowledge in terms of online games, and then they will share it and make it a webinar for us. I will usually attend those kinds webinar to improve my capabilities to handle online learning.” (P3, FGI)

“Firstly, we do have seminars when we were in the PKPB umm you know PKPB timeline here. A few months ago, we had some seminars on how to use Microsoft Teams, ... Umm these seminars were managed by the faculty. So, the faculty provided some seminars for us to join in order to improve our umm technological related skills.” (P17, FGI)

“I also attended online courses like MOOC and Coursera to gain relevant knowledge” (P1, OER)

![Figure 1. Poster on a webinar conducted by one of the tertiary institutions (derived from Whatsapp thread of discussion)](image)

The posters of the webinars below were shared by the participants through the Whatsapp application. These were some of the webinars they had attended in improving their technological skills especially in operating online learning platforms such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), UFUTURE platform, Google applications (Google Classroom and Google Meet) and Microsoft applications (Microsoft Teams and OneDrive). Some of these webinars were organized by their universities. They also attended public online courses like MOOC and Coursera.

d. Finding suitable online learning/social media platforms
One of the measures taken by the participants to overcome the problems they encountered during online learning was also trying to find suitable online learning platforms. They distributed questionnaires and conducted surveys with the students. They also shared the platforms used by them and the students for synchronous and asynchronous sessions.

The participants provide their students with a set of questionnaires asking for the online learning platforms and social media platforms that the students prefer. It was carried out so that they could understand their students better. P2 gave a few options to the students by asking them what their preferences are and coming out with the best plan to help the students while P3 stated that she conducted her classes using the platforms that the students chose. P15 added in the open-ended responses that she chose platforms that are available and accessible for the students. This statement is derived from the following responses:

“I love first class itself... I provide them with a questionnaire... In my questionnaire also I asked about their prefer..aa..platform..their, platform that they prefer to use, whether Google Meeting, Zoom or Microsoft Teams. I’ll ask them and most of them answered Google of course. And then I also asked about the social media platforms that they prefer. Okay, I prepared...I prepare all those questionnaires okay, for me to understand or to know my students better... Then, based on the responses, then I do... did a bit” (P15, OER)

If the students were still unable to do presentations due to problems with the internet and platform, the teachers would allow them to pre-record, but that was going to be the last resort. The student could watch the teaching recording using the recording and send their presentations via Whatsapp and Telegram

“If the students have problems with their internet and platform, I will use Whatsapp and Telegram to send my teaching recording. I also asked them to prerecord and upload their presentations on YouTube and share their link with me ” (P30).

Figure 2. Students’ results from the questionnaire (derived from Whatsapp thread of discussion)
Overcoming the Challenges Concerning Students’ Assessments

The participants also stated that they were having difficulties marking all the assessments online. Online marking was time-consuming and even made their hands sore as they were using the mouse to mark. A participant had to buy two tablets and another participant had to print out the hard copy of the assessment as she believed the marking process was smoother offline than online. Giving formative questions using online games such as Quizizz and Kahoot also enabled them to reduce their workload and the students could get prompt responses after attempting the questions. This could enhance the students’ comprehension of the given topic and improve their retention power.

“My arm became sore you know in terms of using the mouse to like umm mark and grade your student’s assessments. So, ahh last semester and including this semester, I bought two, I bought two joint tablets.” (P7, FGI)

“Umm you know when we have to mark online kay that would be the as for... for myself a bit difficult kay because I don’t really fancy online marking kay. Umm another one is that, it will take some time ay and ahh what you know like for most of the lectures we have to teach more than you know four classes, let’s say five classes and it will take some times okay to finish marking all the assessment. you have to print it out to make it your hardcopy but then for the marking that it will become smooth compared to the online.” Alright and then when we talk about marking- online marking and online games like Quizizz and Wordwall… reduce my workload and students get prompt responses after attempting the questions. They enjoyed and improve their understanding too (P18, FGI)

Based on the analysis, in overcoming the challenges concerning their technological skills, the participants in this study took a few measures such as seeking help from colleagues who are better in technological skills, upgrade their knowledge by watching videos and attending courses, training and webinars, choosing suitable platforms for online learning/social media platforms. In addition, in overcoming the challenges concerning students’ assessments, the participants printed out students’ written assignments and marked them offline, bought new tablets, and prepared students’ assessments through online games.

Discussion

In this study, the researchers intended to explore the strategies or interventions employed by English teachers of the institutions to address the challenges they faced during ERTL. As highlighted in the study, the findings indicate that English teachers overcome problems concerning their technological skills by seeking help from their colleagues, upgrading their knowledge by watching videos and attending courses, training and webinars, choosing suitable platforms for online learning, and conducting better online assessments.

The findings showed that the participants needed help from their colleagues whom they considered technology experts, and one participant was helping her friends with technology. This is related to one of the sources of teachers’ self-efficacy, vicarious experience. When the participants in this study observed their colleagues’ successes, they became role models to imitate (Bandura, 1998). This is also in tandem with Winter et al. (2021) as they mentioned that
experienced colleagues are useful as models and by working with them closely, teachers’ would have more positive attitudes, beliefs and confidence in utilising technology during ERTL.

Furthermore, the participants also watched videos online, such as Youtube and TikTok. They attended some of the webinars to improve their technological skills especially in operating online learning platforms such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC), UFUTURE platform, Google applications (Google Classroom and Google Meet) and Microsoft applications (Microsoft Teams and OneDrive). Some of these webinars were organised by their universities. They also attended public online courses like MOOC and Coursera. The findings disclosed that the teachers have high self-efficacy despite their challenges during ERTL. Self-efficacy is defined as one’s judgement on their ability to organise and perform necessary actions to achieve the required performance (Bandura, 1977). The participants portrayed this quality by being resilient in finding ways to ensure they were better prepared to conduct the online learning instruction each time. This is consonant with Hampton et al. (2020) and Horvitz et al. (2015), as they found out that teachers with high self-efficacy are resilient as they work with extraordinary effort and find ways to overcome challenges. By attending the webinars and courses, the participants showed they knew the importance of acquiring effective online teaching practices. As Carrillo and Flores (2020) mentioned, teachers who acquire teaching practices and utilise various pedagogical tools and technologies such as chat, games, blogs, videos, quizzes and forums, teachers can gauge students’ interest and encourage them to learn faster.

One of the measures the participants took to overcome the problems they encountered during online learning was also trying to find suitable online learning platforms. They distributed questionnaires and conducted surveys with the students. They also shared the platforms used by them and the students for synchronous and asynchronous sessions. The findings were consistent with Gao and Zhang (2020) as one of the participants in the study also gathered students’ responses about their current learning situation to determine students’ preferable online learning platforms and appropriate assessments during ERTL. The findings also showed that students preferred recorded lectures instead of synchronous sessions. Since some students were struggling with internet issues, most students preferred online presentations and the combination of various assessment methods (Guangul et al., 2020). Aroonsrimarakot et al. (2022) also confirmed this as they found out that students preferred recorded videos and audio to be uploaded and available online so that they could watch them repeatedly.

Utting and Legeard (2020) stated that online assessment reduces operational time and makes the marking process easier since this can be done automatically using embedded tools. In this study, the online assessments used are Quizizz, WordWall, and Google Forms. However, the findings in this study show the opposite, as the participants found online marking troublesome because the lecturers are not well trained in marking the students’ answers in soft copy. Moreover, the participants also allowed their students to send their recorded presentations through WhatsApp and Telegram. Correspondingly, Nasri et al. (2020) also asserted that another way of accommodating the needs of students with inadequate internet coverage and no proper devices is to conduct their lessons via WhatsApp and Telegram. Students could also send their assignments via the same social media.

Conclusion

COVID-19 is an unprecedented situation for which the participants in this study had never prepared before. Although online learning is quite common among them, fully online learning is
a novel experience. Based on the findings, the participants in this study faced two major challenges: technological skills and conducting assessments. In this study, the researchers also explored the strategies or interventions employed by English teachers of the institutions to address these challenges. The findings showed that English teachers overcome problems concerning their technological skills by seeking help from their colleagues, upgrading their knowledge by watching videos and attending courses, training and webinars, choosing suitable platforms for online learning, and conducting better online assessments. This study is believed to shed some light on aspects that need to be considered while planning and executing meaningful ESL online teaching and learning experience in higher learning institutions, especially during Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning. This includes English teachers, tertiary institutions and also the Ministry of Education. Through the findings, the English teachers could discover other strategies used by other English teachers in different institutions in coping with the current learning situation. Additionally, the administrators in tertiary institutions could identify the possible challenges faced by their respective English teachers and provide the assistance and support needed to carry out the process of teaching and learning successfully during the COVID-19 pandemic. As for the Ministry of Education, appropriate measures could be taken to overcome the challenges the teachers and students face by providing a stable network connection with long-term sustainability. Workshops and training should be provided to facilitate the teachers to update their knowledge from time to time. Financial assistance or financial loan should be given to educators to help them purchase more devices.

**Limitations**

This study was embarked on to explore the challenges faced and the interventions or strategies taken by the English teachers of these universities in teaching English courses during ERTL. This study was conducted in three countries namely Malaysia, Indonesia and Maldives involving 34 teachers of English. Although the approach employed in this study is suitable for describing, comparing, evaluating and understanding different aspects of a research problem (Yin 2017), the results of this study could not be generalized to the larger population. The sample could not represent all the English teachers teaching at tertiary institutions.

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References


Efficacy of Problem-Based Learning Strategy to Enhance EFL Learners’ Paragraph Writing and Grammar Skills

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Abstract
Generally, this study investigates the impact of problem-based learning strategies in enhancing and improving English as a Foreign Language students’ paragraph writing skills. It explores the impact of Problem-Based Learning on EFL learners’ paragraph development and grammar abilities. The participants were 38 male students between the ages of 15 and 18. They were all in level ten in secondary school and attended a public learning institution in Al-Baha Saudi Arabia. Data was collected using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The data collections were post-test and pre-test for the two age-based groups. Qualitative data was collected through video recordings of the participants. The findings from the study revealed that learners perform better in their post-tests compared with the pre-tests regarding grammar skills and paragraph writing. Thus, PBL success affects students’ motivation for improving their paragraph development and grammar skills. This is the reason for the better performances in the post-tests than in the pre-tests. Additionally, the results reveal that EFL students in the control group did not write together as would have expected. The group dynamics that would have been observed through their cooperation with one another were missing during the paragraph-writing activities. Resultantly, they did not share many of their ideas about the activities. A contrast was observed under Problem Based Learning because the students interacted and freely shared their ideas. The learning and progress of each learner were more conspicuous under problem-based learning than in the control group settings.

Keywords: Applied linguistics, grammar skills, problem-based learning, Teaching English as Foreign Language, writing skills

Introduction

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) refers to a method of learning that relies on the principle of applying real-world problems as the beginning of acquiring and integrating new knowledge. It is a suitable alternative or approach to use in the classroom of the English language for the enhancement of learning and teaching English (Legg, 2007). The PBL method assists in the creation of meaningful English as a Second Language (ESL) activities. When students explore situations or cases relating to solving problems, the activities involved trigger engagement and motivation (Bosuwen & Woodrow, 2009). According to Lapuz and Fulgencio (2020), PBL enhances the improvement of critical thinking skills levels among students, and it also ensures the improvement of the process of teaching and learning. The PBL model guides the students in thinking, analyzing, researching, and investigating; these activities are conducted either in groups or independently, and it remains the core of the PBL model. In addition, PBL requires students to identify materials and link what they are reading with what they are doing with the information (Torp & Sage, 2002). This enables the students to enhance the integration of the content knowledge with their English knowledge based on the difficulties in the teaching and learning of writing a paragraph in ESL classrooms. Therefore, it is significant to ensure the examination of the approaches to learning and teaching skill. Writing through PBL, which encourages influences on the ESL writing of the learners, can be a workable approach to writing skills teaching (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). However, a limited number of studies have been conducted on the use of writing approaches in writing paragraphs, specifically within the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

The purpose of this study involves exploring the effect of PBL on the paragraph writing skills of EFL learners and their grammar skills. In addition, the study unveils the methods used by the learners to acquire writing skills through PBL. Limited information is available concerning what the students do in the PBL classroom milieu and how such actions affect academics and other activities. Minimal research has explored the procedures and the methods of PBL settings of the strategy. In the study, the aim involved the investigation of a novel methodology to allow the students to enrich their skills in writing a paragraph while expediting their interactive skills with various individuals among their peers. In addition, a PBL strategy was able to serve as a means of enhancing interactive skills because the learners have the possibility and prospects of significant interaction with colleagues and of conversing with their peers in the process. The current research addressed the following questions:

- What is the impact of problem-based learning to enhance EFL learners’ paragraph writing skills?
- What is the impact of problem-based learning to enhance EFL learners’ grammar skills?
- How do EFL learners gain paragraph writing skills via problem-based learning?

Literature Review

PBL was initially applied in the year 1970 at the Medical Faculty of McMaster University in Canada (Amir, 2009). The process of implementing PBL at the university was focused on human beings, and it was community-based via an interdisciplinary approach to problem-based learning and learning. According to Markham et al. (2003), the Buck Institute for Education (BIE), an American organization exploring research and development, identified PBL as “an organized teaching method that engages learners in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process established around complicated, authentic questions and attentively designed products and tasks” (p.10). On the other hand, Moss and Van Duzer (1998) also referred to PBL as an instrumental approach to contextualizing learning.
by giving the learners products to develop or problems to solve. Fried-Booth (2002) also defined PBL as a student-centered approach driven by the desire of establishing an end product.

In learning, the process that applies to solving problems requires analysis, thinking, evaluation, and the generation of ideas. Learners become informed by designing their process of learning and choosing the information and the places in which it can be gathered. They explore the analysis and synthesis of the information, after which they utilize and deliver the newly obtained knowledge. Throughout the learning process, teachers act as advisors and managers (Sadeghi et al., 2016).

It remains evident that PBL is a potential means for allowing students to improve their language, communication, and content skills. They can utilize and incorporate factual knowledge and language into their real lives as they perform and create the project (Sadeghi, Biniaz & Soleimani, 2016). Various researchers also indicate that PBL has a positive effect on particular groups of students. For instance, students with average to low verbal ability and students with limited previous content knowledge experienced significant learning in PBL classes more than in traditional classes (Mioduser & Betzer, 2008). In summary, students in PBL classes were more useful and had more real-world content knowledge, which they applied to different tasks than students who were not in PBL classes (Boaler, 1997).

Several studies were obtained relating to PBL in the classroom of language, as reported by Sari, Sumarmi, Utomo, and Astina (2021). The outcome of the study indicated that the PBL model has an important impact on the students’ skills in solving a problem and scientific writing skills. Together, PBL and problem-solving skills had a valuable effect on scientific writing skills (Wood & Head, 2003). The latter conducted a case study of the application of the PBL approach in the Biomedical English Course. In relation to their findings, the researcher proposed a programmatic description of the adoption of the PBL approach in the classroom in the English language. Sadeghi et al. (2016) revealed that students who went through PBL performed better than the students whose education was based on the instructions in the textbooks. The findings lend credence to the positive impact of PBL on students’ writing performance. Last, Norzaini and Shin (2012) found that PBL can be applied successfully on small scale and that PBL is simple for students. The outcome indicates the need for students to be perfectly trained in the practices and theory of PBL for the success of the implementation. According to Lapuz and Fulgencio (2020), PBL improves student critical thinking as well as the learning and teaching process.

Vygotsky (1980), a renowned theorist, discovered the significance of social interaction in the development of cognition. Vygotsky indicated that socialization is fundamental to cognitive development. He was convinced that, in the beginning, learning occurs at the social level; it takes place through interactions between people. Thereafter, it moves to the individual level, which enhances the internalization of knowledge and starts with the interpersonal process.

Several researchers of the theories of the second language, including Roebuck and Wagner (2004) and Lantolf (2000), applied Vygotsky’s ideas to second-language learning. Sociocultural theory refers to a theory of human learning describing the social communication function in cognitive development. The sociocultural theory is composed of various standards that can be classified systematically into three themes. The themes include internalization, social interaction, and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory focuses on the importance of societal communications and human nature behavior, like the internalization procedure (Robbins, 2003).

While learning a second language, the aspect that has proven most challenging is writing, among other aspects of learning such as speaking, reading, and listening. The latter applies not only to learners but also to teachers (Kustati & Yuhardi, 2014). Writing a paragraph is the most important skill because writing
incorporates thinking capacity, trained memory, and language proficiency; generally, it tests the writer’s various cognitive levels (Kellogg, 2001). Students experience challenges in the fulfillment of writing requirements when their language proficiency is low. Meanwhile, a lack of English vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and punctuation tends to contribute to a lack of interest among students (Karim, 2012). Important skills that students should master in the 21st century include problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, collaboration, innovation, and creativity (Redhana, 2019). Lectures must be selective in choosing models of learning that can fit the demand of the skills in the 21st century in the process of learning.

Writing is the most challenging skill for students learning a language because of a variety of intrinsic attributes and extrinsic factors. The challenge is experienced both as a first or second language compared with other skills such as reading, listening, and speaking (Keller et al., 2020). The concepts of awareness related to writing, such as details, supporting sentences, concluding sentences, linking words, punctuation, topic sentences, cohesion, and grammatical aspects, result in writing perfect paragraphs. Moreover, a writer should review and edit multiple times what he or she has written, which tends to make writing appear challenging (Chatt & Haque, 2020). Several types of research, particularly regarding the challenges of writing in the EFL context, show that students are still dreading compositional and writing tasks (Alkodimi & Al-Ahdal, 2021). In the following figure, a Conceptual Framework of PBL in Language classrooms is presented.

![Figure 1. A Conceptual Framework of PBL in Language Classroom (Norzaini & Shin, 2012, p. 113)](image)

**Method**

The study is composed of 38 male participants between the ages of 15 and 18 years. The participants are in level ten at Al-Baha, a government secondary school, in semester one of 2022. The participants underwent random alienation based on two groups: the PBL strategy group, with 20 participants, and the control group, with 18 participants. The study involved two male educators who were members of the same institution as the participants. Moreover, all the English language educators had pertinent qualifications that, in this case, involved the possession of a bachelor’s degree in English and other equivalent experiences in teaching English.
Research Procedures

The study investigated the impact of the use of PBL in the improvement of grammar and writing skills among ninth-grade students at a high school located in the city of Al-Baha. The study design was mixed-method, involving the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher also enhanced the organization of a separate workshop for the experimental group teacher trained in PBL skills.

The instruments of research applied in the study were initially the post-test and pre-test English test of achievement with the inclusion of grammar and writing skills, comprising twenty multiple-choice questions and the task of writing a paragraph. The tests were intended to measure the students’ writing skills according to the ninth-grade syllabus and were arranged by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education. In addition, the test questions corresponded to the syllabus of the ninth grade according to the approval of the Ministry of Education. They were mainly concerned with topics that the students had studied in the ninth grade. The test’s reliability tended to have a high Cronbach’s alpha, at 89%. An achievement test was presented after the study had ended to inform of a post-test, which was mainly concerned with evaluating the achievements of the participants in the skills of English.

As a pre-test, the students were required to write a paragraph. After the completion of the PBL lessons, which took weeks, the students had their post-test based on the same topic. Eventually, analytical scoring was explored for the evaluation of the students’ post-test and pre-test. In the scoring, every component of writing underwent assessment with the total score relating to the components’ totality. Two of the English teachers, who never took part in the study, ensured the correction of all the English test papers, including the test papers at the start and the end of the study.

Next, the participant’s performance was video recorded at a single government secondary school. One of the two groups remained the control group, with the other being an experimental group, which continued directly with the strategy of PBL for up to three weeks. The two groups were subdivided into four smaller groups, and every subgroup was recorded on a video; each video was recorded three times for 20 minutes. The experimental group had their recording as they experienced the strategy of PBL. In the same way, the researcher requested the control group’s teacher to develop sub-groups of four members each, and their activities were video recorded for 20 minutes for every sub-groups activity.

The experimental group’s English teacher committed to activities, such as a workshop meant for fostering knowledge acquisition for the implementation of the strategy of PBL in their classrooms. For that reason, the researcher has set aside some time for the introduction of different books relating to teaching English as a second language in Saudi Arabia. Contrarily, the control group’s English teacher never took part in any workshop or training. As a course requirement, those taking part from either of the groups went through the study of analogous English lessons within their groups for about one hour, almost four times each week. Coding the video clips was
conducted by the two research assistants who underwent training for the coding of the participants’ dialogue.

**Findings**

### Quantitative Data Findings

The study involved 38 student participants sampled from two classes at a public elementary school. The participants experienced either control or experimental environments. The mean, standard deviation, and t-test for two independent samples were calculated to reveal the presence of statistically significant differences between the average scores of the experimental group and the control group on the pre-test (writing skills, grammar skills, and total score). Table one shows these results.

**Table 1. The mean, standard deviation, and t-test (writing skills, grammar skills, and total score). in the pre-measurement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>T. test</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pre-test writing skills</td>
<td>experimental group</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10.06</td>
<td>1.924</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control group</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.80</td>
<td>1.765</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-test grammar skills</td>
<td>experimental group</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.17</td>
<td>1.757</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.811</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control group</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.30</td>
<td>1.658</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pre-test total score</td>
<td>experimental group</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21.22</td>
<td>2.691</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control group</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.10</td>
<td>2.713</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note 1. Table one of the results of the t-test reveals the presence of differences between the average scores of the members of the two groups on the pre-test test (writing skills, grammar skills, and total score).

Table one highlights that the value of (T) to test skills (writing skills, grammar skills, and total score) is not statistically significant, as the significant value associated with it is higher than the level of statistical significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). Therefore, the decision is to accept the hypothesis: there is no statistically significant difference between the average scores of the members of the experimental and control groups on the pre-test test (writing skills, grammar skills, and total score). This indicates that the scores of the experimental group and the control group are equal.

Moreover, the mean, standard deviation, and t-test for two independent samples were calculated to reveal the presence of statistically significant differences between the mean scores of
the experimental group and the control group on the post-test (writing skills, grammar skills, and total score) in the post-measurement, and Table two reveals these results.

Table 2. The mean, standard deviation, and t-test (writing skills, grammar skills, and total score) in the post-measurement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>test</th>
<th>group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>T. test</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>eta square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>post-test writing skills</td>
<td>experimental group</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14.89</td>
<td>2.398</td>
<td>7.80</td>
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<td>0.628</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control group</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10.05</td>
<td>1.146</td>
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<tr>
<td>post-test grammar skills</td>
<td>experimental group</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.78</td>
<td>2.579</td>
<td>8.46</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.665</td>
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<td>control group</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11.80</td>
<td>1.735</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>post-test Total score</td>
<td>experimental group</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32.67</td>
<td>4.459</td>
<td>9.25</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.704</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>control group</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21.35</td>
<td>2.796</td>
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</table>

Note 2. Table two of the results of the t-test reveals the presence of differences between the average scores of the two experimental groups in the control group on the ---- test (writing skills, grammar skills, and total score) in the post-measurement.

It appears from Table two that there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance (α = 0.01) between the mean scores of the experimental and control groups in the following comparisons:

- Writing skills tests and the difference was in favor of the experimental group compared with the control group, where the mean of their writing skills test (14.89) was higher than that of the control group (10.05) and statistically significant (T = 7.80, significance > 0.01), which indicates the statistical significance of the effectiveness of problem-based learning on writing skill. The effect size (eta square η2) for using problem-based learning in increasing writing skills was 0.628; this means that 62.8% of the variance in writing skill is due to the use of problem-based learning, has a high effect size as indicated by Cohen, and indicates the practical significance of the effectiveness of problem-based learning in increasing writing skills.

- Grammar skills tests and the difference were in favor of the experimental group compared with the control group, where the mean of their grammar skills test (17.78) was less than that of the control group (11.80) with statistical significance (T = 8.46, significance > 0.01), which indicates the statistical significance of the effectiveness of problem-based learning on grammar skill. The effect size (eta square η2) for using problem-based learning to increase grammar skills was 0.665, which means that 66.5% of the variance in grammar
skill is due to the use of problem-based learning, has a high effect size as indicated by Cohen, and indicates the practical significance of the effectiveness of problem-based learning in increasing grammar skills.

- The total score for the skills test and the difference were in favor of the experimental group compared to the control group, where the average total score for the skills test (32.67) was less than the control group (21.35), with statistical significance (T = 9.25, significance > 0.01), which indicates the statistical significance of the effectiveness of problem-based learning on the total score of the skills test. The effect size (eta square η2) for using problem-based learning to increase the total score of skills test was 0.704, which means that 70.4% of the variance in the overall skill test score is due to the use of problem-based learning, is a high effect size as indicated by Cohen, and indicates the practical significance of the effectiveness of problem-based learning in increasing the overall skill test score. The mean, standard deviation, and t-test for two related samples were calculated. Table three shows these results.

Table 3. The mean, standard deviation, and t-test to detect the differences between the mean scores of the pre and post measurements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>T. test</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
<th>eta square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>post-test writing skills</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>12.34</td>
<td>3.052</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.416</td>
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<tr>
<td>pre-test writing skills</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9.92</td>
<td>1.822</td>
<td></td>
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<td>post-test grammar skills</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>14.63</td>
<td>3.708</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.477</td>
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<tr>
<td>pre-test grammar skills</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11.24</td>
<td>1.684</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>post-test total score</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>26.71</td>
<td>6.778</td>
<td>5.36</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>0.437</td>
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<tr>
<td>pre-test total score</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>21.16</td>
<td>2.666</td>
<td></td>
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Note 3: Table three results of the t-test are used to detect the presence of differences between the mean scores of the pre and post measurements for the experimental group on the tests (writing skills, grammar skills, and total skills).

Table three indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test for the experimental group on the following tests (writing skills, grammar skills, and total skills).

- The writing skills test and the difference were in favor of the post-measurement compared with the pre-test measurement, where the average writing skills score in the post-test
Efficacy of Problem-Based Learning Strategy

(12.34) was higher than the pre-test measurement (9.92), with statistical significance (T = 5.13, significance > 0.01), indicating the statistical significance of the effectiveness of problem-based learning on writing skill. The effect size (eta square η2) for using problem-based learning on writing skill was 0.416, which means that 41.6% of the variance in writing skill is due to the use of problem-based learning, has a high effect size as indicated by Cohen, and indicates the practical significance of the effectiveness of problem-based learning on writing skill.

• The grammar skills test and the difference were in favor of the post-measurement compared with the pre-test measurement, where the average degree of grammar skills in the post-measurement (14.63) was higher than the pre-test measurement (11.24), with statistical significance (T = 5.80, significance > 0.01), indicating the statistical significance of the effectiveness of problem-based learning on the skill of grammar. The size of the effect (eta square η2) for using problem-based learning on the skill of grammar was 0.477; this means that 47.7% of the variance in the skill of grammar is due to the use of problem-based learning, has a high effect size as indicated by Cohen, and indicates the practical significance of the effectiveness of problem-based learning on grammar skill.

• The total score of the skills test and the difference were in favor of the post-measurement compared with the pre-test measurement, where the average total score of the skills test in the post-measurement (26.71) was higher than the pre-test measurement (21.16) with statistical significance (T = 5.36, significance > 0.01), which indicates the statistical significance of the effectiveness of problem-based learning on the total skills test score. The effect size (eta square η2) for using problem-based learning on the total skills test score was 0.437, which means that 43.7% of the variance in the total score of the skills test is due to the use of problem-based learning, is a high effect size as indicated by Cohen, and refers to the practical significance of the effectiveness of problem-based learning on the total score of the skills test.

Qualitative Data Findings

Qualitative Analysis of the Observation Data

Two examples are given in this case. The first example is from the experimental condition together with another from the control condition. One example had been presented by the researcher originating from the experimental condition, with the other one coming from the control condition for the indication of the variations existing between both conditions. Because the examples were selected from the EFL classes, with the students speaking Arabic and English, the researcher translated Arabic expressions into English, later presented in italics, with the normal font indicating the original words in English. The two examples originating from the two conditions underwent presentation and discussion within the following vignettes.
Problem-Based Learning (Paragraph Writing Task)

The vignette below gives a few minutes for the learners of EFL to dialogue and interact after working on the task of writing for approximately 20 minutes in the EFL classroom. The names of the students in the vignette are Faris, Omar, Saleh, and Majed. The previous week, they wrote a small paragraph concerning Saudi Arabian winter to practice writing short paragraphs using the simple past tense in problem-based learning. The example shows that the students were involved in the discussion on the best way of writing simple past tense correctly. They endured some difficulty regarding the arrangement of certain ideas and the selection of the best ideas for several points of view. Moreover, they also experienced difficulties in grammar and spelling while they were learning English. It remains vital to note that they developed a concerted effort to help one another and rely on one another; they could convey messages verbally and communicate with one another, though they were not good at writing the ideas. Generally, improvements were evident in their performances and achievements, though they had minimal success with the task of writing paragraphs.

1. Majed: The topic is the winter in Saudi Arabia last week. We must talk about all parts of Saudi Arabia.
2. Omar: Absolutely, we are going to talk about all cities in Saudi Arabia. For example, the winter in Riyadh, Jeddah, Abha, and Dammam. These cities are from different directions, from north, south, west, and east.
3. Faris: It is a good idea to write down the ideas, and then we have to discuss them.
4. Saleh: OK, let’s start.
5. Majed: We need someone to write down the ideas then we will discuss them and properly link them.
6. Saleh: Ok, that is great. I will do it. Could you please state the ideas that I have to write down?
7. Omar: Let’s start with this small sentence, “Winter last week in Saudi Arabia was different from city to another one.”
8. Faris: Would you please add this sentence, “In Jeddah, the weather was good; it reached 24 degrees.”
9. Majed: Abha was very cold and windy. This city located in the south of Saudi Arabia.
10. Saleh: Please let me talk about Dammam which located in the east of Saudi Arabia. “Dammam was a very cold city last week.”

From the above vignette, it remains evident that the learners of EFL taking part in the discussion helped one another. There were dynamic interactions that occurred between them with their language being very rich based on the categories of verbal actions: explanations with examples, giving other support in the groups, questions, providing suitable examples, and developing basic assessment during the discussion.

It remains clear that the learners of EFL within the vignette above tended to practice the principle of PBL, which enabled them to communicate with one another in a suitable PBL
environment. For instance, Majed made use of the inclusive pronoun “we” in turn one while asking his classmates for help with writing concerning various parts of Saudi Arabia. The topic that was chosen concerned winter in Saudi Arabia last week. It remains vital to talk about every part of Saudi Arabia. The incorporation of the phrase “we should” in the statement shows that he sought assistance from his colleagues and that he was convinced about them working together.

The next example occurred in turns three, four, and five. Saleh, Faris, and Majed made statements indicating their willingness to work together. For instance, Farsi proposed that he needed to work together with his classmates; he stated that it remained a perfect idea to note down the ideas followed by discussing them. Saleh confirmed his willingness to cooperate and work together while encouraging the groups to begin writing the paragraph. He used the verb phrase “Let’s start,” which is collective and imperative. This signals that he desired to start working together in writing the paragraph. In the fifth turn, Majed makes use of the collective pronoun “we” to emphasize that they were to discuss various ideas together. He stated that there was a need for someone who could write down these ideas for a future discussion and link them together.

The examples indicate that the EFL learners in the vignette tended to practice the strategy of PBL. That is, the students helped one another in learning. When the students followed the features of problem-based strategy, they were likely to gain academically based on the overall grades and completion of more tasks. EFL learners rely on one another for the achievement of their goals, as indicated in the vignette, in which it remains clear that the students learned from one another and tended to contribute various ideas to the group effort to write a correct paragraph. During the writing task, the EFL learners tended to communicate with one another perfectly but experienced a challenge in translating their verbal success into the final written product. There were several grammar and spelling mistakes in the excerpt from the last paragraph.

The students proposed various ideas, conducted a discussion, and noted these ideas down. However, the last paragraph had several mistakes that led to low performance in the group task. The errors involved mistakes such as repetitions and wrong words capitalized, together with various misspellings. PBL allowed the students to interact and exchange various ideas, though they went through challenges while writing the ideas. Generally, EFL learners can learn and progress through PBL despite spelling and grammar errors.

Traditional Learning (Paragraph Writing Task)

The vignette below depicts a few minutes of the dialogue of the EFL learners after working on the task of writing for 20 minutes in the traditional EFL classroom. In the vignette, the students are Aseel, Sami, Anas, and Sultan. They were writing short paragraphs concerning the previous weekend to practice using the simple past tense via the traditional environment of learning. In the following vignette, the EFL learners communicated concerning the best way of writing ideas in the simple past tense. Initially, EFL learners experienced challenges in developing ideas and writing them down. A vital challenge was that the students were not able to coordinate their ideas and experienced challenges in their interaction with one another because they failed to
receive training on the implementation of PBL. In the long run, they were able to help one another without consideration of any structure. They offered varied ideas minus any specific structure to the group discussion.

1. Sami: Hi. Where did you go last weekend? The teacher asked us to write about this topic. In fact, I went to Makkah to visit my relatives there.
2. Aseel: Wow, that is interesting. I went to Taif and it was very nice.
3. Sami: Could we start discussing the ideas and writing the paragraph?
4. Sultan: Ok, but everyone has his style in writing. Why do not we write individually rather than together?
5. Anas: I am totally agree with you, Sultan. It's time-consuming and I have different stories and events that I am willing to write them down.
6. Aseel: We can share different stories and then we can write them in few sentences. I think this will be fine for all members.
7. Sami Mohammed: That is fine, let's work. For example, I visited my friends last weekend.
8. Sultan: I am going to write my work alone. I do not like to work with others, particularly in writing.
9. Anas: I cannot write to anyone, too.
10. Aseel: It is up to you. I just want to clarify that we can discuss the ideas together and then someone will write the ideas to come up with a share paragraph.

The vignette above depicts how EFL learners in the control groups never intended to write in the environment of PBL. They also failed to change ideas, and many students indicated that they preferred working separately. In addition, no dynamic interaction existed between the students while they worked separately, more so in the tasks of writing than in the other tasks. For instance, in the third turn, Sultan observed that each person has a style of writing and stated that he preferred writing alone. This is evident in the statement he made: “Ok, but everyone has his style in writing, why do not we write individually rather than together?” In the fourth turn, Anas agreed with Sultan’s remarks: “I am totally agreed with you, Sultan. It's time-consuming, and I have different stories and events that I am willing to write them down.”

The EFL learners in the vignette never practiced the principles of PBL. The latter is evident in the seventh turn, in which Sultan used “I” as the singular pronoun and shows how he preferred working alone. He indicated that he would work alone in writing his paragraph and never liked working with his colleagues on writing. The learners of EFL in the control condition gave examples and outline clarifications, but to a minimal degree in comparison with their peers in the experimental condition. For example, in the sixth turn, Sami gave an explanation based on an idea to his peers and gave some examples while commenting that it was fine and talking about visiting his friend the previous week. In the ninth turn, Aseel clarified the peers when he indicated that they were able to interact and converse in writing a shared paragraph. Aseel remarked that it was
the responsibility of the peers as he believes the group members could discuss the ideas together; thereafter, one of the members wrote the ideas down and developed a shared paragraph.

Discussion

The study’s findings revealed significant statistical variances, \( p = .000 \) \( (p < .05) \), between the mean scores of the two groups of students. Those teaching English in the PBL environment and those taught in typical classes show a significantly high variance in statistical means. The results show that the outcomes are better in the group taught in a PBL environment. However, the findings also showed no significant variance in the students’ English achievements in the pre-test scores. There are two possible explanations in response to such an observation relating to the better achievement of the learners in the PBL environment. The first is that acquiring English skills through PBL provides an environment that encourages the learners to work in groups and collaborate during most tasks. Thus, they can share their experiences and knowledge. The second explanation is that PBL creates an environment where weaker students can learn from the stronger ones. As a result, the gap between the best and the least advanced learners is lessened through such a learning system.

Findings from previous research have revealed various advantages associated with the PBL learning environment. A common argument is that the PBL environment creates a more conducive learning environment than the traditional environment. A primary concern associated with the traditional education environment is that it propagates individualism. Thus, learners might miss out on the benefits associated with collaboration. For instance, a study by Sari et al. (2021) concluded that PBL significantly affects students’ problem-solving abilities. The study also stated that PBL was a major determinant of students’ scientific writing skills. Another study by Sadeghi et al. (2016) determined that students learning in the PBL environment posted better performances than their counterparts in traditional learning settings when instructions from the same textbooks were used. The findings from this study are among the sea of data supporting the notion that PBL enhances students’ writing skills. The PBL model has also been associated with an improvement in students’ thinking and ability to deduce meaning from instructions (Lapuz & Fulgencio, 2020). According to Fried-Booth (2002), PBL can be a student-centered approach to education motivated by meeting the intended purposes.

According to Özdemir (2006), the PBL model provides a challenging, authentic, and multidisciplinary learning environment where learners can acquire skills associated with designing, performing, and evaluating projects that need them to show sustained effort over time. Eryilmaz (2004) asserted that PBL enhances academic outcomes by facilitating interactions between students by providing a social context in which attitudes are likely to remain positive. Scientific writing skills are enhanced under PBL because of the resultant problem-solving skills. According to Azman and Shin (2012), PBL is applicable in small-scale educational settings and is simple enough to be implemented at various educational levels. Thus, PBL has a better outcome for the theoretical and practical goals of the education system.
Recommendations

Given the research findings, the first recommendation is for further research to support the findings obtained. Secondly, the supervisors of English teachers should introduce the method of PBL to all the teachers. They need to work hard to encourage the teachers to apply the method. In addition, the teachers of the English language should be updated and informed concerning the new methods of teaching that assist them in the improvement of their careers. Lastly, the rest of the studies emphasizing language skills such as reading, speaking, and listening via other methods of PBL should be used to highlight PBLs’ potential to facilitate the development of other language skills.

Study Limitations

Despite the study’s significant positive outcomes, two notable limitations should be considered in applying its findings. The first is that it involved small sample sizes. Thus, applying its findings to the general population might not be easy. The second shortcoming is that the sample was from a government public secondary school for boys. Thus, it does not reflect findings for girls and learners in private institutions.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a mixed method was applied in the collection of the qualitative and quantitative data. The study examined the impact of problem-based learning strategy in the improvement and enhancement of the skills of writing a paragraph and grammar skills among EFL learners. The main purpose of the study relates to the exploration of the impact of PBL based on the skills of writing a paragraph among EFL learners, in addition to their grammar skills. The study outcome indicates that the students performed better post-test compared with the pre-test in relating grammar skills and paragraph writing after the implementation of the PBL method in the class. The utilization of PBL was successful in encouraging students to work hard in refining their paragraph writing in addition to their grammar skills, reflected in the rise of the scores in writing within the post-test. PBL gives the student an opportunity for interaction and exchange of ideas. However, they experience challenges while writing down their ideas.

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Multimodal Resources and Students’ Motivation in English for Specific Purposes

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Abstract
The aim of the research was to analyze and generalize the educational potential of multimodal resources in enhancing students’ motivation in learning English for Specific Purposes. The study was conducted following the theories of digital humanities pedagogy and multimodal pedagogy. It had a descriptive cross-sectional quantitative-based (pedagogical experiment; survey; questionnaire) and qualitative-based (observation of the participants in the educational process; comparison and generalization of pedagogical experience on the problem under research; analysis of the data collected in a statistically accurate manner; monographic method – to interpret the results obtained in a coherent, logical approach) design. The significance of the findings can redound, on the one hand, to modernizing the educational processes of English for Specific Purposes based on the adequate integration of multimodal resources and, on the other, contributing to efficiently developing university students’ multimodal communicative competence. The data collected can be exploited in further research into the issue of increasing the motivation of non-philological students to learn English for professional use. In the course of the pedagogical experiment, effective ways of perceiving and processing the information by students were identified, as well as the advantage of integrating multimodal resources into teaching English for Special Purposes. The scope for further study lies in the in-depth research into forming multimodal communicative competence of technical students in learning English for Specific Purposes.

Keywords: English for Specific Purposes, multimodal communicative competence, multimodal resources, motivation, online classes, pedagogical techniques, technical students

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Introduction

The forced transition of the entire education system to the online format due to the COVID-19 pandemic revealed and exacerbated the problems associated, on the one hand, with the significant weakening of the emotional, interpersonal interaction between the teacher and students, and on the other, – with the necessity of the search for effective online pedagogical techniques for conducting online classes. The education system, like any living organism, was forced to adapt to the given conditions, which prompted English language teachers to look for new ways to organize active learning and adapt the challenges of online education as the primary medium of the learning process “from the standpoint of students’ mental health concerns” (Kolomiiets, Antonenko, Guryeyeva, Fedorenko & Tsepkalo, 2021, p. 153). Although students can more easily tolerate any infections, they are especially vulnerable in terms of potential psychological consequences.

Moreover, in a modern, rapidly changing world, under conditions of uncertainty in different spheres of peoples’ life, the main task of higher education institutions can be formulated as preparing a person for life in an era of crises and challenges through forming the competencies necessary for their successful vital activity, and in the process of learning English for Specific Purposes as well. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 era, the academic community has emphasized the role of higher education institutions in fostering a sense of identity, a digital one in particular, in the young generation. It proposes to consider the formation of democratic values, willingness to cooperate, and share the ideas of the common good among students as one of the mainstreams in the modern world. In addition, “online learning presupposes dealing with a significant amount of information, which demands critical assessment” (Kolomiiets et al., 2021, p. 153). And today, significant focus is made on multimodal pedagogical practices, which enable English learners to enhance their content knowledge and critical awareness and to discuss social identities (Danzak, 2011; Edo Marzá & Fortanet Gómez, 2022; Fedorenko, 2018; Fedorenko, Voloshchuk, Sharanova, Glinka & Zhurba, 2021; Harkavy, Bergan, Gallagher & Van’t Land, 2020; Miller, 2007; Skinner & Hagood, 2008).

Given the fact that the ways of constructing knowledge have both different possibilities and limitations due to the challenges of the COVID-19 era, participants of the educational process can choose from more ways than before to build up and represent knowledge based on combining different methods of multimodal learning (Jewitt, 2008; Kolomiiets et al., 2021; Lee, 2020). Such a combination implies that organizing English learning has become more complex in design, diversity, and multiplicity. As a consequence, regardless of whether teaching techniques consider and accommodate students’ multimodal learning methods, the process of English teaching has become multiplex and requires even more than it used to be for the development of students’ multimodal communicative competence.

The significance of the findings can redound, on the one hand, to modernizing the educational processes of English for Specific Purposes based on adequate integration of multimodal resources and, on the other, contributing to efficiently developing university students’ multimodal communicative competence. The data collected can be exploited in further research into the issue of increasing the motivation of non-philological students to learn English for professional use.

Different aspects of the multimodal pedagogical practices have already been under scrutiny, but the specifics of their integration with the help of various multimodal learning resources into the educational process of English for Specific Purposes at technical universities to increase students’ motivation remains relevant. Therefore, the research aimed at analyzing and
generalizing the potential of multimodal learning resources in enhancing students’ motivation to study English for professional use. The purpose-related objectives were as follows:

1) to carry out a pedagogical experiment to study the influence of the integration of multimodal resources on students’ motivation to learn English for specific purposes;

2) to analyze the efficiency of exploiting multimodal resources as a means of multicultural education aimed at forming students’ foreign language communicative competence and multimodal literacy;

3) to determine the level of student’s motivation in learning English for Specific Purposes through integrating multimodal learning resources into the educational process.

Literature Review

The analysis of scholarly literature demonstrated that the problem of a multimodal approach in education is rather complex, although it has developed for a long time. Among those who laid the foundations of the theory of multimodality were Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001). Theoretical concepts of multimodality in pedagogical settings have been covered quite widely by various scholars, among which are the following: Abdulrahman (2020), Campoy-Cubillo and Querol-Julián (2015), Lankshear and Knobel (2006), Lea and Jones (2011), Moreno and Mayer (2007), Querol-Julián (2023), Sanders and Albers (2010), Stein (2008), Thesen (2001) and many others. Multimodal representations relate to the sociocultural contexts in which different modes are exploited in the communication process (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 20). The above mentioned is especially true in the modern digital age, when the focus on mere language literacy is no longer enough for different spheres of life, as a redefined concept of competence is required (Dooley & Hauck, 2012; Palsa & Mertala, 2019).

When it comes to English as a foreign language, Sanders and Albers (2010) have stated that developing multimodal communicative competence is of paramount importance. As a student who lacks this competence can be at a disadvantage in various educational and professional contexts. Therefore, Pinar (2019) has argued the English language teacher should keep this in mind to develop multimodal competence. Only then will the student be able to determine the most suitable method for specific purposes of representation and communication. Multimodality provides more opportunities for interactive activities, where learners are not passive recipients of linguistic information (Boekaerts & Pekrun, 2015; Shuman & Scherer, 2014). This new communicative landscape is causing a reevaluation, providing students with the optimal opportunities that allow them to interact with texts that are increasingly multimodal (Fedorenko et al., 2021; Pinar, 2019).

Multimodal didactics encompasses how English teachers can create an efficient educational environment by exploiting a wide range of multimodal learning resources (Bezemer & Kress, 2016). And English for Specific Purposes is not an exception. Nowadays, more and more scholars, such as Danzak (2011), Edo Marzá and Fortanet Gómez (2022), Hellwig (2022), Jiang (2017), Lee (2014), Plastina (2013), Prior (2013), are turning to the issue of multimodality in the educational settings of English for Specific Purposes. But notwithstanding this fact, Prior (2013) has maintained that “multimodality seems to have remained a somewhat peripheral area of English for Specific Purposes” (p. 520).

To sum up, we have observed a considerrable research interest in the topic of multimodality in terms of higher education in general and English for Specific Purposes in particular. Presently,
a research gap is evident in studying the potential of the multimodal resources in enhancing the technical students’ motivation to learn English for Specific Purposes.

Method

The study was a mixed methods research. It had a descriptive cross-sectional quantitative-based (pedagogical experiment; survey; questionnaire) and qualitative-based (observation of the participants in the educational process; comparison and generalization of pedagogical experience on the problem under research; analysis of the data collected in a statistically valid manner, e.g., via the method of mathematical statistics to establish quantitative values of the level of student’s motivation to learn English for specific purposes through the integrating multimodal resources into the educational process; monographic method – to interpret the results obtained in a coherent, logical approach) design.

The theory of digital humanities pedagogy underpinned the study. This theory considers the idea that digitalization of the educational environment creates favorable conditions for developing digital citizenship and contributes to the digital socialization of students (Hirsch, 2012). The novelty of this phenomenon is the consistent movement of the educational process towards developing an independent, self-learning, self-regulating personality, ready to acquire the knowledge necessary to select and regulate educational and cognitive activities in the flow of constantly changing information. Additionally, the study employed the significant potential of multimodal pedagogy to make English online classes more democratic and inclusive. The use of different modes in online “classrooms” is like the effect of the work of culture, history, and power in shaping materials into resources for meaning-making in various social practices (Stein, 2008; Thesen, 2001).

Participants

The experimental study during the 2021-2022 academic year covered the sample group of 168 third-year undergraduate students of the Institute of Energy Saving and Energy Management and Faculty of Instrumentation Engineering of the National Technical University of Ukraine “Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute” (after this, officially abbreviated name – Igor Sikorsky KPI). All the students voluntarily accepted to participate in the research at all stages.

The authors involved in the study five teachers of the course “English for Professional Purposes” from the university mentioned above. All the participants gave their informed consent. And all the procedures were approved by the Ethics Committee of Igor Sikorsky KPI.

Research Instruments

To study the possibilities of a multimodal learning environment, we chose classes of English for Specific Purposes. The pedagogical experiment was aimed at investigating the influence of the integration of multimodal resources on students’ motivation to learn English for Specific Purposes. At the ascertaining stage of the pedagogical experiment, a survey among the teachers of English for Specific Purposes was carried out. The teachers were asked to dwell on their attitudes to using multimodal learning resources in the online classroom and their role in enhancing students’ motivation. Also, to determine students’ awareness of the essence of the concept of “multimodality” and the efficient ways of learning during online classes, we surveyed the following questions:

1. What is an easy way for you to perceive educational information (listening, seeing, etc.)?
2. What do you understand by “multimodality”?
3. What functions do websites, podcasts, videos, etc., perform in the educational process, from your point of view?

Additionally, a Likert scale questionnaire, an adapted version of the Questionnaire on Learner Use of Technology by Das and Mishra (2016) (see Appendix A) was emailed to the students to be completed at their convenience.

The surveys and the questionnaire mentioned above were aimed at coming up with the efficient pedagogical techniques for creating a multimodal learning environment in the online classes of English for Specific Purposes. That environment was favorable, on the one hand, for the development of students’ multimodal communicative competence and, on the other, for contributing to successful emotional interaction.

At the formative stage, the pedagogical experiment was carried out synchronously (e.g., studying the topic “Managing stress and anxiety in professional activity” in online classes of English for Specific Purposes and processing multimodal educational materials through multimodal listening tasks and team techniques) and asynchronously (e.g., home reading done by the students) modes. The teachers introduced the new vocabulary input on the topics in the course of English for Specific Purposes during the online classes. The students exercised learning materials with the support of multimodal resources, such as podcasts and video materials.

**Research Procedures**

As warm-up activities enhanced the emotional interaction and students’ motivation in online English classes, we exploited videos followed by different comprehension tasks (e.g., answering the teacher’s set questions followed by short discussions, doing quizzes or exercises on vocabulary, etc.) (see Appendix B).

When selecting video texts for educational purposes, we focused on the following principles:

- the communicative and informational value of an authentic video product;
- the sociocultural value of the video material as a means of introducing a non-native speaker into the world of the English linguistic community;
- the didactic expediency of exploiting the English language authentic video materials for the development of a culture of perception of audiovisual materials that contribute to students’ psychological well-being;
- students’ communicative and intellectual potential.

The video materials exploited not only contribute to building up students’ active vocabulary and developing their communicative competence, but they also provide them with the vital psychological knowledge of how to be mindful, how to be more conscious of their thoughts and actions to decide what to focus on consciously, etc. And we must admit that analyzing and understanding the multimodal nature of listening to such videos is a complex task that demands a great deal of effort from both students and teachers. The latter’s mastery even plays a more significant role in instructing and directing the comprehension process of such multimodal activities. A multimodal listening task is designed to assess students’ ability to identify, interpret, and evaluate verbal and nonverbal information in multimodal texts by answering questions or solving problems posed by an English teacher. However, interpreting non-verbal communication...
is not always an easy task, as often the context must be taken into account (Campoy-Cubillo & Querol-Julián, 2015; Goh & Vandergrift, 2011).

When developing materials for classroom activities, we considered a multimodal approach, i.e., the inclusion of audio material with the combination of other modes of communication. In this regard, we should stress that the modes, which students encountered in the video texts, had an impact on their emotional state.

An asset to the emotional, interpersonal interaction was our, i.e., English teachers, stories about our emotional difficulties in conducting English classes online. And one day, that was facilitated by listening to the song “I will survive, coronavirus version for teachers going online” by Bruening (2020), an associate professor of history and political science at Missouri University of Science and Technology (USA), to the music of the famous hit “I will survive,” performed by Tina Turner. The song is about the unshakable determination of teachers to bring the light of knowledge to the student masses, even if this means enhancing their digital skills on their own in two days.

Today, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a new term, “BANI world”, was coined to describe the collective challenges of modern humanity to substitute for the VUCA (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity) world (Cascio, 2020). The fragile BANI (brittle, anxious, nonlinear, incomprehensible) world with its high level of anxiety has become a reality. Since we have found a resource that is stable and meaningful for most students, despite any challenges in life, those were family photo archives, family stories, and memories, things that there was not enough time for before the COVID-19 pandemic and which acquired great value in current conditions. Therefore, during every English class, we asked two to three students to present three to five pictures, meaningful to them, from their family archive, and prepare a 5-7-minute report with a presentation about the people and events in the pictures. At the same time, they had to explain why those photos were significant to them. Quite interesting to us was the fact that most students prepared multimodal presentations with musical soundtracks. Such a multimodal task contributed to not only enhancing students’ multimodal literacy and communicative competence as well. To a certain extent, it had an impact on their psychological health. As, while going through the photos of their family, they physically felt the energy of their relatives, their inner confidence grew and anxieties disappeared.

Another multimodal pedagogical practice dealt with creating a “group page” in Google Classroom where we accepted students’ proposals on various everyday issues, photos, videos, and notes on multiple spheres of human life and society as well. Those issues were discussed in our online classes. For instance, on that page, students posted the following: photos (“Beautiful and unusual in nature,” “Different emotions of people,” “Quarantine relationships”); notes: (“My ideal day and online study,” “My bad quarantine day,” “A memorable day during quarantine”); and proposals on issues for covering during online English classes.

The fact that technical students expressed their interest in the essence of happiness contributed to our assigning book readings on that phenomenon for most weeks of the semester. A book on happiness, “Authentic Happiness; Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment” by Martin Seligman, was offered to students as additional home reading. We check reading comprehension through short oral reports or the “jigsaw” method. As for the former, we asked each student to give a brief oral account – up to two minutes – about the reading, relating it to their own observations. We recorded whether each student gave an account, but did not evaluate its quality. Because each student was required to speak weekly, and in most
cases, after the report a short discussion arose. The “jigsaw” method, in turn, as a collaborative team technique, was an interactive activity on the material read, which presupposed the division of the group of students into smaller subgroups (three to five individuals), “fragments.” Each group consists of students (called “experts”) working on one of the pieces of a common theme. For example, the common topic was “The analysis of happiness based on three different elements: positive emotions, engagement and meaning,” which was subdivided into three fragments: “The analysis of happiness based on the positive emotions,” “The analysis of happiness based on the engagement” and “The analysis of happiness based on the meaning”). Having found information on their fragment, “experts” from different groups studying the same issue met and exchanged information. Returning to their groups, the “experts” took turns “teaching” the new material to other group members, and in this way, the material was fully mastered by all students in the group.

Given the aforementioned pedagogical techniques, the students should be prepared not only for professional communication in English, but they are also supposed to develop their ability to perceive, understand and relay information from various spheres of human life and society (Kharb, Samanta, Jindal & Singh, 2013; Lea & Jones, 2011; Moreno & Mayer, 2007).

The control stage of the experiment employed a repeated survey among the teachers of English for Specific Purposes to find out quantitative and qualitative changes in the students’ motivation to learn English online with the support of multimodal resources. The dynamics of the student’s motivation to learn English for professional use based on multimodal resources were analyzed and generalized. The quantitative values were determined with the help of the method of mathematical statistics.

**Results**

At the ascertaining stage of the experiment, almost unanimously, the surveyed students associated the concept of multimodality with the distinction between human senses, primarily visual and auditory channels, indicating its connection with the various internet resources, websites in particular. That was a prominent and explicable result. Modern students are active, agile users of the Internet and different social networks, the concept of multimodality is familiar to them. As far as the functions performed in the educational process by websites, podcasts, videos, etc. are concerned, we obtained the following responses: entertaining (52%), enlightening (43%), affective (32%), thought-provoking (49%), other (9%). Furthermore, the students collectively argued that the primary purpose of the digital resources lay in attracting the learners’ attention and enhancing their motivation to study. Besides, most students still pointed to the insufficient use of Internet resources in teaching English for professional use (78%).

Also, we used the Likert scale for the questionnaire, in which the students expressed their vision of the importance of different multimodal resources in the educational process from strongly agree, neither agree nor disagree up to disagree strongly. The respondents showed virtual unanimity in their strong agreement with all the points of the questionnaire.

During the ascertaining stage of the pedagogical experiment, it was found that about a quarter of the surveyed students (24%) considered listening as an easy way of perceiving educational information (i.e., auditory learners); 35% of the respondents were visuals, i.e., they perceived better information containing different images; 41% of the students preferred to combine visual images with sounds. Given that, it is advisable to resort to blending different modes in introducing and practicing educational material.
In addition, we also conducted individual interviews with the teachers. The interviews aimed to find out the level of the student’s motivation to learn English for Specific Purposes. We processed the responses of the surveyed teachers. The findings were as follows: according to the teachers’ observations, 58 students (34.5%) had a low level of motivation, i.e., they were not interested in the course, and their language and speech competence was at a relatively low level (level A2); 54 students (32.1%) demonstrated a medium level of motivation, i.e., they eagerly participated in the class activities, but very often they didn’t make efforts in doing homework thoroughly, and had a sufficient level of language and speech competence (level B1); 56 students (33.4%) were characterized by a high level of motivation, i.e., students were engrossed in all the class activities, and regularly did homework thoroughly, had an outstanding level of language and speech competence (level B2). This survey of the teachers was conducted to choose efficient methods for integrating multimodal resources in the educational process of English for Specific Purposes and determining the tools appropriate for the implementation at the formative stage.

During the control stage of the experiment, the results of the replicate survey among the teachers gave evidence of the quantitative and qualitative changes in the student’s motivation to learn the course under study. The dynamics of the student’s motivation to learn English for specific purposes through integrating multimodal resources in the educational process were generalized. The quantitative values were determined by exploiting the method of mathematical statistics (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>The ascertaining stage</th>
<th>The control stage</th>
<th>Dynamics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>students (%)</td>
<td>students (%)</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>-10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>38.7</td>
<td>+6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>+3.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of the data, provided in Table 1, demonstrated positive dynamics in the levels of the student’s motivation to learn English for Specific Purposes. It can be explained by the fact that we tried to provide students with an opportunity not only to interact using the English language as a tool, but also to gain understanding and skills that were not easily assessed. Furthermore, on the one hand, the students brought to the English online classroom experience with technology platforms and the multimodal (narrative or persuasive) tasks. On the other hand, the students’ willingness to use their occasions in technology assist English teachers in exploring the possibilities of utilizing multimodal learning resources.

Discussion
This study is a contribution to the continuing discussions on the efficiency of multimodal resources in instructing English for Specific Purposes. The exploited pedagogical techniques had an impact on student-centered active learning. Those techniques encouraged the students’ engagement in the relevant to their lives subject-matters, where multimedia technologies improve
interpersonal interaction (Abdulrahaman et al., 2020; Harkavy et al., 2020). Moreover, the use of interactive tasks based on multimodal resources also helped students to communicate and acquire important meta-skills – universal competencies that serve as the basis for developing students’ professional skills (Miller, 2007). We intended to encourage students to think about the issues in their surroundings and link them to relevant discussions during online classes. Their observations were related to the behavior of other people or their own experiences and feelings. Exploring, understanding, and interpreting various sociocultural events, situations, etc., encouraged students to reflect on the meaning of existence, their role in the world through generalizing their own experiences (Fedorenko, 2018). The authors fully share the view expressed by Edo Marzá and Fortanet Gómez (2022) that the utilization of authentic materials makes a main contribution to meaningful practice. We consider English classes as an ongoing process of the identity-building where feelings, values, and attitudes are of great priority. These results are consistent with other studies, among which are the findings by Danzak (2011) and Fedorenko (2018).

The results obtained are in good agreement with other studies (Dooly & Hauck, 2012; Fedorenko et al., 2021; Palsa & Mertala, 2019; Plastina, 2013) which have shown that assignments based on multimodal resources instruction can substantially raise the level of the student’s motivation in learning English for Specific Purposes in particular and enhance the quality and efficiency of the educational process in general. Additionally, the research suggests that emotions also have a particular impact on students’ motivation to learn English for Specific Purposes. This is justified by the findings of Boekaerts and Pekrun (2015), Shuman and Scherer (2014), providing data on how the students’ self-efficacy beliefs develop by increasing the positive interpretations of different sociocultural situations.

Nevertheless, we must acknowledge some limitations in the research. Firstly, the study did not show a more comprehensive picture of improving the students’ communicative competence as the experimental period was relatively short. Implementing this study during more extended period would also be beneficial. Secondly, the experiment was limited to instructing third-year undergraduate technical students. Hence, similar studies can be carried out in other vocational domains (e.g., medical students) and other age groups of students. Despite the limitations mentioned, the students were satisfied with performing multimodal assignments to master English for Specific Purposes, as their motivation increased through integrating multimodal learning resources into the educational process.

Conclusion

Summing up, it can be concluded that using multimodal resources in teaching English for Specific Purposes arouses students’ interest and encourages communication. During the pedagogical experiment, the effective ways of students’ perception and processing the information were elucidated, and the advantage of integrating multimodal resources into teaching English was revealed. The positive dynamics of the student’s motivation to learn English for Specific Purposes were experimentally identified: quantitative values of the levels were determined by the method of mathematical statistics. However, while emphasizing the advisability of integrating multimodal learning resources, the balance between entertainment content and educational content should be maintained. We do not exclude the possibility of irrational use of multimodal resources in educational activities. And it is essential to take into consideration the psychological characteristics of students and the level of their communicative competence. In addition, English teachers should
clearly formulate educational objectives and outcomes of learning, avoid ambiguous or provocative situations, and shift the focus from entertainment to learning.

In our opinion, the scope for further study lies in the in-depth research into forming multimodal communicative competence of technical students in the educational process of learning English for specific purposes.

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**References**


**Appendix**

**Students’ questionnaire**

In your studies, how useful do you think it would be to:

- use the Web to share digital files related to your course (e.g., sharing photos, audio files, movies, digital documents, websites, etc.)?
- use an ePortfolio system to record your achievements?
- design and build Web pages as part of your course?
- create and present multimedia shows as part of your course requirements (e.g., PowerPoint)?
– create and present audio/video as part of your use of a social networking platform (e.g., Facebook) on the Web to communicate / collaborate with other students on the course?
– use microblogging (such as Twitter) to share information about class-related activities?
– keep your own blog as part of your course requirements?

Appendix B: Video texts
– educational video texts on mindfulness (e.g., https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w6T02g5hnT4; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kSaA6ft4NVE);
– educational video texts on managing stress and anxiety (e.g., https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/general-english/audio-zone/beating-stress; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bk2-dKH2Ta4; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojF0QrXtQnA);
A Corpus-based Pronunciation Teaching Model: A Conceptual Paper

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Abstract
Learning a second language is challenging, but mastering pronunciation is even more difficult. Researchers continuously seek new ways to improve students’ English abilities, such as listening and speaking, while ignoring the importance of pronunciation. After conducting a literature review, this article investigates the impact of corpora and two instructional methods on improving students’ pronunciation. The paper addresses how to teach pronunciation effectively in the context of English as a second language. According to the review, corpus resources, critical listening, and shadowing can all be used independently to enhance students’ proficiency in second language learning. Hence, an innovative Corpus-based Critical Listening and Shadowing model has been devised as an aid in the teaching of pronunciation by providing more specific suggestions for teachers and students, with the expectation that students will perform better once they have been taught pronunciation using the methodology. The current study’s findings have pedagogical and methodological implications for pronunciation teaching, learning and research. The implications and future directions of the innovative Corpus-based Critical Listening and Shadowing model are also discussed.

Keywords: Corpus-based research, critical listening, pronunciation teaching model, shadowing, conceptual paper

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol14no1.5
Introduction

The teaching of pronunciation, as well as other English skills, such as speaking and listening, has improved significantly during the past 150 years. The ability to pronounce words clearly is crucial for effective communication (Derwing & Munro, 2015; Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019). Despite being one of the most critical abilities for Second Language (L2) learners, it has generally been neglected by research and academia. Studies have shown that teaching pronunciation enhances learners’ awareness of pronunciation, capacity to practice pronunciation, and communication ability. Since the corpus was introduced throughout these decades, scholars have begun analysing, evaluating, and annotating students’ articulations (Ernestus & Warner, 2011; Livescu & Glass, 2004; Ng, Kwan, Lee, & Hain, 2017). Even though the corpus helped evaluate the quality of students’ pronunciations, its significance for pronunciation instruction should not be understated. This topic has, however, received little research attention. Gut (2005) presented a corpus-based pronunciation training method based on learner corpora, as opposed to most corpora used in previous corpus-based pronunciation studies, and proved its effectiveness. Gut’s study provided the foundation for developing the innovative Corpus-based Critical Listening and Shadowing (iCCLASH), an instructional model for pronunciation. The effectiveness of critical listening has been demonstrated by some pronunciation experts (Couper, 2011; Fraser & Perth, 1999; Thompson & Gaddes, 2005). Shadowing is generally considered a technique that improves listening and interpreting skills in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), but increasing numbers of researchers are examining its use in pronunciation instruction (Foote & McDonough, 2017; Hsieh, Dong, & Wang, 2013; Sugiarto, Prihantoro, & Edy, 2020). Few studies, however, have taken all of these factors into consideration when teaching pronunciation. The present study aims to fill this gap by combining the three methodologies or techniques and formulating an effective teaching model for pronunciation instruction or learning.

The author examines the evolution of pronunciation teaching, corpus-based teaching research, critical listening, and shadowing in the following sections using conceptual research methodology (e.g., Gilson & Goldberg, 2015; Jaakkola, 2020), which is based on the structure proposed by McGregor (2017). Identifying the theoretical foundations is the next step. Following the presentation of a conceptual model and related research propositions, the implications and limitations of the study are discussed. Tables and figures were generated using data collected from Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus. Graphs were created using Python, and literature clusters were visualised using CiteSpace (Chen, 2006).

Literature Review

Pronunciation Teaching

As English has evolved over the years, so has its teaching method. Teaching priorities and concerns about pronunciation have changed over time due to pedagogical changes (Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019). It is crucial to examine pronunciation teaching in relation to its historical and contemporary contexts to make informed decisions regarding this area of pronunciation.
teaching. As shown in Appendix, pronunciation teaching has evolved after becoming a research focus of scholars.

As a research focus or neglected topic, pronunciation in language teaching has varied with the development of mainstream teaching methodologies over the past 150 years. Wahid and Sulong (2013) contended that “the rise and fall of pronunciation instruction is associated with the dominant teaching methodology of the time” (p. 134). After a period of neglect during the era of grammar-translation, it was resurrected during the audiolingual method, and then was downplayed once more following the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). As the development of pronunciation teaching has evolved over the years, there have been some ups and downs. When the grammar-translation method was used in classrooms before the 1850s, a limited number of classroom research records tended to concentrate on topics other than pronunciation teaching. After the direct method (also known as the intuitive-imitative approach or the imitative-intuitive approach) was introduced in 1850s, some scholars began emphasising speaking abilities rather than grammar translation, even though it was not necessarily about pronunciation. Having no professional organisations or journals to share their ideas, the efforts of the innovators of the direct method in language classrooms were ineffective. Despite their minimal influence in language classrooms, their research helped pave the way for the development of pronunciation training during the following decades (Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019).

The foundation of the International Phonetic Association (IPA) contributed significantly to the development of pronunciation teaching by forming the IPA and formulating the four core principles, in addition to developing analytic-linguistic instructional techniques for teaching pronunciation during the period 1886-1889.

During the 1890s-1970s, many types of teaching methods were developed. It was also during this period that phoneticians’ activities were spurred by the rapid advancement of educational techniques. This period was marked by two prominent figures, Pike (1945), who developed a system for describing American English intonation, and Abercrombie, who published several innovative articles about pronunciation teaching between the 1940s and 1950s (e.g., 1949a, 1949b). Additionally, Abercrombie wrote articles discussing the importance of intelligibility in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms and the purpose of transcription e.g., Abercrombie (1956). However, he failed to attract the scholars’ attention at that time. Academics did not consider intelligence seriously until Derwing and Munro (2005) suggested integrating intelligibility, comprehensibility and accentedness.

From the 1950s to the mid-1980, pronunciation development suffered a low ebb (Reed & Levis, 2015). It should be noted that despite this, a four-editioned textbook was widely used in universities and institutions, and this was called the Manual of American English Pronunciation (MAEP) (Prator, 1951; Prator & Robinett, 1957, 1972, 1985). The first two editions of MAEP were released in 1951 and 1957 before the peak of the Audiolingual Method (ALM), whereas the third and fourth editions were released after AML had already begun to decline.

Developed by Skinnerian Behavioral Psychology theories, ALM emphasises spoken
accuracy in stress, rhythm, and intonation through imitation-intuition. “The teacher pays attention to pronunciation, intonation, and fluency. Correction of mistakes of pronunciation or grammar is direct and immediate.” (Richards & Rodgers, 1986, p. 58). Consequently, pronunciation teaching in this period developed to a great extent.

Since the release of the last MAEP edition in 1980, CLT has had a significant impact on pronunciation instruction. Pica (1984) observed a shift from the explicit teaching of language usage principles toward the learner’s active participation in language use. Therefore, she created resources that focus on teaching pronunciation for communicative activities. A suprasegmental approach became popular in pronunciation academia after the introduction of CLT, as researchers realised that introducing pronunciation in a second language through a segmental approach was not the most efficient method because it focused on the specific rather than the general characteristics of accent. Despite the controversy regarding which is more critical, suprasegmental or segmental features, pronunciation teaching has progressed significantly due to this debate.

The market for Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training (CAPT) has increased dramatically over the last few decades. As Pennington and Rogerson-Revell (2019) stated, “Both are having major effects on education and language learning and teaching, and so research on their effects is important” (p. 235). Using corpus-based software to support interactive learning activities students undertake with the assistance of computers is an essential application of CALL (Lüdeling & Kytö, 2008). Therefore, corpus-based pronunciation teaching remains a promising area of research that needs more attention in the future.

**Figure 1.** WoS and Scopus publications on pronunciation teaching (December 31, 2022)

Figure one illustrates how pronunciation instruction has gained much attention in recent years. Researchers are becoming more aware of the importance of pronunciation. How will teachers improve their students’ pronunciation abilities, and what strategies can be used to enhance their pronunciation outcomes? This topic has been explored extensively by some scholars who are interested in it.
According to Figure two, studies on pronunciation teaching can be concluded in Table two in the early half of this decade. Researchers are more interested in intelligibility, English as a lingua franca, online teaching and learning, language anxiety, manner assimilation, international communication and positive transference. Although some of these topics may have overlapped, they were the scholars’ top priority. Aside from that, they discuss pronunciation judgement, teacher recognition, and student speech perception in their paper.

Table 1. Research on pronunciation teaching from 2011 to 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Focus</th>
<th>Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intelligibility</td>
<td>Saito, Webb, Trofimovich and Isaacs (2016); Kang (2012); Crowther, Trofimovich, Isaacs and Saito (2015);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English as a Lingua Franca</td>
<td>Walker and Zoghbor (2015); Wach (2011); Rahimi and Ruzrokh (2016)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Teaching and Language Anxiety</td>
<td>Mompean and Fouz-González (2016); Van Schaijk, Lynch, Stoner and Sikorski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Anxiety</td>
<td>Szyszka (2011); Lee (2016); Baran-Lucarz (2014)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Towards the end of this decade, the number (in Scopus and Web of Science database) of papers on pronunciation teaching has increased to around 1000, twice as many as there were from 2011 to 2017.

Referring to Figure three, intelligibility remains the top priority, and English as a lingua franca remains a significant concern. In addition to the aforementioned topics, academics are also interested in speech recognition, computer-aided instruction, orthographic learning, machine learning and translanguaging.
Table three lists the topics and the researchers who are interested in them. Although Gut (2005) proved that corpus-based pronunciation training works, few studies have combined corpora with pronunciation training.

Table 2. Research on pronunciation teaching from 2017 to 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Focuses</th>
<th>Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intelligibility</td>
<td>Gluhareva and Prieto (2017); Galante and Thomson (2017); Suzukida and Saito (2021)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech Recognition</td>
<td>Kim, Seltzer, Li and Zhao (2018); Haikun, Shiying, Xinsheng and Yue (2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Aided Orthographic Learning</td>
<td>(Chen &amp; Li, 2016); Spaulding, Chen, Ali, Kulinski, Breazeal and Acm (2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthographic Learning</td>
<td>Li, Li and Wang (2020); Wegener, Wang, Nation and Castles (2020)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4. Corpus-based teaching research from WoS and Scopus (2018-2022)**

The WoS and Scopus databases contain several corpus-based and corpus-assisted studies, however, not all of them pertain to teaching or research. Between 2018 and 2022, more than a thousand studies involving corpus-based research have been published in either WoS or Scopus. Depending on their relevance, only the first thousand papers were downloaded. The number of records left after deduplication was 1469. Considering that “corpus” and “teaching” were the keywords for the search, it is not surprising that teaching appears as the first label. Figure four shows a summary of these studies. It seems that researchers are more interested in academic writing (Dong & Lu, 2020; Gardner & Han, 2018), data-driven learning (Crosthwaite, Wong, & Cheung, 2019; Otto, 2021), learner corpus (Davidson, Yamada, Fernandez-Mira, Carando, Gutierrez, & Sagae, 2020; Huang, Kubelec, Keng, & Hsu, 2018), vocabulary and lexical issues (Lu & Dang, 2022; McKee, Safar, & Alexander, 2021), and teacher training (Chen, Flowerdew, & Anthony, 2019; Ma, Tang, & Lin, 2021). They have demonstrated that corpus learning is beneficial to L2 language acquisition. However, few of these studies included pronunciation instruction.

The usefulness of corpus-based methods for teaching and mastering pronunciation has yet to receive much prior study. Despite this, some data suggest that there could be advantages. According to Gut (2005), students who took the corpus-assisted pronunciation training course demonstrated significant improvements in their ability to comprehend the prosodic meaning and place the correct stress in pronunciation after two stages of trials: corpus in a pronunciation training
course and corpus in a data-driven approach. In reviewing a few research studies, Gut (2014) also concluded that the corpus-based approach to teaching pronunciation had some advantages over other methods. Cao (2016) detailed the creation and application of a programme that enables instructors and students to compare the speech patterns of native English speakers and Mandarin speakers of English using an English speech corpus of Mandarin learners. It is crucial to consider how corpora might be used in classroom instruction for language acquisition.

**Critical Listening**

First introduced by Fraser, critical listening allows “learners to compare and contrast incorrect pronunciation with correct pronunciation” after listening to the audio, especially their own voice (Fraser, 2001, p. 45). Fraser and Couper investigated the theoretical underpinnings of critical listening and demonstrated its effectiveness in learners’ pronunciation development. Fraser (2001) provided a framework that explains how beginners of English language learning can be helped to learn pronunciation as part of a structured language course by providing teaching principles. In her research, she defined beginners as “adults in the early stages of learning English as a second language” (p. 50). Some of these “beginners” may have a basic understanding of grammar and vocabulary, as well as some advanced knowledge, but may not be adept at correct pronunciation. The beginner is similar to the learners in general universities as opposed to the learners at prestigious universities in countries where English is taught as a second language. They are considered intermediate learners regarding English proficiency, however, they do not have extensive knowledge of pronunciation, as they have not studied it systematically before.

Fraser suggested that to determine if a student’s version of a given statement was correct, it would be ideal for students to listen to recordings of their voices, even if they could say the same thing repeatedly. She also advised playing pre-recorded audio of other non-native speakers and allowing the students to analyse their pronunciation if conducting the class was challenging. Furthermore, Couper emphasised that the teacher could have the students form a group to listen to their partner’s recordings and determine if the recordings were accurate. The teacher should then assist the students in identifying the salient differences. According to them, this method has been proven to be effective for intermediate learners attempting to learn pronunciation.

Currently, critical teaching is applied primarily to teaching pronunciation (Couper, 2015; Fraser, 2009) and listening skills (Ferrari-Bridgers & Murolo, 2022; Kazu & Demiralp, 2017). Several studies have demonstrated that critical listening can enhance teaching. In light of limited current research, more empirical testing is needed.

**Shadowing**

As suggested by Kadota (2019), shadowing can assist L2 learners in listening intently, repeating the content vocally, and paying attention to what they hear. Cherry, Halle and Jakobson (1953) described it for the first time by saying that it involved listening and repeating words as accurately and quickly as possible. Although it has also been successful in learning foreign
languages, the approach was widely utilised in training simultaneous interpreters (Lambert, 1992).

There are two imitation techniques: shadowing and mirroring. These techniques differ in that shadowing involves repeating along with or slightly following a speaker but not mirroring their movements, whereas mirroring involves mimicking the speaker’s gestures, facial expressions, and body movements while simultaneously repeating them. In light of this, shadowing is more suitable for training pronunciation.

Figure five illustrates the trends of shadowing publications from the Web of Science Core Collection. As of 2019, increasing research has been conducted on shadowing as a valuable teaching tool to improve students’ language abilities, such as listening, speaking, reading and pronunciation, since Lambert introduced it into simultaneous interpreting in 1992. Before 2016, scholars focused primarily on interpreting, and after 2016, they shifted their focus to listening. Pronunciation was not emphasised by many of them.

Several articles have recently described shadowing, particularly in Japan, but many have not been peer-reviewed, so more empirical study is required (Pennington & Rogerson-Revell, 2019). In addition, few of these studies have combined critical listening and shadowing with pronunciation instruction. Thus it could be beneficial to look into the effectiveness of doing so.

**Innovative Corpus-based Critical Listening and Shadowing Model**

By integrating the three distinct ideas of the corpus (the learner spoken corpus), critical listening, and shadowing into pronouncing instruction, an iCLASH model is developed. Initially, the reason for selecting the audio files from the learner spoken corpus was explained. There are several types of corpus. Learner corpora consist of the writing or speech of second-language learners (McEnery, Xiao, & Tono, 2006). Spoken corpora are collections of audio and/or video files or transcriptions of spoken languages (Andersen, 2010). Hence, a learner spoken corpus is a collection of speech data (audio or video) of learners who are acquiring a second language. Following Fraser (2001), the teacher may play pre-recorded audio of other non-native speakers and allow the students to analyse their pronunciation. It took a lot of work for teachers to access pre-recorded audio of other non-native speakers in the past, however, the learner spoken corpus offered a convenient alternative.
In addition, the author wishes to emphasise the importance of critical listening in this model. Cognitive phonology suggests that L2 learners benefit from continuous exposure to the Native Language (NL) to understand the differences between the L2 phonological system and the NL phonological system since simple explanations and practice are insufficient (Fraser, 2006, 2010). The work Langacker (1987) and Taylor (2002) did contribute to Cognitive Phonology, a subfield of Cognitive Grammar in Cognitive Linguistics. Following the cognitive phonology theory, critical listening is more effective in improving learners’ phonological awareness when utilising learner spoken corpora.

Finally, the author elucidates the necessity of shadowing in this model. Krashen emphasised the significance of linguistic input in learning a second language. He also believed that sufficient understandable input might facilitate learning a second language. In 1985, Swain proposed the output hypothesis which could be considered a complement to the input hypothesis. The output hypothesis suggested that comprehensible input played a significant role in the process of SLA, but it was insufficient to develop learners’ second language proficiency comprehensively. According to Swain (1985), when people listen or read, which is called input, they may not need to go through syntax processing and can understand the meaning based on the context or other relevant information. In the output process, when people speak or write, they can make themselves more understandable by arranging the words properly, which is called syntax structure. Gass (1988) improved the model by suggesting that there were five levels in a learner’s conversion of ambient speech (input) to output, as seen in Figure six: (1) apperceived input, (2) comprehended input, (3) intake, (4) integration, and (5) output.

![Figure 6](image)

*Figure 6. A framework for second language studies (Adopted from Gass, 1988, p. 200)*

According to this concept, students who desire to acquire a second language naturally require both intelligible input and comprehensible output. Language output is crucial for developing language competency, along with understandable input.
Kadota (2019) states that shadowing is an output impact that can contribute to adequate output-driven practice, as shown in Figure seven. Therefore, it may be considered as a potent method for enhancing learners’ pronunciation abilities.

Based on the previously discussed points, Figure eight presents an illustration of the iCCLASH model.

Computers, particularly corpora, are useful in learning second languages in numerous studies carried out previously. Among those, only a few focused on linguistic skills, such as pronunciation. Few studies have combined shadowing and critical listening, two effective methods of improving learners’ listening, speaking, and translating abilities. This paradigm combines both of these methods with corpus-assisted instruction.

Figure eight summarises some of the significant concepts. The theoretical underpinning of the study was SLA-based input and output theory, as was previously mentioned. It illustrates the relationship between the research procedures and how the ideas influence the construction of the model. This model should be taught over at least 12 weeks. All aspects of teaching are represented in the blue box, including pre-tests, in-class activities, out-of-class activities, and post-tests. The
dashed box represents the study's direction, the idea that motivated the study. Pre- and post-tests compared students’ performance before and after the teaching plan is implemented. Each step of the in-class exercises is in line with the five stages of the input and output SLA framework proposed by Gass (1988).

Additionally, the assessment step of this process model, which entails accessing and analysing the experiences of students participating in corpus-assisted pronunciation training, needs to be highlighted. Oral and listening tests are part of the pre- and post-tests. Understanding the phenomenon accurately and thoroughly requires the use of a variety of instruments. A questionnaire and interview are used in conjunction with corpus-assisted pronunciation training to evaluate the effectiveness of pairing critical listening and shadowing.

**Discussion**

The role of pronunciation teaching in SLA research has waxed and waned along with the evolution of the teaching methods as an overlooked research topic or a study focus of scholars. Pennington (2021) asserted that it is “safe” to conclude that the value of pronunciation instruction in the classroom will not be contested (p. 3). However, there have been few studies on how to teach it. By examining the literature, the study aims at developing a valuable model for pronunciation instruction that may offer helpful suggestions.

**Strengths and Weaknesses of the Previous Studies**

Previous studies on pronunciation teaching have made significant contributions over the past 150 years, such as the IPA, the MAEP, etc. With the advent of technology, pronunciation instruction in the classroom can also be facilitated through the CAPT method. The first corpus-based pronunciation training method was demonstrated by Gut (2005) after corpora were widely used in linguistic research, and she provided evidence to support her claim in 2014 that corpus-based pronunciation training has some advantages over other teaching methods. Couper (2009, 2011, 2015) and Fraser (2001, 2009) developed a critical listening strategy by providing a theoretical foundation to support their arguments. Kadota (2019) systematically introduced shadowing as a practical technique in SLA and concluded that intensive reading positively impacted learners’ output performance. But he did not emphasise the possible eminent impact of shadowing on pronunciation teaching. In conclusion, no research has linked one of them with another in the field of pronunciation research. Therefore, this is of significance to the area.

**Limitations**

Potential limitations to this conceptual model include sample bias, an insufficient sample, the selection of corpus-assisted teaching materials, the way to conduct pre- and post-test, and the quality of the after-class activities. Further evidence need to be collected in order to further validate or refine this innovative teaching approach.
Implications of the Model

The iCCLASH was an updated model based on the author’s previous research (Qian & Deris, in press) by providing more pedagogical instructions for teachers and shadowing principles for teachers and language learners. This model has the following implications:

1. Incorporating critical listening and shadowing into corpus-based pronunciation teaching is intended to greatly improve learners’ performance.
2. To contribute to future theoretical studies, it presents the theories based on the three separate elements.
3. Detailed instructions for in-class procedures and explicit principles for after-class activities follow an evident process for conducting this research.

Recommendations

The model is designed for first-year students majoring in English. This method needs to be tested for other levels of L2 learners, including beginners or those with employment-related pronunciation needs. Teachers’ interventions should also be compared at different stages of instruction. Finally, the impact of students’ perceptions of this teaching model on their learning performance must also be assessed.

Conclusion

As a result, this research investigates a literature review of corpus-based learning, critical listening, and shadowing, all based on the reasoning and justifications supporting the proposed model. To maximise the effectiveness of corpus-based pronunciation instruction, the iCCLASH model incorporates the two instructional methods. There is a reasonable expectation that this will significantly improve students’ performance in terms of pronunciation. The model’s implications, limitations and future directions were discussed to give the instructor more inspiration and remind them to prepare for any difficulties they could have while using the model.

Acknowledgement

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### Appendix

#### Development of Pronunciation Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct/Reform method: 1850s-1880s</td>
<td>Louvier (1863, 1889) and Viëtor (1905) resisted the grammatic-philological method and suggested that language learning requires a thorough understanding of pronunciation, an intense study of reading, and an inductive approach to teaching grammar.</td>
<td>Louvier 1863; Viëtor 1889, 1905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International phonetic alphabet: 1887</td>
<td>Passy (1888) published the first phonetic alphabet of the modern era.</td>
<td>Passy 1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytic-linguistic approach: 1880s-1890s</td>
<td>The analytical-linguistic approach supported listening, imitation, and production through tools and information, such as a “phonetic alphabet, articulatory descriptions, vocal apparatus charts, contrastive information”, and other types of data (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, &amp; Goodwin, 1996, p. 2).</td>
<td>Celce-Murcia et al. 1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intonation system: 1945</td>
<td>The American English intonation system was first described by Pike (1945), an early innovator.</td>
<td>Pike 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of intelligibility and the use of transcription: 1950s</td>
<td>According to Abercrombie (1949a, 1949b, 1956), the role of intelligibility and the use of transcription in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms were integral to his innovative discussion of pronunciation teaching.</td>
<td>Abercrombie 1949a, 1949b, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiolingual Method (ALM): 1960-1975</td>
<td>The Audiolingual Method is “A method developed in the United States based on behaviourist learning theory. It emphasises the importance of pattern practice through mimicry and repetition to develop correct ‘habits’.” (Ellis, 2015, p. 337)</td>
<td>Ellis 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Minimal pair: 1972, 1975

As a result of empirical findings, minimal pair theory has been widely applied to teaching pronunciation contrasts in first- and second-language contexts (Bowen, 1972).

**Bowen** 1972

### Communicative language teaching (CLT): 1970s-1980s

In the mid- to late 1970s, when the Communicative Approach to language teaching took off (Brumfit & Johnson, 1979; Widdowson, 1978), most of the previously used methods and materials for teaching pronunciation at the segmental level were categorically rejected on theoretical and practical grounds as being inconsistent with teaching language as communication.

**Widdowson** 1978; **Brumfit & Johnson** 1979

### Segmental/Suprasegmental debate: 1980s-1990s

Segmental features tend to receive more attention in ESL pronunciation classes, such as the presentation of minimal pairs, which makes it more difficult for students to recognise the linguistic significance of more general, high-level setting features (Esling & Wong, 1983). The priorities within the sound system will be directed to a more focused emphasis on stress, rhythm, intonation, etc. (suprasegmentals) and how they contribute to the meaning of discourse, as well as the importance of vowels and consonants (segmentals) (Morley, 1991).

**Esling & Wong** 1983; **Morley** 1991

### Computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT): 1980s-1990s

As a motivator for students and instructors alike, computer-based visual display equipment has a solid subjective value, but in the teaching of pronunciation, such technology is perhaps most useful as a complement rather than a replacement for the interaction between teacher and student (Stenson, Downing, Smith, & Smith, 1992).

**Stenson et al.** 1992
Exploring Gifted Secondary School Students' Needs for English Learning in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract
This exploratory paper investigated female gifted secondary school students' needs for English Learning in Saudi Arabia. It has addressed a gap in the literature regarding English Learning needs analysis of gifted secondary school students in Saudi Arabia. It tries to answer the question: What are the needs of those students? The professional needs for English learning were collected through a need analysis questionnaire addressed to gifted secondary school students in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Al-Baha in Saudi Arabia. The data analysis techniques for the descriptive statistics were frequency count, percentage, means, and standard deviations. The results revealed that gifted students need to learn English primarily to access the vast body of international scientific knowledge and research, to get international certificates in English, and to deal with the media, technology, and the Internet. In addition, this study specified students' perceptions about the characteristics that should be included in English class, the difficulties they faced while studying language, and their suggestions for better English learning strategies. Furthermore, gifted students preferred to learn English from activities that resemble daily life situations and to learn at their own pace. The research results indicated that gifted students face difficulties in class, such as making mistakes and feeling bored because they already know the information. They have demonstrated a need to insert virtual learning environments into the curriculum. The study recommended that the Ministry of Education enable gifted students to study a tailored gifted curriculum in English and activate enrichment in and out of activities.

Keywords: English, Learning, gifted, giftedness, needs analysis

Introduction

Gifted education aims to provide Gifted Students (GSs) with appropriate opportunities to maximize their learning potential and make meaningful social contributions (Renzulli, 2012). GSs have the right to receive high-quality instruction in an educational system that meets their abilities and needs. Some GSs have shown high intellectual abilities and are capable of extraordinary performance and accomplishment because of their advanced creativity (Alharbi, 2021). GSs require special attention, in and out of school, to ensure fulfilling learning needs and provide opportunities to perform at a level that matches their potential (Kerr, 2009). Failing to meet the needs of GSs contributes to society's loss regarding future contributions (Alharbi, 2021).

The uniqueness of the gifted requires modification in parenting, teaching, and counseling to develop optimally (Boland & Gross, 2007). GSs should continually utilize their high abilities to keep developing their academic and thinking skills to prepare for future challenges. GSs require well-designed curricula and programs to develop their full potential. However, identifying appropriate curricula for GSs is a universal challenge (Van Tassel-Baska, 2008). Therefore, GS needs ample educational opportunities and services which cannot be supplied with regular programs (Alelyani, 2021). Additionally, providing GSs with curricula that satisfy their needs demands trained and qualified teachers (Finley, 2008).

The needs of English as foreign language learners who have special needs like GSs have been a challenging task in many countries today (Do & Nguyen, 2021). These needs must be analyzed to understand the necessary changes to improve the curriculum, obtain deep insights, and provide more significant inputs about language learners' current and future needs (Cowling, 2007).

The needs of English as foreign language learners who have special needs like GSs have been a challenging task in many countries today (Do & Nguyen, 2021). These needs must be analyzed to understand the necessary changes to improve the curriculum, obtain deep insights, and provide more significant inputs about language learners' current and future needs (Cowling, 2007).

The GSs require special care and proper planning for their educational needs according to their abilities (Kerr, 2009). The unique needs of GSs have only recently begun to be recognized in Saudi Arabia. However, there has been a failure in providing necessary services to GSs. GSs in Saudi Arabia studied the same English language curriculum as regular students and were taught by untrained teachers of gifted education. There are some special programs for GSs, such as summer enrichment and weekend programs, but they do not include English Language (Alamer, 2014).

Therefore, students' learning needs should be considered sufficiently because their engagement will be increased when course plans and English lessons are tailored to their interests, needs, and current level of English proficiency (Brown, 2009). The current study attempts to determine the needs for EL among gifted secondary school students in Saudi Arabia by seeking the perceptions of gifted Saudi EFL students regarding their needs to learn English.

Over the past decades, research on the needs analysis of English learners has been done, such as Loan and Dan (2018) and Zafar (2020). However, previous studies on the needs analysis of English learners have not been rigorous or conclusive. Furthermore, although the gifted secondary school system has been in operation for several years in Saudi Arabia, a few studies have been conducted on EFL students' learning needs in Saudi gifted schools. The current research has addressed a gap in the literature regarding EL needs analysis of gifted secondary school students in Saudi Arabia. It tries to investigate the needs of gifted secondary school students for English learning in Saudi Arabia by exploring their professional needs, and the difficulties they face while studying the language and collecting students' suggestions for better English learning strategies. In light of these aims the following questions were formulated:

1. What are the professional needs of gifted secondary school students for English learning?
2. What are gifted secondary school students' perceptions about the characteristics that should be included in English class?
3. What are the difficulties gifted secondary school students face while studying the language?
4. What are gifted secondary school students' suggestions for better English learning strategies?

The findings of this study, practically and theoretically, are supposed to:

1. Provide valuable insights into the English learning teaching setting which provides the basis for organizing in-class activities and helps bridge the gap between what is taught currently and what needs to be taught.
2. Provide current evidence of gifted Saudi students' English learning needs and the degree to which their needs are met concerning English practices provided by teachers in the classroom.
3. Apply to evaluating English teaching-learning in gifted schools in Saudi Arabia, which will help stakeholders in Saudi Arabia, including school administrators and gifted coordinators, better understand learners.
4. Play an essential role in language curriculum planning and development since a program will be more successful if it aims to meet learners' perceived needs.
5. Be used as a premise for further studies in the settings of gifted schools in Saudi Arabia and beyond in needs analysis.
6. Allow educational professionals to decide how to provide additional support and training to Saudi teachers regarding how to meet the needs of gifted students in schools.

In this paper, the researchers presented a literature review along with an investigation of previous studies to identify the gap in research. It was followed by an overview of this paper's research method, participants, and instruments. Finally, the results, discussion, recommendations, and suggestions were presented.

**Literature Review**

*Gifted in Saudi Arabia*

There is no universal definition of giftedness. The Saudi Ministry of Education defined gifted students as students who have unique capabilities and skills or exhibit outstanding performance in comparison with their peers in one or more areas that society appreciates, especially in the areas of mental excellence, creative thinking, educational attainment, and unique ten skills and abilities, who require special education services that do not correspond to those offered in the regular school curriculum (Mawhiba, 2022). Operationally, the concept of gifted students in this study refers to secondary school students who performed Mawhiba Test and are enrolled in Mawhiba schools in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia has been supporting the field of giftedness for many years. King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for Giftedness and Creativity "Mawhiba," the equivalent Arabic word for gifted, is a non-profit endowment organization in Saudi Arabia, by Royal Order No. 109, dated 13/5/1420H. It aims to identify and nurture giftedness and creativity in scientific fields. It focuses on fostering those gifted and creative in the scientific and technical areas. A strategic partnership was established in 2011 with Mawhiba, the Ministry of education and the National Center for Measurement "Qiyas" to develop and implement a "National Program for Gifted Identification" through standard tools and standards. The sponsorship of over 54,000 Saudi students of both genders by "Mawhiba" led to 597 medals and prizes in competitions, over
16,000 ideas developed, and 15 patents acquired. Over 1000 Saudi students were accepted into the world's top 50 prestigious universities in distinguished disciplines (Mawhiba, 2022).

According to Aljuhaiman (2016), the Mawhiba institution created a definition of a GS based on the view of giftedness as a multidimensional construct. GSs possess aptitude, 97 unique capabilities, or outstanding performance. They are particularly relevant to mental superiority, educational attainment, creativity, innovation, and unique talents and capabilities. Alherby (2012) mentioned that the nomination methods for the Mawhiba program are student self-nomination and teacher or parent nominations. The various aspects of the nomination process, including test registration, are conducted online through a portal system developed as part of the project. Then, the nominated students are offered an aptitude test. After that, GSs are placed either in a gifted school or gifted classes in a regular school. If the giftedness is not negatively affected, GSs can study regularly with their typical peers and receive pull-out programs and enrichment besides school time.

According to Alfaiz, Alfaid and Aljughaiman (2022), the Saudi GSs can fruitfully benefit from several of Mawhiba's programs and services including: (1) enrichment programs, (2) abroad summer enrichment focusing on STEM, (3) limited self-contained classroom program in which GSs are taught regular curricula and then received extracurricular focused mainly on STEM, (4) pull out program that promotes thinking strategies and personal skills, (5) evening and Saturday program for GSs who does not receive services in their schools to nurture them, (6) there are 91 GE centers around Saudi Arabia (41 for males and 50 for females) focusing on creative problem solving and research skills programs, (7) limited intermediate and high gifted schools, (8) mentorship program to connect GSs (15-18 years) with distinguished supervisors (mostly faculty members) to develop students' abilities and skills based on their interests and to develop their scientific research skills and problem-solving strategies, to prepare the students to participate in the National Olympiad for Scientific Creativity, (9) national and international Olympiads and competitions program through intensive training to honorably represent the country, and (10) acceleration twice during their journey in the general education system from grade 4th to 5th and/or from grade 7th to 8th, finally (11) professional development workshops for teachers.

The Advanced Supplementary Curriculum (ASC) textbooks are the enrichment curriculum Mawhiba designed for Saudi gifted in sciences, mathematics, English, and information technology. It aims to build generalization, reasoning, thinking skills, self-reflection, communication, and dialogue besides values, attitudes, attributes, inquiry, risk-taking, creativity, trust, mental openness, and collaboration through numerous advanced activities aligned with the Ministry's Curriculum. (Mawhiba, 2022). Alamer (2014) stated that the English language is not a means of presenting enrichment STEAM to Saudi GSs in school. Unfortunately, the situation is still the same now, as inquiring many English language teachers and supervisors around Saudi Arabia, ASC is not at hand and is not yet applicable even in Mawhiba's specialized schools. Gifted students are limited to the ministry curricula that are addressed to regular learners. They include McGraw Hill productions "We Can" for primary stages, "Super Goal" for the intermediate stage, and "Mega Goal" for high school. *MegaGoal* is a dynamic American English series for international communication in joyful, motivating, success-oriented content. It is designed to suit teenagers and young adults as secondary school students. Structure and vocabulary are introduced gradually and recycled while reading, and cross-cultural content and projects are related to real-world situations. Each semester, secondary students have to deal with vital and updated topics in the six units of the student's book (Santos & O'Sullivan, 2021).
Difficulties Gifted Students Face while Studying the English Language

GSs experience significant difficulties when learning a language due to the lack of additional resources for gifted learners. It is left to the schools and individual teachers to deal with the peculiarities of gifted learners. The most common problem areas for gifted children, according to Davidson Academy (2021), are sensitivities and overexcitement. Gifted individuals exhibit greater emotional sensitivity and awareness. Expression of emotional sensitivity can lead to frustration, sorrow, or withdrawal. Gifted children often display excitabilities in their intellectual and psychomotor areas, interrupt their teachers with unstoppable questions, and have adverse reactions to intense stimuli in the psychomotor, sensual, emotional, academic, and imaginative domains at school and at home. Instead of learning part-to-whole, GSs prefer learning whole-to-part. These features require teachers of the gifted to be prepared and aware of the complexity and variety of giftedness they are handling. Because giftedness is not a significant issue in the curricula of initial teacher training, David (2020) assumed that teachers are not professionally prepared to meet the needs of GSs. Abu Bakar and Ishak (2016) stated that gifted social and emotional states are disrupted due to a lack of decision-making skills. Consequently, gifted people seek counseling as they consistently express issues related to their unique psychological aspects and indicate that they need approaches to enhance their academic achievement and decide about their future.

Regarding the challenges facing Saudi gifted learners, Alamer (2014) stated that despite some special programs for the gifted, such as summer enrichment programs and weekend programs, gifted learners still face challenges as an uneven balance between STEAM and other subjects. In many schools, they have been taught by non-specialist or untrained GE teachers. Moreover, Saudi teachers' preparation and training programs for regular students in general and GSs need a lot of work from the Ministry of education and the teachers themselves.

Needs Analysis

Brown (2009) defined needs analysis as "the systematic collection and analysis of all relevant information necessary in the language learning requirements of the students within the context of the particular institutions involved in the learning situation" (p 267). Operationally, the term needs analysis refers to the learners' professional needs, preferred characteristics of English class, difficulties learners face while studying language, and suggestions for better EFL learning strategies.

Identification and evaluation of needs are integral parts of a needs analysis definition. A needs analysis help teachers identify students' knowledge and skills gaps. The benefits of needs analysis, as Morrison (2020) highlighted, include (a) Identifying knowledge and skills gaps and becoming proactive in approaching potential issues before they become actual problems, (b) Helping prepare training, and making informed decisions based on actual data, (c) Identify the areas that need to be prioritized, and (d) Identify the type of training needed.

In the case of GSs, the benefits of identifying learners' needs are of great importance to providing them with actual and functional requirements rather than what is expected from them. According to Al-Hamlan and Baniabdellrahman (2015), need analysis is a process that involves the development of the academic activities of an individual or a group of learners. A needs analysis that focuses on language programs incorporates curriculum development. The approach requires instructors to identify knowledge and skills gaps that can be used to change the curriculum to improve English students' outcomes in Saudi Arabia.
In the context of Saudi Arabia, Alelyani (2021) reviewed the special educational needs of gifted Saudi Arabia students' literature. Reviewing the literature included the significant concerns of cognitive, social-emotional, psychomotor, affective, intuitive, and diverse gifted needs.

Alharbi (2021) investigated the attitudes of Saudi elementary school general education teachers toward GSs and GE and their perceptions of giftedness. One hundred forty-one teachers participated through an online questionnaire about their attitudes plus perceptions. The results revealed that participants would support the needs of GSs, and some special services, yet they were not informed about the GSs' challenges and were unaware of the unique affective needs of the gifted. Still, they did exhibit some understanding of giftedness as a multifaceted construct and some positive social and emotional characteristics.

In a case study, Almalky (2021) provided evidence for developing programs to prepare school principals to meet the needs of GSs. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with eight school principals who run gifted programs, eight GE teachers and coordinators, and 51 GSs were interviewed, then analyzed four policy documents. The findings revealed a lack of essential knowledge and skills among principals who deal with GE. However, principals of high-performing cases tended to be more aware of addressing the needs of GSs as they are instructional leaders, compared to low-performing building managers. The study recommended that the Saudi GE policy be urgently revised and that the responsibilities of principals towards GSs be clearly defined.

English Language Learning Needs

Identifying students' beliefs in learning English, their expectations, and how they evaluate their English ability is essential. In the case of verbal gifted, Yaafouri (2019) stated that the inclusive framework for finding gifted and talented English language learners must base on defining comprehensively exceptional ability that encompasses a range of cognitive, social and emotional, artistic, linguistic, and logical reasoning capabilities.

The first step in performing a learner needs analysis is investigating individuals' backgrounds (Irwansyah & Azis, 2018). During this phase, some elements to analyze are educational experiences, English Language Proficiency (ELP) scores, and reading and writing skills to compare them with the state's ELP standards. In addition, English learners' need analysis involves determining the learners' academic and language skills. Mahbub (2019) states that English students' intellectual and language capabilities help teachers assess their knowledge and skills gaps. The final step of conducting a needs analysis of English language students is determining their strengths and interests to determine the level of academic assistance required by the students.

GSs need to fulfill their social, emotional, creative, and physical needs and their cognitive desires through well-designed education to be fitted to the student's intellectual level and areas of giftedness. There is a need for a supportive environment that fully polishes the extraordinary, targeted input to realize high potential. Last, professional teachers, counselors, and supervisors must understand the accelerated developmental path and respond to gifted students' unique emotional needs (Alelyani, 2021). Phuong (2020) referred to the significance of professional needs as a wide array of English professionals needs to equip learners with suitable and technical facets needed at workplaces for proper communication with clients, employers, and colleagues.

Do and Nguyen (2021) attempted to find out the needs for English learning among gifted high school students in Vietnam by investigating the main question: How do these students report their needs for English learning? One hundred eighty English-majored students from five gifted
exploring gifted secondary school students' needs for English
Manasrah, Alzobiani, Alharthi & Alelyani

high schools in five provinces of Vietnam participated in a questionnaire-interview survey. The participants revealed their need for English because they needed it for future employment and cross-cultural/national communications for long-term purposes. Participants' needs were not very satisfactorily met in the classroom. They wanted to practice more English speaking and listening skills.

Al-Hamlan and Baniabdelrahman (2015) examined the needs of secondary school students related to learning English in Saudi Arabia through a questionnaire of 400 learners (males and females) in the second grade in secondary schools in Riyadh city, plus semi-structured interviews with eight students. It has been found that students should learn English primarily to communicate effectively, speak fluently, and obtain a job. They had lower speaking and listening skills than they did in writing, reading, and grammar. Students also preferred additional resources, allowing them to choose exercises, work in pairs, and translate unfamiliar words. The findings referred to the teachers' ignorance of students' differences, which frustrated students in class.

Previous studies have been vital to this research because they have provided rational background highlighting that gifted secondary school students require additional care. In addition, previous studies have provided insights into the diverse English language requirements, including grammar and vocabulary. Furthermore, the studies have helped us understand how to perform a needs analysis of learners.

The previous studies used different instructional approaches to analyze students' needs. Most of these studies focused on general cognitive, social-emotional, psychomotor, affective, and intuitive needs, but none is specified for English learning. Instruments often used to collect need analysis data are questionnaires, interviews, observation, modules, or combinations for young and adult learners. The results revealed that gifted students are not satisfied because their unique needs are not taken care of by the GE, principals, coordinators, or unprepared teachers. One shared point is dissatisfaction, mainly because they need more space to practice, as Do and Nguyen (2021), to cope with educational and emotional challenges, as stated by Alelyani (2021). Moreover, it is essential to acknowledge that learning differences and preferable activities become outstanding issues, as in Al-Hamlan and Baniabdelrahman (2015), plus raising the awareness of the school staff to deal with the gifted uniqueness as in Almalky (2021). The final remark here is that giftedness in the context of foreign language learning in Saudi Arabia is still an underexplored issue that needs thorough deliberation.

Method

This study aimed to explore the needs of gifted secondary school students for English learning in Saudi Arabia. The study adopts a quantitative method to analyze the English needs of gifted secondary school students. According to Creswell (2014), quantitative research is focused on describing and explaining the phenomenon under investigation by collecting data analyzed using mathematical methods. Accordingly, this study was designed as survey research with data collected through questionnaires. This design enables the researcher to generalize a study's findings beyond the situation involved (Mertler, 2022). The research design is based on questions from the researchers' observations and the literature review. Students' perceptions regarding their needs for EL were examined using a questionnaire and the study's data were analyzed using SPSS 28 and descriptive statistics for students' perceptions.
Participants

The study population consisted of all female gifted secondary school students enrolled in Mawhiba Schools in Riyadh, Jeddah, and Al-Baha for the academic year 2021-2022. The sample comprises approximately 118 randomly chosen students between 15 and 19 years of age from five gifted secondary schools to respond to the questionnaire. The study was conducted during the third term of the academic year 2021-2022. Among 118 participants, 41 were from Riyadh (34.7%), 25 were from Jeddah (21.2%), and 52 were from Al-Baha (44.1%) (Table one).

Table 1  Data of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riyadh</td>
<td>First grade</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second grade</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third grade</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeddah</td>
<td>First grade</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second grade</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third grade</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Baha</td>
<td>First grade</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second grade</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Third grade</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>118</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above has shown that the majority of students are from Al-Baha at a 44.1% followed by the percentage of students from Riyadh at 34.7% and the number of participants from Jeddah is the least with only 21.2%.

Participants were asked to answer two questions to collect primary data regarding their English language background. Responses to these questions revealed that most students did not live in an English-speaking country and that the number of students who had not taken English courses before is larger than the number of students who had as shown in Table two.

Table 2. Responses to primary data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Have you ever lived in an English-speaking country?</td>
<td>7.60%</td>
<td>92.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Have you taken any English courses before?</td>
<td>46.6%</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Instruments

The research instrument was constructed by the researchers based on the relevant literature and previous studies that tackled the students' needs in English language learning (Al-Hamlan & Baniabdelrahman, 2015; Do & Nguyen, 2021). A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was used and 31 items were included and divided into five main sections. Section one regarding personal information. Section two explored the necessities for learning English, whereas Section three focused on the characteristics that should be included in English class. Section four investigated their difficulties in English learning, and Section five asked for suggestions. The questionnaire was
translated into Arabic to avoid misunderstanding since all respondents are non-English native speakers. To address the face validity of the questionnaire, the researchers invited six knowledgeable ELT experts to give their feedback on the questionnaire. Then, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient has been used to assess the reliability of the questionnaire. The test result was α = 0.799 (> 0.7, the required coefficient).

**Research Procedures**

The questionnaires of the study were distributed during the third term of the Academic year 2021-2022 to gifted secondary school students online. Students were allowed to answer and submit their responses within a week. Responses were then collected and analyzed using the SPSS program. The mean for each item and the standard deviation was calculated in the analysis process.

**Statistical Methods for Data Analysis**

Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software version 28.0.1. The main data analysis techniques used in this study are frequency count, percentage, means, and standard deviations. Descriptive statistics tests on the data (with mean scores level: Very high = 4.5 – 5; High = 3.6 – 4.4; Medium = 2.5 – 3.5; Low = 1.0 – 2.4).

**Results**

The results are organized into four sections (a) students' necessities for English learning, (b) their perceptions about the characteristics of English class, (c) the difficulties that face them in English learning, and (d) their suggestions for better English learning.

**The First Question Result**

Table three shows the participant's responses to the first question. The respondents have shown similar estimates for the items in this section. The total mean score for this section is 4.49, which means that the respondents highly estimated these items.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To pass the University enrollment exam.</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To participate in different international workshops, conferences, or programs.</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. To get a prize in international competitions and Olympiads such as &quot;ISEF.&quot;</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. To get international certificates in English (IELTS, TOEIC, TOEFL)</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>.74</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. To study abroad in the future.</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. To deal with the media, technology, and the Internet.</td>
<td>4.55</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. To access the vast body of international scientific knowledge and research.</td>
<td>4.73</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. To share my research and inventions internationally.</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Mean</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3. Students' responses to the first question**
The Second Question Result

Table four reveals the participant's responses to the items of English class characteristics. The respondents have shown different estimates for the items in this section. The total mean is 4.23, which means the respondents agree on these items.

Table 4. Students' responses to the second question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. English lessons should include research-based activities such as 'presentations.'</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. English lessons should include authentic problem-based activities such as 'to be financial advisors.'</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The activities should resemble daily life situations.</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. English lessons should be evaluated according to projects, assignments, class participation, and performance, not by a final exam.</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The teacher should allow me to select appropriate texts, course materials, and other resources.</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The teacher should provide me with opportunities to work at my own pace.</td>
<td>4.65</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I should perform the activities individually.</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. English lessons should be introduced in a laboratory instead of the classroom.</td>
<td>3.80</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Mean</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Third Question Result

Table five indicates the participant's responses to the difficulties they face in the English language. The respondents have shown different estimates. However, the total mean score for this section is 2.69, meaning that the respondents have difficulties in English. Only one item with a high mean score (3.6) implies that the most difficulty GSs face is that the course does not provide extracurricular activities in English. GSs disagree that the English language is hard to learn, with a low mean score (2.08).

Table 5. Students' responses to the third question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17. I feel bored in English class because I already know the information.</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. The teacher does not give enough opportunities to speak English in class.</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. The course does not provide extracurricular activities in English.</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The teacher corrects mistakes immediately in front of the class.</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I am afraid of making mistakes.</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I am unable to gather information about a particular topic from English resources.</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I think the English language is hard to learn.</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Fourth Question Result

Table six shows the participant's responses to the suggestions for best EL learning. The respondents have shown similar estimates for the items in this section. The total mean score for this section is 4.23, meaning that respondents agree greatly with the items mentioned here. The mean (between 4.54 and 4.66) implies that the GSs suggest some ideas to learn English effectively such as being provided with virtual learning environments and being exposed to different practices of English language skills.

**Table 6. Students’ responses to the fourth question**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. I like to be exposed to different practices of English language skills.</td>
<td>4.54</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I want to be provided with virtual learning environments to visit international museums, industries, institutions, etc.</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. I prefer to be introduced to various online English courses.</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I hope there is an English club in my school.</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. I want if my school provides us with enriched English courses.</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I prefer if my teacher integrates technology in all English classes.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I like it if my school provided accelerated English programs.</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. I prefer if my school provides other languages besides English.</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Mean</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>4.23</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings revealed that gifted students need to learn English primarily to access the vast body of international scientific knowledge and research, to get international certificates in English, and to deal with the media, technology, and the Internet. Moreover, gifted students preferred to learn English from activities that resemble daily life situations and to learn at their own pace. The research results further indicated that gifted students face difficulties in class, such as making mistakes and feeling bored because they already know the information. They have demonstrated a need to insert virtual learning environments into the curriculum.

Discussion

Discussion of the First Question: What are the professional needs of gifted secondary school students for English learning?

The first question aimed to identify the GSs' perspective of their professional needs. The findings have revealed that GSs need English for different purposes. Also, the findings showed that the three top reasons for learning English are the scientific resources in English, getting international certificates in English, the media, technology, and the Internet.

The findings are supported by previous research projects and studies that have already investigated the professional needs of GSs for English learning. Gifted secondary school students primarily learn English "to access the vast body of international scientific knowledge and..."
research." This result contradicts Do and Nguyen's (2021) study in which gifted secondary school students in Vietnam rated learning English to get an excellent job in the future as their primary professional need. In comparison, Al-Hamlan and Baniabdelrahman's (2015) study revealed that speaking English fluently is an essential professional need for English learning. Additionally, "to get international certificates" in English was rated as a medium-level need by gifted secondary school students in Do and Nguyen's (2021) study. Furthermore, Al-Hamlan and Baniabdelrahman (2015) have supported GSs' need "to learn English to deal with the media, technology, and the Internet" (p. 127). They have reported that learners need English to use the Internet and mobile applications and to deal with computer software.

The findings related to the first question indicate that gifted secondary school students in Saudi Arabia are fully aware of the global changes and the growing importance of knowledge, globalization, and technology. Rating the professional needs as the highest might be since gifted secondary school students are comprehending and willing to participate in the Saudi 2030 Vision that mainly highlights the importance of establishing a knowledge-based economy and the importance of international certificates and technology.

**Discussion of the Second Question: What are gifted secondary school students' perceptions about the characteristics that should be included in English class?**

GSs preferred to learn English from activities that resemble daily life situations, to learn at their own pace, to select appropriate texts, course materials, plus other resources, to be evaluated according to projects, assignments, class participation, and performance, not by a final exam. The tendency is noticed that GSs are less favorable to perform the activities individually. Alelyani (2021) and Van Tassel-Baska (2008) supported the current findings by asserting that GSs prefer to learn at their own pace and select appropriate texts, course materials plus other resources. The findings align with Al-Hamlan Baniabdelrahman's (2015) results, in which students rated "learning English from activities that resemble daily life situations" as their preferred characteristic that should be included in the class.

A curriculum should be flexible enough to accommodate self-directed learning fueled by student interests in several ways. It involves learners making choices about the direction and goals of their knowledge and adjustments at their own pace. Similarly, Do and Nguyen's (2021) interviews with gifted secondary school students in Vietnam highlight their preference for communication and using daily life situations.

Moreover, similar to the findings of the second question of the present study, Alelyani (2021), Do and Nguyen (2021), and Southern and Jones (2015) emphasized that GSs prefer being evaluated according to projects, assignments, class participation, and performance, not by a final exam. Alamer (2014) further asserted that relying on essential elements of cognitive abilities (i.e., memorization) is one of the significant challenges faced by Saudi gifted secondary school students. Accordingly, it can be implied that GSs should have access to faster-paced learning opportunities and more complex than what is usually available in a regular classroom with students having mixed abilities. If not, they may lack the experience to utilize their high skills. The gifted student is more prepared to acquire the high level of Bloom's taxonomy and gain advanced thinking processes, not only evaluated by the final exam.

Additionally, Alelyani (2021) and Al-Hamlan and Baniabdelrahman (2015) support the current findings in which the gifted secondary school students rated "to perform the activities individually" as their most minor favorable characteristic to be included in English class due to the
need to find true peers with similar abilities and ages. There is a need for a supportive environment that fully polishes the extraordinary, targeted input to realize high potential. Last, gifted and professional teachers, counselors, and supervisors must understand the accelerated developmental path and respond to the accelerated and unusual emotional needs.

**Discussion of the Third Question:** What are the difficulties gifted secondary school students face while studying the language?

The findings showed that GSs face some problems while learning English. "The course does not provide extracurricular activities" and "Feeling bored in English class because they already know the information presented" are rated by gifted secondary school students as top difficulties they face while studying the language. These results are supported by Alfaiz et al. (2022), who highlighted the significance of enrichment for GSs, and Alamar (2014), who asserted that GSs could not be expected to expand their talents if the curriculum does not give them adequate knowledge related to their needs. Thus, it can be indicated that one of the significant problems in language learning is the ignorance of the differences between GSs and other students, which may lead to severe consequences. GSs may miss the motive to learn, be reluctant to participate with their peers and be frustrated. Moreover, the "Fear of making mistakes" is highly rated by gifted secondary school students as a difficulty they face while studying the language. This result might be attributed to self-esteem issues since perfectionism is often associated with giftedness. Davidson Academy (2021) stated that as a perfectionist, a child might exhibit challenging behaviors, including being competitive with others, sacrificing socializing for achievement, or avoiding activities they fear they will fail. Whether perfectionism can be good or bad is debatable. Still, the problem stems from their inability to see themselves beyond their role as the "smart student" in class for many GSs.

**Discussion of the Fourth Question:** What are gifted secondary school students' suggestions for better English learning strategies?

It can be indicated that gifted secondary school students are suggested: "to be provided with virtual learning environments to visit international museums, industries, institutions, etc., to be exposed to different practices of the English language skills, and to have an English club." Their top-rated difficulty is "The course does not provide extracurricular activities in English." To be exposed to different practices of the English language skills" and "to have an English club" by gifted secondary school students assembled with the interview results of Do and Nguyen (2021) that revealed gifted secondary school students are interested in more opportunities to practice the language in a variety of methods.

Moreover, the fourth rated suggestion, "I like it if my school provides accelerated English programs," might be associated with the difficulty mentioned in the third question, "Feeling bored in English class because they already know the information presented." It is grounded in the belief that gifted learners need advanced, often above-grade-level learning opportunities that mirror their rapid processing abilities and need for depth, complexity, and abstraction. Accelerated learning experiences provide advanced learners opportunities for faster progression through the curriculum than peers (Shaunessy-Dedrick & Lazarou, 2020).
**Recommendations**

Here are several recommendations:

- GSs must be provided with a tailored gifted curriculum in the English language.
- Activate the English enrichment activities inside and outside the classroom.
- Develop a digital education platform with collaborative learning tools to allow GSs to access interactive educational content and interact with their peers nationally and internationally.
- Provide regular professional development training for EFL teachers of gifted to keep them updated.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

The study's results paved the way for further investigations including:

- The Effectiveness of English Language Enrichment Activities in Developing English proficiency in GSs.
- The Effectiveness of Modern EFL Teaching Strategies in Developing Gifted Achievement in International Competitions/Exams.
- The Role and Characteristics of the EFL Teachers of Gifted in Supporting Innovation and Talent.
- The Characteristics of the Gifted EFL Curriculum and Activities.
- Content Analysis of English language Gifted Enrichment Materials in the Light of the Current Results of Gifted Needs for EL.
- An Evaluation of Mawhiba Advanced Supplementary Curriculum in the Light of Sustainable Development Standards.

**Conclusion**

This paper explored female gifted secondary school students' needs for English Learning in Saudi Arabia. In addition, this study specified students' perceptions about the characteristics that should be included in English class, the difficulties they faced while studying language, and their suggestions for better English learning strategies. The results revealed that gifted students need to learn English primarily to access the vast body of international scientific knowledge and research, to get international certificates in English, and to deal with the media, technology, and the Internet. Furthermore, gifted students preferred to learn English from activities that resemble daily life situations and to learn at their own pace. The research results indicated that gifted students face difficulties in class, such as making mistakes and feeling bored because they already know the information. They have demonstrated a need to insert virtual learning environments into the curriculum.

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Abstract
Integration of Information, Communication, and Technology helps instructors meet the global need for substituting technology-based teaching and learning tools and services for conventional teaching techniques. English teachers can customise learning for students, and thus it is important to explore new subjects and provide goal-focused training to students. Thus, motivating teachers to use technology and develop their teaching styles to emphasise good teaching is important. Teachers should stop seeing technology as an obstacle to learning. Self-efficacy theory relates to the expectancy-value framework, and motivation is based on the expectation of outcomes through a given course of action. Fundamental psychological needs can also be met with the help of motivation, which eventually increases the desire to undertake competent activities. This study revealed the importance of teachers' technological skills to connect well with students and help them complete their tasks efficiently. Different theories, such as attribution and self-efficacy, have also been incorporated to understand the effectiveness of different tools and technologies. This method could improve students' ability to learn new languages and their communication skills. This study recommends using information tools, as they effectively improve teaching methods and strategies. Information tools are considered strong and constructive tools that allow teachers to improve their strategies and communicate with students. Besides, it is also effective to incorporate lesson plans that can enhance the scope of students' use of technologies to study and gather relevant ideas about various language and linguistic topics.

Keywords: Attribution theory, English language teachers, Jordanian teachers, multiple modalities, self-efficacy theory, technology
Introduction

The term "technology" is a significant issue in the 21st century since it has become the principal means of knowledge transfer in the majority of nations, including education. The advancements and changes to our society brought about by the integration of technology have radically changed how people think, work, and live today. This urges educational institutions, including schools, to think about incorporating ICT into their curricula to prepare students for living in "a knowledge society" (Grabe & Grabe, 2007).

Information, communication, and technology (ICT) integration in education refers to the use of computer-based communication that is included into the academic process. To educate students for the modern digital world, teachers are seen as the key participants in incorporating ICT into their routine classroom activities because of the ability of ICT to offer a dynamic teaching-learning environment. Nevertheless, it also refers to the benefits of networking learning communities to address the issues of current globalization. As such, the purpose of ICT integration is to improve the quality, accessibility, and cost-efficiency of how education is offered to students (Arnseth & Hatlevik, 2012).

The term "ICT integration in education" is frequently used to describe a digitally oriented teaching and learning process that is closely related to the usage of instructional materials in classrooms. As kids are used to technology and learn better in a tech-based environment, the subject of ICT integration in schools, specifically in the classroom, is essential. This is due to the substantial contribution that technology in education contributes to the pedagogical components, where the use of ICT will lead to successful learning with the assistance and support of ICT aspects and components. (Jamieson-Procter et al., 2013).

There has been a deliberate shift toward technology-supported instruction in Jordanian schools over the past 20 years, leading to various distant educational models and techniques. This cutting-edge educational approach ushered in a workable school reform system that included several initiatives and operational modalities (Obeidat et al., 2022a). These methods, sometimes known as "distant education," have steadily gained acceptance as a form of instruction. According to Read et al. (2013), online, virtual, computer-based, web-based, and other kinds of out-of-classroom education entail preplanning and a well-structured style of teaching and learning. Despite the promising future of technology-based education and its increased popularity, remote learning has faced several problems due to curriculum design, policy disagreements, and an existing digital divide that divides learning in various socioeconomic circumstances (Resta et al., 2018). These obstacles limit the smooth use of technology in the classroom (Mao et al., 2019).

Technology has a big effect on schooling nowadays. Schools must use technology to enhance students' education, despite barriers to its acceptance. The first are external factors, such as the availability of resources, training as well as equipment accessibility. Teachers and students may only use online learning if they have access to fast internet connections. Second are characteristics that are exclusive to teachers, such as their skills, and perspectives on employing technology (Danaa et al., 2022; Ng'ambi et al., 2016). Teachers must gain the requisite abilities if
they receive enough technical training. Any of these components, which Ertmer (1999) refers to as first- and second-order hurdles, might thwart attempts to use technology.

The widespread adoption of digital technology is continuously changing how people obtain information, exchange ideas, and interact. To do this, one must be flexible in exploring, communicating, and cooperating online and in various circumstances (Leu et al., 2017). The educational options available today have been significantly impacted by these developments. Three main factors in the current educational environment cast doubt on conventional ideas of teaching and learning and provide a compelling argument for multimodal learning as a crucial pedagogy:

English instructors must investigate new areas since they can personalize learning for their students. In the end, it helps assure students' success by giving them goal-focused instruction. Also, it is critical to inspire instructors to embrace technology and refine their teaching methods to highlight effective teaching. The need to prevent instructors from viewing technology as a barrier to learning is paramount. The expectancy-value framework and self-efficacy theory are related, and similar motivation is said to be founded on the anticipation of results via a certain path of action. With the aid of motivation, basic psychological requirements may also be satisfied, which eventually heightens the desire to carry out competent actions.

In this study, the discussion has focused on using multiple modalities, which can encourage teachers to embrace technologies that can benefit students. Different research articles on language and linguistics are used to find the important benefits of technologies essential for students. Moreover, various research methods have been used in this paper to gather relevant data to find ways to encourage teachers to accept different technologies that students find useful. Discussion on the importance of secondary data collection methods has been presented in this study, which can help the researchers understand the need for incorporating new technologies. Apart from that, it has been noticed that the importance of collaborative learning has also been presented with the help of advanced technologies to uplift students.

**Literature Review**

Several studies discussed the importance of multiple modalities to encourage teachers regarding technologies, academic and cultural growth through languages on the website (e.g., Batane & Ngwako, 2017; Caena & Redecker, 2019; Lawrence & Tar, 2018;), and the importance of recognising prior learning through digitalisation (e.g., Khokhar & Javaid, 2016; Ranellucci et al., 2020; Tondeur et al., 2017). The importance of multiple modalities to encourage teachers regarding technologies is displayed in Figure 1.
Importance of Multiple Modalities to Encourage Teachers Regarding Technologies

Rao (2019) observed that one of the most effective methods to gather relevant data in various academic contexts is technology, which is beneficial for having instant knowledge by providing students with proper guidance and the right sources. Besides that, technology allows students to assess the genuine quality of information they gather through online sources and use it to enhance their knowledge and learning capabilities. Technologies have allowed students of the 21st century to understand difficult concepts inside out and use necessary technical skills for future purposes. It has been observed that integrating technology into the curriculum also improves students' learning processes and outcomes.

Academic and Cultural Growth through Languages on the Website

The investigation of Egyptian Universities Libraries Consortium (EULC) English websites has been categorised as the beginning of the achievement of the goal of efficiently enhancing language along with the social-educational target of the Council of Europe within the European Union (EU). Therefore, it has become essential to consider the various ways EULCs display. At the same time, intercultural principles and sharing ideas and knowledge can be respected with other European and international experts who have also been considered to be significantly essential (Newman et al., 2019).

The Importance of Recognising Prior Learning Through Digitalisation

In this modern era, it has been observed that analysing students' learning processes in different learning environments, which include informal and formal, has become common in today's world. It has been found that non-formal learning comes from different planned activities, such as training processes in the workplace and online training. On the other hand, informal learning has no significant structure and is mostly unintentional or incidental for learners. It tends to gather significant ideas with the help of daily activities related to work, leisure, and people's interests. Shaver (2016) further stated that teachers could adopt different methods to improve learning outcomes, which include summative testing and examinations. It also comprises evidence-based methods, such as portfolios, observations, and work practices. Transitions that occur in recognition of the Prior Learning (RPL) process have also been highlighted in this study.
which can be an effective way for teachers to improvise for formal and non-formal learning purposes. RPL is a procedure that determines if the learners satisfy the standards for a unit of study by evaluating their competency, which they have earned via both formal and informal learning. To apply for RPL, they may use several documents. This includes training records but is not restricted to them.

On the one hand, digital learning and evaluation in higher education have become popular research topics. However, it has been discovered that more research into the digitalisation of RPL, particularly in the setting of university language centres, needs to be done. Several scholars have argued that a robust adoption of the RPL principle in universities can help teachers enhance student performance and assess them more efficiently.

**Attribution Theory**

Attribution theory is associated with the concerns of individuals, consciously or subconsciously, and seeks to interpret why they have been effective or ineffective based on different tasks. Graham (2022) further stated that attributions are also considered to possess "adaptive" influence over motivated behaviour when they refer to factors within an individual's control. On the other hand, attributing success to providing an easy task would likely harm subsequent motivated behaviour. Shaver (2016) further pointed out that the relevance of attribution theory to psychology is derived from the fact that it is related to significant people. There are different types of attribution, including interpersonal, explanatory, and prediction-based attribution. Teachers in various fields attribute things that allow them to make genuine future predictions and have a deep understanding of what is going on in the world.

On the other hand, people with an optimistic personality tend to attribute positive events to stable as well as internal and global causes. Besides, they also consider negative events with unstable, external, and particular causes. As such, people with pessimistic personality traits were responsible for negative events caused by internal, stable, and global causes and positive events caused by external, stable, and specific causes. Attribution theories eventually attempt to explain how human beings evaluate and determine the cause of changes in other people's behaviour.

Graham (2022) critically commented that self-efficacy is people's belief in their ability to exercise control over over-functioning and other important life events. It also provides motivation for people, which helps them gather relevant ideas and knowledge regarding important lessons and programs. Moreover, there are four important components: mastery, verbal, vicarious, and physiological states. The study also includes a systematic review of the literature on various theoretical foundations, measurements, antecedents, and outcomes based on ESE and work that considers ESE an important moderator. Based on the collected review, an agenda can also be set for conducting future research, based on which various implications for entrepreneurship education and training are highlighted. Emphasizing these facts has helped us consider the need to concentrate on other perspectives of theory, which helps improve our understanding of how ESE influences analysis outcomes at different levels. Newman et al. (2019) also argued that entrepreneurial thinking and behaviour help people from different generations be producers of a
positively developed career to achieve larger societal changes with the help of teachers and students.

**Methods**

This section covers methodology related to epistemology, scientific research, and evaluating the comprehension and application of various ideas and techniques. The major components of the scientific research paradigm have been described, which helps comprehend the significance of the technology that teachers use to assist pupils. Theories focus on identifying various languages and their linguistic relevance in relation to the adoption of technologies and the stages of their implementation. According to Žukauskas et al. (2018), it is crucial to understand each strategy's strengths and disadvantages. The approach eventually leads to better research preparation and understanding of the studied problem.

**Research Design**

The research design refers to a framework of techniques and market research methods that a researcher selects to complete the research goal. Furthermore, research design also helps the researcher find suitable methods to conduct the study. Based on the critical views of Bloomfield and Fisher (2019), it has been shown that in order to decide which model to use for a study, a researcher needs a thorough awareness of the many types of research design. Here, *the descriptive research design* is selected to determine the best way to collect and analyse the required data.

In a descriptive design, a researcher is mainly associated with illustrating various situations or cases. It is considered a theoretically developed design method that is prioritised with the help of gathering, analysing, analysing, and conducting efficient research on accumulated information. Moreover, the method offers researchers insights into the reasons for conducting a study and ways to accomplish the research. Descriptive design can also help a teacher have a better understanding of the requirements of the study. If the problem statement needs clarification, a researcher can conduct further exploratory research. Sileyew (2019) critically commented that a descriptive research study is used to look at the characteristics of a population to identify existing problems. This method is effective for understanding the issues that teachers face as they emphasise various technologies.

This step-by-step planning helps researchers understand important aspects of a study and motivates them to have correct thought processes. There are three common research strategies, which include quantitative, qualitative, and mixed research strategies, through which the overall direction of a research study can be achieved. Sileyew (2019) pointed out that defining objectives is important for a researcher to use the methodology and gather data effectively. With the help of descriptive and correlational designs, it can be effective to have a clear picture of various research characteristics, trends, and relationships as they exist in the real world. However, it is impossible
to conclude cause and effect, and thus having research strategies is essential to doing detailed research on the given topic.

Furthermore, experiments are the most effective method for investigating cause-and-effect correlations without the chance of other variables impacting the results. On the other hand, their controlled environments may not always mirror how things work in the real world. They are also frequently more difficult and costly to adopt. Qualitative research designs have been discovered to be more flexible and inductive, allowing the researcher to change his strategy based on what he discovers during the research process. Hence, in this study, qualitative methods are used to collect data and use them to understand the need for multiple modalities to motivate teachers to use technologies.

Data Collection

In this study, *the positivist research philosophy* has been selected to collect factual knowledge and data related to the given topic. Positivism is mainly considered the philosophical instance of natural scientists working with reality within society, leading to the production of generalisation generalisations. According to Alharahsheh and Pius (2020), positivism relates to the general importance of what is given. There are two important data collection processes, which include primary and secondary data gathering methods. In this study, a secondary data collection process is used, which helps the researchers analyse existing journals, articles, and documents associated with encouraging teachers to embrace technology beneficial to students. Based on the critical opinion of Loomis and Paterson (2018), there are mainly two types of most preferred social science methods to gather large-scale recreation data based on mail or online surveys occurring on digital platforms. Both of these data collection methods are strongly effective in producing a satisfactory response rate at a reasonable cost. On the other hand, in recent years, it has been observed that response rates have been declining, and at the same time, costs have risen. It is also observed that survey fatigue has become an issue that has eventually changed the ways of communication among people. Some of the advantages of secondary data collection methods have been highlighted below:

- It is economical and also saves effort and expenses. Moreover, the process is considered to be time-saving. On the other hand, it aids in making primary data collection more specific with the use of secondary data acquired, allowing researchers to fill in the gaps and weaknesses and understand the extra information that must be collected. It is used to help others grasp the problem better. It also serves as a foundation for comparing the data acquired by the researcher.
- Various themes have been prepared to assess the collected secondary data, based on which research on the use of multiple modalities has been developed. Different research articles are also selected that are associated with this topic to assess the data and understand the relevance of technologies for students used by teachers. Bolander et al. (2021) further remarked that incorporating organizationally relevant metrics is essential to analyse this.
type of data, which succinctly quantifies the inputs and outputs of the usage of technologies by teachers to benefit students and ensure their effectiveness. Organisational data and data from various government agencies are always considered reliable and are never associated with information gathered from less credible sources, such as personal blogs or websites.

• Findings

Various research papers have eventually helped to understand the need for self-efficacy, which is important to achieve goals and tasks effectively.

Technology Aids Students in Improving Their Learning Techniques and Achieving Positive Results

It has been found that technology helps students improve their learning techniques and achieve positive outcomes. Besides, this process provides teachers with new tools and challenges that can transform instructional roles, curricula, and practices. Technology brings empowerment tools into the hands and minds of those who use them. On the other hand, in traditional learning, it has been observed that students often have difficulty grasping concepts. According to Lestari (2019), digital simulations and models can assist students in gaining a better grasp of numerous subjects and becoming acquainted with the current world's wonders. This process has allowed teachers to interact directly with students, understand their issues, and work efficiently to solve them. Teachers with higher technological ideas possess the ability to prepare new lessons strategically. It includes different text types, interaction control methods, and student activity models.

Collaborative Learning with the Help of Advanced Technologies

Technological communication systems have helped teachers communicate with students and ensure their ability to understand important language-related topics. It is important to categorize certain activities that provide abilities to students and allow them to work and collaborate. Besides, learning through collaborative methods is mainly used to develop students' higher-level thinking skills and boost their confidence and self-esteem (Nakata et al., 2022). It can give students from different fields unique ways to learn new things and languages. These tools also possess a variety of features that are used to encourage collaboration, such as built-in chat. It has advanced features like changing colours for different researchers, tracking changes, and writing playback.

With the help of advanced modalities, the capacity to insert comments may also be understood, and this provides thoughts on multiple degrees of sharing, from viewing to editing. Furthermore, document collaboration tools are commonly used among librarians to collaborate on presentations and instructional materials. They can also be used in one-shot sessions. Rao (2019) critically argued that online collaboration tools are also excellent for keeping students engaged in...
both physical and virtual classrooms. This process, on the one hand, enables active learning; on the other hand, it is also used to facilitate peer learning. For example, incorporating brainstorming tools in online mode, which include Padlet or MindMeister, into library instruction increases cognitive thinking and comprehension. It has also been found that collaborative online technologies allow students to achieve seamless assessment. Hence, teachers need in-depth ideas about these technologies to foster student improvement.

**Competency-Based Learning to Keep Students Motivated in Their Learning Process**

In this modern era, technologies based on the aspect of adaptive learning have transformed competency-based learning. As a result, it has been the most prestigious of credentials for centuries. It can be used to complete any degree with the help of effective communication between students and teachers. Moreover, this learning theory can also be applied in day-to-day learning with the help of a growing array of adaptive learning tools. Based on the critical opinion of Rao (2019), it has been noticed that digital learning tools of the modern era are used as a social element to develop students' speaking confidence. On the other hand, it has been observed that there is a need to emphasize students' need for continuous, direct contact.

Frequent and goal-focused training is also considered vital to becoming a successful teacher. When technology is considered, it is even more important to emphasize this topic. In this globalized and always-changing industry such as edtech, it has become important to keep everyone aware of modern technologies, their usage, and how they can be used. People should also know how to use them to enhance their teaching processes. Teachers are also required to ensure that the training they are delivering to students mainly focuses on the specific needs and skill levels of the teaching staff.

**Discussion**

Based on various studies, it has been observed that communication between students and teachers is strongly needed to complete any activity. After considering the terms "effective" and "ineffective" communication, it has been noticed that this is unacceptable because it tries to increase misconceptions between teachers and students. The emergence of advanced technology has been useful in reducing communication gaps, and eventually, the process has also smoothed the knowledge flow process. Despite considering a traditional or virtual classroom, the usage of online collaboration tools has made things easier for everyone to form a community. Teachers can assign projects to students from different fields in real time. Students also get a chance to clear their doubts regarding different subjects, which can be easily resolved with the help of technology. Cloud storage implementation has eventually made the research process easier for students in this modern era. The old days are gone, when students were required to find piles of books in order to find specific references and improve assignments and projects. With the advancement of technology, research has become a powerful tool. In today's technologically advanced world,
numerous free opportunities are available from reputable universities. Students can access the internet through their devices and search for possibilities, regardless of their situation.

Working collaboratively has become essential in life in the twenty-first century, as most workers need to collaborate to advance in their careers. The ability of students and teachers to collaborate through different digital tools expands every day with the help of internet-based applications, which is highly beneficial. It enables teachers to do various activities, such as editing documents in teams, having face-to-face communication instead of considering their location, and using interactive whiteboards that allow for simultaneous edits, along with other important activities. In terms of learning activities, digital collaboration not only promotes fun or engages new ways to learn but also opens up new possibilities and allows students to succeed in the workplace. Mekouar et al. (2021) critically commented that incorporating new collaborative learning strategies helps increase students' engagement and improve the learning experience.

It has been noticed that classroom technology training is considered a broader concept and covers all important topics as a whole rather than focusing on contextual examples. Nakata et al. (2022) also observed that it is a good idea to compile and encourage teachers to expand their knowledge carefully. However, it is observed that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic situation has been adversely affected, and it continues to affect education methods every day. Moreover, it has been noticed that education methods have not been immune to pandemic situations. Thus, it has become essential for teachers to know how to adapt effective technological methods in such a way that they can be used to enhance the teaching method and its quality without being negatively affected.

Based on the current situation, competency-based learning allows students to maintain flexibility and their own work pace, eventually allowing them to meet their work goals (Nakata et al., 2022). It has been observed that novelty in assessment and grading can also be maintained by adapting competency-based learning. Hence, teachers need to have a broader understanding of this concept and implement it accordingly.

Conclusion

The study has helped to conclude the importance of technologies that need to be used by teachers to connect well with students and help them complete their tasks efficiently. It has been found that sharing intercultural principles with the help of innovative technologies is significantly essential within European societies. Various theories, such as self-efficacy and attribution theory, are used to perceive relevance to individual goals and motivate students to undertake functional and relevant activities. Different theories, such as attribution and self-efficacy, have also been incorporated to understand the effectiveness of different tools and technologies. This method could improve students' ability to learn new languages and their communication skills. Moreover, it has been found that this process increases communication between students and teachers and helps them form good bonds.
Recommendations

Based on the implementation of effective tools to encourage teachers to embrace technologies, the following are discussed below:

Proper training needs to be provided to understand the importance of modern technologies. Teachers need genuine training to assess innovative technologies and use them to keep students motivated. Besides, it has been found that using multiple modalities, such as creating digital content, integrating social media, and reviewing web pages, has also helped teachers provide students with adequate knowledge about languages. It enhances the career growth scope of students and helps them achieve their goals. Training to take a proactive approach to embracing technology has also been found to be an effective tool for training students and giving them their required knowledge.

Also, the study recommends using information tools, as they effectively improve teaching methods and strategies. Information tools are considered strong and constructive tools that allow teachers to improve their strategies and communicate with students. Besides, it is also effective to incorporate lesson plans that can enhance the scope of students' use of technologies to study and gather relevant ideas about various language and linguistic topics. Teachers can also supplement traditional teaching methods with apps or trustworthy online resources to keep students more engaged. Virtual lesson plans, grading tools, and online tests are also recommended, as they can save teachers much time.

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Efficiency Degree of Emergency Digital Teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic on Achieving Students’ Quality Learning Outcomes in Saudi Universities

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Abstract
The current study aimed to determine the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during the covid-19 pandemic in achieving students’ quality learning outcomes. This study aims to enrich the theoretical literature on managing the teaching and learning processes during crises to help faculty and students adapt to emergency conditions. It clarifies the importance of planning and preparation for non-traditional learning environments based on modern technologies. To achieve this aim, the researcher used a descriptive method. A 23-item survey was developed and answered by 360 teaching staff in some Saudi universities who were part of the study population from 2021 to 2022. According to the research sample, emergency digital education during the covid-19 epidemic was of moderate efficiency on learning outcomes. The arithmetic mean of this dimension was (3.41). Meanwhile, the result exhibited a statistically significant effect at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the years of experience variable. Furthermore, the results identified factors that could have influenced the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic in achieving students’ quality learning outcomes. The second dimension averaged high, reaching (3.72). The study came out with executive recommendations based on its results.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, Emergency Digital Teaching, Higher Education, Quality learning outcomes, teaching in a crisis

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Introduction

Since March 10, 2020, universities have found themselves obligated to find ways for achieving students learning outcomes to overcome the challenges imposed by the Covid-19 Pandemic, especially during the curfew where traditional direct education was no longer possible. This need coincided with previous calls for educational systems to keep pace with the successive changes, including non-traditional forms, such as distance education and e-learning, including both modern technologies and means. Fisher (2013) believes that using such modern techniques in teaching has become an urgent necessity and that digital tools should always be the available option, and not only temporary procedures planned to be used once in a while. More recommendations came from an Arab conference regarding the need to prepare appropriate plans and policies for the implementation of e-learning in a manner that would suit the needs and conditions of Arab countries; and the need to design, develop and employ e-learning communities’ systems to achieve learning outcomes, with emphasis on thinking and social skills, participatory and cooperative learning (EAET, 2013; Salem, 2004).

However, resorting to contemporary alternatives that dispense with traditional education patterns does not guarantee good results unless it is well-planned and obstacles and challenges are eliminated. The results reached by Wright (2014) indicated that the initial enthusiasm of officials in the United States of America towards online university education began to wane in light of reports of poor learning outcomes, caused in part by the limited capabilities of traditional online courses management systems. The study hypothesized that the Vigilant Online Learning Systems (VOLS) would be more suitable for junior college students than the traditional online course management system. Hence, universities quickly resorted to alternatives to the traditional classroom in an effort to compensate students for attending university campuses through their reliance on distance education patterns. Most of these patterns were represented in virtual platforms or e-learning, or what some call Emergency Digital Teaching or Emergency Remote Teaching via the Internet (Ferri, Grifoni & Guzzo, 2020), or however, whatever form of education was adopted, some studies revealed there were serious weaknesses of infrastructure and inept technological preparation of faculty members.

Other studies have proven the usefulness of modern education forms such as distance education, online education and e-learning and their effectiveness on developing both academic achievement and attitudes towards learning. Such educational patterns also help in achieving planned learning outcomes, provided that they are well-planned and well-prepared and that teachers have the skills to deal with its techniques (Al-Reeh, 2018; Al-Baitar, 2017, 2020). It has become clear that the need to create educational environments that support and stimulate the learning processes, in addition to developing self-learning skills among university students to raise their competencies and become compatible with the requirements of labor markets (Al-Omari & Al-Mukhtar 2019; Abbassi, Meguellati & Souaci, 2022). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has gone through the experience of distance learning and e-learning in the Saudi Electronic University and King Abdulaziz University (KAU), where e-learning and blended learning has been used for more than a decade under the umbrella of the Deanship of Distance Education. Some studies revealed that the majority of the participants had positive attitudes towards e-learning and that students were ready to go online to avoid any academic loss due to the Covid-19 Pandemic (Bahanshal & Khan, 2021).

Saudi universities, like others, were surprised by the consequences of the Covid-19 crisis on education, so they resorted to some education forms that could replace face-to-face, traditional
teaching. So, they used online platforms such as Blackboard, Zoom technology, Microsoft Teams, and some social media such as WhatsApp. Such media used by the course were effective to some extent according to the views of those in charge of the educational process in universities, which necessitated conducting a study to find out the efficiency degree of these education forms. Hence, the problem of the study in its quest to answer its main question: What is the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes? It clarifies the importance of planning and preparation for non-traditional learning environments based on modern technologies. This study sought to achieve the following research objectives:

1. Determining the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes from the point of view of the study sample.
2. Knowing the effect of the variables (gender, years of experience, and specialization) on the study sample’s estimate of the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes.
3. Determining the factors that affected the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes from the point of view of the study sample.
4. Providing executive recommendations to the relevant authorities based on the results of the study.

The study attempted to answer the following questions.

1. To what extent are there statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the study sample members in their estimation of the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes due to the variables of gender, years of experience, specialization?
2. What are the factors that affected the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes?

As for its practical importance, it is expected that this study will benefit the following parties:

1. Universities and those responsible for the quality of the educational process and its development.
2. Researchers and academics in the field of higher education management and quality who would like to conduct further studies in this regard.

**Literature Review**

The concept of traditional education refers to the educational process between the teacher and students directly and requires their physical presence in the same place and time during the classroom (insider, 2022). However, after reviewing the relevant literature, we find that non-traditional learning forms include participatory e-learning, synchronous e-learning, asynchronous e-learning, emergency remote teaching, emergency digital teaching, blended learning, distance learning (Ejdys & Kozłowska, 2021),(Al-Reeh, 2018),(Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). These e-learning forms had positive impacts on learners “The attractiveness of e-learning as a form of teaching gained in importance, mainly among students” (Ejdys & Kozłowska, 2021, p 13).

In distance education, teachers use e-learning to deliver information to their students: e-learning is a modern educational system whose objective is to provide educational programs using
information technology, the Internet, and the accompanying hardware and software (Salem, 2004). Communication in this type of education is through local and international internet networks or via CDs and similar digital content preservation tools, allowing learners to choose the content that suits them and enabling them to choose the suitable time and place. The teacher in this type of education is like a private teacher tutor (Janby, 2019). Among the types of e-learning is self-paced learning. Another type of e-learning in which the teacher is a facilitator of the learning process where the cooperation between the students themselves. The third is considered a hybrid between the two previous types (Ghirardini, 2011). E-Learning falls into two types: synchronous e-learning and asynchronous e-learning (ETEC, 2020a). Synchronous: the teacher is separated from the learners spatially, with his meeting with them temporally, and the communication between them is direct, through direct conversations, video conferences, and virtual classes. Asynchronous: the teacher is separated from the students in time and space so that each student chooses the times and places that suit him/her to learn. Perhaps the most famous university in the Kingdom that has used this type of education is King Abdulaziz University (KAU) (Bahanshal & Khan, 2021).

Saudi universities have used digital technologies via the Internet at the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic. WhatsApp was also used by some teachers who did not have adequate skills in dealing with online platforms specified by the universities. This took place by sending the learning material via WhatsApp, followed by, and followed by an audio message explaining or commenting on the text. However, during the pandemic, the use of distance education via the Internet, this experience did not get its right from preparation and planning, so it is correct to call it "Emergency Remote Teaching via the internet (Ferri, et al., 2020), or emergency digital teaching (Gonzalez et al., 2022), this name was adopted by the researcher in this study.

Learning Outcomes in Saudi higher education are the basis upon which all procedures for designing academic programs and curricula are established. Moreover, they are also the basis for evaluation. Today, they are the focus of all quality and academic accreditation processes and the main incentive for educational reform movements and higher education worldwide. Learning outcomes in higher education in Saudi Arabia have been set and defined in the National Qualifications Framework by distributing them into three domains (ETEC, 2020a):

1. Knowledge and understanding of the facts, principles, theories, processes, and procedures involved in the field of learning, work, or profession in which the student will work.
2. Skills: what the graduate can do for continuous learning and work or profession. These skills include three sections:
   - Cognitive skills: These include applying knowledge, critical thinking skills, problem solving, investigation, and creative thinking.
   - Practical skills: These include applying knowledge, appropriate tools and devices, the skillful application of motor and manual skills.
   - Communication and information technology skills: These include written, verbal, and nonverbal communication and numerical skills (the application of arithmetic operations and the use and production of information and communication technology).
3. Values: The principles and criteria the graduate shows, guiding him/her to succeed in life, work, or profession, including:
   - Academic and professional values and ethics.
   - Continuous self-learning and independence.
   - Work with a team and take responsibility.
Previous Studies

The prior studies that dealt with forms of education, which were brought up in this research, can be summarized as follows:

- Ferri et al. (2020) aimed to analyze the benefits and the challenges facing unexpected remote teaching based on the experiences of the Covid-19 Pandemic, which also referred to an Italian case study. The study revealed several challenges that are facing remote education. The first challenge is technological, which mainly related to the lack of necessary devices for the students and the unreliability of internet connections. Second is the pedagogical challenges which are primarily associated with the lack of digital skills of both teachers and students, the lack of motivation and interactivity among the students, and the lack of organized content versus the massive amount of online resources. Finally, social challenges related to the improper study environment at home, the decrease or lack of support of remotely working parents, and the low interactivity between the students and their teachers.

- Ejdys and Kozłowska (2021) aimed to study the change in acceptance degree of e-learning at higher education in 2020 - 2021. The surveys conducted on both teachers and students showed that the students are more tolerant of e-learning than the teachers. In their opinion, e-learning saves time, improves easier communication with teachers, and enables flexible classes schedules. Unfortunately, e-learning had a less positive impact on the teachers.

- Sayyaf (2021) intended to study the effect of the Covid-19 Pandemic on the e-learning's technical and psychological challenges facing faculty members and students of the University of Bisha, Saudi Arabia. A survey with a sample of 343 faculty members and 1981 students was conducted, and the results indicated that the challenges facing the students were the lack of technological awareness, the lack of proper training on computer and the Internet, the fear of accessing non-educational websites, and the fear of making mistakes while using the internet. Also, they encountered some technical issues such as sudden cuts for the Internet and power and the failure of many students to fully accept the idea of engaging in e-learning and the adverse effects of the home quarantine. However, the faculty member's challenges included the weak infrastructure and lack of equipment, continuous assessment process, class management challenge, and designing the appropriate content, activities, and tasks.

- Ouyaba (2020) used the descriptive-analytical approach to assess a process of transition all courses online due to universities closure during the Pandemic. The study attempted to understand the plan drawn up by the instructions of the Ministry of Higher Education to confront the urgent situation. An applied study was conducted on students of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Ghardaia, where an electronic questionnaire was carried out on a sample of 100 individuals. The results showed that there was an increasing adaptation to the crisis and an acceptable readiness for distance learning and that students preferred platforms that were characterized by asynchronous interaction. However, the level of interaction was low, and there was a variance between levels and specialization. The study concluded that there were physical and human obstacles that limited students' interaction with the activities available on various platforms.

- Gonzalez et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative study on 200 Information Technology students to determine the impact of transition experience from face-to-face to remote learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Norway. Results showed that the students felt the transition to digital learning had positive effects on their lives, such as more time to study, flexibility to study through recorded lectures that can be reviewed frequently and at any time. There were
adverse effects such as lack of structure, more distractions, and violation of privacy when their cameras needed to be turned on.

- Alshehri et al. (2020) highlighted the experience of a mid-size college transition process from face-to-face to fully online teaching in Saudi Arabia due to COVID-19 Pandemic. According to the study, the difficulties associated with the shift necessitated the reprioritizing of education, putting online education upfront, and reconsidering biological threats as risks possibilities that could obstruct regular education.

- Firmansyah et al. (2021) studied executed at one of the Indonesian state universities to reveal the transition from face-to-face to fully online learning due to Covid-19 from students’ perspective. A narrative approach was used in this research where the data were collected through online interviews. It was processed based on the results of group discussions and studies related to the execution of online learning during the Pandemic. The results showed that the students were tolerant towards e-learning. In their perception, online learning had more flexibility and efficiency, and was also operative in terms of time management, costs reduction, and energy and resources saving. However, the students mentioned that they encountered some obstacles and challenges such as low interactivity between the teacher and students, sudden changes in schedule, inadequate facilities, and weak utilization of learning media.

- Perifanou et al. (2021) investigated teachers’ perceptions of their digital skills for performing their professional responsibilities and teaching during the Pandemic. A survey was conducted on a sample of more than eight hundred teachers to find out their implementation of digital technologies in their work. The answers revealed that they mostly utilized digital tools for assessing and developing educational resources in addition to teaching. They also used digital tools for assessing students’ work and even for interacting and communicating with their students. Such tools, however, were scarcely implemented for giving feedback on students’ performance or educational resources. They were not able to cope with management and long-term planning, let alone the development of digital education in general.

Previous studies were in accordance in terms of the descriptive approach, with the exception of (Ferri et al., 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2022), which used the qualitative approach, (Firmansyah et al., 2021) used a narrative approach. All of the studies used the questionnaire as a tool for data collection and were in accordance with the notion of the non-traditional form of education, such as distance education and e-learning, and the challenges facing these forms, such as the study by Sayyaf (2021), Ejdys and Kozłowska (2021), Alshehri et al.(2020), and Gonzalez et al. (2022). Some of these studies focused on estimating the impact of these forms on the quality of the educational process and the quality of its outputs, such as the study by Gonzalez et al. (2022), Perifanou et al. (2021) and Janby, (2019). There were some obstacles that limited the effectiveness of non-traditional forms, as shown by the study by Ejdys and Kozłowska (2021), Firmansyah et al. (2021) and Sayyaf (2021)

These studies have agreed in their results on the importance of digital-based education in achieving the quality of the educational process. They also agreed that there was a need to pay more attention to these forms as a permanent method and not just resort to them only in difficult circumstances.
Here are some salient terms used in this study. *Emergency Digital Teaching*: Digital teaching is a modern use of technology and its tools in the teaching and learning process, which is known as technology-enhanced learning (TEL) or e-learning” ((IAD, 2022). Some called it during the pandemic “distance teaching and learning in emergencies. One of the characteristics of this form of teaching is its lack of planning because it came in response to a crisis that did not enable teachers to plan well and prepare for digital teaching (Garrison & Vaughan, 2008). The researcher defines digital teaching procedurally in this study as the emergency transition from traditional education to digital technologies in delivering science materials to students. *Covid-19 Pandemic*: The World Health Organization defines Covid-19 as the disease caused by the emerging coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. First discovered on December 31, 2019, it was a new strain of the coronavirus that had not been detected in humans (WHO, 2022). The researcher adopts this definition as a procedural definition for the purposes of this study. *Learning Outcomes* (LOs): WHO (2022) describe Los as statements that express what knowledge and skills learners are expected to possess at the end of a period of learning and of how that learning is to be demonstrated. The researcher defines LOs procedurally in this study as: What the descriptions of the academic programs and their courses stipulate as indicative of what students are expected to achieve in terms of knowledge, skills and values after completing the requirements of those programs and courses.

The current study agrees with previous studies in selecting the descriptive approach and its reliance on the questionnaire as a tool for data collection. However, it differs in its focus on identifying the learning outcomes targeted in the educational process in Saudi universities. These are the outcomes that were formulated in the specifications of university programs and courses, based basically on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) ((ETEC), 2020a). It also differs in its focus on measuring the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching, which Saudi universities have resorted to achieve student-learning outcomes.

**Methods**

This part of the study includes a description of the method used, population, sample, the data collection tool, validity, reliability, and the process of correcting it. The following is an exposition of the methods and procedures. The descriptive approach was implemented based on the study’s objectives, the questions, and the nature of its problem. The researcher collected the data and theoretical information from their original sources and previous studies; then, he developed a questionnaire to collect field data, which aimed to estimate the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during the Covid-19 Pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes in Saudi universities.

The population of the study consisted of faculty members in Saudi universities. The questionnaire was distributed to 400 individuals from the study community in a random manner. The number of questionnaires considered for the purposes of analysis was 360, distributed according to Table one, which shows the characteristics of the research sample, taken from IMSIU, KSU.
Table 1. Distribution of the sample according to the variables of job, gender, years of experience and specialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>COUNT</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experience</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10 Years</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Major</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>360</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Instruments

After reviewing previous studies, relevant theoretical literature and then surveying the opinions of a sample of experienced faculty members in Saudi universities, the study tool was built. It consists of a 5-item questionnaire, where the participants are required to respond to statements (Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) to collect data and answer the study's questions. After conducting the necessary operations to ensure its validity and reliability, it settled on 23 items distributed over two dimensions, according to the following procedures:

Validity of the Tool

The apparent validity of the study tool was confirmed by presenting the items in their initial form to a group of specialized arbitrators, who refereed the items contained in the questionnaire in terms of clarity of the linguistic formulation of the items and their relevance to the field. Based on their observations, three items were deleted, and some items were re-drafted. 80% of the arbitrators gave their consent. Thus, the questionnaire consisted of 23 items distributed in two dimensions: the first contained 17 items (1-17), and the second contained six items (18-23).

Tool Stability

To assess and determine the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes in Saudi universities, estimates (cut-off scores) have been developed based on the following equation: \((5-1) \div 3 = 1.33\), including \(1 + 1.33 = 2.33\); hence the efficiency degree is low between 1 - 2.33, average between 2.34-3.67, and high between 3.68-5. The questionnaire stability was verified by calculating the scale's internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha after it was applied to a pilot sample consisting of 30 individuals from outside the study sample. The stability of the questionnaire ranged between 0.88 and 0.92, and these numbers are suitable for adopting the study tool to collect its data. According to the five-point Likert Scale, the response was determined on the questionnaire items at five levels. Accordingly, degree of (5) was given to strongly agree, a degree of (4) to agree, a degree of (3) to somewhat agree, a degree of (2) to disagree, and a degree of (1) to strongly disagree.

Research Procedures

To analyze the primary data of the research, the researcher encoded and entered it into the SPSS computer system, and the necessary treatments were carried out to reach the results that could answer the questions of the study as follows:
• Using the correlation coefficient to measure the degree of correlation of the phrases with the total score of the questionnaire.
• Using the equation (Cronbach's alpha) to check the stability of the tool.
• Using means and standard deviations to answer the first and third questions.
• Using the T-test for two independent samples to answer the second question.

Findings
To answer the first question: What is the Efficiency Degree of Emergency Digital Teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic on Achieving Students’ Quality Learning Outcomes from the point of view of the study sample? The arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the items of the first dimension were extracted, which dealt with indicators of the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes, and as stated in the analysis of the first-dimension data, as shown in Table two:

Table 2. Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the first-dimension items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension Items</th>
<th>Ar. M</th>
<th>SDV</th>
<th>Ef.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Emergency digital teaching developed students' technical skills.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency digital teaching contributed to the development of the student's ability to find solutions to the problems arising from his use of information technology.</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Emergency digital teaching developed the student's responsibility for self-learning.</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Emergency digital teaching contributed to breaking the psychological barriers that reduced student participation and interaction in the lecture.</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Emergency digital teaching encouraged effective communication between learning group members.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Emergency digital teaching developed students' verbal-verbal communication skills.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Emergency digital teaching enabled the student to acquire problem-solving skill.</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Emergency digital teaching made it easier for students to memorize and retrieve knowledge.</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Emergency digital teaching enabled the student to acquire critical thinking skill.</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Emergency digital teaching developed students' verbal and written communication skills.</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Emergency digital teaching made it easier for the student to understand the knowledge contained in the courses.</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Emergency digital teaching contributed to the emergence of positive values among students such as teamwork and constructive cooperation.</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Emergency digital teaching enabled the student to acquire investigation skill.</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Emergency digital teaching encouraged students to engage in teamwork.</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Emergency digital teaching contributed to increasing students' interaction with the teacher in the lecture.</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Emergency digital teaching enabled the student to acquire the skill of analysis and conclusion.</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Emergency digital teaching enabled the student to acquire the skill of innovative thinking.</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Average 3.41 M
By looking at Table two, it is clear that the total arithmetic mean of the items of the first dimension of the questionnaire was average, which reflects the average Efficiency Degree of Emergency Digital Teaching during Covid-19 Pandemic on Achieving Students’ Quality Learning Outcomes from the point of view of the study sample. Then, it appears from the table that three items scored the highest averages: Emergency digital teaching developed the students’ technical skills and their arithmetic average (4.25); and Emergency digital teaching contributed to developing the student’s ability to find solutions to the problems arising from his use of information technology, and its arithmetic mean (3.92); and finally, emergency digital teaching developed from the student’s tolerance for the responsibility of self-learning, and its arithmetic average was (3.86). The high averages of these three items are a clear indication of the impact of emergency digital teaching, which universities resorted to in developing students’ technical skills and problem-solving skills. This coincides with the major goals of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) ((ETEC), 2020a), which emphasizes skills as a major component of the graduate’s personality regardless of his specialization. Also, this result may be attributed to the nature of the challenge faced by students and their professors with the onset of the Covid-19 crisis, as everyone who had low technical skills encountered problems in dealing with the courses presented via electronic platforms. This is what prompted them to develop their skills. These results coincide with the results of studies number (Ouyaba, 2020; Gonzalez et al., 2022; Firmansyah et al., 2021; Ejdys & Kozłowska, 2021).

As for the remaining items of the dimension, the averages ranged between 3.06 and 3.58, all of which reflect a medium efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes from the point of view of the study sample. Three of the highest items were of particular importance, as they affect high learning outcomes, and these items ranked fourth and fifth, namely: emergency digital teaching contributed to breaking the psychological barriers that reduced student participation and interaction in the traditional lecture, and their average was 3.58; and the item: Emergency digital teaching encouraged effective communication between learning group members, with a mean of 3.44, and the item: emergency digital teaching have developed verbal communication skills for the student, with a mean of 3.44. This result reflects the role of active participation and the teacher’s involvement in practical experiences, and these results met with the results of (Bahanshal & Khan, 2021).

When they measure the students learning outcomes in university courses, experts in evaluating education realize that some of them were not tangible before the application of the education forms imposed by the Covid-19 Pandemic, especially in some outcomes related to communication skills, communication and information technology. Through his experience for more than ten years as a consultant in evaluating education, quality and academic accreditation, the researcher realized the difference represented in breaking the psychological barriers of the student, which increased his participation and interaction from a distance with both his colleagues and the course professor. The result shown by the results of the dimension analysis may be attributed to this reason.

To answer the second question: Are there statistically significant differences at the significance level (α ≤ 0.05) between the study sample members in their estimation of the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes due to the variables of gender, years of experience, specialization? The
second question has been answered through the necessary analyzes and by calculating the arithmetic averages of the sample responses according to the three variables, as follows:

**Gender Variable**

There was a calculation of the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes from the point of view of the study sample according to the variable of gender. The T-test for two independent samples was used. Table three shows the result of the test, and the null hypothesis states that: There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level \( \alpha \leq 0.05 \) among the sample members in their estimation of the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes from the point of view of the study sample, this result is attributed to the variable of sex.

Table 3. Arithmetic averages of the answers of the sample members according to the variable of sex

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Arithmetic Means</th>
<th>Std.v</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>57.78</td>
<td>13.11</td>
<td>-1.03</td>
<td>0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Looking at the test results as shown in Table three, it becomes clear that the differences are not statistically significant, which means that the null hypothesis is correct, and therefore there are no statistically significant differences attributable to the sex variable at the significance level \( \alpha \leq 0.05 \) among the sample members in their estimation of the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes due to the variable of sex. This result opposes that of (Gonzalez et al., 2022), whose results showed differences in favor of females.

**Years of Experience Variable**

The necessary analyses were conducted to extract the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes based on the variable of years of experience. The t-test for two independent samples was used, and table four shows the test result, and the null hypothesis states that: There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level \( \alpha \leq 0.05 \) attributed to the variable of years of experience.

Table 4. Arithmetic averages of the answers of the sample members according to the years of experience variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Experience</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Arithmetic Average</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10 Years</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>60.27</td>
<td>13.14</td>
<td>5.55</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 Years</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>52.00</td>
<td>10.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the test results shown in Table four, it is clear that the differences are statistically significant, which means that the null hypothesis is invalid. Therefore, there are statistically significant differences attributed to the years of experience variable at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) among the sample members in their estimation of the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes. It appears from the table that it was in favor of those with years of experience less than ten years. This result may be attributed to the level of students dealt with by those with less experience. They dealt with undergraduate students, while those with long experience often dealt with graduate studies (Masters and PhDs). Their teaching burden was usually more than those with long experience who were often full professors and their teaching hours were fewer.

**Specialization Variable**

The necessary analyzes were conducted to extract the arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes due to the specialization variable. The results are shown in Table five.

Table 5. *Arithmetic averages of the sample members’ answers according to the specialization variable*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specialization</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Arithmetic Average</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Humanities</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>14.49</td>
<td>-275</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientific</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>58.09</td>
<td>12.66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By looking at the test results shown in Table five, it becomes clear that the differences are not statistically significant. This means that there are no statistically significant differences attributable to the variable of specialization at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) among the sample members in their assessment of the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes. This result can emerge from the fact that faculty members in humanities, like their colleagues in scientific faculties, use the same e-learning platforms and technologies and whatever was made available by the Ministry of Education in the KSA, the direct authority for education that manages its Corona file during the Pandemic. This result confirms the results of (Gonzalez et al., 2022).

To answer the third question: What are the factors that affected the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes? The arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the items of the second dimension were extracted from the questionnaire, which dealt with these factors, and they are shown in Table six.

Table 6. *Arithmetic averages and standard deviations of the second-dimension items*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>The difficulty of achieving some educational activities through technologies and their spaces.</th>
<th>Arithmetic means</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Efficiency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Efficiency Degree of Emergency Digital Teaching

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students’ weak motivation towards learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weak technical skills of some faculty members.</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poor technical skills of students.</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Weak technical support services in case of problems in distance education system.</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Weak technical infrastructure in universities.</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Overall Average</strong></td>
<td><strong>3.72</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>High</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By looking at Table six, it is clear that the overall arithmetic means of the items of the second dimension of the questionnaire was high, which reflects the strong influence of some factors on the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching on achieving of students’ quality learning outcomes in Saudi universities during the Covid-19 Pandemic. These factors have limited the degree of achievement of learning outcomes for students. Moreover, the table shows that the highest averages were for the item “the difficulty of achieving some educational activities through technologies and their spaces”, which received an average of 4.00, followed by the item “weak students’ motivation towards learning during the pandemic” with an average of 3.78. The item “Weak technical skills of some faculty members” scored an average of 3.69. This indicates the importance of these factors and their substantial impact on the educational process imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. This result is attributed to the nature of the stage in which traditional education alternatives were applied, such as emergency digital teaching or distance education or synchronous and asynchronous e-learning. There was no prior preparation in terms of students' required technical skills or psychological readiness. These results are consistent with the results of the studies of (Sayyaf, 2021; Ferri et al., 2020).

Perhaps this pandemic has opened the eyes and the mind to the urgent need to pay attention to distance education technological requirements to ensure the continuity of learning for students in emergency conditions and at all times and circumstances. The arithmetic averages of the fifth and sixth items in this dimension, which are related to the infrastructure of technological alternatives in universities and related technical support services, indicate how these factors affect students' learning outcomes and quality. This result is consistent with what was suggested by the studies of (Ferri et al., 2020; Firmansyah et al., 2021).

### Conclusion

More than a decade ago, the Saudi Ministry of Education set significant learning outcomes and included them in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (ETEC, 2020b). These outcomes are the basis for all procedures for designing academic programs and courses, and they have become a basis for the evaluation and development processes. They are today the focus of all quality and academic accreditation processes. This study highlighted and utilized them when building its tool and directing the course of its research. The study results showed the efficiency of emergency digital teaching, which Saudi universities resorted to for enhancing students' technical skills and problem-solving skills. This meets some of the primary goals of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF, 2020), which emphasizes these skills as a significant component.
of the graduate's personality regardless of specialty. The study results showed that emergency digital teaching had an impact on developing some positive values among students, such as taking responsibility for self-learning and striving to solve problems arising from the use of technology. Emergency digital teaching contributed to breaking the psychological barriers that reduced student participation and interaction in the lecture.

But it was a minor degree in achieving learning outcomes in the knowledge and understanding domain. It was also a minor degree in achieving learning outcomes in the cognitive skills domain such as investigation, reasoning, creative thinking and critical thinking, which requires good planning and preparation for the use of technology in teaching. The study results also showed a set of factors that affected the achievement of the learning outcomes during the Covid-19 pandemic. These factors included the difficulty in executing some educational activities via the Internet and its spaces and the weak technical skills of students and some faculty members. The study also showed Saudi universities' general lack of readiness for modern education forms that use technologies. Perhaps this pandemic opened the eyes and raised the awareness of the need for distance educational technologies to ensure the continuity of learning for students, not only in emergency conditions but at all times and circumstances.

The limitation of the study includes objective limits, which means that the current study is limited to measuring the efficiency degree of emergency digital teaching during covid-19 pandemic on achieving students’ quality learning outcomes. It also includes spatial limits, which refers to fact that the tool was applied to the Saudi universities in the Riyadh region, which constitute 30% of Saudi universities. The last one is time limits since the study tool was applied to the study sample in the first semester of the 2021/2022 school year.

Recommendations

In light of the results of the study, the following suggestions can be made as executive recommendations:

1. Universities should reconsider their planning and use of educational patterns to include modern education forms, such as e-learning, distance education, and blended learning so that teachers and students become ready for these patterns and requirements to achieve the desired quality of education and its outcomes.
2. Universities should focus on developing the technical skills of both faculty members and students through training programs that enhance those skills in line with the global trend towards distance education and e-learning.
3. The Ministry of Education should reconsider its strategies for planning higher education and its outcomes.
4. The Education and Training Evaluation Commission should include in the academic accreditation criteria for programs indicators specific to technological environments that meet the requirements of non-traditional education patterns and indicators for the technical skills of faculty members in universities.
5. Researchers can conduct further studies on non-traditional education forms (modern education forms) and their requirements to achieve the desired quality of education and its outcomes.
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Using Ideological Conflict to Create Carcinogen Risk in Arabic Scientific Discourse: A Corpus-Based Study

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Abstract
Many Arabic scientific debates are devoted to disputes on cancer and its causes. Scientists tend to inform people about the danger of consuming and being exposed to carcinogens. The paper aims to explore the proximization strategy that Arab scientists rely on to construct carcinogen risk to promote people’s preventive actions against carcinogens. The paper intends to answer the main question: how does the Arabic scientific discourse employ ideological conflict to construct carcinogen risk? It is hoped that the paper can provide insights into the linguistic construction of concepts through the ideological conflict between two different poles in the Arabic scientific discourse. It provides insights for Arab scientists by promoting their awareness of the potential of Arabic for presenting a fully intellectual reflection of scientific knowledge. It focuses on the construction of carcinogen risk that generates tension between the values held by people and the opposing values ascribed to carcinogens. This aim is achieved by employing Cap's (2013) cognitive pragmatic theory of proximization. The theory comprises three proximization strategies: spatial, temporal and axiological. The axiological proximization strategy is applied to a corpus of Arabic scientific discourse. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are used in the analysis to produce more objective results. Anthony's AntConc (2019) corpus linguistics software is used for conducting mathematical calculations through corpus linguistics. The paper has arrived at some conclusions that show how axiological proximization is employed to construct carcinogen risk which encourages people to take preventive actions.

Keywords: AntConc, axiological proximization, carcinogen risk, cognitive pragmatics, ideological conflict, proximization theory, scientific discourse

Introduction

Cancer represents a global and public health concern. The bulk of deaths worldwide is primarily due to cancer. In 2018, there were approximately 9.6 million registered death cases (Arafa, Rabah, & Farhat, 2020). Carcinogens are substances that cause cancer and are present in every part of the environment. The Latin word carcinoma (from the Greek karkinoma), which means "malignant tumor, cancer," and the suffix -gen, which means "something produced" or "thing that creates or causes," were combined in 1853 to make the noun carcinogen (Carcinogen, 2008). Carcinogens can quickly enter human systems through food, air, radiation, water, cosmetics, smoking, etc. According to Pohanish (2002), a substance or combination of substances that cause the promotion or start of malignant or benign neoplasia (cancer) in humans or animals is considered a carcinogen.

One of the main focal points of the scientific discourse (henceforth SD) in general and Arabic SD, in particular, is cancer and carcinogen-related issues. Knowledge in SD comes from disciplines such as biology, chemistry, physics, pharmacy, ecology, etc. Through linguistic resources, knowledge of various subjects is textualized. Examining the language used to represent knowledge is necessary to determine knowledge structure (Hao, 2020; Rasheed, 2020). SD differs from other kinds of discourse. According to Wei and Yu (2019), the ideographic, interpersonal and textual functions of SD influence the formality of language. In their list of genres connected to SD, Wei and Yu (2019) include scientific papers, scientific writings, experimental reports, introduction of scientific and technological trends, scientific and technological information materials, etc. SD is the contextualized language that scientists and other science practitioners employ. It shares specific grammar, pronunciation, and spelling patterns with practically all other types of discourse. It contains a broad vocabulary with several familiar or specialist terminology which is used in specific contexts (Yore, Florence, Pearson, & Weaver, 2004; Jaafar & Ganapathy, 2022).

Scientists disagree over whether it is possible to derive a convincing explanation from the gathered facts in SD, which is a discourse of conflict (Harris 1997 cited in Hanauer, 2006). Scientific research is governed by discourse, which transforms unsupported theories and scientific arguments into evidence-based arguments (Prelli, 1989, cited in Hanauer, 2006). Disagreement and argumentation are essential aspects of SD. These two characteristics may combine in SD on carcinogens to produce an ideological clash between the values of people at risk of cancer and the opposing values of carcinogens. Such ideological tension is created to raise people's awareness of the dangers of consuming or being exposed to carcinogens. Language is used for increasing awareness by proximizing the ideological conflict to individuals to present risk and crisis linguistically. The goal of proximization in general and axiological proximization (henceforth AP) in particular is to persuade individuals to take precautions against substances (carcinogens) that individuals have previously believed to be environmentally friendly. Depending on AP, Khalil and Al-Zubaidi (2022) have investigated how ideological conflict is employed to construct carcinogen risk in the English SD. According to the present paper, the problem is that there is a gap in the literature regarding how ideological conflict in the Arabic SD can portray carcinogen risk.

The paper intends to determine how the ideological conflict is achieved in the Arabic SD which tackles carcinogen risk. It attempts to determine the cognitive pragmatic ways used in Arabic SD to construct carcinogen risk by arguing the ideological conflict of values between people and carcinogens. The significance of the paper is that it can provide insights into the linguistic construction of carcinogen risk in the Arabic SD through the ideological conflict between carcinogens and people. It furnishes insights for Arabic scientists by promoting their awareness of
the potential of Arabic for representing a fully intellectual reflection of scientific knowledge. The aim of the paper is achieved by using Cap's (2013) proximization theory for analysis. It is a theory within cognitive pragmatics. It uses spatial, temporal, and axiological proximization strategies to form threats and crises. AP strategy has been used for analyzing the data since it is a linguistic choice for creating ideological conflict that can be used to generate threats and crises.

The paper aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Investigating how carcinogen risk is constructed in the Arabic SD through the ideological conflict between carcinogens and people.
2. Finding out the cognitive pragmatic tools that the Arabic SD mainly relies on to construct carcinogen risk through ideological conflict.

In light of the objectives above, the paper attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. How is carcinogen risk constructed in the Arabic SD through the ideological conflict between carcinogens and people?
2. What are the cognitive pragmatic tools that the Arabic SD mainly relies on to construct carcinogen risk through ideological conflict?

The paper provides a theoretical background about cognitive pragmatics, proximization theory, AP and certain related theoretical issues. Then, it presents the results achieved by applying AP to the data using Antony’s (2019) AntConc, as corpus linguistics software to get better statistical results. Thus, the paper is both qualitative and quantitative. The results are then supported by the detailed discussion that is consolidated with other references and works conducted by other researchers. Finally, conclusions that fulfill the research objectives and answer the research questions are put forward.

**Literature Review**

**Cognitive Pragmatics**

Cognitive pragmatics is the study of the cognitive principles and processes involved in the construction of meaning-in-context, while pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning-in-context (Levinson, 1983). Cognitive pragmatists concentrate on the inferential chains which are essential for communicating the interlocutor’s intention. The words and mental images that underlie the understanding of various cognitive phenomena as cognitive processes serve as the starting point. The interaction between pragmatics and cognition is the primary focus of cognitive pragmatics (Abbas, 2009; Gallai, 2019).

Cognitive pragmatics is not a combined field of cognitive linguistics and pragmatics. Instead, pragmatics has always been cognitive. This fact is evident from classic pragmatics works such as Grice’s (1975) implicatures and Searle’s (1975) list of ten stages that partners (text receivers) follow in interpreting indirect speech acts. This fact is supported by the Relevance Theory proposed by Sperber and Wilson in 1985. Traditional pragmatic theories have given rise to various strategies that fit into cognitive linguistic frameworks. Although the name “cognitive pragmatics” has not been used to them yet, these approaches can be categorized as cognitive pragmatic ones (Gallai, 2019).

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model of spatial, temporal, and modal conceptualizations along with applications to political discourse, are a foundational part of Cap's (2013) theory. According to Chilton (2014), placement is akin to a backbone for the performance of DS theories within texts. Positioning is a strategy that addresses our place inside the conceptualization and the locations of other actors and actions. It can therefore be spatial, temporal, social, epistemic, and axiological and combines distancing and proximization methods (Hart, 2018).

The positioning has to do with how mental spaces are organized as areas of conceptual space, which has an impact on grammatical formulations. It also has to do with portions of the text which are affected by how the discourse world is built inside the DS. Positioning techniques rely on the capacity to construct points of view. The deictic organization and the change in perspectives of view conceptualize these techniques (Hart, 2018). People position things around them in the world by situating them in relation to themselves along the three axes of space, time, and modality when processing any sort of discourse (Chilton, 2004). Initially, the three axes were connected to the DS, which contains the symbolic Self (I, we, etc.). The coordinates of the other processes and entities on the space (s), time (t), and modality (m) axes determine the ontological spaces in which they take place (Chilton, 2004). Accordingly, it becomes possible to conceptualize the ontological configurations (triggered by a text).

**Proximization Theory**

Proximization is a recent concept. Chilton (2004) is the first author to use the verbal nouns "proximate" and "proximising". Cap (2005) coined the word "proximization," which he used to denote the strategic organization of cognitive-pragmatic interpretations in (initially, political) speech (Cap, 2013). Then, "proximization has become a cognitive-linguistic, pragmatic, as well as a critical discourse analytic term which accounts for the symbolic construal of links between entities inside the DS" (Chilton 2005, cited in Cap, 2013, p. 5). It deals with the symbolic change in which the DS’s periphery entities become the deictic center of the DS. Proximization is a discursive technique that makes physically and temporally far events and conditions (including remote antagonistic ideologies) seem more and more damaging to interlocutors. The actor strives to justify the measures and/or policies that they suggest to counteract the growing impact of the harmful, foreign, alien, antagonistic entities by projecting the distant entities as slowly creeping towards the partner’s territory (both physically and ideologically) (Cap, 2018).

Proximization theory, according to Cap (2020), functions as an operation of forced construal that calls to mind the proximity of the external threat to enhance preventive measures. According to Cap’s (2013) Spatio-Temporal-Axiological (STA) proximization model, specific lexico-grammatical choices are strategically used. As a result, the theory depends on an interdisciplinary research program that uses corpus-based, critical, pragmatic, and cognitive techniques. The linguistic establishment of the deictic core and deictic periphery depends on the lexico-grammatical choices. As a result, they support the symbolic interpretations that allow the periphery of DS to reach the deictic center (Cap, 2013).

Several cross-disciplinary presumptions govern how lexico-grammatical choices relate to the changing extralinguistic context. In terms of its offline static pre-existence and its online dynamics of new meaning production through conceptualization, it is consistent with the cognitive idea of DS. It fits with metaphorical cognitive frameworks. Additionally, proximization theory establishes linguistic representations for mental mappings to achieve specific goals pragmatically. These goals form the framework for legitimacy. The percentages of lexico-grammatical choices
that reflect the axiological, geographical, and temporal categories are always changing. These changes reflect the changing status of the dimensions of space, time, and value (Cap, 2013).

The threat comes from Outside-Deictic-Center (ODC)/ DS-peripheral entities (carcinogens). The Inside-Deictic-Center (IDC) entities (people) are thought to be invaded by the ODCs as they travel through space. The IDCs typically include both partners and actors (text producers and text receivers). Such an approach tries to demonstrate the ODCs' negative representation as being dangerous and threatening to the IDCs' positive representation. The negative portrayal of ODCs generates fear and calls for protective measures. As a result, the purpose of motivating public approval is to strengthen preventive action (Cap, 2020). The threat is of an ideological and spatio-temporal nature. As a result, proximization can be considered from the perspectives of space, time, and axiology.

**Axiological Proximization**

The forced construal of an ideological clash between the "home values" of the DS's Central entities (IDCs) and the alien antagonistic values of the ODCs (which occur in the DS's conceptual periphery) is the essence of AP. The ODC ideological threat will materialize within the IDC domain due to the IDC-ODC conflict, which either will or (at least) may result in a physical confrontation (Cap, 2013). AP strategy is of three categories. Each category employs certain lexico-grammatical choices to achieve AP:

**Category One:** Noun phrases (NPs) construed as IDC positive values or value sets (ideologies)

**Category Two:** Noun phrases (NPs) construed as ODC negative values or value sets (ideologies)

**Category Three:** Discourse forms involving the linear arrangement of lexico-grammatical choices (phrases) construing materialization in the IDC space of the ODC negative ideologies.

Categories one and two signify ideological opposition because they are related to the values of the opposing (central vs. peripheral) physical entities in the DS (IDCs vs. ODCs). The juxtaposition of the two sets of opposing values is a requirement for the construction of the ODC negative values (Cap, 2013). The threat that motivates the ODC's (people's) bodily impact is presented by the ODC-negative values (carcinogen values). The essence of AP is such a symbolic shift "from the conceptual premise to the physical act," which strengthens its status as a proximization strategy (Cap, 2013). Regarding how pronominal NP replacements are handled in the STA techniques, Cap (2013) acknowledges that pronominal substitutes are not always included in the categories and don't always count. He argues that proximization strategies can use fewer noun phrases (NPs) as category descriptors, allowing for the explicit provision of pronominal alternatives.

As for the conceptual shift, category three entails a difficult sequential scenario that is divided into two components: the "abstract-ideological" component and the "concrete-physical" component. The ideological component depicts a conflict between the IDC and the ODC opposing values in an abstract and far-off manner. Once the physical and ideological components come together, the ODC's ideological hostility becomes a real physical threat. An ongoing shift in conflict probability levels is crucial to the transformation from abstract to physical conflict. While the physical component transforms the IDC/ODC conflict from a remote possibility to a high probability, the ideological component subsumes that potential. This symbolic process helps to understand why the third category consists of phrases arranged linearly (Cap, 2013).
Method

The paper has employed a mixed research method that combines qualitative and quantitative analysis for more reliable results. For the qualitative and quantitative analyses, Cap’s (2013) AP strategy (as a component of proximization theory) was used for analysis. Through the use of corpus linguistics, mathematical computations were performed in the quantitative part of the analysis. The corpus analysis was performed using Anthony’s AntConc (2019) software. AntConc is a free CorL program created by Prof. Laurence Anthony, a Director of the Centre for English Language Education, Waseda University in Japan. It was first released in 2002. There are versions available for Windows, Mac and Linux. AntConc can be freely downloaded from the webpage http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/. On this webpage, there are links to specific online guides and videos. The version used in the current study is AntConc 3.5.8 (windows) (Anthony, 2019). AntConc is capable of reading and processing data converted to a certain format (.txt, .htm, .html or .xml). Therefore, AntFileConverter has been downloaded from the webpage above and used for converting the corpora files before they are processed by AntConc. The program is downloaded as a single file and can be run by double-clicking this file. Users can store it wherever they want on the computer. Moreover, it can be run from a USB memory stick. The corpus was built by the researchers. The sub-genres of the corpus include scientific reports presented by governmental and non-governmental scientific associations or institutes, news stories on scientific developments, scientific articles presented in online periodicals, and those presented on websites devoted to medicine and the environment. The texts were taken directly from internet sources. The texts were then converted into Word.doc files, one file per text (article). Finally, the Word.doc files were converted to txt format (using the program AntFileConverter) and then processed by AntConc. The size of the Arabic SD is 56288 tokens. Accordingly, the formed corpus is suitable as a representative for the data in question.

Research Procedures

The procedures followed are:

1. Presenting a literature review about certain theoretical topics that form the backbone of the paper;
2. Collecting Arabic texts from different sub-genres of SD to build the corpus;
3. Generating a word.Doc file for the Arabic scientific texts collected;
4. The word. Doc file is converted to text. file format (by AntFileConverter software) to be processed by Anthony’s (2019) AntConc;
5. The corpus is processed by Anthony’s (2019) AntConc in relation to the AP categories to obtain statistical results;
6. The results obtained are then discussed to complement the quantitative results with qualitative evaluation;
7. Present a set of conclusions that achieve the research objectives and answer the research questions.
Results

The AP strategy consists of three categories. Both one and two recruit NPs and single-word nominals as lexico-grammatical choices. In category one, the NPs are construed as IDC positive values or value sets (ideologies). In category two, the NPs are construed as ODC negative values or value sets (ideologies). The results of analyzing categories one and two are put in one table (table one) to avoid confusion and inaccuracy. To do the corpus analysis of these categories, the word list of the corpus in AntConc has been surveyed to look for NPs that suggest positive IDC values and negative ODC values. Then, the concordance of each suspected NP is checked to assign and calculate the related instances. The File View tool has also been used in many instances for a double check. The lexico-grammatical choices that have occurred in the corpus are الأنسجة الطبيعية (normal tissues) and صحة الإنسان (human health) for the IDCs and الأورام الخبيثة (malignancy) and أعراض خطيرة (serious symptoms) for the ODCs. The identification of the lexico-grammatical choices which establish categories one and two depends on the denotative meaning of the NPs and single-word nominal (which refer to IDCs and ODCs) because, in SD, information is presented straightforwardly rather than adopting figurative language where connotative meaning is expressed. The results are presented in table one in appendix A.

Category three is the most essential category in the AP strategy. Cap (2013) presents an elaborative formula for this category. The formula is in the form of a four phraseological paradigm as follows:

1. NP denoting ODC value(s) followed by or combined with
2. VP denoting a remote possibility of the ODC-IDC conflict followed by
3. VP denoting a close probability of the ODC-IDC conflict followed by or combined with
4. NP denoting physical consequences of the ODC-IDC conflict.

In the Arabic language, such sequence of NPs and VPs may not occur verbatim since Arabic has a different word order from English. English word order tends to be more fixed than the Arabic one since Arabic employs optional and obligatory word orders. Moreover, in Arabic, pragmatic information is mainly indicated by word order, but, in English, such information is indicated by different syntactic constructions (Aajami, 2019; Khalil, 1999). Such a difference is a natural consequence of typological differences among languages. Therefore, in the analysis of the Arabic corpus of SD, the existence of NP of ODC value, VP of the remote possibility of ODC-IDC conflict, VP of the close probability of ODC-IDC conflict and NP of physical consequences of the ODC-IDC conflict in one structure need to be taken into consideration rather than their sequence within the same structure. However, Cap (2013) provides other flexible discourse forms for this category since some NPs and VPs do not collocate and may not occur with some NPs and VPs of other paradigms. In such cases, the NPs and VPs may occur independently rather than involving within a four-part structure.

The application of this category to the Arabic SD corpus has been performed by generating a word list in AntConc. Then, the word list was manually investigated to identify NPs that denote ODCs and the NPs that denote negative values for ODCs (already identified in table one. Next, each related NP was inserted in the search box in AntConc and then the start button was hit to display the concordances where the NPs exist, as shown in figure one for the ODC التلوث (pollution):
Consequently, the structures or discourse forms where the ODC negative values and the ODCs themselves exist are displayed and examined to identify any conceptual shift from abstract ideological part to concrete-physical part. The results of analyzing this category in the Arabic SD corpus are presented in table two in appendix B.

The category tree is the most crucial one in the AP strategy (Cap, 2013). This is mirrored by its position in the corpus; after categorizing the ODCs' negative values, the corpus illustrates the ensuing physical harm with nearly equal relevance. Therefore, category three is the core of AP.

The total statistical results for the three categories of the AP strategy in the Arabic SD corpus are put in table three:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Lexico-grammatical choices</th>
<th>Total instances</th>
<th>Percentage of instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Noun phrases (NPs) construed as IDC positive values</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Noun phrases (NPs) construed as ODC negative values</td>
<td>1573</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Discourse forms involving linear arrangement of lexico-grammatical phrases construing materialization in the IDC space of the ODC negative ideologies.</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total instances</td>
<td>2167</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table three shows a clear divergence in the employment of the three categories. Figure two displays the graphic representation of the distribution of the AP strategy categories in the Arabic SD corpus.
According to the rates of distribution of the AP strategy categories in the Arabic SD corpus, the categories can be arranged on a scale of three ranks as shown in table four:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category rank</th>
<th>Category No.</th>
<th>Lexico-grammatical choices</th>
<th>Total instances</th>
<th>Percentage of instances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Noun phrases (NPs) construed as ODC negative values</td>
<td>1573</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Discourse forms involving linear arrangement of lexico-grammatical phrases construing materialization in the IDC space of the ODC negative ideologies.</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Noun phrases (NPs) construed as IDC positive values</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AP plays a considerable role in constructing carcinogen risk in the Arabic SD (2167 times). This outcome supports Cap’s (2013) emphasis on AP as an essential proximization strategy for crisis and threat construction.

Discussion

Category two has achieved the first rank in the number of occurrences in the corpus. Category two in the AP is concerned with NPs construed as ODC negative values. The dominance of this category explicates the extent to which the ODC negative values act as the cornerstone of the ideological conflict in the corpus. According to the dominance of category two, Cap (2010) states that the main function of AP is to entail that IDCs are given different values to broaden the domain of contrast and comparison (between carcinogens and people) and increase the values attributed to ODCs for them to be rejected. Cap (2017) emphasizes the construal of ODC entities as “inherently evil” to achieve a stronger “fear-raising appeal” that promotes “an effective defense or prevention plan” (p. 36). The dominance of this category represents the instigator of the AP since, as Cap (2010) believes, the ODC elements “are then construed as potentially invading the IDCs’ home territory or the territories which have been converted to the IDCs’ ideology” (p. 401).

The NPs construed as ODC negative values are mainly of physical denotations such as التلوث/ التلوثات/ الملوثات (pollution/ pollutants), التلوث/ التلوثات/ الملوثات (pollution/ pollutants), (disease(s)), (tumor(s)), (الأورام/ اورام/ أورام) (tumor(s)), (الأورام/ اورام/ أورام). Such physical denotation for ideological conflict is explicated by Cap (2014) who believes that the antagonistic ODC peripheral values can be physically materialized within the DS center. In addition, Cap (2010) emphasizes the fact that the actor’s construal of an ongoing ideological conflict eventually comes into being in the form of a physical clash between the interlocutors and the opponent.

The second rank is occupied by category three with 536 instances (24.7%). Although category one employs straightforward lexico-grammatical choices that take little textual space in the corpus, it could not outperform category three which Cap (2013) considers the most essential category in the AP strategy. The importance of this category parallels its rank in the corpus in that, after signifying the negative values of the ODCs in category two, the corpus presents the almost equivalent significance of the shift from these negative values to the resulting physical damage. Hence, category three forms the heart of AP. This finding is supported by Cap (2008) who assures that the success of the proximization strategy depends on the construal of the eventual clash between the ODC and the IDC entities, and the most salient lemmas are those which indicate a
conflict-bound movement on the part of both ODCs and IDCs, though the latter can also be construed as passive or inert and thus easily invadable.

The last rank goes to category one where NPs are construed as IDC-positive values with a frequency of 58 instances (2.7%). Although the construal of ideological conflict between IDCs and ODCs is crucial to the AP, the positive values of IDCs in the Arabic SD corpus are not that significant and, thus, do not perform a significant AP linguistic activity in the corpus. This is because the IDCs (health and safety of people) are portrayed mainly as universal victims that are facing everlasting enemies (different types of cancer and various carcinogens). The abundant identification of ODCs and their positive values would be redundant.

Conclusion

The paper aims to investigate the cognitive pragmatic construction of carcinogens risk through an ideological conflict of values in the Arabic SD. To achieve this aim, the AP strategy (as part of the cognitive pragmatic theory of proximization) was employed to analyze the data. The paper has come to a set of conclusions. First, carcinogen risk is ideologically presented through the three categories of the AP strategy: category one (Noun phrases construed as positive values of people who are subjected to environmental carcinogens), category two (Noun phrases construed as negative values of carcinogens themselves) and category three (discourse forms of linear arrangement of lexico-grammatical choices that construe the materialization of carcinogens negative values in the people’s space). Second, the Arabic SD lays more emphasis on the construction of the negative values of carcinogens risk to create robust reactions towards them. Thus, more serious preventive measures would be performed by people. Third, the positive values of people are not that influential in creating ideological conflict since the ultimate aim of Arabic SD on carcinogens is to raise awareness of the cancerous effects of some environmental products.

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References


### Appendices

**Appendix A:** Table 1. The results of analyzing categories one and two of the AP strategy in the Arabic corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NPs of positive values for IDCs</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>NPs of negative values for ODCs</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>الاxceض/ الحالات/ العوامل/ الخ. الطبيعية (natural + Tissues / Conditions / Factors / Etc.)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>خطر/ مخاطر/ المخاطر/ خطورة (risk(s))</td>
<td>459</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>صحة + الاساس/ الرضيع/ الاشخاص/ الكوكب/ الخ. (Health of + human/ baby/ people/ planet/ etc.)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>الأمراض/ امراض/ المرض/ مرض (disease(s))</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>حماية (protection)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>الأورام/ الورم/ ورم/ اورام (tumor(s))</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>نتائج/ السوائل/ الفلوت/ الملوثات (pollution/ pollutants)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>اصابة/ الإصابة</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(injury)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الإصابات/المصاب/إصابة</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(injuries/ injured)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>أمراض/حالات/ леч.+ صحة</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>خطرة/ وحمة/ الخ.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(health + serious / dangerous / severe / etc. + Conditions / cases / etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الأورام/المرض/نمو/ الخ.</td>
<td>34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(malignant + Tumor/disease/growth/etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الوفيات/الفاة</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(death case(s))</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>فيروس/ الفيروسات</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(virus(es))</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مشاكل/اعراض/تأثيرات/أخ.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>خطيرة/ وخيمة/ الخ.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(serious + Problems/symptoms/effects/etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الالتهاب/الألم/التهاب</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(inflammation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الحشاشه/المواض/العنصر/اخ.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الخطرة</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Harmful + Weeds/ Substances/ Effects/ Factors/ Etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>السموم/الكائنات السامة</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Toxins/ Toxic Ingredients)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الغازات/الجزيئات/العناصر/اخ.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>السامة</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(toxic + Gases/molecules/elements/etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الفضلات/التناثر</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Waste)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>المخلفات/المواض/العنصر+الخطرة</td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hazardous + Waste/ Components/ Materials)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>إضرار/وفيات</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(damages / death cases)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الاضطراب/التصاد/انحراف</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(turbulence/ turmoil)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>التنظير/دور/التدخين</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(passive + Smoking / role)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>التهاب الكبد الوبائي</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Hepatitis)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الأورام/الخلية+ الخبيثة</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(malignant + Tumors / cells)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الضرر/السنار</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(damage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ضعف/فقدان+الشهي/الوزن/الخ.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Anorexia/ weight loss/ Immunodeficiency/ etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مادة/إضطراب/تأثيرات/إضرار</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(polluted + Material / gases / waste / etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>（the injured）</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مشاكل/(problems)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ضعف/ ضعف</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(damage)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Appendix B: Table 2. The statistical results of category three of the AP strategy in the Arabic corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ODC NPs &amp; NPs of negative values for ODCs</th>
<th>Example instances</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ممكن أن يكون العمال قد تعرضوا لمواد أخرى حفزت المرض وطورته بدرجة أكبر (عاملات السكر/السكريات/السكروز)</td>
<td>(Eating high amounts of sugars led to the spread of cancer cells from the breast to the lungs.)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الان التعرض لجزيئات نانو أكسيد التيتانيوم يؤثر سلباً على بكتريا الامعاء المفيدة مما يؤدي إلى عواقب وخيمة .... (The exposure to titanium dioxide nanoparticles negatively affects the beneficial gut bacteria, which leads to serious consequences....)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>المواد/المواد/مادة/المادة (material(s))</td>
<td>ممكن أن يكون العمال قد تعرضوا لمواد أخرى حفزت المرض وطورته بدرجة أكبر (عاملات السكر/السكريات/السكروز)</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(meat(s)/اللحم)</td>
<td>(Eating a slice of meat a week would increase the risk of infection.)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(use)</td>
<td>(Eating a lot of sugar calories leads to weight gain, which or obesity increases your risk of cancer)</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>عوامل/العوامل (factor(s))</td>
<td>(WHO confirmed that the consumption of red meat could be a possible cause of cancerous diseases for humans.)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>زيادة+ الوزن/استعمال السيارات/هرمون الاستيرون/الأنشطة الفرنسية/التدخين/الشيشة</td>
<td>(For those under the age of fifty, along with other factors that contribute to increasing these risks.)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>السكر/السكريات/السكروز</td>
<td>(Eating a slice of meat a week would increase the risk of infection.)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>زائد الوزن/الزن/أعمال السيارة/الاستيرون/الأنشطة الفرنسية/التدخين/الشيشة</td>
<td>(WHO confirmed that the consumption of red meat could be a possible cause of cancerous diseases for humans.)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>تلوث/ملوثات/الملوثات (pollution/pollutant(s))</td>
<td>(This is the first time that experts have classified outdoor air pollution as a cause of cancer.)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>استخدام</td>
<td>(Eating a slice of meat a week would increase the risk of infection.)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>المواد/المواد/مادة/المادة (material(s))</td>
<td>(WHO confirmed that the consumption of red meat could be a possible cause of cancerous diseases for humans.)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>الكلور/خلايا/الخلايا + السليمة</td>
<td>(the healthy cell(s))</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>مضاعفات (complications of the disease)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total instances</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1573</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Using Ideological Conflict to Create Carcinogen Risk in Arabic Scientific Discourse

Khalil & Al-Zubaidi

There are a number of environmental factors that lead to cancer.

Tobacco smoking poses risks and its relationship to lung cancer...

Repeated sunburn during childhood is more dangerous than excessive exposure to the sun.

Known as phthalates, they belong to a class of chemicals linked to cancer.

Popcorn made in the microwave is considered one of the foods that cause lung cancer.

A person is the cause of a number of other factors that lead to his infection with many dangerous diseases.

People who are obese have a 30% higher risk of developing colon cancer.

Boiled fruits containing a high amount of sugar have been added to the list of drinks that are dangerous to the intestines....

Inheritance of mutated patterns of these genes leads to a significant increase in the risk of developing carcinomas....

Many people were not aware of the ingredients that are used in personal care products that are full of harmful toxins that can lead to catastrophic consequences....

The concentration of cadmium, zinc, manganese and copper in the soil is statistically correlated with the rates of malignant tumors....

Titanium 711 is considered a dangerous substance that causes colon cancer.
Using Ideological Conflict to Create Carcinogen Risk in Arabic Scientific Discourse

Khalil & Al-Zubaidi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>cigarettes/hookah</td>
<td>Hookah is less dangerous than cigarettes, but hookah smoking is linked to many health problems, including those that cause cancerous diseases.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lead</td>
<td>Repeated exposure to lead increases the risk of stomach cancer.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fat / fatty</td>
<td>All vegetable oils contain high levels of fatty acids. This surplus causes health problems that may multiply to reach sick cases.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sweeteners</td>
<td>These products contain carcinogenic aspartame compounds, genetically modified products, artificial sweeteners, and genetically modified materials, which all contribute to the occurrence of cancerous tumors.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uranium</td>
<td>The lecture devoted a part to pollution... touching on depleted uranium and the effect of nuclear radiation on skin and blood cancers.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waste</td>
<td>To take upon themselves the responsibility as far as waste is concerned, and the impact of their oil projects on the environment, causing serious health risks....</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asbestos, radon gas, pesticides and dangerous waste lead to liver and lung cancers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rays</td>
<td>Ultraviolet rays from the sun cause skin cancer...</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total instances: 536
Goal-Setting Displayed by Vietnamese EFL Students

Do Minh Hung
Foreign Languages Faculty
Dong Thap University, Cao Lanh City, Vietnam
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Abstract

Goal-setting behavior for learning courses displayed by college students of English as a foreign language (EFL) has yet to be substantively documented in the current literature. The present study, therefore, examined this topic to activate students’ goal-setting behavior in learning, which is deemed to increase their engagement in learning and ability to initiate action plans for goal attainment. The study results also provide pedagogical implications for teachers to tailor their teaching methods, techniques, and course contents in alignment with students’ goals. Thus, the main research questions raised in the study are what goal patterns students set for their specific learning courses and what action plans they make to meet the goals set. For data collecting instruments, an assignment template was completed by 58 EFL students from a university in Vietnam, followed by short phone conversations between the researcher and involved students for self-report validity. The analyzed data results identify three common goal-setting patterns displayed by students and confirm their ability to self-initiate action plans for set goals.

Keywords: Action plan, course, EFL students, goal-setting, template

Introduction

Human beings are goal-driven actors in almost all real-life practices. Goals for human life can be about personal relationships, education, entertainment, satisfaction, or career (Fishback & Ferguson, 2007; Starkey, 2004). Thus, concerning duration, a person’s life goal may last relatively from a couple of minutes, like having a cup of hot tea on a cold day morning, stretching over month/year-long terms, like eating less, exercising more, earning a college degree to the entire life, such as professional achievement and goals undoubtedly impact people’s cognitions, behaviors, judgments, attitudes, and emotions (Berkman, Falk, & Lieberman, 2012; Fishback & Ferguson, 2007). It follows that at college, students should attend to specific goals for their learning and future employability. Student life is generally the vital period for young people to shape their future work self via setting career goals known as high-order goals or temporary interests (Fishback & Ferguson, 2007) and initiating proactive behaviors for set-goal attainment. Proactive behaviors are characterized by “self-initiated, anticipatory action that aims to change and improve the situation or oneself” (Parker & Collins, 2010, p.635). That said, proactive behaviors or self-initiated actions serve as both instruments applied for set-goal outcomes and as an indicator of one’s perceived ability to make change and improvement, which promotes creativity skills.

Although learning outcomes are universally defined in terms of target knowledge, skills, and competencies of a given college course are explicitly stated in the course syllabus from the outset as a directional guideline, students taking the same course mostly vary in setting and striving for their individual goals resting on expected course grades via mid-term tests, final exams or other assessment formats. In other words, learning goals set by students would highly reveal their current individual states, expectations, value beliefs, and needs for reaching desired states in learning concerning future work self. Getting to know individual students’ specific goals at specific points/stages of learning, therefore, could provide prompts for teachers to support students over learning courses by tailoring course content components and teaching techniques towards their set goals and needs alongside incorporating other helpful guidance activities because this type of coaching supports indicative of goal-relevant stimuli has been found to generate a positive impact on boosting intrinsic motivation, goal-pursuit attention, and appropriate proactive career behaviors (Fishback & Ferguson, 2007; Huang & Hsieh, 2015; Üncuoğlu-Yolcu & Çakmak, 2017). Thereby, consciously and intentionally aligning instructional activities with students’ learning needs presented in their set goals is worth responsibly considering and taking responsive actions by college teachers in charge. However, not much has been documented in the existing literature about how EFL college students arrive at their learning goals at different points/stages along the college life road, what internal processes they manipulate over the goal-striving course, how setting goals impact their subsequent behaviors and emotions, or why some students fare better than others in this regard (Clements & Kamau, 2018).

On the aforementioned grounds concerning only a few investigations on goal-setting performances by EFL college students in the current context of those non-English speaking countries such as Vietnam, the present study, therefore, aims to fill the gap. To the end of this initial study, two focused research questions are raised: (1) what are typical patterns of goal-setting displayed by EFL college students regarding grade-point average and the discrepancy between the current state and desired goal? and (2) what action plans do they self-initiate to attain set goals? Finding out specific answers to these questions is meaningful because they will provide further understandings about EFL learners’ internal processes, common tendencies of needs, and expectations over their learning courses at college and pedagogically offer blueprints for in-charge
teachers to gear their teaching plans to substantially serve the learners’ set goals. In other words, goal-setting activation will likely benefit both learners and teachers involved (Çıkrikçi & Gençdoğan, 2022; Gkizani & Galanakis, 2022).

The following sections in this paper are to further ground the present study theoretically with other worthwhile notions regarding goal-setting behaviors, followed by the research methods and conduction procedure. Then, obtained results and discussions are presented, leading to the conclusion of the present study.

**Literature Review**

Goals convey internal representations of desired outcomes, events, or processes. The relevant literature (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Çıkrikçi & Gençdoğan, 2022; Dempsey, Eardley, & Dodd, 2022; Gkizani & Galanakis, 2022; Oflu, Baluku, & Otto, 2022; Ozimek, Bierhoff, & Hamm, 2022; Fishback & Ferguson, 2007; Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022; Locke & Latham, 2002; Max & Bacal, 2004) has reported two common patterns of goal-setting. The first one is the *approach orientation* commonly practiced by those with a high level of self-efficacy. The second is the *avoidance orientation* applied by those who fear errors and failure. With a low level of self-efficacy, avoidance-orientation individuals would not take challenges or risks in setting ambitious or challenging goals “because challenges and risk may take them into unfamiliar, unsafe realms” (Schienle, 2009, p.13), i.e., they have a high level of intolerance of uncertainty. Intolerance of uncertainty refers to “the tendency to fear the unknown and to worry excessively about potential future negative outcomes” (Arbona et al., 2021, p.699), namely errors and failure. Past research has shown that a high level of uncertainty intolerance appears to hinder proactive career behaviors and has a close linkage with anxiety sensitivity, which includes fear of negative evaluation and pain (Arbona et al., 2021; Carleton, Sharpe, & Asmundson, 2007). Additionally, the fear of uncertainty and failure may evoke negative emotions such as feeling unqualified, hopeless, shameful, or guilty (Fishback & Ferguson, 2007; Tracy & Robins, 2004), which tend to impact task performance negatively (Caniëls & Baaten, 2019). When these negative elements occur, one may perform under his/her current capacity or be unlikely to complete the given task as expected. In contrast, the approach-orientation group appears to be more committed to goal-related actions or tasks, and goal commitment is believed to empower them, to try harder in ambitious goals because “goals mobilize effort” (Blerkom, 2009, p.36). Furthermore, Erez and Kanfer (1983) posited that “The most significant finding has been that specific and hard goals result in better task performance” (p.454). Unfortunately, this has not been expressly or conclusively recorded in the EFL learning field, probably due to insufficient research on goal setting.

Another widely acknowledged notion is that rational goal-setters would likely take into account their self-efficacy (i.e., self-confidence), personal strengths and weaknesses, environmental resources, and past related outcomes, and then knowingly figure out if they are competent to accomplish given course tasks or performance requirements (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Fishback & Ferguson, 2007; Jeffrey & Putka, 2000; Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022; Locke & Latham, 2002; Max & Bacal, 2004). Additionally, the act of setting goals for a specific college course is also affected by students’ deliberations over the salience of that learning course for themselves (Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022), meaning that students are inclined to commit themselves to self-ask and answer such questions as why they need to take that course or what possible rewards/values they may earn resulting from successfully finishing the course. This self-weighing process over the cost-effectiveness of a given learning course fits the *expectancy-value*
theory (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011): (i) the individual’s expectancy of success in a given task and the rewards that successful task performance will bring; (ii) the value the individual attaches to success on that task, including the value of the rewards and of the engagement in performing the task. It is also widely reported that the pathway from the current to the desired state in goal-setting is not always in a linear mode because common follow-ups for goal-striving (which include strategic action plans, feedback on the goal progress, sometimes adjusting or breaking down the original/end goal into smaller, more manageable sub-goals) are relatively subject to emerging environments or in the face of roadblocks, etc. (Blerkom, 2009; Erez & Kanfer, 1983; Jeffrey & Putka, 2000; Kernan, Hance, & Heiman, 1991; Starkey, 2004). At least, for goal-striving, i.e., manipulating relevant actions to meet the set goals, three core processes are involved (Berkman, Falk, & Lieberman, 2012; Steel, Svartdal, Thundiyil, & Brothen, 2018): Goal maintenance, i.e., retaining the mental image of the set goal in the working memory at least until the goal attainment like attending a student festival at the weekend, reviewing lecture notes for a term exam, quitting smoking or possibly much longer like being a vegetarian for the rest of one’s life. Performance monitoring is being aware of one’s current status relative to the goal end, frequently assessing progress made referencing the desired end, and timely adjusting performance properly in response to context-specific requirements. Response inhibition refers to attentionally removing all habitual responses potentially impairing the goal, or blocking these responses if they appear to take place.

As a result, once learning goals are considered, established, activated, and pursued, several cognitive, metacognitive, and behavioral processes occur to all college students in some way, at one point or another over the course participation and even after course completion as a reflective deliberation (Steel et al., 2018). Considering a complex dynamic system inherent in the pursuit of a four-year long EFL college program degree typically involving a scheduled sequence of multiple discrete learning courses, both compulsory and optional, it is crucial for all EFL college students to frequently reflect on their goal-striving progression in one way or another, cognitively transcending and connecting the past, present, and future-contingent events and making sound decisions and proactive plans for the upcoming learning moves. Thus, the present study is designed to offer them such type of constructively compelling reflection, which is detailed in the following section.

**Methods**

**Participants**

The present study was framed as qualitative exploratory research (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) because it was the first one to investigate goal-setting behaviors exhibited by a group of EFL-majoring sophomores from a local university in Vietnam. No similar study was previously conducted at this university. Participants in the present study were convenience sampling in terms of sampling methods (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Creswell, 2014), grounded on the fact that these participants were already shaped formally by the institutional system. All these sophomores, aged between 19 and 20, speaking Vietnamese as their mother tongue, were at the early beginning of their second academic year of 2022-2023 when taking part in the present study. They all enrolled in one compulsory course in their 4-year undergraduate program in EFL major. This course was taught by the researcher (who authored the present paper). Noticeably, despite coming from different provinces of Vietnam, those course participants shared (i) the first language (i.e., Vietnamese), (ii) the young adulthood of 19 – 20 years old in their specific ongoing student life, (iii) the previous educational background situated in Vietnam (they
all were born in Vietnam, had never been or lived abroad before, educated from primary to secondary under the Vietnamese educational system in the Vietnamese setting), (iv) the end goal of their tertiary education (earning a college degree majored in EFL), (v) the current learning setting hosted by this local university, and (vi) the EFL training program run by the faculty of this university. The fact that the existing literature offers virtually no information about whether these participants with such multiple identical core antecedents have any concrete goal-setting and striving behaviors in common at their second-year college stage of EFL acquisition or how they differ, if any, in this regard motivated the researcher to carry out the present study in his regular teaching classes at this university. After obtaining the official permission granted by the Department in charge, the researcher started conducting the study.

**Research Instruments and Data Collection Procedure**

As mentioned above, the present study aimed to find out empirically: (1) what are the typical patterns of goal-setting displayed by EFL college students concerning grade-point average and the discrepancy between the current state and desired goal?, and (2) what action plans do they self-initiate to attain set-goals? For answers to the research questions, before ending the first session of his regular teaching class, the academic 2022-2023 year, the researcher delivered the goal-setting displayed template (which had been devised by the researcher himself) to all present students in that first-session day as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>My grade-point average (GPA) course profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>My grade-point average (GPA) course profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>Listening Skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last semester’s GPA already gained (2021-2022)</td>
<td>(1) ………………….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2) <strong>Tick one</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Very satisfied □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Satisfied □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Not satisfied □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3) Attribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>………………….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This semester’s GPA goals (2022-2023)</td>
<td>(4) ………………….</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5) <strong>Tick one</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Very confident □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Confident □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Not confident □</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6) <strong>Action plans</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>………………….</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen from Table 1, the displayed template contains only four EFL skills because together with other courses (such as philosophy, physical education, English phonology, and grammar) these English language courses are currently compulsory that all participants took the previous year as freshmen (2021-2022) and also in the second year (2022-2023) as sophomores at this university. Thus, each of these specific courses formulates a discrete sub-goal for participants. The researcher openly and carefully guided participants to fill in the given template item by item:
(1) the last semester’s GPA they gained in these skill courses, respectively;
(2) on that gained GPA, their responding emotion resulted - how they truly felt then;
(3) how they should account for that result, i.e. why they gained such a very satisfying,
satisfying, or not satisfying GPA;
(4) exact GPA goal for the upcoming semester in each of the skill courses given;
(5) how confident they feel for that self-set goal, that is how they estimate their capacity to
meet the set goal; and
(6) what they should do to meet the goal.

Although this university currently co-applies two interchangeable grading schemes of 1-4
and 1-10 (that is: A= 4 equates to 8.5 – 10 points, B=3 for 7.0 – 8.4 points, C=2 for 5.5 – 6.9 points,
D=1 for 4.0 – 5.4 points) (Do, 2022), participants were requested to display only GPA in 1-10
format for ease and consistency across templates submitted. Visibly, for items (1), (2), and (3)
individual participants are required to consciously recall and reflect on what already happened in
the previous semester. That metacognitive-skill promoting process from (1) to (3) should likely
exert its impact on the subsequent process reflected in (4), (5), and (6) moves, respectively in the
template as a logical reasoning flow. This cause-effect contingency template represents inherent
goal-setting behaviors documented in the literature reviewed above (Austin & Vancouver, 1996;
Berkman et al., 2012; Ozimek et al., 2022; Fishback & Ferguson, 2007; Jeffrey & Putka, 2000;
Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022; Locke & Latham, 2002; Max & Bacal, 2004). Also, the template
closely echoes a three-step model of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2002), comprising (i)
forethought of strategic planning, and outcome expectations or goal attainment; (ii)
performance/volitional control via utilizing different strategies, and techniques to self-motivate
and monitor the learning processes oriented towards the set goals; and (iii) self-reflection by
evaluating progression and noticing emotional reactions drawing on learning outcomes. Template
items also refer to the questionnaire scale measuring self-regulation with two major components:
knowledge of cognition and regulation of cognition (Schraw & Dennison, 1994).

As a result, this mental-working template is deemed to intensively engage participants in
their learning attention and responsibility in the sense that it appears to compel them to take
sufficient time and profoundly deliberate over at least a two-semester successive time to be
assumedly packed with multiple different learning events already happening, particularly
significant ones such as exam-sitting days and exam-scores report received, followed by
envisioning what should be done in the upcoming semester to mobilize motivation and available
resources for goal-directed actions. Thus, the entire process appears to beneficially develop
students’ metacognition and emotional control, particularly abstract reasoning and critical thinking
skills, which can potentially be transferred into their career life after college.

Considering the ethical codes in research, although the goal-setting practice is conducive
to learning, the researcher used the template only as a homework assignment and also clearly
informed students from the onset that the given assignment was aimed to explicitly practice goal-
setting skills, which was worthwhile in the learning process at college and completely optional,
meaning that they did not have to submit it in any case and it had nothing to do with the course
grades at hand. Otherwise, they volitionally decided to partake in the present study by submitting
the completed template via personal emails within the following week and at their self-decretion
permitting the researcher to contact them individually for further information on an absolute-
confidentiality basis from that point on. This translates that under no circumstance could any
personal information, especially real names, be identified in the final result report by prospective
readers. In return, the researcher would provide detailed comments and constructive guidance to improve goal-setting skills and proactive learning plans.

Then, during the following week, the researcher received 58 completed template copies submitted. The fact that all these 58 template copies were properly fulfilled with the expected information shows the validity of the template format used in the present study. Then, the researcher arranged short phone conversations of approximately ten minutes each per template submitter to (i) acknowledge the template submission and voluntary participation in the study; (ii) confirm the validity and truthfulness of the information displayed in the template by the participant; (iii) obtain relevant information in detail; and (iv) offer constructive comments and action guidance if needed. Having gained sufficient confirmation from all 58 template submitters (35 females and 23 males), with the research questions in mind, the researcher started the process of scrutinizing all the submitted templates one by one, and then linking them collectively and reiteratively, in terms of numbers counted and content analysis. The following section will detail obtained results from the submitted templates regarding the targeted research questions in order.

Results

Research Question One: Goal-Setting Patterns Displayed

The following table presents goal-setting patterns based on discrepancies or the gap from the item (1), i.e., previous semester GPA gained, to the item (4), meaning this semester's GPA goal targetted by 58 students involved displayed in the templates (Table one). Thus, the discrepancy is simply calculated by (4) minus (1). For simplicity and visual focus, Table two displays only item (1) results and discrepancies aimed at by the students involved.

Table 2. Goal-setting patterns displayed by 58 students (N) via the given template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Listening Skill</th>
<th>Speaking Skill</th>
<th>Reading Skill</th>
<th>Writing Skill</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A= 8.5 – 10 points</td>
<td>N= 4/58</td>
<td>N= 10</td>
<td>N= 7</td>
<td>N=17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.89%</td>
<td>17.24</td>
<td>12.06</td>
<td>29.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B= 7.0 – 8.4</td>
<td>N= 13</td>
<td>N= 19</td>
<td>N= 15</td>
<td>N= 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22.41%</td>
<td>32.75</td>
<td>25.86</td>
<td>53.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C= 5.5 – 6.9</td>
<td>N= 36</td>
<td>N= 29</td>
<td>N= 34</td>
<td>N= 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.06%</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>58.62</td>
<td>17.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D= 4.0 – 5.4</td>
<td>N= 5</td>
<td>N= 0</td>
<td>N= 2</td>
<td>N= 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.62%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

First, Table two shows that among the four skills, students appeared to be struggling with listening, and reading courses with more than 70% for listening, and more than 60% for reading, earning only either an average C or poor D in present GPA, representing the previous semester learning outcomes. This follows that these two skill courses observed more than 50% aiming at a discrepancy of between one and two points: listening 63.79% and reading 51.72%, which overrides the other two skills of capturing only 32.75% each. In addition, 100% of students whose present GPA fell in C or D denoted an emotional response of "not satisfied" across the four skills for the item (2), Table one.
Secondly, results from both the item (3) attribution, Table one, and subsequent individual phone conversations reveal that most of the 2-or-higher-points discrepancy setters, from either D or C advancing towards B or A, confidently approached their goal desire and anchored to two antecedents of (i) concerted effort for learning and (ii) firmly-acquired strategic methods/techniques of specific-skill learning. They cited clearly that both these antecedents were deliberately activated in the ongoing semester but weak or almost absent in the previous one.

Thirdly, contrary to the up-moving direction underpinning the first and second patterns, the third pattern is maintaining a high GPA, either B or A. This pattern applies to those who earned B or A GPA the previous semester. Unquestionably, the A-maintaining group is logically expected because such a GPA level is the highest band score. Meanwhile, the B-maintaining goal group openly cited during subsequent phone conversations that by self-reflecting on the previous semester and self-envisioning toward the upcoming semester they concluded their current capacity could hardly meet the new semester's coursework demands satisfactorily. In one sense, the latter group appeared to seriously consider their strengths and weaknesses concerning upcoming task requirements, prompting that their existing capacity could probably not catch up with growing task demands. In another sense, they somehow showed an avoidance orientation (Schienle, 2009) at this specific point of their learning pathway.

**Research Question Two: Action plans displayed**

Table three below presents the results from the item (6) action plans, and Table one is displayed 58 returned templates by the students involved. Then, concrete illustrations from the templates are provided. For anonymity, as ethically required in research, all the templates will be coded by Tem1, Tem2, Tem3, and so on, meaning from template 1, template 2, template 3, etc., respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content items</th>
<th>Total number</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Templates providing action plans for all four skill courses of English listening, speaking, reading, and writing</td>
<td>58/58</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Templates navigating relevant learning resources</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Templates identifying features or distinct characteristics of each of the four skills</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Templates referencing others’ assistance</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Templates prioritizing tasks in the order of importance</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Templates stating self’s strengths and weaknesses in each of the four skills</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Templates designing concrete steps for doing tasks</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Templates including self-evaluation on task performances</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Templates setting concrete lengths of time for doing tasks</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Templates locating suitable environments for doing specific tasks</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following extracts are illustrative of the obtained data. For English listening skills, Tem two conveys time frame, learning steps, focal attention on weak points while doing tasks, listening genres, and learning resources:
To get the expected goal score I will make a study plan for listening practice as follows: Every day I will spend 45 minutes or one hour practicing listening at hours like 7 pm every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. In my spare time, I listen to audio and podcasts to practice more. In terms of listening practice I will follow the steps: for each listening, underline keywords, concentrate attention on these words or their synonyms; identify my weak points, and improve them. I will also practice different types of listening (lecture, conversation, conversation, etc.). About materials to practice listening: I will practice listening in IELTS test formats, Cambridge Practice Tests for IELTS Listening, Basic IELTS Listening practice materials, Get Ready for IELTS Listening. I can practice listening on websites: ieltsonlinetests.com, and breakingnewsenglish.com

For speaking skills, Tem5 conveys content items of skill-specific demands, techniques of practice, learning resources, others’ assistance, self-motivation, determination, and reasons for tapping into these strategies:

English speaking skills are difficult for foreign language learners like me. I will have to practice a lot in different ways such as: No matter how poor my vocabulary or pronunciation, I will show confidence and speak as much as possible when given the opportunity. No one laughs when I make a mistake; on the contrary, they can be more enthusiastic to help me correct it. The more practice, the more I will improve my fluency and vocabulary. I will often listen to English news on TV or songs on websites for pronunciation skills. Besides, I will also learn more vocabulary and expressions. The more I speak, the more I learn. I'll try my best to improve my speaking skill.

For reading skills, Tem32 conveys content items of skill benefits improved, levels of reading texts, textual types, content topics, other skills integration, self-motivation, and learning resources:

Reading is a quiet place for me, so if I improve on it, I will gain a lot of things: First, vocabulary is added. Second, I will learn a lot of the grammatical structures found in the reading passages. Third, I have a platform to promote the remaining skills to develop, especially Listening and Writing skills. The most effective solutions help achieve my reading improvement goals: + Practice more readings, from easy to difficult, + Read articles in English or bilingual books, + Search for favorite topics in English to increase interest and help me remember better.

For writing skills, Tem40 conveys content items of detailed steps of practice, time frame, and post-task reflection.

I will study for writing three days a week, dedicating one day to task one and the other two days to task two. Both types of lessons are divided into three similar learning stages: phase one is the consolidation of vocabulary, collocation, and grammar; phase two is learning in the form of lessons and phase three will be practice questions. About the writing process, I follow four steps: the first draft, then reading the example, then correcting mistakes, and finally drawing new words, paraphrases, and collocations.

Discussion

First, grounding on the empirical data presented in Table two, the present study points out the first typical pattern of goal-setting in EFL skill courses, which is passing over a low GPA, that is meeting either B, good, or A, very good. As a result, most students share the desire to improve learning outcomes and demonstrate a straightforward approach orientation, especially when their GPA is low, in goal-setting behavior. However, of the C-or-D GPA group or low-achievers, approximately 20% of all four skills expressed a "not confident" in item (5), Table one. In other words, an above-average GPA desire is typically adopted by students disregarding whether or not their self-confidence is advantageously matched. This pattern signifies that low-achievers appear to tolerate a temporal uncertainty, i.e., lasting an academic semester in the timeframe. Otherwise, reasonably they are subject to repeatedly coping with a feeling of failure or shame when communicating or thinking of their learning outcomes in comparison with their peers or relative to standard criteria in learning (Arbona et al., 2021; Carleton et al., 2007; Fishback & Ferguson, 2007; Tracy & Robins, 2004). So, the first pattern modified should be read passing over-low GPA driven by an approach orientation and a temporal uncertainty tolerance. This tendency is partly
justified by the fact that the previous year was their first year at college with multiple novel learning environments and coursework demands in comparison to those undergone at high school. Additionally, as noted above the repetition of all four courses of English listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in the second year of the EFL college program supports their confidence in terms of task familiarity (Dörnyei, 2005). From another interpretation, their confidence in the second year also signals that they, to a certain extent, made good use of the learning feedback resulting from the previous year or past experiences (Zimmerman, 2002) via self-reflection. Accordingly, the present study relays this pattern in goal-setting among EFL students as approaching high GPA driven by strong self-confidence, that is meeting B or A levels straightforwardly. It is evident that the approaching high GPA pattern primarily occurs when sufficiently increased self-confidence is warranted (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Fishback & Ferguson, 2007; Jeffreys & Putka, 2000; Konstantara & Galanakis, 2022; Locke & Latham, 2002; Max & Bacal, 2004).

Secondly, from the empirical data provided in Table three, it is evident that all students can self-plan actions for setting goals with the first two content items displaying actions for each of the skills under deliberation and locating relevant learning resources, scoring 100% each. As a result, a positive answer to the second research question posed by the present study is gained. A wide variation is identified among the templates in terms of figuring out and detailing exactly what needs to be done, why, and how to do it successfully for subgoals represented by each skill course GPA targetted as seen in item (1), Table one, and Table two above. Since goal-setting theories universally underline that more realistic, measurable, attainable, and detailed action plans pay a more viable path to success (Blérom, 2009; Erez & Kanfer, 1983; Jeffreys & Putka, 2000; Kernan et al., 1991; Starkey, 2004; Steel et al., 2018), it is gratifying to find that some involved students appeared to have taken it rigorously by playing out details of action plan although the template was only optional and had no impact on the course grade.

In addition to a remarkable variation in self-initiative plans, as seen from Table three, another sound insight captured from the data is that based on the previous semester's GPA given in the templates, high-achievers appeared to outperform the low-achievers in terms of detailed action plans. In other words, high-achievers tend to fare well in setting learning goals. This finding in the present study to some extent contributes to filling the gap in goal-setting issues (Clements & Kamau, 2018). In another sense, it sheds light on constructively pedagogical implications. First, if class time is permitted, in-charge teachers could attentionally select, bring in, and showcase some exemplary action plans for each skill to the whole class because in general terms students can learn from peers or classmates, not just from their teachers. This way has been utilized by the researcher of the present study himself and it worked. Yet, two essential conditions must be warranted: (1) the template writer's voluntary consent and (2) absolute anonymity as required by ethical codes. Secondly, the template format applied in the present study could be used as an obligatory homework assignment and partly counted in grade course assessment rather than merely optional because as a strong learning demand, it will likely and beneficially boost students' rigor in self-reflections and reasoning skills substantively inherent in the self-regulation system, which are essential for college students at large during college life and career progression (Blérom, 2009; Dörnyei, 2005; Erez & Kanfer, 1983; Jeffreys & Putka, 2000; Kernan et al., 1991; Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Starkey, 2004; Zimmerman, 2002). Then, students will potentially and fruitfully produce a wider meaningful repertoire of strategic action plans, which can be shared among peers right in the classroom or via some sort of virtual device.
Conclusion

The present study attempted to find out the common goal-setting patterns displayed by EFL students from a university in Vietnam and their self-initiated action plans to attain set goals for specific learning courses. The obtained results reveal (i) a variation in goal-setting directions displayed by involved students even though they share multiple background antecedents (first language, young adulthood, previous education, tertiary education goal, and current specific-learning setting), (ii) a complex mechanism of multiple functional processes packed with both metacognitive and affective components via self-reflecting on past/previous learning outcomes and upcoming learning stage in goal-setting behaviors under discussion, and (iii) students’ ability to self-initiate action plans to attain set-goals.

Although tentatively configured due to limitations in a small selected sample and being situated in a specific learning setting, the three patterns of passing over low GPA, approaching high GPA, and maintaining high GPA found out by the present study are hoped to openly encourage further research on relevant issues. Potential directions could be (i) involving a larger sample within EFL majors or cross-disciplinary students for a better generalization in goal-setting patterns for specific learning courses seen as subgoals at university education, (ii) situated in different learning contexts/situations for examining the possible impact of contextual variables involved, (iii) over an entire undergraduate timespan for looking at possible shifts in the concerned behaviors within individuals, and (iv) replicating the template used in the present study for testing its validity. Future studies are essentially needed to not only enrich understandings of inherent issues and thus gradually narrow the existing gap in the literature but also likely bring about various productive pedagogical implications within EFL education and beyond like those suggested in the present study.

About the author
Dr. Do Minh Hung has been teaching English at Dong Thap University, Cao Lanh City, Dong Thap Province, Southern Vietnam, for 25 years. He holds a doctoral degree in Applied Linguistics and has published several journal articles in the areas of English instruction and English-Vietnamese translation. ORCID ID https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9140-8404

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Enhancing Academic Writing Vocabulary Use through Direct Corpus Consultation: Saudi English Majors' Perceptions and Experiences

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Abstract
Using corpora as a learning tool in Second Language writing has gained popularity recently. The present study aimed to explore how Saudi EFL students perceive and engage with direct corpus consultation activities in academic writing as an effective method of overcoming their vocabulary errors. Hopefully, this study will provide insights into the issue of raising awareness among both EFL university students and writing teachers about the benefits of direct corpus consultation in academic writing, as well as highlighting the potential challenges students might face. Two specific questions were addressed in the study: How do Saudi EFL students perceive direct corpus consultation as a method for overcoming vocabulary errors in academic writing? What are the challenges that EFL students encounter when they use direct corpus consultation? Based on convenience sampling, a total of 32 Saudi female students majoring in English participated in the study. The study employed a mixed-method approach to increase the credibility of the study results. The study data were collected from a structured questionnaire based on a 6-point Likert scale and semi-structured interviews. The corpus used was the Corpus of Contemporary American English. The findings of both the quantitative and qualitative analysis revealed that the participants were positive about using direct corpus consultation to improve vocabulary and academic writing. In addition, some challenges associated with using direct corpus consultation were outlined in the study findings. The study concluded with several recommendations for future research and pedagogical implications.

Keywords: data-driven learning, direct corpus consultation, mixed-methods, Saudi English majors, academic writing, vocabulary errors, students’ perceptions

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Introduction

Technology has significantly affected almost every aspect of our life, remarkably as a learning tool in EFL classes. In this respect, the use of direct corpus consultation as a technology-based learning tool in EFL writing classes has received increased attention in the last few years. The use of corpora for language learning in EFL/ESL classes is effective in several recent studies, attracting both teacher and researcher interest (Al-Gamal & Ali, 2019; Boulton, 2017; Park, 2022). Corpora are considered to be a vital source for language learners since it enables them to access authentic, various, and reliable language data and examples that cannot be found in other sources. One of the first to advocate corpus consultation for language teaching was Johns (1991), who presented the concept of "data-driven learning", in which students learn from observing and analyzing corpora. Corpora are considered to be a vital source for language learners since it enables them to access authentic, various, and reliable language data and examples that cannot be found in other sources.

Corpora are considered a valuable tool in language teaching and learning for improving reading, and writing skills (Al-Gamal & Ali, 2019). It is assumed that corpus output data, which contains examples of language sentences analyzed according to their contexts and keywords, are effective for L2 language learning, specifically academic writing and vocabulary acquisition (Khorsheed, 2018; Qoura, Hassan, & Mostafa, 2018). Numerous studies in the Second Language writing area like those of Abdel-Haq (2017), Al-Howishil (2019), Al-Qahtani (2021), Sun and Hu (2020), Vyatkina (2018), and Wu (2016) have found that corpus tools assisted academic writing processes to be more reliable (with large data) and more empirical (with real language data).

Vocabulary learning is considered to be an integral element in language learning that could be improved with corpus data and corpus-based activities. According to several research studies, language teachers can help improve students' writing quality and vocabulary knowledge by providing authentic texts and examples of real-life language usage to EFL students. It has also been claimed that using corpus tools in language teaching helps students discover different vocabulary aspects such as collocation, connotation, and others (Pérez-Paredes, 2020; Yoon, 2011). Moreover, recent studies have examined students’ perceptions regarding the implementation of direct corpus consultation as a teaching tool in EFL classes (Sinha, 2021; Yoon & Hirvela, 2004).

Recent studies in the Saudi context have shown, however, that the corpus approach is not widely used by EFL teachers (Al-Howishil, 2019; Alsolami & Alharbi, 2020) and that students' perceptions regarding corpus consultation have not been widely explored (Youssef, 2021) or it was limited to using one research tool either a questionnaire or semi-structured interview. For instance, Alsolami and Alharbi (2020), Lai (2015), Park (2022) applied a semi-structured interview to measure Saudi EFL learners’ attitudes toward the use of corpus in writing class.

In other contexts, most studies used questionnaires for investigating students’ perceptions of the corpus (Elsherbiny & Ali, 2017; Koçak, 2020; Luo & Liao, 2015; Sinha, 2021). Moreover, students’ perception of these studies was a sub-theme and not the study’s main focus. To fill in this research gap, the present study aimed to examine Saudi EFL university students' perceptions of using direct corpus consultation as a learning tool in overcoming vocabulary errors in academic writing classes, using both a questionnaire and semi-structured interview to gather in-depth data. This study is significant concerning its implication for EFL/ESL pedagogy that hopefully may broaden insights into the issue of raising awareness of both EFL university students and writing
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teachers regarding the role of direct corpus consultation in overcoming vocabulary errors and improving academic writing performance and highlighting the potential challenges that students might encounter. The study objectives were to examine students' perceptions of using direct corpus consultation to develop their academic writing in terms of overcoming vocabulary errors and to identify difficulties students may encounter while using direct corpus consultation. Two research questions were addressed in this study:

1. What are Saudi EFL students’ perceptions of using direct corpus consultation in developing their academic writing in terms of overcoming vocabulary errors?
2. What are the difficulties that EFL students face in using direct corpus consultation?

In the following sections, we review the pertinent literature, describe the research methods, present the results, discuss the main findings, and conclude with pedagogical implications and suggestions for future work.

Literature Review

Vocabulary and Academic Writing

Vocabulary is one of the critical aspects of language learning. Findings of many empirical studies have shown that mastering vocabulary is considered to be the central block in developing L2 students’ writing skills (Kilic, 2019; Wu, 2016) and that students’ overall vocabulary knowledge significantly predicts their writing qualities and features (Kilic, 2019). Hence, with technology development in the L2 learning setting, corpus consultation can help and aid L2 students in learning the required vocabulary for effective academic writing. According to Ying (2021), integrating technology into EFL writing classes has provided useful writing instruction for EFL teachers and helped students to solve their academic writing problems such as semantics issues, linguistics patterns, and forms related to a given topic.

Vocabulary Errors in Academic Writing

According to Bailey (2014), Writing well requires a wide vocabulary as well as proper grammar and sentence structure. Writing is a difficult skill for EFL students because when they write, they have to focus on several elements at once such as content, vocabulary, spelling, capitalization, using correct punctuation, and text organization (Al-Tamimi, 2018). In recent studies, lexical errors, such as misspellings, word choice, collocations, punctuation, and prepositions, were found to be the most frequent errors among EFL student writers when writing English essays (Ababneh, 2017; Holmberg Sjöling, 2020).

In the Saudi context Studies on EFL students' academic writing performance revealed that missing words, wrong word choices, wrong word forms, spelling, and article errors were among the most common errors (Ababneh, 2017; Al-Tamimi, 2018). In addition, research results indicated that students' inability to choose appropriate vocabulary or express their ideas adequately in writing was the primary cause of their poor writing performance.

Corpus Linguistics

Corpus Consultation in EFL/ESL Classes

Reppen (2010) has defined corpus as "a large and principled collection of naturally occurring texts (written or spoken) stored electronically" (p. 2). Hence, corpora present a body of language or refer to an enormous collection of texts and language that usually exist in everyday life and are stored in computer form (Baker, 2010). This invention has affected applied linguistics research and emphasized the significant role of corpus data analyses in supporting the language
learning process in the classroom. With the growth of computer technology, corpus linguistics has gained more attention in language studies and research. Corpus research has become an ever-growing and developing field in second-language pedagogy. Recently, many studies have adopted corpus linguistics methods and techniques in L2 research and pedagogy (e.g., Gilquin, 2021; Le Bruyn & Paquot, 2020; Youssef, 2020). Most related studies suggested that using corpus as an educational tool is beneficial for EFL students since it provided them with authentic contexts and examples (Almutairi, 2016; Boulton, 2016; Roslim, Abdullah, Aziz, Nimechisalem, & Almuddin, 2020). Moreover, research findings revealed that integrating corpus tools in L2 teaching and learning helps develop EFL students' writing skills (Khorsheed, 2018) and improves their vocabulary knowledge (Khan, 2019; Vyatkina, 2018).

In terms of vocabulary learning, according to Nation (2001), the meaning of metalinguistic awareness is: to know the word, not only the word definition but also the word pronunciation, spelling, collocations, morphology, parts of speech, specific uses, different meanings, and related context of word usage. Thus, one of the unique aspects of using corpus is providing these additional features about the word. Teachers have recognized that a new word and its context can affect vocabulary learning (Qoura et al., 2018). When using corpora in vocabulary teaching, a list of concordance lines automatically appears on the screen from the corpus data, providing vital, valuable, and relevant information about the target word (Lee, 2018). Corpora teach students the most frequent words and expressions, with examples within corpora from spoken and written English (Abdulrahman, 2015).

Though many recent studies have stated that corpus consultation can be very effective and useful in an EFL/ESL writing class (Khan, 2019; Khorsheed, 2018; Ying, 2021; Yoon & Jo, 2014), students may face some difficulties while using corpus consultation. One of the main problems is time-consuming (Yoon & Hirvela, 2004), therefore, teachers should allow enough amount of time for students. Researchers have also highlighted that students with low language proficiency may have difficulty using corpus consultation due to the overwhelming output of corpora (Al-Howishil, 2019; Luo & Liao, 2015; Yoon & Hirvela, 2004). Thus, it is claimed that corpus is suitable only for high-level and low-level students with many concordance examples that appear too many and are not practical (Elsherbini & Ali, 2017). Besides, teachers should be trained on how to design suitable corpus-based activities to help students get exposed to a broader framework of how corpora are used in English teaching. Online corpora are available for anybody, and EFL instructors and researchers should make sure they are available at their institutions (Qilichevna, 2020).

Types of Corpus Consultation in Language Classroom

Generally, there are two ways of adopting corpus consultation in language classrooms: indirect corpus consultation and direct corpus consultation (Yoon & Jo, 2014). First, indirect corpus consultation refers to situations in which corpora are used to provide material about "what to teach and how to teach it" (Römer, 2011, p. 206). This consultation type allows EFL/ESL teachers to create different materials for language teaching that can be used to design new syllabuses (Römer, 2010). Accordingly, through using ready-made tasks and activities collected and organized by their teachers, students collect corpus data indirectly (Boulton, 2017).

Second, direct corpus consultation involves introducing corpus tools to learners so they can search and discover word meanings and grammar rules directly (Almutairi, 2016). Through this type, students engage in corpus-based activities and use corpora directly to search and explore different language patterns (Luo, 2016; Sun & Hu, 2020). In addition, students can use the targeted
corpus to search for and find related rules while looking for a specific point. However, they may face some difficulties initially with the massive number of examples that may be insignificant. Direct corpus consultation seems to be the dominant paradigm in earlier studies (Smith, 2020). Searching corpus directly and analysing corpus results, such as lexical and grammatical patterns and frequency rather than depending on designed examples in isolated texts, is more logical and practical for L2 learners in developing their linguistic features (Boulton, 2017). Therefore, the direct corpus consultation type was applied in the present study, where students searched directly for certain vocabulary features on the corpus website.

**Empirical Research on Corpus Consultation and Students' Perceptions**

A study conducted by Yoon and Hirvela (2004) studied ESL students' experience with using corpus tools in L2 writing. Findings indicated that the student's overall attitude toward using corpus was positive, and they believed that corpus tools and techniques had improved their writing ability. Based on their study findings, Yoon and Hirvela concluded that if learners spent more time practicing corpus, their attitude would be more positive. Another study by Balunda (2010) investigated students' perceptions of using Data-driven learning (DDL) to teach academic vocabulary. The study sample included ESL students at one of the largest universities in the United States. Findings revealed that students perceived corpus and DDL as unique and different ways to teach academic vocabulary. Tekin, Trainer and Soruç (2016) have investigated 26 ESL students' perceptions of using corpus tools and activities at a university in Turkey. Findings indicated that students found corpus tools and activities useful, easy, funny, practical, and innovative, but complex.

Students' perceptions of using online dictionaries versus corpus consultation to correct their writing errors were investigated in a questionnaire-based study by Luo and Liao (2015). Findings showed that learners have a positive attitude regarding using corpus in writing class. Some difficulties were mentioned, including the need for more time and some examples from the corpus search tool may be confusing. Another recent study was carried out by Paker & Ergül Özcan, 2017 who studied 34 intermediate-level students to identify students’ attitudes regarding corpus-based vocabulary activities. Findings showed that students held positive attitudes toward using corpus-based activities.

A recent study by Oktavianti, Triyoga & Prayogi (2022) explored EFL students' perceptions towards corpus use for teaching English. The participants were 31 students from English Education Department in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The findings revealed that the majority of students viewed corpus positively and considered corpus application for language teaching to be beneficial and necessary. However, the students encounter corpus difficulties because they are unfamiliar with corpus technology and corpus output.

In the Saudi context, Al-Howishil (2019) has explored students’ perceptions of using direct corpus consultation as a learning instrument in EFL classes. The participants were 53 Saudi Female students and English majors. The British National Corpus (BNC) was the tool of direct corpus consultation. The study results indicated an overall improvement in students’ performance and LA knowledge, and students have shown a positive attitude about using direct corpus consultation in English language classes. Another study by Alsolami and Alharbi (2020) investigated Saudi EFL learners’ perception of using corpus activity in an academic writing class as a pedagogical approach. A semi-structured interview was conducted to investigate students’ perceptions. The findings showed that students positively integrated the corpus approach in academic writing.
classes. The participants reported four positive aspects of using corpus activities: improving self-confidence among EFL student writers, offering various authentic inputs, and promoting language awareness.

A recent study by Youssef and Omar (2020) explored the effect of using corpus-based approach on vocabulary teaching. The sample consists of 54 Saudi students. The sample was assigned into two groups, the control (N= 29) and the experimental (N=25). Tools include pre-post vocabulary tests, students’ and teachers’ questionnaires. the findings proved that students in the experimental group held positive attitudes regarding using corpus-based approach in vocabulary classes and most of them stated that they have benefited from using it. In another recent study, Youssef (2021) explored Saudi EFL learners' perceptions of using corpus activities to teach English vocabulary. Learners highly value the benefits of corpus activities in vocabulary lessons, according to the study findings. Moreover, learners reported encountering some challenges when using corpus, including difficulty analyzing corpus concordance lines, low language proficiency, and unfamiliar vocabulary.

Overall, previous studies revealed that using corpus consultation in EFL/ESL writing classes has positively improved students’ performance and most students hold a positive attitude regarding the implementation of corpus consultation. However, most of the previously mentioned studies examine students’ perceptions regarding corpus consultation as a sub-theme and not as the main theme. Moreover, to explore students’ perceptions most previous studies used one tool either a questionnaire or semi-structured interview and focused mainly on students’ perceptions, not the difficulties that face students while using corpus consultation. As a result, an additional investigation was needed to identify students' challenges and difficulties, and to implement more effective methods for corpus consultation. Hopefully, the present study will fill in this gap and provide an authentic, well-designed study that aims to investigate the perceptions of Saudi EFL students with regard to direct corpus consultation, mainly in relation to overcoming their common vocabulary errors in academic writing. Also, it highlights the difficulties that EFL students face in using direct corpus consultation and suggested solutions. The present study is significant because it involves both quantitative (quantitative data) and qualitative (qualitative data) methods to obtain in-depth data analysis.

**Methods**

The study utilized the one-group pre-/post-tests quasi-experimental design. The study employed a mixed-method approach, quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interviews). To answer the research questions the study lasted for nine weeks.

**Participants**

Based on convenience sampling, 32 Saudi Female undergraduate students majoring in English (level five) participated in the study in the second semester of the academic year 2020/2021. They were all enrolled in the same writing class taught by the researcher at the same Saudi public university. The average age of participants was 22 years (SD = 1.72). All of them have agreed that they like to search the internet to support their English-language learning and use online dictionaries and other resources in English Writing courses. Since participants are in level five, their English proficiency level will be intermediate to advanced, which is suitable for using direct corpus consultation.
Research Instruments

Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire based on a 6-point Likert scale was administered at the end of the study to investigate students’ perceptions toward using direct corpus consultation in developing academic vocabulary knowledge and overcoming common vocabulary errors. The study questionnaire was adopted from Yoon and Hirvela’s (2004) and Yoon’s (2005) questionnaires with some modifications to make it suitable for the study’s main purpose. For example, the researcher added items about students’ perceptions of implementing direct corpus consultation activities in EFL vocabulary learning.

The questionnaire contained 43 items, divided into two main sections. The first section focused on the student’s background and demographic information (11 items). Students' perspectives on four main areas are assessed in the second section of the questionnaire (34 items), which is divided into four parts: the effectiveness of corpus consultation in overcoming vocabulary errors in academic writing (part one, 11 items), the effectiveness of the direct corpus consultation activities they participated in (part two, four items), the difficulties encountered during corpus consultation (part three, eight items), and the effectiveness of corpus as a language learning tool as a whole (part four, 11 items). A six-point Likert scale was used to score the responses (strongly disagree = 1, strongly agree = 6). To ensure the questionnaire’s face validity, the first version of the questionnaire was submitted to four assistant professors and the questionnaire was modified based on their comments. Following that, Cronbach’s Alpha Coefficient was used to measure the questionnaire’s reliability. The reliability test indicated that the questionnaire has relatively high internal consistency (α= 0.888).

Semi-structured Interview

To gain a comprehensive understanding of participants' experience with direct corpus consultation, fifteen randomly selected participants participated in a semi-structured interview. The interview questions focused on identifying the main difficulties students faced while using direct corpus consultation, exploring their recommendations concerning the future effective use of corpus consultation in learning vocabulary, and gaining an overall picture of their personal experience with corpus consultation experience and whether they benefitted from it. Five assistant professors reviewed and approved the interview protocol. Next, the interview questions were piloted on a sample of students other than the research sample. The results indicated that the interview questions were clear and appropriate.

Research Procedures

The study lasted for nine weeks, throughout the second semester of the academic year 2020-2021. The course was online due to the global pandemic (COVID-19). First, the researcher reviewed the previous literature and studies in corpus consultation in second language teaching, ESL academic writing, and common vocabulary errors in writing. The study sample was assigned to one quasi-experimental group. The study intervention lasted for one semester (three months). During this intervention, students were trained on using corpus consultation in developing their academic writing using Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). After the intervention, the researcher applied a questionnaire to investigate students’ perceptions of using direct corpus consultation. Also, a semi-structured interview was used to explore the common difficulties that English majors face in using corpus consultation and their recommendation for more effective use of corpus consultation in writing classes and learning vocabulary.
The questionnaire was administered online via google forms during the class lecture time. And the researcher was available during the class to explain the questionnaire format and different parts to students and answer their questions. Afterwards, the semi-structured interview was administered online via the Telegram app during students’ free time. Each call lasted for 12-15 minutes, and though the interview was conducted in English, students were allowed to switch to Arabic whenever they wanted to elaborate on their thoughts and feelings. The participant's responses to the interview were recorded after their permission and later transcribed for data analysis.

Results

Results Related to the First Research Question

Questionnaire Result

Responses to the four parts of the second section of the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 28.0; the results were as follows:

The Questionnaire Results Concerning the Effectiveness of Using Direct Corpus Consultation

The first part (11 items) focused on the effectiveness of using Corpus consultation in overcoming vocabulary errors in academic writing. The mean, standard deviation, and rank of each item are presented in table one (See Appendix A).

According to table one, the students reported an overall positive perspective on the effectiveness of corpus consultation in overcoming vocabulary errors. Most students (m = 5.38; SD = 0.79) agreed that corpus consultation helped them to learn different collocations. The majority (m = 5.22; SD = 1.12) also agreed that corpus consultation helped them understand vocabulary items' meanings. Students also reported that it helps them the most in learning connotation (m = 5.03; SD = 1.17), spelling (m = 4.94; SD = 1.13), and word form (m = 4.88; SD = 1.12).

The Questionnaire Results Concerning Students' Perspectives on the Direct Corpus Consultation Activities

The second part (four items) focused on exploring students' perception of direct corpus consultation activities that they engaged in. The mean, standard deviation, and rank of each item are presented in table two.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Deviation</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. The activities had clear and simple instructions on the corpus website.</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. The activities guided me to practice different search options on the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) website.</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. The activities assisted me in understanding the corpus research results.</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. The activities facilitated the process of searching the corpus.</td>
<td>5.28</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results in table two show an overall positive perspective toward the effectiveness of direct corpus consultation activities. Most students (m = 5.44; SD = 1.10) agreed that corpus consultation activities have guided them to practice different search options on the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) website. The majority also agreed that direct corpus consultation activities facilitated the process of searching the corpus (m = 5.28; SD = 0.88), assisted them in understanding the corpus research results (m = 5.28; SD = 1.02), and had clear and simple instructions to apply on the corpus website (m = 5.28; SD = 1.14).

The Questionnaire Results Regarding Difficulties Encountered in Using Direct Corpus Consultation

The third part (eight items) focused on exploring the difficulties that the students encountered in using direct corpus consultation. The mean, standard deviation, and rank of each item are presented in table three.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Deviation</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. The interface of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) was confusing and puzzling.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I had difficulty in analyzing the corpus search results due to the too many sentences that the search gives (the concordance output).</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. I had difficulty interpreting the concordance output due to new words.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I had difficulty interpreting the concordance output due to the complexity of the given sentences.</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I had difficulty interpreting the concordance output due to segregated/isolated sentences.</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I have some difficulty in using the corpus due to the time and effort spent on analyzing the data.</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I have some difficulty in using the corpus due to limited access to computer/Internet.</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Limited training and practice made it difficult for me to use corpus consultation effectively.</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result in table three indicates that some students (m = 3.47; SD = 1.54) had difficulty in analyzing the corpus search results due to the too many sentences that the search gives. Students also reported having trouble in using the corpus due to the amount of effort and time required for the analysis (m = 3.44; SD = 1.62), confusion about the concordance output due to new words (m = 3.03; SD = 1.55), and difficulty in interpreting the concordance output due to the complexity of the given sentences (m = 2.94; SD = 1.58)
The Questionnaire Results Concerning Students' Perspectives towards Using Corpus

The fourth part (11 items) focused on investigating students' perspectives on using corpus as a language learning tool. The mean, standard deviation, and rank of each item are presented in table six.

Table 4. Part Four: Perspectives towards using corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Deviation</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24. The Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) was easy to use.</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. I understand the purpose of using corpus consultation in this writing course.</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. When I search for information in the corpus, I usually get the information that I need.</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. I tried to consult the corpus for other linguistic problems that I encountered in essay writing.</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. I consult the corpus when writing papers for other courses too.</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Overall, the corpus is a very useful resource for improving my English writing.</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. I will keep on consulting the corpus to enrich my vocabulary knowledge in the future.</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. If I had had the chance to learn how to use corpus consultation tools earlier, I would have been better in using more advanced academic vocabulary in my writing.</td>
<td>5.16</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. I believe that the corpus should be introduced in all ESL writing courses.</td>
<td>4.91</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. I recommend corpus consultation to other EFL students.</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. I want to learn more about using corpus consultation.</td>
<td>4.69</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table four shows that most students agreed that when they search for information in the corpus, they usually get the information they need (m= 5.22; SD = 0.38) and that they understand the purpose of using corpus consultation in writing (m = 5.16; SD = 1.24). Many students (m = 4.75; SD = 1.43) agreed that the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) was easy to use. Students agreed that they wanted to learn more about corpus consultation (m = 4.69; SD = 1.44), that they would continue to consult the corpus to enrich their vocabulary knowledge in the future (m = 4.72; SD = 1.59), that they would recommend corpus consultation to other EFL students (m = 4.72; SD = 1.17), and that corpus should be taught in all ESL writing courses (m = 4.91; SD =
1.14).

**Results of the Semi-structured Interview**

To obtain an in-depth analysis of corpus difficulties and students' evaluation of and personal views on using direct corpus consultation, the researcher administered a semi-structured interview at the end of the study. The analysis of the interview data resulted in the following three themes.

**Corpus Consultation Benefits and Challenges**

Regarding the advantages of using direct corpus consultation, all students (100%) reported that engaging in corpus consultation tasks was an excellent experience that enriched their vocabulary knowledge and improved their academic writing quality. Besides, most students mentioned that they have to keep using corpus consultation in the future even after the course has ended with other classes. One student stated: “I will keep using it because it is helpful and give me more options for word search with example, and how to use it in different contexts”. Most students (87%) agreed that corpus consultation helped them improve their writing performance by improving their vocabulary use and overcoming their common vocabulary errors. They also viewed that corpus has saved their time; they find all the information they look for in one website. One of the students reported: “I was searching for a website that can show me the small differences between words" Additionally, some students (47%) reported that they have already started to use corpus in other courses.

On the other hand, some students (53%) reported that they have encountered problems using direct corpus consultation and the COCA website, especially with website registration, limited search numbers, and other technical issues. For example, one student said: “I faced difficulty at the beginning when I signed up with my account to COCA" Another problem was the internet connection. Students needed a fast connection to avoid slow searches and sudden website stops. Furthermore, some students (26%) mentioned that the corpus output was complex, and the concordance lines were difficult to understand. As one student said, "The examples, sometimes are very long" Some students (20%) also complained about time; they reported that corpus searches need more time to find answers. One student mentioned: "Time is the main problem, we needed more time”.

**Corpus Consultation and Overcoming Vocabulary Errors**

It was unanimously agreed by all students (100%) that direct corpus consultation reduced all four types of vocabulary errors: collocation, connotation, word form, and spelling. They also stated that their writing quality was improved. For example, with collocation errors, most students (80%) were impressed how corpus offers them many options for word collocation which helped them to write accurately. One student said: “Yes, corpus helps me much with collocations more than dictionaries." Another added:" I learnt new collocations and how to use them". In terms of connotation, Students reported that their vocabulary became more academic, and they gained better vocabulary knowledge. "Corpus helps me choose more academic words" one student reported.

In addition, many students (74%) added that corpus consultation had enhanced their word form knowledge; one student said: " [it is] very helpful with word form” Finally, students stressed that spelling errors had been reduced after direct corpus consultation; one student said:" It helped me a lot with spelling mistakes." Furthermore, according to students’ responses, collocation errors were the ones that improved the most among the four-vocabulary aspects (collocation,
connotation, word form, and spelling), then connotation, spelling, and the last one is word form.

Suggestions for Effective Integration of Corpus Consultation in EFL Classes

Most students (87%) were optimistic about the potential use of direct corpus consultation in EFL classes in terms of learning new academic vocabulary, writing correct sentences, and improving overall writing performance. For example, one student mentioned: "it is a good reference for English learners when they write essays". Another student added, “[It is] recommended for EFL students, it will improve their vocabulary”. However, some students (53%) believed that corpus consultation will be helpful only with advanced learners more than beginners because they need to understand the searching techniques very well. For example, one student said, “corpus is not [recommended for] beginners, they should start with using online dictionaries first.”. Other students believed that corpus could be used by students of all proficiency levels if teachers provided them with tasks appropriate for their level. Most students (87%) recommended integrating corpus as a learning tool in all EFL writing courses because; they wished that someone had introduced this tool earlier in levels one or two, which would have saved their time and improved their academic writing quality. One student said: “I regret that I did not know about it earlier”.

The questionnaire’s overall results have revealed a positive attitude toward using direct corpus consultation as a learning tool in EFL writing classes to improve their vocabulary knowledge and overcome their errors. First, findings indicated a generally positive attitude regarding the effectiveness of direct corpus consultation in developing their academic vocabulary and writing quality. Second, almost all students agreed that COCA direct corpus consultation has reduced vocabulary errors. In addition, the interview findings present that most students stated that direct corpus consultation has enriched their vocabulary knowledge, improved their academic writing and reduced their vocabulary errors. Also, students agreed that direct corpus consultation reduced all four types of vocabulary errors: collocation, connotation, word form, and spelling and they recommended introducing corpus consultation to EFL classes at early stages.

Discussion

Results of the first part of the questionnaire showed an overall positive perception regarding the effectiveness of direct corpus consultation in overcoming vocabulary errors. This result is similar to Abdel-Haq and Ali’s (2017), Koçak (2020), Oktavianti et al., (2022), Sinha (2021) findings, which showed that students agreed that the corpus has helped them use a wide range of vocabulary in essay writing and reduced spelling errors. Thus, the second part of the questionnaire indicated an overall positive perspective toward the effectiveness of direct corpus consultation activities. This finding is consistent with other studies (such as Paker & Ergül Özcan, 2017; Koçak, 2020; Youssef & Omar ,2020), which revealed that supporting corpus-based activities have effectively improved students’ performance and reduced corpus difficulties. The third part of the questionnaire revealed that students face some difficulties with direct corpus consultation such as analyzing the corpus results, amount of effort and time and difficulty in interpreting the concordance output. This finding is similar to some related studies (Al-Howishil, 2019; Elsherbini & Ali, 2017; Luo & Liao, 2015; Oktavianti et al., 2022; Sinha, 2021; Yoon Hirvela, 2004), which assured that the amount of time and the effort needed to search and analyze the concordance lines were among the main challenges that EFL students face in using corpus consultation. The last part of the questionnaire showed that most students agreed that they usually get the information they need with corpus consultation and that they understand the purpose of
using corpus consultation in writing. This finding is consistent with those of Abdel-Haq and Ali (2017) and Youssef & Omar (2020), who have found that students found the corpus to be a valuable resource when learning EFL writing.

The findings of the interview stated that most students found that direct corpus consultation has enriched their vocabulary knowledge and improved their academic writing quality. This is similar to Abdel-Haq and Ali’s (2017), Alsolami and Alharbi’s (2020) and Lai (2015) findings, which emphasized the effectiveness of corpus in improving EFL students’ writing skills. However, some students mentioned that they have encountered problems in using direct corpus consultation as website registration, limited search numbers, and other technical issues. This finding echoes the findings of other related studies (Al-Howishil, 2019; Elsherbini & Ali, 2017; Luo, 2016; Oktavianti et al., 2022; Paker & Ergül Özcan, 2017; Park, 2022), which found that technical issues, corpus cut-off sentences, and time constraints are the major challenges students face with corpus. Moreover, all students agreed that direct corpus consultation reduced all four types of vocabulary errors: collocation, connotation, word form, and spelling and that corpus consultation enhanced their vocabulary knowledge. This finding is similar to Elsherbini and Ali’s (2017), Paker and Ergül Özcan’s (2017), and Al-Qahtani’s (2021) findings which have confirmed that corpus had improved students' lexical features and helped them reduce writing errors and learn new vocabularies. Finally, many students indicated that they are optimistic about the potential use of direct corpus consultation in EFL classes and recommended integrating corpus as a learning tool in all EFL writing courses. This finding is in line with the findings of other related studies including Elsherbini and Ali (2017), Lai (2015), Oktavianti et al. (2022), Paker and Ergül Özcan (2017), Yoon and Hirvela (2004), and Yoon (2008), which recommended using corpus in other courses, not only in writing classes. Considering these results, we can assume that direct corpus consultation could be a valuable resource for EFL learners with appropriate training and tutorial support.

However, due to some limitations of the study, the findings cannot be generalized. These limitations include the limited number of participants and the focus on four main types of vocabulary errors (collocation, connotation, word form, and spelling). Additionally, the study was limited to a short duration, one semester.

**Conclusion**

This study examined Saudi EFL students' perceptions of using direct corpus consultation in developing their academic writing by overcoming vocabulary errors and identifying the difficulties they face when using it. Most students held a positive attitude towards the experience; they reported that it was a new motivating experience that increased self-learning. While some faced some difficulties such as more time to search and analyze the corpus output and other technical issues. Subsequently, it is recommended that corpora implementation should be introduced to EFL classes at early stages as an essential learning tool, especially in the Saudi setting, to support the Saudi 2030 vision, which encourages self-learning. Teachers should vary the corpus consultation types and tasks to meet students' learning preferences. Further research is recommended to include a larger research sample of males and females from different study majors and to explore how EFL students perceive direct corpus consultation as a tool to develop other EFL skills.
Acknowledgment

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**Appendices**

**Appendix A**

Table 1: Part One: The effectiveness of using direct corpus consultation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Deviation</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Table 1. *Part One: The effectiveness of using direct corpus consultation*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Corpus consultation helped me to overcome my vocabulary errors in academic writing.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corpus consultation helped me to understand the meaning of vocabulary items.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.22</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corpus consultation helped me to comprehend the semantic function of vocabulary items.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corpus consultation helped me to overcome spelling errors in academic writing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corpus consultation helped me to distinguish different forms (parts of speech) of vocabulary items.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corpus consultation helped me to learn different collocations (compound words) of vocabulary items.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corpus consultation helped me to learn more about connotation (word choice) of vocabulary items.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corpus consultation helped me to recognize various usages of each vocabulary item in different contexts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corpus consultation provided me with various instances of using each vocabulary item.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.53</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direct Corpus consultation showed me how native speakers tend to use different vocabulary items.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Corpus consultation helped me to learn new academic vocabulary coincidentally.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender Stereotypes in Moroccan EFL Textbooks’ Illustrations: Content and Critical Image Analysis

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Abstract
Textbooks have always been influential in transmitting knowledge and values in modern education systems. However, they may transmit various gender-based stereotyped roles that could negatively affect learners in shaping their worldview. Accordingly, this study investigates gender stereotypes in the visual discourse of one English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbook currently used in Moroccan secondary schools. It does so by looking at male/female appearance in the textbook illustrations. It also considers gender differences in occupations and roles. Moreover, the study employs a qualitative critical image analysis to selected images based on Giaschi’s (2000) model analysis. To this end, the research comprises quantitative content analysis and qualitative critical image analysis. The findings show less visibility of female characters in illustrations, ascribing them to gender-based traditional occupations and subordinate roles. Besides, the qualitative critical image analysis reveals that women still suffer from misrepresentation by depicting them as dependent, submissive, and needing help. The study contains, in the end, recommendations for promoting gender equality through textbooks in Morocco.

Keywords: critical image analysis, Moroccan EFL textbooks, gender stereotypes, illustrations, visual discourse

Gender Stereotypes in Moroccan EFL Textbooks’ Illustrations

Introduction

Before embarking on gender stereotypes in textbooks, defining “gender” and “stereotypes” is helpful. According to the Online Oxford Dictionary, gender designates the condition of being male or female, usually referring to social and cultural variations rather than biological factors. In essence, unlike "sex," which refers to biological variations between the two sexes, "gender" describes social and cultural features that are masculine or feminine. These gender categories determine the roles of men and women in a given society or culture, which may foster many stereotypes affecting the two genders in the learning process and go beyond embracing social life matters.

As for the second term, a stereotype is a “fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is often not true in reality.” (The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary). These erroneous generalizations about particular groups based on fixed ideas or images result in several stereotypes, including gender stereotypes. For example, in education, there is a common gender stereotype in school subjects that the best place for male teachers is in math and science classrooms. In contrast, female teachers are best suited to teach languages or the belief that female teachers are more encouraging and warmer than male teachers (Calvanese, 2007). These two examples of gender stereotypes in the school context, among others, pave the way to build and construct identities that are either masculine or feminine. Bearing this in mind, the question that needs to be asked now is: how are these gender stereotypes constructed?

To answer the above question, Lindsey (2003) states that the different socialization agents, from the family, peer groups, media, and school, shape boys’ and girls’ roles. For her, “from the moment a girl infant is wrapped in a pink blanket and a boy infant in a blue one, gender role development begins” (p.53). In schools, Stromquist (2007) points out that many gender stereotypes are constructed through various forms, such as the classroom space arrangement and the school uniform, which reinforce the notion of “difference” for boys and girls. These practices inside the school atmosphere also create a sense of hegemonic masculinity, and thus schools become agents in making masculinities and femininities (Connell, 1996). Besides, segregation in the classroom is aided by teacher-student interactions and practices in which males and females may be treated differently, either intentionally or unintentionally (Slater, 2003). In this context, Sadker et al. (1991) identify different forms of sexist practices against female students in the classroom, including allotting less time for girls to talk and receiving less praise, attention, and correction from teachers.

Additionally, the formal curriculum plays a prominent role in the identities and lives of boys and girls and remains one of the most important sources of gender stereotypes (Taylor, 2003). These gender stereotypes may have several effects on girls’ achievements (Blumberg, 2008; Dengà et al., 2018; Good et al., 2010; Hussain, 2012; Shapiro & Williams, 2012) and their aspirations and future careers (Hurtado, 2015; Mburu & Nyagah, 2012). As Benattabou (2020b) states, “sex stereotyping may continue to be a hindrance, and a stumbling block for the development and enhancement of learners’ ambitions and vocational aspirations.” (p. 57). Therefore, analyzing textbooks to investigate gender stereotypes is extremely important to unveil them and raise awareness about the issue to ensure equal representation for both genders.
In this light, the present study explored one secondary school textbook (Visa to the World) that is still used in Moroccan classes. The aim was to analyze gender stereotypes in its illustrations by adopting content analysis and critical image analysis to investigate overt and implied messages of pictures by combining quantitative and qualitative means. The quantitative analysis dealt with the frequency of male/female appearances, while the qualitative means encompassed a critical image analysis of twenty images. The study is significant because uncovering gender stereotypes opens the door to challenging and deconstructing them, aiming to promote non-stereotyped representation, which is crucial for creating a fair learning atmosphere. However, before considering all these, let us consider what the literature review says about the topic.

**Literature Review**

Recently, gender representation in EFL textbooks has piqued the interest of a growing number of researchers. These researches have shown the dominance of men and the stereotypical images of women (Al-Saleem, 2011; Aljuaythin, 2018; Amini & Birjandi, 2012; Ansary & Babaii, 2003; Blumberg, 2008; Cheung & Yang, 2010; Pesikan & Marinkovic, 2006; Taylor, 2003; Yaghoubi-notash & Nariman-jahan, 2012). Seemingly, one typical result and feature that could be deduced from the findings of these studies is the fact that women and female characters suffer a lot from low visibility, ascribing female characters to traditional gender roles, and the use of sexist language against them, such as prioritizing male adjectives and nouns.

Similarly, in Morocco, some researchers have investigated the issue focusing on the gender depiction in dialogues along with their related illustrations (Jaafari, 2016; Karima, 2017). Others worked on male and female representation in texts, exercises, dialogues, and illustrations (Bouzid, 2019). Benattabou, in two recent studies, combined a quantitative content analysis of illustrations (Benattabou, 2021) and a qualitative content analysis alongside a critical image analysis (Benattabou, 2020a). Benlaghrissi (2022), in a recent study, examined the representation of males and females in a Moroccan textbook’s conversations by employing both quantitative and qualitative analytical methods. Overall, all the researchers have concluded that gender inequalities persisted, and many gender ideologies were embedded in the studied textbooks.

In summary, it has been shown from the literature review that data from either past research or present in Morocco and elsewhere suggest that gender bias in English textbooks is still present nowadays. However, the focus of previous studies has tended to be on sexist language rather than visual portrayal. Indeed, the existing accounts even examine visuals but adopting a critical image analysis has yet to be extensively addressed. Thus, one crucial area that still needs more investigation is visual discourse. In this respect, the present investigation aimed to fill that missing gap, determine if the findings represent the traditional discrimination of women, and confirm what is suggested in most literature.

**Method**

**Materials**

The present study randomly examined one EFL Common Core textbook officially approved by the ministry of education and still used in public secondary schools in Morocco, “Visa to the World” (2006). Unlike first or second-year Baccalaureate textbooks, common
Gender Stereotypes in Moroccan EFL Textbooks’ Illustrations

Benlaghriessi

Core materials are full of illustrations that best serve the study objectives. According to Giaschi (2000), there has been a shift in textbook design toward visual elements rather than linguistic or textual content. Consequently, more images are included, and their analysis to ensure a fair representation is equally necessary.

Procedures of analysis

In analyzing gender stereotypes in Visa to the World, the study used content analysis and critical image analysis. In the first stage of the study, the total number of pictures in all the textbook units was counted. Then, the number of male pictures and figures, female pictures and figures, and pictures including both males and females were counted. The second stage of the study looked at gender differences in occupations, roles, and activities. The third stage of the study dealt with a critical analysis of selected illustrations. With this go-getting purpose, twenty pictures were chosen out of the total number to be analyzed critically following Giaschi’s analytical framework that contained the following seven questions: (1) what is the activity of the image(s)? (2) who is active (the “protagonist”) in the image(s)? (3) who is passive (the “receiver”) in the image(s)? (4) who has status in the image(s)? (5) what does body language communicate? (6) what does the clothing communicate? (7) where are the eyes directed? (Giaschi, 2000, p.37). However, to avoid repetitive conclusions, questions two and three have been condensed into one question: who is active (the “protagonist”) and who is passive (the “receiver”) in the image(s)?

Results: Content Analysis and Discussion

The Frequency of Male/Female Appearance

The results of the first question are reflected in table (1). It shows the total number of pictures in the textbook from unit 1 to 10, the number and percentage of male pictures, female pictures, and the number and percentage of pictures including both males and females:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Number of Pictures</th>
<th>Male Pictures</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female Pictures</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Both Genders</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>(58%)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>(35%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>(37%)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>(54%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(33%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(33%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(57%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(14%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(33%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(17%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(53%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 7</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>(76%)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>(24%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(73%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>(27%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(33%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(33%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(34%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(100%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Total Number of Pictures</strong></td>
<td><strong>166</strong></td>
<td><strong>88</strong></td>
<td>(<strong>55.00%</strong>)</td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>(27%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>(18%)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In tune with the above table, the first evident point is that illustrative pictures in Visa to the World are higher for males than females. In the textbook, there are 166 pictures, 88
(55%) for males compared to 59 (27%) for females, and 19 mixed pictures with a percentage of (18%). What stands out in the table is that the number of male pictures outnumbers that of females in almost all the units except unit 2. In effect, to better understand male/female visibility, it was necessary to delve into the content of each unit in particular by counting the number and the percentage of male/female figures in all the textbook pictures.

Consequently, the analysis of male/female figures in all the units reveals that the total number of figures is 206. Out of the 206 figures, 113 (66%) are for males compared to 93 (34%) for female figures, as reflected in table (2):

Table 2. Male/Female Figures in Visa to the World Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Male Figures</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Female Figures</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A closer inspection of table (2) illustrates that male figures also outnumber female figures in individual pictures. As we have seen earlier, just like male/female pictures, the number of male figures outnumbers that of female figures in all the units except unit 2 and unit 9. For further discussion, in unit 1, for instance, which covers issues like “Sporting life,” “Famous scientist people,” and “Personal relations,” male figures are 29 (57%), and female figures are 22 (43%). However, if males are more than females, it is because of the topic of this unit that it is still considered more appealing for males than females, and this again shows the stereotype that sports and science are the domains of men.

The most shocking findings can be found in unit two, "Education." Only 17 (27%) male and 47 (73%) female figures. At first glance, it seems that girls are more engaged in school activities than boys but looking into the type of activities female characters are involved in, we come to understand that females are depicted either going to school or coming in or out of school (pictures p. 30); only four pictures out of 22 describe female students studying inside the classroom or reading a book. According to Pesikan (2006), this portrayal shows quantitative progress, but no intellectual activities related to school are found. Further, according to the analysis of unit three, which is concerned with “Food,” the number of male figures is 5 (56%), whereas the number of female figures is 4 (44%). In this unit, there is not much difference between the two genders. Still, what is surprising is that while women are portrayed in the kitchen wearing aprons and doing household chores, men are always seen at snacks eating or sitting in cafes. That being the case, this unit also promotes the stereotype that the right place for women is to be at home. In discussing “Famous scientist people,” there are no pictures of women inventors in this unit, which reinforces the stereotype that scientific inventions and math-related fields should be in the
hands of men. So far, in this textbook, there is only one picture of a woman inventor, Marie Lukie.

As it can be analyzed, the most prominent finding to emerge from male/female appearance in *Visa to the World* illustrations is that the given examples from the different units of the textbook show a poor and unfair representation of women in pictures. Therefore, the answer to the first question is so clear that the frequency of male/female appearance is not equal and that male figures outnumber female ones in almost all the units, leading to the conclusion that women’s representation in the illustration of this textbook supports the review of the literature and past researches, and this pushes us to go further in the analysis of occupations and jobs.

**Gender Stereotyping in Occupations and Jobs**

So far, this paper has focused on the extent to which the two genders are visible in illustrations, this part of the study deals with the type of occupations and jobs ascribed to each gender. Table (3) describes male/female occupations and jobs:

Table 3. *Male/Female Occupations and Jobs in Visa to the World* Illustrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Male Occupations and Jobs</th>
<th>Female Occupations and Jobs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>Boxer, singer (3), actor (4), scientist (6), student (2), athlete, cricket player, footballer</td>
<td>Housewife (3), actress (8), student (2), tennis player (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>Student (4), teacher, doctor, photographer, bus driver, mason, cook, police officer, painter, mechanic, dentist, carpenter, butcher, pilot</td>
<td>Student (6), teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>Student, waiter</td>
<td>Student (2), cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>Bookseller, cook, seller, buyer</td>
<td>Buyer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>Footballer, teacher, student</td>
<td>Housewife, student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 6</td>
<td>Doctor, dentist</td>
<td>Receptionist, secretary (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 7</td>
<td>Comedian, artist (5), painter (4), musician (2), singer (4), student (5), pianist</td>
<td>Singer, painter, student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 8</td>
<td>Scientist, chemist, inventor, physician, musician, businessman, chairman</td>
<td>Physician, secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 9</td>
<td>Student, king</td>
<td>Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 10</td>
<td>Manager, farmer, hunter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, the data in this table shows that both men and women are engaged in various jobs and occupations with more focus on professional and leadership ones for men. However, male jobs account for 81 of all jobs (69%), whereas female jobs account for only 37 (31 %). Thus, this difference between the two genders demonstrates how female characters are biased and underrepresented in occupations. Moreover, in most textbook pictures, men are depicted more in public roles and jobs, such as singing, teaching, selling items, painting, or being portrayed as doctors, dentists, pianists, and farmers. On the contrary, women are predominantly depicted as housewives, cooks, secretaries, or receptionists.

In unit 1, for example, male occupations are mentioned 19 times (56%) against 15 jobs (44%) for females. Looking at the types of jobs, it should be noted that higher positions
mostly given to men, such as boxers (1), singers (3), actors (4), scientists (6), students (2), athletes (1), cricket players (1), and footballers (1), while women are depicted as housewives (3), actresses (8), students (2), and tennis players (2). In unit 2, male jobs are mentioned 17 times (71%) compared to 7 times (29%) for females. Most jobs show men as teachers, doctors, photographers, bus drivers, masons, police officers, painters, dentists, carpenters, butchers, or pilots. Women are presented as students (6) or teachers (1). This frequency suggests that men are better suited to high positions than women. Indeed, this presence of men in different types of jobs in society may imply that they are more productive than women.

To conclude this section, female characters are depicted with traditional gender-based occupations in almost all the units. However, out of 37 female jobs in the textbook, only 4 presented women in advantageous positions in society with a percentage of 11% in contrast to 89% of stereotypical female jobs, as the following graph shows:

![Female Occupations](image)

*Figure 1. Female Occupations and Jobs in Visa to the World Illustrations*

These non-stereotypical occupations include a female tennis player, teacher, painter, and physician. On that account, male/female occupations and jobs are stereotypical and unfair; a fact that makes our study goes hand in hand with the previous ones. In the following chapter, male/female roles and activities are presented.

**Gender Stereotypes in Male/Female Roles and Activities**

Male/female roles and activities can be classified into three main categories: productive activities, done mostly outside the home, and paid for. Second, reproductive activities are performed at home, unlike the first; these activities are not paid for. Third, community activities are done for the community services, such as protecting the environment or funeral activities (Kabira & Masinjila, n.d., 1997). However, the study focused mainly on the first and second categories, while the third was not included as there is only one picture of community service (picture p. 123). Therefore, the activities attributed to each gender in this textbook are shown in table (4):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Productive Activities</th>
<th>Reproductive Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Males</td>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 2</td>
<td>-Teaching, bus driving, house construction, cooking, electrical fitting, a doctor treating his patient</td>
<td>-Teaching mathematics, teaching geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 3</td>
<td>-Working as a waiter</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 4</td>
<td>-Selling items (3), book shopper (2)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 5</td>
<td>-Teaching</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 6</td>
<td>-A dentist removing teeth, a doctor treating a patient</td>
<td>-Secretarial duties, receptionist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 7</td>
<td>-Singing (2), playing with the guitar</td>
<td>-Singing, painting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 8</td>
<td>-Advertising</td>
<td>-Secretariat duties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 9</td>
<td>-A king delivering a speech</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit 10</td>
<td>-Protecting the environment</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in table (4) reveals the various activities ascribed to both genders. The table shows that more men (77%) than women (23%) are engaged in productive activities. These activities shown in the table include teaching, selling items, advertising, house construction, and others. On the other hand, the data also reveals that more women (63%) than men (37%) are depicted in reproductive activities. These activities are birthday celebrations, shopping, watching TV, buying items, and inviting friends. Therefore, it seems clear that females are still suffering from stereotypical practices in activities, too, as diagram (2) shows:
Diagram (2) illustrates that men participate in productive activities at a higher rate than women, with 77 percent compared to 23 percent for women. Conversely, in reproductive activities which are not paid for and are less valued in society, women are more visible, with a percentage of 63%. However, this gender imbalance in paid productive activities shows that men’s roles are more valued than women’s. Men also contribute more to the community by doing productive activities such as house construction, electrical fitting, driving passengers, protecting the environment, teaching, advertising, and others.

In short, similar to occupations and jobs, women are also misrepresented in activities and roles. This low visibility of women in the professional sector and ascribing them to traditional roles and activities such as secretarial duties, buying items, inviting friends, and watching TV while portraying men in intellectual activities such as teaching, using the computer, or playing the role of a doctor would undoubtedly socialize female students to accept these passive roles and also to accept the division of labor that is discriminatory against women (Benattabou, 2020a). Therefore, to better understand this female misrepresentation, the following section goes too further to include a critical image analysis of twenty images.

A Critical Image Analysis of Selected Illustrations

In line with the third objective of the study, twenty pictures were chosen in different units of the textbook to be examined. The choice of pictures was based on the researcher’s perception of pictures that contain any stereotypes either in the activity of the picture, the status of the two genders, the roles ascribed to them, body language, or even in their clothes. Eleven pictures are mixed, five are female, and four are male. All these pictures were analyzed in seven questions following Giaschi’s critical image analysis framework.

What is the activity of the image?

The illustrations reviewed are primarily focused on four areas: domestic activities, work environments, leisure, and school activities. Home activities have the highest percentage (40%), followed by the work environment (25%), entertainment and free activities (20%), and school activities (15%). Not surprisingly, in the first category, women are more focused than men, eight of the twenty images are of home activities, and all of them depict girls and women involved in household work, such as in the kitchen (figure 3) or taking care of the household or the children (figure 4).
As for the work environment, the emphasis is on males rather than females. Almost all images show men in higher-ranking positions, such as doctors, engineers, butchers, or bus drivers (figure 5), or in leisure activities sitting at a snack table or having coffee with friends.

In the third area dealing with entertainment, males and females participate in various spare-time activities, but more focus on girls watching TV, shopping, or sleeping (figure 6). This representation, indeed, shows the stereotype of female passivity. Besides, even girls outnumber boys in pictures in school activities, but they are presented more outside the classroom. Therefore, the analysis of images reinforces stereotypes about women and girls who are often associated with home activities. At the same time, men are mostly portrayed outside the home, either at work or with friends having good times. This depiction promotes the binary opposition of the active male versus the passive female, as we will see in the next question.
Who is active, and who is passive in the image?

Males and females take part in various activities and positions. On the one hand, men are demonstrated to be more active than women, particularly outside the home. On the other hand, more women than men are depicted in non-valued tasks. Welcoming visitors, playing with youngsters, and inviting friends are just a few of these activities. Girls are typically seen at home, engaged in hobbies and leisure activities such as watching TV, sleeping, shopping, or celebrating.

Equally remarkable, even girls are occasionally depicted in public spaces, but they are portrayed chiefly in passive roles associating them with activities requiring no high educational level. There are pictures of girls reading books, using computers (figure 7), playing tennis, and playing the piano, but they are rare. Men are more frequently seen participating in culturally significant events that require advanced social skills and a high educational level. A doctor treating a patient, a bookshop team member doing his job, and three men safeguarding the environment (figure 8) are just a few examples.

Who has status in the image?

Almost all the images examined point to a single fact: males are given higher status and positions than females. Six supporting examples are offered. The first depicts a doctor treating a female patient, the second depicts a dentist removing a woman's teeth, and the third depicts a female as a doctor's receptionist. These three images demonstrate a conventional gender-based labour distribution. The fourth image depicts a young man and a lady sitting in a coffee shop, with the waiter addressing the man, not the woman, to make the order (figure 9). The fifth image depicts a group of women purchasing products, with one male paying; this indicates that men work and get money while women rely on them (figure 10). The final image is a family portrait. The grandfather is shown in the centre of the image, implying the high status within the family, surrounded by two females. The grandmother is pictured next to him without much interest.
What does body language communicate?

The body language in images directly or indirectly expresses distinct impressions. It becomes evident from the images studied that the way both genders are shown is fundamentally different. While men's images often bear self-confidence and seriousness, women's images convey an interchange of emotions. Men have more power and look more self-confident, both within and outside of the home. For example, in unit 3, a father sits in a relaxed, confident position in front of the television, while a wife sits at the side of the sofa with her hands crossed (figure 11). Giaschi (2000) argues that this image depicts the man's dominance as the breadwinner and the wife's submission (as cited in Berger, 1972). Another example is unit 4, where the husband is represented paying for his wife's clothing needs, which she has chosen; here, the husband is depicted in his parental position, which necessitates his presence to pay.

The illustration on page 127 (figure 8) above, which displays three men striving to save the land, one clutching a pickax, the other a rifle, and the third appearing to be an engineer, is an excellent example of male characters' seriousness and active involvement in the community. Many pictures show males in relaxed situations with their friends or at home. What is fascinating about these images is that even when males are displayed at home, they are dressed in suits and ties, indicating that men have control and that their place is not at home but outside working. Female figures, on the other hand, communicate emotional interchange. Boys are never seen in cases involving emotional exchanges, which appears to be a female-only attribute. This element is well shown in the textbook's first illustration in unit 1, which depicts a housewife welcoming a new neighbour with open arms (figure 12).
What does clothing communicate?

In addition to body language, the clothing worn by figures in photographs is essential to their appearance and can send sexist connotations. For example, women in skirts and dresses appear in 71% of female images, while women in pants appear in only 29% of female photographs. When women are depicted in the kitchen, they are sometimes shown wearing aprons (figure 13). These outfits are out of date and gender-stereotyped. They also transmit the old-fashioned method of female dressing (Giaschi, 2000). The majority of male figures, on the other hand, are dressed in suits and ties. As seen in the illustration (figure 14), men are usually dressed up in suits and ties, even for family dinners, to display authority, power, and leadership.

Where are the eyes directed?

Analyzing the selected images in terms of the seventh question dealing with the eyes’ direction reveals that most characters direct their eyes toward each other or the camera. Images containing only female characters usually look at each other with a smile as a sign of comfort; the same for images containing a male and a female. In contrast, female submission and dependence can be detected in other cases. A family photograph, for example, includes a grandfather, a grandmother, a husband, a wife, and three children, all of whom are looking at the camera except the grandmother, who is looking submissively toward the grandfather (figure 15). Another example is a couple at a restaurant where the waiter and the man are looking at each other while the lady is looking in turn at the man to make their order.
Conclusion and Recommendations:

The study of Visa to the World’s illustrations resulted in significant conclusions. First, there is an evident and unfair representation of female characters as far as appearance is concerned. Also, one can realize a wide gender gap in occupations, roles, and activities. Both men and women are depicted in numerous occupations and roles, with a greater emphasis on men's professional and leadership ones, while women are always depicted as mothers and homemakers. Similarly, female characters are usually connected with reproductive activities, whereas male characters are always associated with productive ones.

Equally important, the critical image analysis resulted in fundamental conclusions. First, women still suffer from misrepresentation, which opens no door to social change. It also reveals that women are still presented in traditional roles as housewives. On this basis, the way women are depicted as dependent, submissive, and needing help would also unconsciously socialize female students to believe in such binary oppositions in the real world. In this case, at all levels, strategies to promote gender equity in education need to be implemented. This implementation starts with textbooks free of gender stereotyping and sexist attitudes. Gender issues should also be included in every curriculum, and presenting this issue to students, teachers, and textbook designers will help create awareness of the topic.

As for the limitations, the scope of this study was limited to examining only one textbook, so to have more reliable results, more textbooks should be studied. In addition, it concerns mainly with illustrations, but other angles should be investigated, like dialogues, reading texts, and exercises.

All in all, since textbooks, as powerful educational tools, reproduce gender stereotypes, as the study shows, much work should be done in this area to help erode this phenomenon. Thus, more research must be done to increase the awareness of textbook designers, teachers, and students. After all, nowadays, in Morocco and elsewhere, women hold different leadership positions in different domains, which must be supported in textbooks. Undoubtedly, all these stereotypical images of women go against the fundamental value of gender equity.

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Unlocking the Potential of Translanguaging: Teachers’ perspectives to Maximize Learner Outcomes

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Abstract
That First Language (L1) facilitates Foreign Language Learning is a debatable issue in the field of language pedagogy. This field has evidence for and against using L1 in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, showing positive and negative learning outcomes. Behind this controversy, the current study investigates teachers’ attitudes regarding using L1 in EFL classrooms in Saudi contexts and whether or not language teachers think it aids or improves students' performance. The study sought to provide teachers of EFL with a perspective on monolingual and Translanguaging approaches. Thus, it investigated how English language instructors at Saudi universities view the role of Arabic in English language learning/teaching. The data were collected through questionnaires, class observation, and interviews. The participants were 104 teachers of English from different Saudi Universities with varied ethnic backgrounds, and subsequently, three participants were chosen to observe their classes twice and, afterward, follow-up semi-structured interviews. The data from the questionnaire was submitted to SPSS for data analysis, and the data from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed manually with the assistance of computational devices. A classroom observation checklist was used to triangulate the findings of the questionnaire. This study indicated that teachers believe frequent English exposure is the best way to teach it. In addition, the study suggests that the L1 is useful for explicit learning and reduces anxiety, thereby assisting students in adjusting to the Foreign Language environment.

Keywords: Bilingualism, English as a Foreign Language, English Language Learning, First Language, monolingual approach, teachers’ perceptions, translanguaging pedagogies

Introduction

In recent years, the increasing demand for English Language Learning (ELL) classrooms has transformed into a booming industry globally. Therefore, more time and money were allocated to the ELL classroom. Sugarman (2016) stated, “English learners (ELs) are one of the populations to whom financial support has been targeted through supplementary funding” (p. 3). Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to the fact that the way English classrooms are managed is still insufficient. Thus, educators prioritized resources for interventions to help English Language students (ELs) recover gaps in learning opportunities caused by online education-sifting. Therefore, the traditional classroom regained widespread attention as they purport to improve the student’s overall ELL experience.

ELs need to be provided with extensive English input that is authentic and similar to the mode of communication in English-speaking countries. Krashen’s input hypothesis i+1, which is slightly more challenging to the ELs, can be an excellent way to help students learn the language and improve their levels significantly in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context (Krashen, 1981). The value of the input in EFL cannot be overstated since it aids in improving different skills, such as reading and listening (Dekeyser, 1997). Krashen (1982) believed that the only way to learn a language is through comprehensible input. Dekeyser (1997), on the other hand, stated that input could not be used to automate production skills. As a result, exploring input functions in ELL is critical to developing effective EFL teaching strategies.

Scholars like Carter et al. (2020), Fall (2020), and Werang and Harrington (2020) argued that teachers must encourage learners to use their EFL more in the classroom as it is the only mean where they can use it within. So it can be a way to challenge learners and motivate them to focus on the target language. Some scholars, such as Shvidko (2017) and Rafi and Morgan (2021), believed that the only way for ELs to improve and develop their English skills is to eliminate their native language. They claimed that students should utilize only English as the most significant way to learn it. From their point of view, employing English entails prohibiting or encouraging students to abandon their native tongue (Shvidko, 2017; Rafi and Morgan, 2021). On the other hand, the Ontario Ministry of Education recommended an entirely different strategy. They published a booklet called Many Roots, Many Voices (2005) to help ELs in public schools. It supported the notion of welcoming First Language (L1) into the classroom while teaching various subjects. Through the strategic use of the students’ L1, they would feel at ease and supported in the environment, especially for the beginning and pre-intermediate levels, where it is hard for students to communicate with the target language.

Educators must ensure that they are aware of the two teaching approaches and be able to determine the weaknesses and strengths of each of them to decide which is going to help their students the best. Particularly, the translanguaging approach actively employs students’ L1 in English language teaching, whereas the monolingual approach reduces students' L1 in the English language classroom (Du, 2016; Tang, 2002).
Statement of Problem

Not all schools encourage students to use their native language during their ELL. For example, students must speak English in the majority of English classes at Saudi universities. Because English input is critical, the majority of instructors support this strategy. Despite this rule, some teachers allow students to discuss assignments in their native languages. This means some teachers advocate monolingual language instruction, while others promote translanguaging language instruction. The debate on language instruction among Saudi teachers is ongoing. Clear communication of teaching techniques would be an excellent way to learn how different teaching approaches function properly, why English teachers make certain decisions, and how these decisions affect classrooms.

Because theories do not work in every classroom, teachers should reflect and learn from one another. Therefore, the perspectives of English language teachers should be investigated. Hearing different approaches to teaching English provides teachers with comprehensive advice. As a result, researching English teaching methods can help all teachers improve their instruction, assist English language learners, and reflect on their practices. In addition, it provides feedback on the implementation and outcomes of new concepts in English language education. As a result, this study looks into the best approach and the factors that influence it.

Significance of the study

English has become the most frequently spoken language in the world, yet many English speakers do not speak it as their native language (Graddol & Meinhof, 1999). This is mainly due to the growing trend of globalization, which is resulting in increased international trade and travel, as well as the advancements in communication technology that allow a far greater population to speak English. For example, although English is not an official language in Saudi Arabia, the 2030 vision has made it valuable, and the Saudi government created more ELL opportunities for its citizens to be competitive in the global economy.

An examination of EFL instructors' practices may serve several purposes in the context of teaching English in Saudi Arabia. Aside from the demands of the English teaching profession and the enrichment of professional development, teachers can better serve their students by investigating the strategies employed by other instructors. It also allows instructors to reflect on and learn from their own and others' EFL teaching experiences. Depending on the demands of the classroom, these ideas can be categorized and used as recommendations for instructors. It is critical that instructors study various methodologies and determine what they can take away to help their students learn English more efficiently.

Research Objectives

Exploring teachers' perspectives can help researchers determine how instructors understand the usage of students' L1 in EFL classrooms and how they integrate theories and experiences into the teaching. Teachers' perspectives are essential aspects of the reflection and
development of teaching strategies and teaching philosophies. Therefore, to understand the strategies adopted in their classes, it is necessary to know the teachers' perspectives on the approaches they employ.

**Research Question**

This research aims at answering the following research question:

From the perspective of EFL teachers at Saudi universities, what role does L1 play in EFL classrooms?

**Literature Review**

**Monolingual Pedagogies**

“What is essential is that the language being studied should be as far as possible the sole medium of communication in any given environment” (Gatenby, 1965, p. 48). Gatenby argued that the student’s L1 should be avoided at all costs in any form of communication and any environment and only use English to learn it. According to Gatenby’s argument, students’ L1s harm the EFL learning process. In addition, Mitchell et al. (2019) stated:

> When learning a first language, the process is relatively simple: all we have to do is learn a set of new habits as we learn to respond to stimuli in our environment. When learning a second language we run into problems: we already have a set of well-established responses in our mother tongue. The SLL process involves replacing those habits with a set of new ones. (p. 29)

Replacing the L1 with the new ones of the EFL is suggested here, which includes omitting the L1 itself and replacing it with the target language, which goes back to Chomsky’s (1957) idea of children acquiring the language by observing the production of the language from the people around them.

Lado (1957) discussed the possibilities of transferring errors and mistakes when using the L1 while learning the EFL due to the interference that might occur. He suggested prohibiting the use of L1 in the language classroom to reduce or eliminate interference. Furthermore, Krashen (1981) underscored that employing the L1 in English language acquisition may be beneficial, but the interference is harmful. Thus, he favored the monolingual method and recommended that students learn English monolingually by giving them comprehensible input. Rafi and Morgan (2021) advocated for monolingual English approaches to education based on the premise that English-medium teaching is the most effective method for enhancing students' English proficiency. In addition, Schmidt’s (1990) noticing hypothesis supported the monolingual approach as learners benefit more from consciously noticing forms of input. ELs need to notice EFL instructors as rich in input that would lead to more attention to the target language resulting in richer intake (Leow, 2007; Sanz, 2004).

Thus, the monolingual approach reduces interference between the L1 and EFL, which means the negative impact of the L1 on the ELL will be maintained to a minimum scale.
Furthermore, using English as the only means of communication could result in a more natural acquisition environment. This natural learning environment with continual comprehensible input is linked with increased language competency (Dekeyser, 1997; Leow, 2007). Moreover, the monolingual approach has advantages for teachers as they do not have to decide when to use students’ L1 during classes and when it should be taken out. In addition, using English only can bridge the communication between teachers and students, albeit it must be comprehensible. Given these advantages, it is easy to see why many ESL teachers go for a monolingual approach in the classroom.

**Translanguaging Pedagogies**

The Translanguaging approach regards the L1 as a beneficial tool that should be intentionally exploited in EFL classes rather than considering it a hindrance. According to Schoeman et al. (2023), “Translanguaging and functional multilingualism had the goal of using multiple languages to develop proficiency in the target languages” (p. 2). Thus, the L1 plays a significant, if not primary, role in acquiring the EFL. This implies that input and instruction in the EFL will still be provided, but the usage of the L1 will not be limited as in the monolingual approach. Instead, the L1 should be used, promoted, and actively employed in language classrooms (Cook, 2001). Schoeman et al. (2023) explained that “translanguaging contributed to familial cariño, creating classrooms in which students felt comfortable and had a positive rapport with teachers and each other” (p. 12).

Ellis (1994) suggested that the L1 has a positive role in the classroom. Ma (2013) agreed with the idea that the L1 enhances learners' L2 acquisition as he said, “While they are putting overdue emphasis on negative transfer, they are ignoring the function of positive transfer that can accelerate L2 language learning” (p. 33). Moreover, Cook (2001) asserted that separating the L1 and L2 is a way to failure that should be avoided as they are interwoven in the students’ minds. He claimed that EFL acquisition is not a separate process and that the L1 and EFL go through stages of integration rather than separation in language learning. Therefore, the role of the L1 in ELL is just as significant as the English language because the L1 becomes increasingly related to the ELL tool. Rafi et al. (2023) also stated that “students engaged in translanguaging could produce more succinct, well-formed essays and score higher than those who were forced to write monolingually” (p. 40).

Language is not merely an object, it is a sophisticated system, and therefore, the role of the L1 cannot be easily identified (Chomsky, 1957). Depending on the component of the target language, the L1 may have a different role. According to Upton and Lee-Thompson (2001), “the L1 [was used] by L2 readers to help them wrestle with word and sentence level problems, confirm comprehension, predict text structure and content” (p. 491). Moreover, Halasa and Al-Manaseer (2012) identified the role of the L1 in task completion activities to take the role of instructional tools. Thus, in ELL, the L1 serves as a scaffold (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). Moreover, Rafi et al. (2023) realized that translanguaging approaches played an essential role in fostering the learning
process of the ELs and “enabled them to develop a more robust understanding of the content; hence, they took less time writing the final product than regular classrooms” (p. 40).

Studies proved that the natures of language classrooms require a combination of different languages in linguistic production (Jorgensen, 2008; Lambert, 1990). For example, Els tend to mix their L1 rules with the EFL whenever they try to speak in English. They also involve code-switching more frequently between L1 to L2 to express themselves adequately. Additionally, studies suggested that some structures and features of languages are the same in L1 and EFL. Therefore, allowing students to transfer their knowledge will positively help facilitate EFL learning (Ellis & Fotos, 1999; Ma, 2013). Rafi and Morgan (2021) explored the use of bilingual pedagogies in an academic writing skill development course at a public institution in Bangladesh. The outcomes of this study challenged monolingual approaches to academic writing and changed typical exercises that were limited to the target language only. In addition, the intentional use of bilingual pedagogies and content suited to students' native language(s) and experiences helped promote cross-linguistic analysis, building metalinguistic awareness, and fostering a deeper grasp of persuasive language traditions across cultures. Cenoz & Gorter (2020) proposed that L2 learners may benefit from their multilingualism if planned teaching techniques are used to increase language and metalinguistic awareness.

Behan et al. (1997) argued that allowing students to use their L1 in the classroom helped them to achieve higher scores than if they only used the target language. In addition, Swain and Lapkins (2000) supported the idea of using the L1 in the classroom as they proved that students who used their L1 in preparing their writing tasks were able to finish their assignments faster than students who were not allowed to use their mother tongue. Liu and Zeng (2015) suggested that using the L1 for learners at the beginning level can help them better understand the contents and express themselves more precisely.

Individual classrooms must be explored based on the observations above because what instructors do in class eventually affects the results of ELL at the board or even program level. However, the studies did not look into the teachers' perspectives as thoroughly as they did with the students. As a result, the current study focuses on the teachers' viewpoints and allows them to communicate about their techniques and what is behind their perceptions. This helps to improve research information on teachers' perspectives while also providing a clearer picture of additional techniques employed by instructors and the reasons behind their selections.

Method
The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to determine teachers' perceptions of the significance of students' L1 in the EFL classroom and how these perceptions influenced their teaching practices. It employs Tang’s (2002) methodology, which consisted of a survey questionnaire requesting a "holistic" perspective and a follow-up interview in which participants were questioned about their methods and approaches. Interviews are helpful for this research because they permit participants to speak freely and request additional information. In addition,
prior to the interview, classroom observations were utilized as a qualitative step to collect additional data. Combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies helps compensate for each method's shortcomings.

Participants

During the academic year 2022, 104 faculty members from Saudi universities (including, but not limited to, Jazan University, King Khaled University, Taybah University, and Tabuk University) with teaching experience ranging from one to fifteen years volunteered to participate in the survey. Six percent of the participants were teaching English for one to three years, 13% were teaching for four to six years, 13% were teaching for seven to nine years, 32% were teaching for 10-15 years, and 38% were teaching for over 15 years. Regarding the L1 of the teachers, 42% of them were Arabic speakers, 4% of English as their mother tongue, and 54% were speakers of languages other than Arabic and English. Among the participants, 43% of them were females, and 57% of them were males. In addition, three teachers were randomly selected for classroom observations and interviews.

Research Instruments

To determine how teachers' perceptions of the significance of students' L1 in the ELL classroom influenced their pedagogical approaches, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used.

Questionnaires

To find out EFL teachers’ perspectives on using Arabic in the classroom, a 5-point Likert scale questionnaire, ranging from 1 ‘strongly disagree’ to 5 ‘strongly agree’, was filled out on Microsoft forms (see Appendix A). The questionnaire consisted of 15 items assessing participants' behaviors and attitudes toward teachers using L1 in their EFL classrooms, as well as three demographic questions.

Classroom Observations

Some six randomly selected first-year English language classes (each lasting about 50 minutes) by three teachers were observed to determine how often and in what situations Arabic was used (see Appendix B for the teachers' profile). Teachers and students were not aware of the goal of the observation beforehand to get more authentic classroom data.

Interviews

The three teachers whose classes were observed participated in semi-structured interviews in which they were asked why they sometimes preferred to use Arabic rather than English in their classrooms (see Appendix C for the interview questions). The interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed.
**Research Procedures**

This is a mixed methods study consisting of quantitative and qualitative methods. The first part was the questionnaire. A link to the questionnaire was distributed via university WhatsApp groups, Twitter, and Facebook. Also, friends and colleagues were invited to share it with the WhatsApp groups at their universities. For the second part of the study, six classroom observations and three semi-instructed follow-up interviews were conducted to collect further information. Each interview lasted an hour and was audiotaped on at least two devices. Transcribing this interview followed.

In addition, following the collection of data, an analysis of the results was conducted. SPSS was used to analyze questionnaire results, while Microsoft Office Excel 2010 was used to analyze results from observations and interviews. The practical process depended on the validity, veracity, and ethical standards of academic research, with participants’ consent and anonymity.

**Results**

**Questionnaires Analysis**

**Preliminary Interpretation**

After receiving the survey data, an excel file was created. After that, the data were uploaded to SPSS statistical software to analyze the items, to determine descriptive statistics for each item, including mean and standard deviation administrations (see Appendix E), and to ensure that all items evidenced sufficient variance. Item analysis revealed that all items had sufficient variance.

The descriptive statistics give the means and standard deviations for each questionnaire item. Visual inspection of items means suggested a divide between teachers’ perceptions of the idea of using Arabic in the English language classes, with scores suggesting that five was higher than one, where five indicated that the respondents strongly agreed with the giving statement. In contrast, one revealed that the respondents strongly disagreed with the statements.

The data were then examined to determine whether they were suitable for factor analysis. An examination of the correlation matrix showed that each variable was correlated at three, with at least one more variable not getting into the fray. Hence it might be removed. The correlation r has to be .30 or greater, as anything lower would suggest a weak relationship between variables (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Furthermore, none of the variables correlated above .90, which suggests that while there were relationships among variables, they did not overlap to the extent of multicollinearity (which would suggest that some items did not add unique information to the data).

In addition, Bartlett’s test of sphericity was at the level of <.001 (see Table 2), meaning that the data are a good match for factor analysis and have patterned relationships. Finally, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure (KMO) of Sampling Adequacy was examined, and it determined that the data is suitable for the EFA with a cut-off above .50, which was .806. This indicates that the degree of information among the variables presents a strong partial correlation (See Table one).
Table 1. SPSS output for KMO and Bartlett’s Test

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .806 |
| Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 458.344 |
| Df | 105 |
| Sig. | <.001 |

Factor Extraction and Rotation

The factor analysis was set to extract any factor with an eigenvalue over one. This yielded four underlying factors. Factor one explains 29.69%, Factor two explains 14.39%, Factor three explains 8.03%, and Factor four explains 6.77% (see Table two).

Table 2. Truncated SPSS output for the total variance explained for extracted factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial Eigenvalues</th>
<th>Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>% Of Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.204</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The rotated component matrix displayed the loading of questionnaire items onto the four factors (see Appendix F). Again, this was nearly a clean solution, with most items loading onto only one factor.

The data has four factors: (a) L1 to help comprehend with ease while teaching the EFL, (b) Mother tongue L1 not to be used strictly, (c) English to improve, and (d) English preferred to communicate in classes.

Item Analysis and Cronbach’s Alpha

One way to test internal consistency or the relatedness of multiple questions in a group was to measure Cronbach’s alpha. Thus, SPSS was used to conduct Cronbach’s alpha analysis to test the consistency of the items within the four factors extracted earlier in the paper through the stage of factor analysis. (a) L1 to help comprehend with ease while teaching the EFL, (b) Mother tongue L1 not to be used strictly, (c) English to improve, and (d) English preferred to communicate in classes.

Factor one consisted of eight items that were highly consistent with each other. In this case, $\alpha = .83$, which showed that the factor was reliable. The means and standard deviations showed us that the items were tapping into the same concept with similar scores. Moreover, the Inter-Item Correlations table, which displayed how each item correlated to all the other items, showed us that all items measured the same concept and correlated well together. They were all above $r = 0.3$.

The second factor consisted of five items that were reliable with each other with $\alpha = .74$. The means and standard deviations clarify that the items were tapping into the same concept as well. The Inter-Item Correlations table also proved that all items measured the same concept and
correlated well with r > 0.3. Factors three and four consisted of only one item for each; thus, they were unsuitable for the reliability test.

**Descriptive Analysis of the four factors in relation to participants’ responses**

The purpose of this analysis was to show the levels of participants’ agreement with the four factors. The table below illustrates the degree of certainty with each item within the four factors (see Figure one)

![Figure 1. Descriptive analysis of the four factors](image)

As presented in table three, the participants showed great agreement with each of the factors. To give a greater understanding, the items within each factor were analyzed separately. Table four below illustrates the degree of certainty of participants’ opinions regarding the L1 to help them comprehend with ease while teaching the EFL (see Figure two).

![Figure 2. Descriptive Analysis of the first factor](image)

Interestingly, 38.5% of participants believed allowing students to use their L1 in classes increases motivation and decreases anxiety. However, 34.6% of participants disagreed with the idea that students can better master English vocabulary by using their native language. On the other hand, 38.5% of participants did not agree with the idea that tips on English learning should be offered in students’ L1.

Interesting data results were presented when it came to the idea of the medium of the classroom’s instruction. 32.7% agreed, and 15.4% strongly agreed that students’ L1s would be a
better medium for explaining abstract and difficult concepts. 37.5% agreed with the statement that they clarify instruction for students in their L1. 36.5% agreed that allowing students to explain grammar and instruction in their L1.

Amazingly, 28.8% of participants neither agree nor disagree with the support in students' L1 use to have a better chance to follow the lesson. 27.9% disagreed and 27.9% agreed with the same idea. The table below illustrates the degree of certainty of participants’ opinions regarding the L1 not being used strictly (see Figure three).

![Figure 3. Descriptive Analysis of the second factor](image1)

As shown in the figure above, there was a debate about not allowing students to use their L1 in the classroom. It is seen that 34.6% disagreed, and 35.6% agreed that their students should not use their L1 in the classroom.

43.3% of the participants thought students should use English exclusively upon working on assignments in the classroom. In addition, 41.3% agreed that using an English-English dictionary is more helpful for language learners than a dictionary in students' L1. Table four shows that 31.7% of participants disagreed with the idea of not allowing students to use their L1 in the classroom.

Figure 4 illustrates the degree of certainty of participants’ opinions regarding the English to improve (see Figure four).

![Figure 4. Descriptive Analysis of the third factor](image2)

Table six shows that 70% of the participants believed that the more English is used in the classroom, the more their English will improve.

Figure 5 illustrates the degree of certainty of participants’ opinions regarding the English preferred to communicate in classes (see Figure five).
Unlocking the Potential of Translanguaging: Teachers’ perspectives

Moafa

**Figure 5.** Descriptive Analysis of the fourth factor
91.4% (55.8% Agree & 35.6% St. Agree) of participants remind their students to use English only in the classroom.

**Classroom Observations**

Table three illustrates how many times and in what circumstances students’ L1 was used during the observed three classes.

**Table 3. The Number of times students’ L1 was used**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Times students’ L1 was used.</th>
<th>Explaining complex grammar rules</th>
<th>Explaining complex ideas</th>
<th>Explaining the significance of words</th>
<th>Giving instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. A</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. L</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. M</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the first-year level English lessons, three professors employed students’ L1 to transfer the technical know-how of English words, their lexical patterns, behavior and the context in which it is used, as shown in the table. The most common usage of students’ L1 was to clarify the significance of words, which occurred 29 times. After his English explanations, Dr. M used Arabic to describe some phrases, which proved successful based on the students' reactions. Following her English explanations, Dr. L utilized Arabic to explain the meanings of unknown words. She produced a suitable and culturally unique Arabic equivalent for the term ‘feel’ in the phrase 'feel under the weather,' and the students got it fast. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the professors solely use Arabic to clarify abstract or culturally specific terms. All three professors initially attempted to explain complicated topics in English and switched to Arabic when they believed the students could not grasp their English explanations.

Dr. A was the one who gave the most instructions in the students’ L1. He utilized Arabic only after delivering directions in English in the first five occurrences to guarantee that every student understood what was stated. The professor had to utilize Arabic instructions alone four times to keep the students’ attention and get them to follow him. These three classroom observations show that Arabic is utilized when English explanations fail.

**Interviews**

Three teachers were interviewed about their use of students’ L1 in the classroom and how they felt about the widespread argument that using students’ L1 lowers their exposure to English. One of the interviewees (Dr. A) has been teaching English since 2007, the second interviewee (Dr.
L) has been teaching English for three years, and the third interviewee (Dr. M) has been teaching it for six years.

Dr. A found using students’ L1 to be realistic and sometimes practical, especially when making the ideal accessible to learners. When asked about the L1 policy in his organization and how he perceives it, he responded, “We were told not to allow Arabic in our classes. Yet, it is something nonavoidable.” However, Dr. A. was not satisfied with that policy and described it as “not practical and needs to be revisited” and perceived his speech as mentioning that recent research supports the argument of using learners’ native language in EFL classroom contexts.”

Dr. L realized that using L1 depends on the students' levels. She illustrated, “Beginners, for instance, I have not seen any improvement in their communication when I PREVENT using L1 during some complex activities.” However, dr. L found it necessary to use students' L1 upon introducing any complicated or higher-cognitive activity, as she realized that explaining how they do the activity in L1 helps students perform better and improves students’ independence and self-management of learning processes.

On the other hand, Dr. M passionately believes that he must avoid using the L1 in his class unless he finds students did not get what he meant explicitly because he thinks L1 usage ruined exposure to English. Dr. M thinks using English in EFL settings must be dominant, whether by the teachers’ or students’ interaction. Dr. M argued that an EFL teacher for Saudi students must urge using the target language, English, except in cases of misunderstanding, where using the L1 is fruitful to convey the message.

Dr. L and Dr. M were unsure about the language policy in their organizations, as there were no clear policies for using the L1 in classes. In addition, their organizations have never reminded or urged EFL teachers to strictly follow any policies for using the L1. However, both dissuaded their students from using their L1 as they wanted them to learn English through English for better and easier understanding.

Regarding the relation between students' L1 and EFL and whether they think students with good L1 skills might also have good EFL skills, Dr. A argued that it is a mistake to separate the two languages. He explained that successful teachers should be aware of the possible functionality of the two languages to perform the tasks. He insisted that learners with good skills in their L1 will adequately make the positive transfer when needed in their EFL learning. On the other hand, if learners do not have good skills in their mother tongue, they will not have good skills to transfer to the new language, which might reduce the cognitive development and the learning process in each language.

In addition, Dr. M explicated the relationship between students' L1 and EFL. He shed light on how a deficiency of life skills would result in a lack of experience in general; likewise, students must know the target task in their L1 and then redo it interactionally in the target language. He connected that to the example of students’ writing. He insisted, “Undeniably, I think good L1 skills will also have good EFL skills.”
On the other hand, Dr. L elucidated that L2 learners always link their mother tongue and EFL; thus, avoiding using students’ L1 during class time is impossible because students keep connecting L1 and L2 to learn, which helps them accelerate learning. However, Dr. L disagreed with that idea and articulated that one of her friends struggled to understand the EFL despite having good L1 skills. She explained that after one year of learning, her friend could not acquire L2, and her professional skills in L1 did not reflect her ability to acquire L2.

Dr. L was positively sure that by allowing herself and her students to use their L1 in the classroom, her students’ comprehension and L2 learning would improve. Moreover, Dr. M strongly believed that some students would have the experience of using English but with much more influence depending on their L1. To elaborate, the students will rely on understanding English as their L1 because of the influence of Arabic as the most dominant and most used language in student’s daily life.

Dr. A and Dr. L agreed that using students’ L1 saved their class time and motivated their students to be more involved in the language learning process. However, Dr. M disagreed with them and thought that using students’ L1 would not have positive consequences in terms of learning because they rely on receiving the target language through their L1. Dr. A persisted that students are more willing to participate and be actively involved in the classroom sessions upon allowing their L1 during classes. He insisted, “Classrooms are more motivating, relaxing and most importantly more supportive and encouraging for the learners.” Dr. M was more into students’ sides this time and thought that students’ emotions in the classroom are particularly important, as suggested by using their L1 along with emphasizing English. He thought a mixed L1 and EFL would motivate students to feel less nervous while speaking or talking in English. On the other hand, Dr. L proposed permitting students to use their L1 to make them more active.

Discussion

This study explores the perspectives of EFL teachers to answer the research question, "From the perspective of EFL teachers at Saudi universities, what role does L1 play in EFL classrooms?" The data revealed that EFL instructors at Saudi universities deemed it necessary to gradually increase comprehensible input, as students’ L1 would no longer be required in the classroom after receiving sufficient information to equip them with an acceptable level of EFL for effective communication. Consequently, 53.9% of participants believed L1 could be used as a scaffold to help ELs manage their anxiety, boost their self-confidence, and interact freely without fear of insufficient comprehension (53.9%).

According to the data analysis, translating key phrases, complex concepts, or even entire sections is an effective way to learn EFL (52.8% of participants agreed that it would be helpful to allow students to explain grammar points to each other in their native language). Furthermore, EFL teachers thought that embracing the usage of students’ L1 in group discussions and peer interactions lessened students’ nervousness during the classes, and that was connected to Community Language Learning which is a technique that minimizes students’ fear and anxiety by
actively using their L1 during classrooms’ discussions (Cook, 2001). In addition, based on the six classrooms’ observations, it was noticed that without translation, students are more likely to produce unguided and frequently erroneous translations. Allard et al. (2023) explained that “translated materials and an open language policy help to prioritize students’ content learning and position students for maximum comprehension and engagement of culturally relevant and justice-oriented content” (p. 8).

The interview data showed that teachers of EFL regarded Translanguaging in the classroom to be a positive method. They viewed it as a means of fostering an open, welcoming atmosphere in which all students, regardless of their linguistic background, could express and develop their language abilities. EFL instructors illustrated that allowing students to transition between languages and their L1 was beneficial to comprehending instructions and target language concepts. In addition, the data from the questionnaires showed 49% of EFL teachers agreed and 16.3% neither agreed nor disagreed that they would clarify instructions for students using their first language. The classroom observations were great support for this as it was clear in the way teachers used students’ L1 to explain complex grammar rules, ideas, and word significance and give instructions.

Translanguaging is also viewed as a means to boost student involvement by EFL teachers since it allows for more tailored education and creates natural student discussion and debate. Allard et al. (2023) contended that students’ L1 can be used to scold, control, or demean as it is to praise, soothe, or lift up. Translanguaging was regarded by EFL teachers as a tool to increase creative thought and develop critical analysis, problem-solving, and creativity, all of which are highly appreciated in EFL learning situations (Rafi, 2023; Allard et al., 2023; Schoeman et al., 2023).

The research indicates that EFL teachers in Saudi universities believed that using Arabic in ELL/teaching sparingly and wisely in the English classroom does not reduce students’ exposure to English but can assist the teaching and learning processes. This is not to exaggerate the role of the L1 or to advocate for greater use of the L1 in EFL classrooms, but rather to clarify some misconceptions that have plagued foreign language teachers for years, such as whether they should use the mother tongue when necessary and whether the frequently cited principle of no native language in the classroom is justified.

Teachers of EFL concurred that students’ L1 is used primarily to encourage and assist EFL learning. Consequently, EFL teachers believed that if a certain amount of input is delivered and a certain level of English is attained, students are encouraged to use English whenever appropriate. Explicitly encouraging students to use English when observed speaking in their L1 was also compatible with the Input Hypothesis since the teachers’ goal was for students to use English in class (38.4% agreed 23.1% neither agreed nor disagreed that students are never allowed to use their first language in classes). EFL teachers insisted that English remains the dominant language of communication in the classroom, and (91.4%) of them reminded their students to use English whenever they found them using their L1 during classes. EFL teachers thought that employing the mother tongue, like any other classroom strategy, is merely a technique to improve foreign
language proficiency. In addition, 87.5% of the participants agreed that the more the use of English in the classroom, the more significant the improvement of students’ English.

The participants acknowledged that translanguaging is difficult to manage and leads to confusion in the classroom if it is not restricted. Moreover, they asserted that when students are permitted to switch between languages too frequently or too freely, they may get distracted or confused and lack the ambition to master the target language. Dr. M was concerned that permitting students to depend excessively on their native language might hinder their progress in the target language. In addition, the findings have shown that teachers thought enabling Translanguaging might result in the development of poor habits and reduce both fluency and accuracy in the target language (Rafi & Morgan, 2021).

The debate over Translanguaging within EFL continues as teachers and researchers wrestle with the implications for both students and teachers. Ultimately, it is up to the individual teachers to decide how to best manage and implement Translanguaging activities in their classrooms to promote successful language learning.

Conclusion

This research investigated and analyzed the use of L1 in classrooms in Saudi universities to provide EFL teachers with a perspective on monolingual and Translanguaging techniques. The study’s findings highlighted the possibility of Translanguaging pedagogical approaches to establish opportunities in EFL classrooms that accept all students regardless of their L1 or English proficiency levels. EFL teachers suggested that Translanguaging pedagogies offered a voice to students who were silenced in the typical EFL classroom without interrupting the natural interaction flow of high-achieving students. The study proved that EFL teachers found L1 provides a bridge for teachers and students, bridging gaps in understanding, and providing a safe and supportive learning environment. It was proved that EFL teachers regarded L1 as a scaffold of instruction, facilitating explanations and giving examples, helping with practice and review, aiding comprehension, and encouraging critical thinking and communication. It was proven that the EFL teachers regarded L1 as a tool to explain cultural and linguistic contexts, describe classroom rules and expectations, discuss, and review material, and explain complex concepts. However, EFL instructors thought that if a given amount of knowledge is delivered and a particular level of English is acquired, students should be encouraged to employ English-only roles.

About the author:

Dr. Ruqayyah Moafa is an Assistant Professor at the English Language Institute at Jazan University, Saudi Arabia. She possesses a Ph.D. degree in Applied Linguistics. She has conducted substantial research in cross-cultural communication, writing in other languages, discourse analysis, and English Language Teaching. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2657-2053
References


Appendices
Appendix A
Questionnaire

Teachers' Perception of Students' Usage of the First Language in The Classroom

Your responses will only take about 5 - 10 minutes and the results will be used as part of research on English language teaching. This survey is VOLUNTARY and CONFIDENTIAL.

Check the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements using the following number scale ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The more students use English at school, the more their English will improve.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>My students are never allowed to use their first language in class.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The student should not use their first language in the classroom at all.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I would clarify instructions for students using their first language in classes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Allowing the students to use their first language in class would increase motivation and decrease anxiety.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be helpful to allow my students to explain grammar points to each other in their native language.</td>
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<tr>
<td>When students are working on an assignment in the classroom, they should use English exclusively.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not let my students speak their first language because it is difficult for me to understand what they are saying.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my opinion, students can better master English vocabulary by using their native language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be better to use an English-English dictionary than a dictionary in students' first language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English is best learned by translating between the students' first language and English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In contrast to English, students' first languages would be a better medium for explaining abstract and difficult concepts.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tips on English learning should be offered in students' first language.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whenever I see students using their first language in class, I remind them to use English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If support were given in students' first language, they might have a better chance of following the lesson.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How long have you been teaching English?
1. 1 – 3 years
2. 4 – 6 years
3. 7 – 9 years
4. 10 – 15 years
5. More than 15 years

What is your first language?
1. Arabic
2. English
3. Others

What is your gender?
1. Male
2. Female
Appendix B
Teachers' profile

Dr. A is an assistant professor who has been teaching English for over ten years. He has been teaching English to the university level students since 2007. He received his MA and Phd. degrees from American universities with major in Applied Linguistics.

Dr. M is a lecturer who received his MA in TESOL from an American university. He has been teaching English to university level students for six years.

Dr. L is a language instructor who received her MA in TESOL from American university. She has been teaching English for first-year university-level students for over three years.

Appendix C
Interview Question

1. How long have you been teaching English?

2. What do you think about your students using their first language in the classroom?

3. Is there any time when your students use their first language in class because it is necessary and helps the educational process?

4. Do you have any first language policy in your organization? How do you perceive this policy?

5. From your perspective, what is the relation between students' first and second language? Do you think students with good first language skills will also have good second language skills?

6. What do you expect from your students by the end of the semester?

7. What kind of outcomes have you observed from (allowing / not allowing) your students to use the mother tongue in the classroom?

Appendix D
Research Ethics Committee Approval

| Standing Committee for Scientific Research - Jazan University (HAP0-10-Z-001) | Reference No.: REC-43/09/214. |
| Research Title: The Role of First Language in Second Language classroom | Date of decision: 13 April 2022 |
| Principal Investigator: Dr. Ruqayyah Nasser Moafa | Sponsor: - |

The following item [✓] have been received and reviewed in connection with the above study to be conducted by the above investigator.

- Application for Research Ethics Committee approval
- Research proposal/protocol
- Patient Information Sheet & Consent Form
- Questionnaire
- Investigator’s CV.

The committee’s decision is:

[✓] Approved

[ ] Modification required (item specified below or in a companying letter)
[ ] Rejected (reasons specified below or in a companying letter)

Comments: Investigator is required to:
1. Report any protocol deviation/violations to the Ethics Committee.
2. Provide progress and closure reports to the Ethics Committee.

Members of Standing Committee for Scientific Research:
- Dr. Hassan Ahmad Alhazmi College of Pharmacy - Jazan University
- Dr. Ibrahim Metaan Qosadi College of Medicine - Jazan University
- Dr. Othman Mousa Hakami College of Science - Jazan University
- Dr. Essam Ibrahim Al-Aqeeli College of Medicine - Jazan University
- Dr. Zakaria Ahmed Zakri College of Sharia and Law - Jazan University
- Dr. Mohammed Haidar Badedi General Directorate of Jazan Health Affairs
- Mr. Bandar Hassan Al-Fifi Committee Secretary - Jazan University

Chairman of Standing Committee for Scientific Research

Dr. Hassan Ahmad Alhazmi

Date and Signature

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Jazan, P.O. Box: 114, Tel: 00966173230028, 00966173232800, 00966173230029
### Appendix E

#### Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The more students use English at school, the more their English will improve.</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>1.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students are never allowed to use their first language in classes.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student should not use their first language in the classroom at all.</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would clarify instructions for students using their first language in classes.</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing the students to use their first language in class would increase motivation and decrease anxiety.</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be helpful to allow my students to explain grammar points to each other in their native language.</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>1.207</td>
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<tr>
<td>When students are working on an assignment in the classroom, they should use English exclusively.</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>1.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not let my students speak their first language because it is difficult for me to understand what they are saying.</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my opinion, students can better master English vocabulary by using their native language.</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It would be better to use an English-English dictionary than a dictionary in students' first languages.</td>
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<td>1.047</td>
</tr>
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*Note: All items scored on a 5-point scale. N = 104.
Appendix F

SPSS output for four factors extracted Factor Matrix

<table>
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</table>

222
Appendices

Appendix A

Questionnaire

Teachers' Perception of Students' Usage of the First Language in The Classroom

Your responses will only take about 5 - 10 minutes and the results will be used as part of research on English language teaching. This survey is VOLUNTARY and CONFIDENTIAL.

Check the degree to which you agree or disagree with the following statements using the following number scale ranging from 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How long have you been teaching English?
1. 1 – 3 years
2. 4 – 6 years
3. 7 – 9 years
4. 10 – 15 years
5. More than 15 years

What is your first language?
1. Arabic
2. English
3. Others

What is your gender?
1. Male
2. Female
Appendix B
Teachers' profile

**Dr. A** is an assistant professor who has been teaching English for over ten years. He has been teaching English to the university level students since 2007. He received his MA and Phd. degrees from American universities with major in Applied Linguistics.

**Dr. M** is a lecturer who received his MA in TESOL from an American university. He has been teaching English to university level students for six years.

**Dr. L** is a language instructor who received her MA in TESOL from American university. She has been teaching English for first-year university-level students for over three years.

Appendix C
Interview Question

1. How long have you been teaching English?

2. What do you think about your students using their first language in the classroom?

3. Is there any time when your students use their first language in class because it is necessary and helps the educational process?

4. Do you have any first language policy in your organization? How do you perceive this policy?

5. From your perspective, what is the relation between students’ first and second language? Do you think students with good first language skills will also have good second language skills?

6. What do you expect from your students by the end of the semester?

7. What kind of outcomes have you observed from (allowing / not allowing) your students to use the mother tongue in the classroom?

# Appendix D

## Research Ethics Committee Approval

| Research Title: The Role of First Language in Second Language classroom | Date of decision: 13 April 2022 |
| Principal Investigator: Dr. Ruqayyah Nasser Moafa | Sponsor: - |

The following items have been received and reviewed in connection with the above study to be conducted by the above investigator:

- [x] Application for Research Ethics Committee approval
- [x] Research proposal/protocol
- [x] Patient Information Sheet & Consent Form
- [x] Questionnaire
- [x] Investigator’s CV.

The committee’s decision is:

- [x] Approved

Comments: Investigator is required to:

1. Report any protocol deviation/violations to the Ethics Committee.
2. Provide progress and closure reports to the Ethics Committee.

## Members of Standing Committee for Scientific Research:

Dr. Hassan Ahmad Alhazmi - College of Pharmacy - Jazan University  
Dr. Ibrahim Mutaam Qosadi - College of Medicine - Jazan University  
Dr. Othman Mousa Hakami - College of Science - Jazan University  
Dr. Essam Ibrahim Al-Aqeeli - College of Medicine - Jazan University  
Dr. Zakaria Ahmed Zakri - College of Sharia and Law - Jazan University  
Dr. Mohammed Haidar Badedi - General Directorate of Jazan Health Affairs  
Mr. Bandar Hassan Al-Fiti - Committee Secretary - Jazan University

Chairman of Standing Committee for Scientific Research

Dr. Hassan Ahmad Alhazmi  
Date and Signature

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Jazan, P.O. Box: 114, Tel: 00966173230028, 00966173232800, 00966173230029
### Appendix E

#### Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The more students use English at school, the more their English will improve.</td>
<td>4.46</td>
<td>1.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My students are never allowed to use their first language in classes.</td>
<td>3.03</td>
<td>1.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The student should not use their first language in the classroom at all.</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would clarify instructions for students using their first language in classes.</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allowing the students to use their first language in class would increase motivation and decrease anxiety.</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.164</td>
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<tr>
<td>It would be helpful to allow my students to explain grammar points to each other in their native language.</td>
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<td>1.207</td>
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<td>When students are working on an assignment in the classroom, they should use English exclusively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I do not let my students speak their first language because it is difficult for me to understand what they are saying.</td>
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EFL Student-Directed Feedback for Improving Academic Writing Skills in Thailand

Sureepong Phothongsunan
Department of Business English,
School of Arts, Assumption University, Thailand
Email: sureepongp@gmail.com

Received: 01/04/2023  Accepted: 03/07/2023  Published: 03/24/2023

Abstract
Exploring how written corrective feedback can help learners optimize their writing skills has always been an interest to teachers in the field of English language teaching. This action research involves a group of 28 intermediate English as Foreign Language students in the English as a Foreign Language Grammar course with an emphasis on academic writing development at an international university in Thailand. The study focuses on two academic essays produced by the learners over a 14-week semester in which students are required to submit two drafts of each of the essays on the assigned topics. Student-Directed Feedback is used to allow the students to choose between various delivery formats for the feedback and ask some specific questions about their work to which the students need answering. With questionnaires also surveying students’ attitudes given at the end of the course, it is revealed that Student-Directed Feedback has had perceived positive effects on most of the students in terms of feedback particularity, personalisation and higher learner autonomy.

Keywords: Student-Directed Feedback, academic writing skills, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol14no1.14
Introduction

Written corrective feedback is widely known to play a crucial role in EFL writing and thus, feedback and error correction methods have been investigated considerably from various points of view in many ESL, EFL and ELF contexts. There is a continuing discussion on the efficacy of different types of corrective feedback; however, it has been agreed upon that there is no definite indication of the most practical written corrective feedback in different environments. By and large, teachers and students often feel bombarded by traditional corrective feedback given on written assignments or tasks and the literature usually reflects concerns regarding the effectiveness of various practices in which teachers and students are involved, including the intelligibility of feedback comments; authority over written texts; and the significance of correcting grammatical errors (Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 2003; K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006; Hart, 2011, Truscott, 1996).

This research was conducted to see if Student-Directed Feedback (SDF) could mitigate the concerns over effective corrective feedback and find out the extent to which it can be used to help develop learners’ writing and academic skills. Student-directed feedback is defined as feedback which learners can ask to receive in a certain format and on particular aspects of their written work. Contrary to peer review, this kind of feedback is provided by the teacher but it is the learners who direct in what ways and what they receive comments on (Campbell & Schumm-Fauster, 2013). The objectives of the study are to identify the forms of feedback EFL university students would like to have most and what aspects of written feedback they believe benefit their writing development and how. Two main research questions in the study are:

1. What forms of Student-Directed Feedback do EFL university learners prefer to receive on their English academic writing?
2. What aspects of written language has Student-Directed Feedback helped them to improve, and to what extent?

The paper first introduces the relevant background of the study, the objectives and research questions, the review of the literature on corrective feedback, and the research design followed by the findings and the discussion and it ends with the conclusion of the study respectively.

Literature Review

Despite the extensive research on corrective feedback undertaken in the past few decades, some issues on feedback practices appear to be unrequited, causing EFL teachers to question feedback usefulness and applicability (Alkhammash & Gulnaz, 2019; Gedik Bal, 2022; K. Hyland & F. Hyland, 2006). It has also been found that current literature on corrective feedback has pointed out some gaps in research in investigating what EFL teachers do while correcting student writing and why they do it in such a particular manner (Ferris, 2014). Moreover, how well corrective feedback has been taken and perceived by learners in EFL contexts to the extent that it can help them improve needs further investigation. Therefore, to understand the actual needs of EFL teachers and learners in context, and to connect the gap between research and practice, research in written corrective feedback should focus on realistic pedagogical environments. Moreover, Lee (2014) indicates that most of the feedback research has been undertaken in the first language and English as Second Language (ESL) contexts predominantly in English-speaking countries such as America, England, Australia, New Zealand and India. As a result, there is a rising need to encompass more corrective feedback research in various EFL settings and even in other distinct contexts from around the world.
Feedback is information given by an authority on aspects of one’s act (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Thus, there are two types of feedback in general, positive and negative. In the EFL context, positive feedback is approval from the teacher which affirms a correct linguistic production by the student. Negative feedback, on the contrary, is a remark from the teacher after an incorrect expression by the student. Corrective feedback, both oral and written, is overall seen as negative as it involves error revision. Although oral corrective feedback is usually offered as part of teaching and learning within the classroom, written corrective feedback is more often than not written responses provided by the teacher after reviewing students' written responses. Thus, language teachers may have to give several comments on student writing, varying from mechanics to content clarity. As a result, teachers help students to become aware of what is right in the target language (Chandler, 2003) which supports second language learning. Written corrective feedback is an important mechanism in drawing students’ attention to correct linguistic features. Nevertheless, the usefulness of written corrective feedback is debatable. According to Truscott (1996), written corrective feedback is not only useless but also unfavourable. He argued that written corrective feedback produces only a meaningless form of knowledge, which has a negative outcome on learning. Consequently, it can decrease student drive to learn because it brings about anxiety and lack of confidence making way for unnecessary streamlined writing. Also, error treatment takes time and it inhibits active learning (Truscott, 1996).

Swain (2005) agrees that disclosure to intense intelligible input is the only requisite for Second Language (L2) acquisition and output since an effective communicative protocol encourages learning by promoting the learners to assess their linguistic competence in contexts. Following Bitchner and Storch (2016), in recent years, more research points to the upsides of written corrective feedback in L2 development. One of the gains of L2 written corrective feedback is that the written output remains and can actually be re-examined by the learners, which provides an opportunity to have metacognition in learning the target language.

Educators have also studied the likelihood of different kinds of written corrective feedback in EFL taking into account the nature of errors which language teachers should be aware of in teaching academic writing. Ellis (2009) points out the choice of errors to focus on. Two concerns regarding the choice of errors arise whether to rectify all the errors or to opt for some error corrections. It is then advised that it be best to emphasize a few types of errors. Likewise, indirect feedback in which the error is revealed with no correction is supported by some EFL scholars. In line with Ferris’ (2014) proposition, indirect feedback appears to be more advantageous than direct feedback, especially for future development. Lately, utilizing electronic platforms in giving written corrective feedback is gradually regular and providing a succinct response to a certain error and access to sources revealing the appropriate usage can inspire students to correct themselves and have better metalinguistic awareness (Ellis, 2009).

Methodology

As action research, this research looks into a phenomenon in which learners are often faced with difficulties in receiving written corrective feedback while learning English in an EFL classroom. To deal with such problems, in this study, learners are given some options in receiving corrective feedback as to the format and the aspect of feedback needed. After the investigation, how well the efforts worked is measured and if the results are still not satisfactory, the steps are to be adapted with anticipation to yield better outcomes in the future. It can be said that this working approach is about learning by doing and trying to find the best possible solution to the problems.
and this process is bound to be unending as there is always room for further improvement. The study also aims to shed light on an inquiry into the meanings and values of individuals, EFL learners, and the ways they interpret what they encounter and experience in EFL classrooms and contexts. It is therefore important to understand learner behaviors and perceptions because every learner is unique and perceives the world and approaches complications they undergo differently.

Participants

A class of 28 intermediate EFL junior and senior students enrolled in the EFL Grammar Essentials course at an international university in Thailand was the sample group in this study. The students are of mixed nationalities, five of whom are Chinese and the others are Thai. The students were mostly in their junior and senior years in a 4-year undergraduate degree program in Business English at a university in Thailand. Twenty-two of them is female whereas the six others are male. They were purposively chosen to take part in this study as they were all Business English majors who have been learning English as a foreign language for more than 15 years. Five of them had experience studying overseas and five others have been to English-speaking countries including Australia, the UK and the USA either to travel or study for some time. Having completed English IV, the final and most advanced of the four mandatory English courses at the university, the students were considered medium to high achieving in respect of their academic achievement as shown in their cumulative Grade Point Averages (GPAs) between 2.15 to 3.76 out of a four-point scale. All students reported having taken some writing tasks in almost every subject in the study program.

Research Instruments

To obtain data from the students, two research instruments were utilized. The two essays along with their drafts were used as the initial instrument in which the students had to write two essays of 250 words each. Each essay required a draft submission so that corrective feedback could be given in the process. One essay was expository and the other was meant to be argumentative. The two essay topics included “Define the meaning of true friendship” and “Learners have to be educated, but they also have to learn things for themselves” accordingly.

After the first drafts of both essays were turned in, the students were able to indicate what kind of delivery formats they preferred to receive the feedback on and then they also had to inquire about their written work, which could be on register, lexis, grammar, reasoning, and creativity. The six forms of feedback available were written remarks, email comments, face-to-face communication comments, traditional corrections on paper, and teacher’s responses to certain questions or issues which the students doubt and LINE comments. The students were allowed to choose to receive more than one form of feedback if they were required to.

Another method used to collect the data in this study is a questionnaire. The questionnaire used to discover students’ attitudes is one conventional method to investigate Thai EFL learners’ views of the efficacy of self-directed feedback the students experienced and perceived after having successfully written two essays and received all the feedback from the lecturer. The questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale with seven questions was designed to direct and assess the level of the participants’ views of agreement. The justifications for why the questionnaire was also used in collecting data are that a questionnaire is a practical way anticipated to attain the learners’ views properly (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Second, with a concise and focused questionnaire, the data collection process is doable within one semester, causing less inconvenience and time for the
research participants. In this study, only the English version of the questionnaire was administered as the students, both Thai and non-Thai were learning in the international program which uses English in teaching and learning for all courses. Overall, the research procedures took about one semester to complete in the first semester of the 2021 academic year.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data on the forms of feedback were first analysed to see how many students preferred what types of feedback with an attempt to rank the most and the least commonly requested delivery formats from a total of six forms given. Subsequently, the data were further collected quantitatively at the end of the course by written questionnaires which surveyed learners’ attitudes towards different delivery formats and the perceived effectiveness of learner-directed feedback for improving general written English and academic skills.

The quantitative data analysis for the questionnaires was carried out with PASW statistics 18. With descriptive statistics employed, the evaluation scores of the learner’s views of the agreement were presented. Following B. Sommer and R. Sommer (2002), it is considered sensible to employ more than one method to examine data or investigate the research for further relevant data. Having more than one method of data collection and/or analysis in a research study is a well-established norm in the social sciences field (Alexander, Thomas, Cronin, Fielding & Moran-Ellis, 2008). There is also growing evidence that researchers have attempted to use more than one quantitative method of inquiry (Fielding, Burningham, Thrush, & Catt, 2007). It seems that no matter how many methods are used, two main issues arise: justification for their employment and, how the data obtained in different sets would be incorporated (Monrad, 2013).

Findings

To respond to the first research question, some major findings can be addressed: the most preferred feedback delivery formats the students chose.

Table 1: *Forms of feedback requested and received on English academic writing*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of feedback</th>
<th>Number of students (in order of preference)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LINE feedback</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email responses</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher’s feedback on some questions</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-text corrections (traditional revisions)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written remarks</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Face-to-face feedback consultation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students in this study mostly preferred to receive feedback via the LINE application, which is also equipped with audio-recording features allowing them to ask or probe further if needed. In addition, some students favored comments via emails. Communicating via email is functional these days as it is quick and responsive. Given that the students can specify to have some feedback specifically given to certain questions, many of them found this form of feedback useful and preferable. Feedback flexibility is one element that many EFL learners consider. In-text corrections or the traditional method of written feedback came fourth, followed by written remarks. Face-to-face feedback consultation was found to be the least preferred type of feedback the students would ask for and receive on their English academic writing.
By and large, the questionnaire survey responses showed that students felt comfortable using learner-directed feedback and found it quite motivating as it encouraged them to independently evaluate their own writing. Most of the students also valued the level of detail which stemmed from the speed and scope that LINE and emails enable digitally. Moreover, audio feedback features in LINE could allow the students to identify through the teacher's intonation exactly how positive or negative a comment was. Having individual feedback emailed or recorded also intensified the feeling that it was personal and particular and that the teacher had invested time in helping them individually and deliberately.

With regards to the second research question on what aspects of written language the students perceived that directed feedback has helped them improve. The findings revealed that, overall, the number of students perceiving general aspects of their writing as having been improved by different types of learner-directed feedback was considerably higher than those perceiving no improvement (see Table two). The students perceived that their understanding of English grammar, transitional words, and sentence structure improved dramatically. In the meantime, knowledge of natural expressions, text structure or organization and vocabulary was found to improve as well at a medium level. The exception was with punctuation in which few students reported slight improvement from the feedback given in this aspect. This may be because per se a small number of students asked certain questions about their use of punctuation (no question meant no feedback). Perhaps concentration on other skills led to the neglect of what is often considered minor errors in general. Still, open-ended responses were generally positive and explained that learner-directed feedback, by being more specific and detailed than traditional feedback, motivated students to eagerly and keenly seek corrections by themselves.

Table 2. Aspects of general written English Student-Directed Feedback has helped to improve

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects of language</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Level of improvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural expressions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Slight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence structure</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text structure</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, key academic skills such as critical thinking, analytical reading, proofreading and dealing with feedback were all perceived as having substantially improved through learner-directed feedback. There were some interesting differences in other responses, for example, the number of students indicating that learner-directed feedback significantly helped with choosing and narrowing a topic is similar to the number of students perceiving no improvement in this skill.

Standard responses from the survey regarding academic skills once more praised specificity, the customized nature of the feedback, and heightened motivation to develop their academic abilities. Several students claimed that learner-directed feedback helped them to think more critically and present arguments and positions more logically, and some were even delighted to have skills deficiencies highlighted by learner-directed feedback that they had not anticipated.

Based on these results, it can be argued that learner-directed feedback is a viable alternative to traditional feedback. The findings also address issues of intelligibility, authority over the written texts, motivation, and the revision of grammatical errors.
Discussion

Based on the findings, the use of LINE, an application popular among the current generation, was favored by most of the students in this study. This came as no surprise as it is the most widely used platform of communication in the 21st century in many countries around the world including Asia owing to its convenience and accessibility on the mobile device (Eun-ji & McCracken, 2015). According to Van De Bogart and Wichadee (2015), it was found that at university Thai students were satisfied with using LINE as they considered it to be helpful for various academic reasons.

Emails were found to be the second most preferred feedback form. One clear advantage of using emails is that messages, comments, and attachments can be stored for permanent retention, which makes it better than any other communication platforms such as LINE and WeChat which have limited validity periods (El-Sabban, 2009). On the contrary, it would appear that face-to-face meetings to discuss written feedback could create more frustration and tension for the students and thus the majority of the students chose to avoid receiving this form of feedback (Ferris, 2003). Some students who are outgoing and more interactive and inquisitive in nature would prefer to meet with the teacher in person to discuss any doubts or questions they have.

Differences in students’ responses on the usefulness of Student-Directed Feedback were reported as some claimed that it greatly helped them improve their writing skills while some argued against its practicality with English writing. These points can be attributed to learners' different previous experiences that come into play when immersing into a foreign or second language learning environment (Forman, 2014).

In terms of supporting learner-centeredness, allowing students to choose a delivery format for their feedback means that each student can receive feedback in a form that matches his or her fortes and preferences. Digital delivery formats enable more detail in feedback and can facilitate intelligibility. It was also found that students who study via digital-equipped programs are more active and have better attitudes towards learning than those studying in traditional classrooms (Banditvilai, 2016). Moreover, by allowing students to request help with specific aspects of their writing, Student-Directed Feedback encourages learner reflection, self-editing, and learner autonomy while leaving the authority over the text with the student author. It also eliminates some of the urgency from experts or gurus in the field to agree on a single correct solution to the issue of grammatical correction. All of these benefits of Student-Directed Feedback have a motivating, positive effect on the students.

Conclusion

The study aims to identify the forms of feedback EFL university students prefer to have most and what aspects of written feedback are perceived to help hone their writing skills and how. The overall results of this study lead to the conclusion that learner-directed feedback is a useful tool for developing and supplementing learners’ writing and academic skills and highlight compelling rationale for adopting learner-directed feedback in academic writing courses. The main findings would also justify implementing the approach in other EFL classrooms and contexts. The follow-up of this study hence should pursue a closer investigation into the practices using additional types of corrective feedback forms not included in this study. In addition, although it is easier to process, the somewhat small number of participants in this study may to some extent restrict the results' generalizability. Future research could broaden the study over a longer time and observe the efficacy of Student-Directed Feedback in enhancing student writing. It is vital to
consider how and to what extent the students can benefit from self-directed feedback. Diversity in participants and academic writing courses, considering multiculturalism and inferential statistics, can suggest useful insights into corrective feedback studies.

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References


High-Proficiency L1 and L2 English Learners’ Morphological Words in Writing

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Abstract
English differs from other languages in morphology, which may cause trouble in EFL learning. The interesting topic is whether ESL learners can obtain the same level of morphology in their English learning as native English speakers. The study explores whether high-proficiency EFL learners differ from native EL1 learners in writing using root words, inflected words, and derived words. This article reported on a comparative study between Advanced EFL learners (TOEFL Testees (n = 318)) and native English learners (writers of the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (n = 176)) by lexical frequency profile analysis on their use of root words, inflected words, and derived words in writing. The findings suggest that there are significant differences between the two groups. TOEFL writers used a much higher proportion of root words but a much lower proportion of inflected and derived words than native English learners. The findings will expose the differences between EFL learners and native L2 learners in word learning and contribute to L2 language teaching and learning theoretically and practically.

Keywords: high-proficiency EFL learners, native English speakers, productive morphological words, comparison

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Introduction

Though many more studies have involved EL2 productive vocabulary in recent years with the support of computer programs for corpus-based lexical analyses, most observed words with only a distinction of frequency levels, considering nothing of morphological categorization: root words, inflected words, and derived words. English is less complex than some languages in inflection, e.g., French, but more complex than others, e.g., Chinese. The differences between learners’ native language and their L2 in morphology may influence their L2 learning: the richer their native language in morphology, the easier it is for the L2 learners to learn their L2 language, and, on the contrary, the richer their second language in morphology, the more difficult it is for them to acquire (Slik, Hout, & Schepens, 2019). Additionally, in English, there are a significant number of derived words that may pose a challenge for EFL learners. Though in recognition, L1 learners acquire different morphological English words at different rates (Anglin, Miller, & Wakefield, 1993), it is still unknown whether EFL learners can achieve the same level as native English learners in morphological words in writing. The answer may help to expose the morphological characteristics of the two groups, the relationship between their productive vocabulary, and the development tendency of EL2 and also supply some implications to EL2 teaching and learning. Therefore, this study will ascertain whether the two groups are the same in using these words by comparing advanced EFL and native English learners’ written morphological words by lexical frequency profile analysis on their writings.

Literature Review

English has an extensive vocabulary which is a heavy task for EFL learners to learn (Goldfield and Reznick, 1990; Schmitt, 2008), and English words differ in learnability or the difficulty they exert in language learning. Besides differences in frequency, words’ morphological structures may also be a crucial factor causing differences in learning efficiency (Morris, Porter, Grainger, & Holcomb, 2011). Morphologically, there are primarily root, inflected, and derived words in English. In this study, root words refer to those word forms from which inflected and derived words are formed on morphological rules: inflectional and derivational rules. Mature language speakers have mastered these rules and use them in communication receptively and productively (Nation, 1990, 2001; Richards, 1976).

The question of how language learners acquire morphological knowledge aroused L1 researchers’ interest. The earliest studies were on the order of L1 children’s acquiring different grammatical morphemes. Brown (1973), Villiers and de Villiers (1973) found that children of diverse native language backgrounds gained 14 grammatical morphemes in a similar order. Dulay and Burt (1973, 1974), believing that L2 learners may follow the same order, conducted studies on L2 learners, concluding that L2 children acquire some grammatical morphemes almost in a similar order. It was the same case with L2 adults, e.g., Bailey, Madden, Krashen (1974), Larsen (1975), Pica (1983). Beyond inflectional morphemes, the order of acquiring derivational affixes has also attracted scholars’ attention, e.g., Biemiller and Slonim (2001), Leong (1989), Tyler and Nagy (1989) found that learners’ knowledge of affixes grows as they go from elementary school into high school. Some empirical studies also examined the order of L2 acquisition of different suffixes, e.g., Danilović, Savić, and Dimitrijević (2013), Mochizuki and Aizawa (2000), Schmitt and Meara (1997), concluding that L2 learners’ affix knowledge increases with their vocabulary size.

Both inflectional and derivational studies have been concerned with individual inflectional
or derivational morphemes from the perspective of differences in frequency, regularity, predictability, and productivity (Bauer and Nation, 1993), which is difficult to reflect L2 learners’ development in overall morphological knowledge (Lin, 2012; Mochizuki and Aizawa, 2000).

To track L1 receptive vocabulary development, Anglin, Miller, and Wakefield (1993) conducted a study on L1 children’s acquisition of different morphologically defined words, finding that the numbers of the root words, inflected words, and derived words increased in various scales, which means that they were developing in different trajectories. Xanthos et al. (2011) studied the relationship between the lexical richness/complexity in child-directed oral productive data and nine diverse language background children’s morphological development speed in speech, with an indicator advocated by Xanthos and Gillis (2010) called Mean Size of Paradigm (MSP), the number of distinct inflected word-forms in a sample of language data divided by the number of distinct lemmas. They found that the speed of children’s morphological development is positively related to the morphological richness of their spoken language input.

A few studies have also touched on EFL learners’ development in productive morphology, with indexes of lexical richness involving language learners’ inflectional or derivational aspects. Malvern, Richards, Chipere, and Durán (2004a) used D-value to track 38 children’s development in morphological words (inflectional diversity) from the 18th month on in speech. They calculated three versions of the D-score to indicate three aspects of productive vocabulary, finding that the three versions were increasing on different scales. Miranda-García and Calle-Martín (2005) used another measure in the study, named index of flexionability, or allomorphism, the number of types divided by that of lemmas, in fact, the variation of Lemma/token ratio. Granger and Wynne (1999) pointed out that lemma/token ratio and adjusted lemma/token ratio measures of lexical richness can show language speakers’ usage of root words and inflected words. Lou and Ma (2012) compared EFL and native EL1 learners’ language production with Type-Lemma Ratio (TLR) and Lemma-Family Ratio (LFR) as indicators of inflectional diversity and derivational diversity, respectively, finding that concerning the 1st 1000 high-frequency words, native English speakers used more inflectional forms than Chinese students but fewer derivational forms than Chinese students and that as for the 2nd 1000 frequency level words and the low-frequency words, Chinese students used more inflectional forms but the same proportion of derivational forms as American students.

Some studies have also measured morphology under morphological complexity/richness. Slik, Hout, and Schepens (2019) explored the role of morphological complexity in predicting the learnability of Dutch as an additional language, finding that the morphological complexity of L2 learners’ native language may influence their duration of residence in their target language context for L2 learning and if their native language is as complex in morphology as their target language or more complex, they may shorten their overseas residence and finish their L2 learning earlier. Brezina and Pallotti (2019) put forward a new measure of morphological complexity (an indicator of average inflectional diversity) called the Morphological Complexity Index in two case studies on native and non-native speakers’ writing, concluding that morphological complexity varies with speakers’ language levels and the characteristics of their native language. Clercq and Houses (2019) made a study of some (English, French as L1 and L2) learners’ development in morphological complexity with three measures: inflectional and derivational diversity in the whole lexicon (Type/Family Ratio by Horst, Collins (2006)), overall inflectional diversity (Inflectional Diversity by Malvern, Richards, Chipere, Durán (2004b), and inflectional diversity in the verbal system only (Morphological Complexity Index by Pallotti (2015)), showing that French as L2
learners’ morphological development had a more continuous increase than that of EL2 learners. Although the above studies have exposed the diversity in inflection or derivation or both, they have not tracked EFL learners’ development in morphologically productive ability systematically and comprehensively. Firstly, they focused mainly on inflectional knowledge (Garbo, 2019; Sim, 2019), e.g., Malvern, Richards, Chipere, and Durán (2004a, 2004b), Brezina and Pallotti (2019), Slik, Hout and Schepens (2019) and, at most, inflectional and derivational aspects simultaneously, e.g., Lou and Ma (2012). Secondly, the indexes used are all proportional ones between one unit of words and another, i.e., Type Token Ratio, Type Lemma Ratio, Lemma Family Ratio, etc., resulting in decimals (ranging from zero to one) of low discrimination. Most importantly, no study has ever delved into the relationship between high-proficiency EFL learners and EL1 learners in different morphological words in writing. It is still unknown how EFL learners’ morphological aspects develop, i.e., whether they are the same as native English speakers in morphology.

This study is made to compare a group of advanced EFL learners with a group of native English learners in their productive use of root words, inflected words, and derived words, i.e., to observe the relationship between their use of three categories of morphologically defined words, which may suggest the relation between them in productive vocabulary. The study is to answer the following question: Are advanced EFL learners the same as Native English speakers in their written root woods, inflected words, and derived words?

Method

This study compares the two groups of subjects’ coverage of root words, inflected words, and derived words in writing by lexical frequency profile analysis. The morphological words involved in the study refer only to root words, inflected words, and derived words for the limitation of the technology.

Participants

Two groups of participants are involved in the study. One group comprises EFL learners (n = 318) who applied for admission into English-speaking countries for further education and took the TOEFL test. The other group includes native English speakers (n = 176): 90 British university students and 86 American college students. The study got no additional information about EFL learners’ biometrics and British university students’ age. Among the 86 American University students, 27 were from Indiana University, aged 22 to 48; 17 were from the University of South Carolina, 18 to 19 (most), and 42 were from the University of Michigan, 19 to 23.

Research Instruments

Range BNC is a computer program designed by Heatley, Nation, and Coxhead (2002) to perform the Lexical Frequency Profile analysis, a scheme put forward by Laufer and Nation (1995) to calculate the numbers and percentages of the words appearing in language data and sort out them into frequency levels by their occurrence in the target language corpus: the British National Corpus. The software has been updated several times, resulting in several versions, different in the number of base word lists. The version used in this study is one with 16 base word lists sourced from the British National Corpus (BNC). Each of the 1st 14 lists consists of 1000 families of words. The 1st contains the words of the highest frequency band in BNC, while the 14th comprises those
of the lowest frequency band. The 15th list consists of proper nouns, such as names of people and places, and the 16th comprises most interjections, exclamations, hesitation, procedure, etc., common in spoken English.

The analysis results present the coverage of different frequency level words in a piece of language production through counting different frequency level words, classified primarily concerning their occurrence in the native language corpus (Edwards and Collins, 2011). Word counting is by token, type, and family; the percentage is only by token and type. The sample output of the analysis is shown in Table one as follows:

Table 1. Sample output of the LFP analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD LIST</th>
<th>TOKENS/ %</th>
<th>TYPES/%</th>
<th>FAMILIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>482/77.74</td>
<td>186/61.79</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1/0.16</td>
<td>1/0.33</td>
<td>1/1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>0/0.00</td>
<td>0/0.00</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| not in the lists | 7/1.13 | 7/2.33 | ????
| Total     | 620       | 301     | 256      |

The results in the above table indicate that among the whole composition (620 tokens, 301 types, or 256 families), 482 are from the 1st 1000 frequency level, making up 87.28% of the entire composition (620 tokens). If counted by type, they are 165, accounting for 78.57% (301 types). These are 256 families, 153 from the 1st word list (the 1st 1000 frequency level). The not-in-the-list words have not been calculated by family. For one thing, there is no reference base word list for it, and for another, usually, there are a lot of nonsense words, misspellings, etc.

To calculate the percentage of root words, inflected, and derived words, the authors compiled the original word lists of Range BNC into three morphological word lists, each consisting of only root words, inflected words, or derived obtained by eliminating the other two types of words. The study uses these three-word lists to extract the statistics of the target morphological words in language data.

Research Procedures

The study has collected two categories of language data, i.e., 318 sample TOEFL compositions written by the above-introduced EFL learners in the TOEFL test and 176 compositions written by the previously-mentioned native English college students.

The sample TOEFL compositions are drawn from 450 essays in an e-book Sample Essays for the TOEFL Writing Test (TWE) —Answers to ALL TOEFL Essay Questions (ToeflEssays.com, 2004), a collection of compositions written by EFL learners sitting in actual TOEFL tests as their answers to one of the 185 ETS (American Educational Testing Service) official topics. These essays are of at least 300 words (356.28 words on average), and all have obtained a full scale—six score (one to six score). On average, TOEFL writers’ essays are 356.42 tokens, 175.64 types, or 150.64 families long.

Those 176 timed compositions written by native English college students are from
LOCNESS (Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays) (Granger, 1998), a corpus of native English learners’ essays (https://www.uclouvain.be/en-cecl-locness.htm). LOCNESS is a collection of 272 timed and untimed essays written by native English students. For comparison, the study selected only 176 timed essays, 90 essays by British university students and 86 by American university students. Those written by British university students include expository-historical essays (18 on *French society and institutions*), literary essays (39 on *French Intellectual traditions*), and argumentative essays (33 on *A single Europe: A loss of sovereignty for Britain*). They are about 500 words long each, and those 86 essays written by American university students are all argumentative, among which 69 are about 500 words each and the other 17 essays, 1090 words on average. To alleviate the influence of the length of these 17 long essays, the authors segmented them into smaller pieces of not more than four *bits* and kept the 1st piece of each (intact in sentences) for analysis. The resultant parts are about 755 words long on average. On average, the 176 essays by native university students are 541.32 tokens, 243.86 types, or 201.74 families long. The compiler of the corpus has deleted all direct quotations. The statistics of the compositions by the two groups are in Table two:

Table 2. Statistics for language data in the study (N1=318, N2=176)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOEFL</th>
<th>Native</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Length (token)</td>
<td>356.42</td>
<td>541.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Length (type)</td>
<td>175.64</td>
<td>243.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Length (family)</td>
<td>150.64</td>
<td>201.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note 1. N1 = Number of TOEFL testees (i.e., the advanced EFL learners), N2 = Number of native English speaking students, TOEFL = sample TOEFL essays, Native = native British and American university essays

Data Analysis

The study has obtained the descriptive statistics of the two groups’ root words, inflected words and derived words to see whether there are any differences between them in using different morphologically defined words, and performed an independent sample T-test on the means of the two groups’ root words, inflected words and derived words respective to justify whether the differences are statistically significant.

Results

This section introduces the results of comparing the two groups’ root words, inflected words, and derived words, respectively.

Root Words

The descriptive statistics of root words for the two groups are in Table three:

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of root words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>42.57</td>
<td>70.98</td>
<td>58.65</td>
<td>5.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>38.17</td>
<td>64.44</td>
<td>52.39</td>
<td>4.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Valid N (listwise) 176

Note: SD = Std. Deviation

As illustrated in Table three, on average, the root words (counted in type) used by native English university students account for 38.17% of the whole composition. In comparison, TOEFL writers used 42.57%, which is much greater than the former. The study has conducted an independent
sample T-test on the difference t see whether it has reached a statistically significant level, and the results are in Table four:

Table 4. Comparison of TOEFL testees (n = 318) and native students (n = 176) on their root word usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Root words</td>
<td>13.48</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1.61</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL</td>
<td>58.65</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>52.39</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table four shows a statistically significant difference between TOEFL testees and native English students in their use of root words in compositions, $t(492) = 13.48, p = .000, d = 1.61$. TOEFL testees (M = 58.65) use a more significant percentage of root words in writing than native English students (M = 52.39), and the effect size is 1.6, which is smaller than the typical size for effects in the behavioral sciences. It indicates that TOEFL writers employed a statistically significantly more significant percentage of root words in writing than native English students.

**Inflected Words**

The study has also calculated the descriptive statistics of inflected words, i.e., the percentage of inflected words among the whole composition (counted by type), and the results are in Table five as follows:

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of inflected words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>11.19</td>
<td>35.58</td>
<td>24.57</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>18.51</td>
<td>36.36</td>
<td>27.24</td>
<td>3.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: SD = Std. Deviation

As exposed in Table five, the mean percentage of inflected words (counted in type) used by native English university students is 36.36% of the whole composition, very near to TOEFL writers’ 35.58%. The study has conducted an independent sample T-test to see whether the difference is statistically significant, whose results are in Table six:

Table 6. Comparison between TOEFL testees (n = 318) and native students (n = 176) on their inflected word usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inflected words</td>
<td>-7.58</td>
<td>427.72</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL</td>
<td>24.57</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>27.24</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$^a$ The t and df were adjusted because variances were not equal.

The results in Table six suggest that the difference between the two groups in using inflected words is statistically significant, $t(427.72) = -7.58, p=.000, d = -0.45$. It means that TOEFL writers (M = 24.57) use a significantly lower percentage of inflected words than native English students (M = 27.24).
24.57) have used a much smaller percentage of inflected words in writing than native English students (M = 27.27), and the effect size is -0.45, which is near to medium size for effects in the behavioral sciences.

**Derived Words**

The study has obtained the descriptive statistics of derived words, i.e., the percentage of derived words among the whole composition (counted in type), which are shown in Table seven as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>24.53</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>2.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>7.92</td>
<td>23.28</td>
<td>14.22</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valid N (listwise)</td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in the descriptive statistics in Table seven, the mean percentage of derived words (counted in type) in native English university students’ writings is 14.22% of the whole composition. In companion, that of TOEFL writers is 12.90%, very near the former. The study has conducted an independent sample T-test to check whether the difference is statistically significant, and the results are in Table eight:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derived words</td>
<td>12.90</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>-4.55</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOEFL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>14.22</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table eight shows that the difference between the two groups in the use of derived words is statistically significant, $t(492) = -4.55$, $p = .000$, $d = -0.18$, which suggests that advanced EFL writers (n = 318) have employed a smaller percentage of derived words in writing than native English students (n = 176). The effect size $d$ is -0.18, which is small for effects in the behavioral sciences.

**Discussion**

The study shows that TOEFL writers have used a much more significant percentage of root words in writing but a smaller percentage of both inflected and derived words than native English learners.

At first appearance, it may indicate TOEFL writers have mastered a more significant number of root words for production. We may further extrapolate that these high-proficiency EFL learners have a more excellent vocabulary. In contrast, since native English learners have used fewer root words, they certainly have a smaller vocabulary. However, if taking it a second thought, things may be more complex, and the truth may be contrary since language users tend to select words for use in a completely different way for daily oral communication and writing.

In daily communication with a limitation in time, speakers usually try to select simple words and use them repeatedly so that listeners can catch what they are saying more easily. Without a doubt, simpler high-frequency words are their first choice; therefore, they choose root words. However, in writing, especially in formal written communication, since the use of words is not limited as in a forced answer task such as a multiple-choice task, but free, a task awarding writers
relatively enough time for consideration and choosing from their storage of words. They tend to choose more formal words to avoid using simple words repeatedly. Thus, those low-frequency words and their variants will be more favorable.

Consequently, since the more advanced writers have more options, they will try to choose more variants of words and more different words to express the exact meaning so that the whole piece looks more complex and colorful. Whereas those green-handed writers, having only a small number of choices for expression, will use words more repeatedly. Thus, their writings seem dull and less variant, with a more significant number of words repeated, especially using more root words.

Looking from the other side, in writing, the diverse use of words generally indicates the more significant number of writers’ productive vocabulary, the principle followed by those scholars advocating the use of context-dependent measures in studies related to L2 productive vocabulary, e.g., Laufer (1994), Laufer, Nation (1995), etc. Therefore, in this study, TOEFL writers’ option of a more significant number of root words may indicate they have a significant amount of root words sources on the one hand and also that they have been learning words primarily by rote recitation item by item, rather than by way of inflection and derivation or other associations. Therefore, their vocabulary usually consists of root words available. Another reason may be that they avoid using more complex words, including morphologically complex words, for fear of being faulty since they have no confidence in using them, which is an intentional simplification (Blum and Levenston, 1978).

In fact, in English, root words account for a large part of low-frequency words, and the mono-syllabic ones will decline in number with the increase of Greeco-Latin words and with the decrease of word frequency levels (Carr, Owen, and Schaeffer, 1942; Oldfather, 1940, as cited in Bellomo, 2009). Complex words from the Greeco-Latin source account for about two-thirds of the English vocabulary (Carr, Owen, & Schaeffer, 1942). Proficient language learners should be able to use more complex words rather than root words.

EFL learners’ words are usually monotonous and lack variation, especially under forced conditions, e.g., sitting on a test, which results in a more significant percentage of root words. In contrast, native English learners may have a rich source of root words and, at the same time, rich resources of other words, e.g., derived words and infected words, etc., embodied in significantly greater percentages of inflected and derived words in their writings. It may also be because that they have intentionally tried to avoid repeatedly using too many root words by resorting to complex morphological words, e.g., more inflected and primarily derived words, making their writing more attractive. In brief, advanced writers can use a greater variety of words rather than repeat those usually used words.

Conclusion

The study shows that TOEFL writers have used much more root words in writing, but fewer inflected and derived words than native English learners. However, it does not necessarily suggest they have a more extensive productive vocabulary than native English learners. On the contrary, their more significant number of root words and a smaller number of inflected words and especially derived words may indicate what direction they should strive for in developing a second language productive vocabulary. They should not depend on the mechanical recitation of words one after another as the only way for vocabulary acquisition but consider associations among words in different aspects. Word knowledge includes lexical breadth, i.e., the number of words, and lexical
depth, i.e., the rich information about word use. In language teaching, teachers should also try to raise learners’ morphological awareness and supply language learners with a complete picture of word knowledge so that language learners would have a master of comprehensive information on word usage, including morphological information about words’ context.

Limitations and Directions for Future Studies
Though the study has arrived at some conclusions, they can only be tentative but not conclusive statements on second language acquisition. They deserve further testing for the following reasons.

Firstly, the subjects involved in the study are not randomly selected, which may alleviate their representativeness. On the one hand, the study has chosen Advance EFL learners for their full marks in their TOEFL writing test, which may not ensure they are all high-proficiency EFL learners since some students may be more robust in writing but weaker in other language skills. On the other hand, the selection of native English learners was made by the compiler of LOCNESS, probably by recruiting volunteers, and so they may be of greater idiosyncrasy but less native English learners’ shared properties. To assess language learners’ actual ability, the participants should better be from a broader scope in living places, educational levels, majors, etc. In a word, the more heterogeneous, the better.

Secondly, the essays of the two groups are on different topics, which may have also undermined the credibility of the conclusions since different topics (Mu and He, 2006) and, especially, different styles (Bao, 2010; Johansson, 2008) of writing may have the potentiality of influencing word using. Thus, in future studies, the writing styles of different times must be the same, and the topics for writings in comparison should be at least highly relevant.

Thirdly, for the limitation of the current technology, beyond the three kinds of morphological words investigated in this study, the other type of morphological words cannot be extracted and thus have yet to be studied, i.e., compound words. Such words are as common and vital in EFL learners’ vocabulary repository as the other three and deserve to be studied. In fact, in the not-in-the-list part of the results of Rang BNC, a large proportion are compound words. In the future, if there were any breakthrough in technology to consider compounds, the analysis would be more accurate.

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References


Multilingual Practices and Trans-Language Methods in Teaching English

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Abstract

The study investigates trans-language methods in teaching English. The research examines multilingual practices in the Ukrainian context from sociocultural and multimodal perspectives. Also, it is a desire to know how trans-language techniques can effectively enhance language acquisition. The data came from the Program of English Language Profile conducted in two Ukrainian Universities, aimed at giving students in the bachelor’s programs the opportunity to reinforce their multilingual and intercultural competencies in a second foreign language (English) within the first semester of 2021. The study analyzes the audio recording of students’ and teachers’ multilingual practices, questionnaires on students’ attitudes toward trans-language, and qualitative interviews with teachers. Results show how multilingual resources may facilitate intercultural communication and language development. The findings emphasize the importance of building natural multilingualism and making it a resource, strategy, and goal of teaching English. This study provides practical suggestions and techniques on how universities can adapt to formal teaching environments. Implementations show that trans-language processes become a set of multilingual practices whereby language teachers build on and use their students’ linguistic resources and background knowledge to convey meaningful content. This research develops ‘trans-language’ as an educational and linguistic concept and gives educators the ground to think critically about the advantages and limitations of adopting a multilingual approach.

Keywords: multilingualism, multilingual practices, teaching English, translinguaging, trans-language methods

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Multilingual Practices and Trans-Language Methods

Solodka, Moroz, Filippyeva & Maystrenko

Introduction

Multilingual practices have become very popular. Multilingualism, translingual, and interlingual are theoretical terms defining language competencies as integrated and contextualized conceptualizations.

Students’ linguistic needs in a multilingual context are imperative for success in teaching English. Universities around the world create programs to reinforce multilingual practices and strategies of trans-language to achieve intercultural competencies.

Trans-language as a concept shifts focus from the structural analysis of the language to what people do with it in their everyday lives. Oliva, Donato, and Ricciardelli (2020) describe it as “the unmitigated desire for language and the desire to ensure that future generations experience as many languages as possible” (p.178). This idea also helps to rethink bilingualism as the norm and adopts beliefs about the language that multilingual practices are at the center of investigation and teaching.

Translanguaging refers to a communicative function of receiving input in one language and giving output in another. It allows bilingual learners to use their home language and develop positive experiences. The approach presents an opportunity to understand the speaker’s worldview in their plurality and advance pedagogy based on language practices. There is a need for systematic inquiry into multilingual practices to establish how language varieties have permeated into higher education classroom interaction.

The study aims to investigate the effectiveness of multilingual practices in teaching English.

The research gives educators the ground on how to use the trans-lingual approach and trans-lingual methods in the classroom.

The research attempts to answer the main research question:

How can using multilingual practices and trans-language techniques effectively enhance acquisition of English as a second language?

It also has the following sub-questions:

1. What multilingual practices and trans-language techniques do the teachers use?
2. Do the teachers use trans-language techniques to facilitate the students’ language learning?
3. Can trans-language procedures facilitate intercultural communication?

The research objectives of the study:

1. To determine how multilingual practices are present in teaching English.
2. To investigate how teachers create a learning environment using trans-language techniques in multilingual classes.
3. To explore possible recommendations for strategically using multilingual resources and multimodalities in the intercultural context.

Literature Review

The definition of translanguaging

The history of translanguaging relates to the field of multilingual practices. Williams (1996) used this term first. Baker (2006) stated that translanguaging in the classroom is the input (reading or listening) which tends to be in one language, and the output (speaking or writing) in another one, and this is systematically varied. Williams (1996), Lewis, Jones, Baker (2012), and
Beres (2015) found that translanguaging works well as a teaching strategy in high school to develop both languages successfully. Trans-language strategy results in effective content learning. Translanguaging has established a new paradigm for the study of language acquisition, which has engendered a highly nuanced terrain for innovative research (Oliva, Donato, & Ricciardelli, 2020).

Garcia and Wei (2014) explained the concept of trans-language as the multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage to make sense of their bilingual worlds. Their definition is rather broad and emphasizes existing bilingual practices. Researchers argue that a language is a continuous process that only exists as language or translanguaging. The process shapes people as they interact in specific social, cultural, and political contexts. The emphasis -ing purposefully shifts the focus away from discrete languages and does the act of meaning-making central. Garcia (2009; 2011) refers to translanguaging the active invention of new realities through social action.

Translanguaging means different things for different researchers in other contexts. Creese and Blackledge (2010) used this term for flexible bilingual pedagogy. A pedagogical approach adopted this term to enhance teaching indexes of the speakers’ shifting multilingual and multicultural identities.

Daryai-Hansen, Barfod, and Schward (2017) distinguished between languaging and translanguaging: languaging is the everyday communication practice where individuals transcend norms and use them to achieve interactional and social aims.

Canagarajah (2011; 2014) noted that current classroom studies show that translanguaging is a naturally occurring phenomenon for multilingual students.

Wei (2011; 2022) described trans-language practices as creative, critical, and flexible strategies in a multilingual context. The trans-language practices combine various linguistic structures and systems, including different modalities (speaking, writing, listening, and reading). Translanguaging includes the full range of linguistic performance of multilingual language users for purposes that transcend the combination of structures, the alternation between systems, the transmission of information, and the representation of values, identities, and relationships.

Mazak (2016) explained trans-language practices as transformative, which create a social space for the multilingual language user by bringing together different dimensions of learners’ personal history, experience, and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, cognitive and physical capacity into one coordinated and meaningful performance, and making it into a lived experience. Wei (2011) calls this space ‘translanguaging space.’

Wei (2011) looked further at the creativity and criticality of multilingual speakers, using a psychological, linguistic notion of ‘languaging,’ which refers to the process of using the language to gain knowledge, make sense, articulate one’s thoughts, and communicate using it. For Wei (2011), trans-language practices involve the learners making strategic situation-specific choices about the language systems they use to achieve a communicative goal. The techniques can limit the transformative and critical occupation of language spaces inherent in multilingual classrooms.

Sayer (2013) referred to trans-language as a method, a descriptive label for language practices, and an analytical tool.

Makalela (2014) and Poudei (2019) related trans-language practices to code-switching. Code-mixing is the use of code from one language in another in the course of using it in communication. Unlike code-switching, translanguaging (code-mixing) does not refer to the use of two separate languages or the shift of a language code to the other one (Hornberger & Link, 2012). In translanguaging, speakers select language features and soft assemble their language
practices to fit their communicative needs (Garcia & Wei, 2014). That code-switching, on the one hand, often carries language-centered connotations of language interference and language transfer, which has a monolingual orientation where languages have different codes. Translanguaging, on the other hand, shifts the lens from a cross-linguistic influence to how multilingual speakers intermingle linguistic features assigned to a particular language or variety (Hornberger & Link, 2012). In other words, code-switching is language-centered and treats language systems as discrete units. Translanguaging is speaker-centred, assumes unitary language systems, and shows the interdependence of language systems (Makalela, 2017).

Zirbes (2014) stated that using of any language, that the learners know is not only unavoidable as a cognitive function but is a valuable tool in promoting language awareness. Students can transform restrictive monolingual landscapes. Creese and Blackledge (2010) reported that the universities which have accepted multilingual practices are successful in their language teaching programs.

Wei (2022) argued that translanguaging is a methodology offering a new conceptual framework that promotes some significant analytical shifts: shift away from the language as abstract code to meaning- and sense-making.

Cenoz, Leonet, and Gorter (2022) referred to pedagogical translanguaging as instructional strategies integrating two or more languages. ‘The boundaries between languages are soft and fluent, and students should benefit from being multilingual by using resources from their whole linguistic repertoire’ (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022, p. 343).

Mazak and Carroll (2016) saw translanguaging as follows:

1. Translanguaging is a language ideology that takes bilingualism as the norm.
2. Translanguaging is a theory of bilingualism based on lived bilingual experience. Bilingual students possess an integrated repertoire of languaging practices from which they draw as they navigate their everyday bilingual worlds.
3. Translanguaging is a pedagogical stance that teachers and students take that allows them to draw on all their linguistic and semiotic resources as they teach and learn both language and content material in classrooms.
4. Translanguaging is a set of practices that is not only code-switching but includes language practices that draw on an individual linguistic and semiotic repertoire.
5. Translanguaging is transformational and changes the world as it continually invents and reinvents language practices in a perpetual meaning-making process. Implementing of these practices transforms not only our traditional notions of languages but also the lives of bilinguals.

Translanguaging Research

Makalela (2014; 2017) presented research on translanguaging practices in South African institutions of higher learning. He concluded that adopting a translanguaging approach can increase students’ linguistic repertoires and assume multilingual identities. Makalela used this approach as the methodology that is linguistically and culturally transformative. Multilingual practices transform the classroom space into a microcosm of societal multilingualism. It constantly affirms of linguistic and cultural communities where one language is incomplete without the other. Results of his research show that there is both a vertical and a horizontal input-output exchange in more than two languages in either direction. Therefore, using translanguaging discourse practices remains an innovative step toward a fully-fledged multilingual return.
Daryai-Hansen et al., (2017) delivered the research at Roskilde University in Denmark. Researchers created the explicitly designed program to reinforce students’ multilingual and intercultural competencies using trans-language strategies to achieve interactional and social aims. Students in this program worked with other students in their fields on projects using English, French, German, or Spanish. The authors emphasize that this program challenges the prevailing monolingual ideology of universities in Denmark and uses multilingual practices to meet language and content learning goals. Students and teachers implement and acknowledge trans-language methods integrating other foreign languages, primarily the students’ first language but also English. Daryai-Hansen et al., (2017) proved the importance of implementing multilingual tools as a resource, method, and strategy inside and outside the foreign language classroom.

Mazak, Mendoza, and Mangonez (2017) showed the multilingual practices of three professors at an officially bilingual university in Puerto Rico. They considered that translanguaging developed language practices organically, based on professors’ keen understanding of students’ sociolinguistic, cultural, and historical backgrounds. Teachers used an instructional strategy to link classroom participants between the social, bicultural, and linguistic domains of their lives (Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012). Trans-language techniques were helpful tools for professors to employ content and provide students with opportunities to expand their linguistic, academic, and meaning-making repertoires.

The research of He, Lai, and Lin (2017), based on the Chinese context, examined the interplay of multilingual practices to integrate intercultural semiotic resources. It showed how strategic use of multilingual resources and multimodalities of intercultural and multilingual context facilitated intercultural communication and language-integrated learning (CLIL) context.

Groff (2017) presented interlanguage in an Indian context, based on developing natural multilingualism and positive attitudes to speech variations in multilingual repertoires.

Carroll and van den Hoven (2017) explored multilingual teaching practices in UAE. They state that translanguaging opens the door for a scenario in which bilingual teachers can use their understanding of students’ L1 to make their teaching comprehensible. The authors advocate for increasing the usage of Arabic in English-medium courses.

Doiz and Lasagabaster (2017) showed the professor’s beliefs about trans-language practices in English-medium classrooms at the University of Basque Country. They concluded that teachers should critically consider trans-language techniques for students in particular contexts with specific aims.

The analysis of multilingual practices reveals the importance of research in the context of the impact of translanguaging on multilingual language acquisition.

**Methods**

This research is explanatory, qualitative, and interpretative. It had some specific goals: to determine the extent to which multilingual practices are present in teaching English; to investigate how teachers create learning environments using multilingual practices and translanguaging techniques in multilingual classes; to explore possible recommendations for strategic use of multilingual resources and multimodalities in the intercultural context. To achieve these goals, researchers used multiple methods for data collection: 1) the audio record of students’ and teachers’ multilingual practices; 2) questionnaires on students’ attitudes toward multilingual practices; 3) qualitative interviews with teachers.
Participants

The researchers conducted the study at V. O. Sukhomlynskyi National University of Mykolaiv (Ukraine) and Odesa National Polytechnic University (Ukraine) in 2021.

The participants comprised 62 bachelor-level students and eight teachers of English who participated in the Program of English Language Profile conducted in two Ukrainian Universities in 2021.

Research Instruments

The researchers explored the issues relevant to the language through observations and interviews. It also included discussions about language attitudes and teaching methods. The investigation considered contextual factors in the inductive analysis process based on a questionnaire addressing language use in the university classroom. A questionnaire was distributed digitally to faculty members. It included descriptive, interpretative, predictive, and attitude-based questions.

Researchers created questionnaires for teachers and students.

Table 1. The questionnaire for teachers’ interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What do you think of L1 (mother tongue) teaching and learning L2 and L3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(second and third languages)?</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Should teaching English be monolingual?</td>
<td>Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>How do you understand multilingual practices?</td>
<td>Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Do you use translanguaging in teaching English?</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>What kind of multilingual practices do you use?</td>
<td>Q5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>How to facilitate L2 learning with the help of trans-language methods?</td>
<td>Q6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>What kind of environment should the teachers create in multilingual classes?</td>
<td>Q7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>What is the extent to which multilingual practices are present in teaching English?</td>
<td>Q8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Your recommendations to scaffold multilingual practices</td>
<td>Q9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The questionnaire for students’ interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Coding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Should teaching and learning English be monolingual?</td>
<td>Q1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Does your teacher use the mother tongue in teaching English?</td>
<td>Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>What languages do you use during the lesson: English, German, Ukrainian or Russian?</td>
<td>Q3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>What do you think about using all the languages you know to learn English?</td>
<td>Q4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Is it necessary to use other languages when you study English?</td>
<td>Q5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>What languages should teachers and students use?</td>
<td>Q6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>What do you think about mixing languages?</td>
<td>Q7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Does it make your understanding better?</td>
<td>Q8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Does it help better communication?</td>
<td>Q9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Does it encourage you to speak English more?</td>
<td>Q10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>What is your attitude to multilingual practices?</td>
<td>Q11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Does it motivate you to continue the learning process?</td>
<td>Q12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>What kind of multilingual practices of teachers do you like the most?</td>
<td>Q13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>What multilingual practices would you use on all levels of learning English?</td>
<td>Q14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>What multilingual experience would you use as a future English teacher?</td>
<td>Q15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Procedures

In the autumn of 2021, the Department of German Philology and Translation of V. O. Sukhomlynskyi National University of Mykolaiv (Ukraine) initiated the Program of English language profile, which seeks to give students in the bachelor’s programs the opportunity to reinforce their multilingual and intercultural competencies in a second foreign language (English). This program aims to develop students’ capacity to function in a transnational and multilingual context. The content was inspired by the CLIL approach, integrating content learning and language learning, focusing on the dimensions: the language of learning, the language for learning, and the language through learning (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). The program required 40 hours per semester. Teachers also encouraged students to work independently with their profile language, linking the program to project work. Learners designed language profiles for and benefited from the specific academic context. Students learned to find relevant theoretical, methodological, or empirical literature for their work in their profile language. Language profiles’ content was multifaceted and included the following: knowledge of significant theoretical perspectives in humanities and social sciences, knowledge about English-speaking countries, skills to talk about English and culture, analysis, and compare specific linguistic and cultural phenomena. It also included general study skills such as reading, information searching, and communication strategies. Students presented and discussed this content with teachers at evaluation seminars.

Results

Attitudes towards Multilingual Practices

Students’ evaluation of multilingual practices

In the following analysis, we discuss students’ attitudes toward multilingual practices in language teaching and learning by focusing on students’ questionnaires filled out in the fall of 2021 by students who participated in English language profile evaluation seminars. Researchers collected 15 evaluation questions (Q1–Q15).

The approach of Daryai-Hansen et al., (2017) was the ground for the analysis and included the following levels:

1. Nano level - the development of individual multilingualism as the center of language profile;
2. Meso level – internationalization strategy;
3. Micro level – the implementation of the language profiles by teachers.

The data show that students’ overall impression of implemented multilingual practices is positive. Learners appreciated that the language profile allowed them to study English in the Ukrainian university context at the meso level. Students emphasized that the English language profile provided a learning environment where they had a chance to use language practices: having the possibility to speak “freely” (Q7) and “impulsively” (Q9) and “not overthink before speaking” (Q10). They developed the “desire” (Q12) and “courage” (Q10) to talk in English and to help each other (Q9), and they became motivated to continue their learning process (Q12).

In the evaluation questionnaire in which the students elaborated on their attitudes toward multilingual practices, two questions, in particular, focused on translanguaging within the language profile. Students had to reflect on their multilingual practice (Q2) and to self-evaluate their multilingual practices (Q3 – Q5). They discussed the development of language profiles using the Q6 and the Q13–Q14.
The data reflect substantial individual differences (nano-level). There is a discrepancy between the student’s experiences with language profiles’ multilingual practices, on the one hand, and their ideological construction of “good” language learning and language use, on the other.

Twenty-five students knew their multilingual practices in the language profile classes and the evaluation seminars. Most students used English, Ukrainian, and other languages they know to understand the content of learning (Q4, Q8). The ability to mix languages supported communication. Learners emphasized that they appreciated multilingual practices.

Two students characterized multilingual methods as “liberating” (Q11) and emphasized that these practices gave them the courage to continue learning the second language. The evaluations of five students reflected strong monolingual norms (Q1). The learners used multilingual practices but preferred to use only English exclusively in the future (Q14).

Students shared recommendations for the development of language profiles (micro level). They felt optimistic about the existing multilingual practice and described different aspects of the trans-language approach. The learners experienced these practices as a possibility to acknowledge linguistic competencies and implement differentiated instructions when switching the language codes.

The data reflect multilingual practices from the student’s perspective as a transitory phenomenon, a kind of interlanguage stage (Q14).

In discussion with students-future teachers of English (Q15), the researchers transitioned to the question of what methods they would use to teach English, keeping in mind the multilingual experience. Most students answered they would use their mother tongue and don’t mind vocal support in Ukrainian or Russian. Few students supported the idea: “Teachers should teach English only in English.” Talking about preferred teaching methods, many students agreed that supporting a known language would be necessary for teaching English. They were grappling with the tension between exposure to oral English and sufficient comprehensible instructions. The demand for English was strong, and the need for mother tongue support was also vital.

Qualitative interviews with eight English teachers became the base for analyzing the teachers’ attitudes toward multilingual practices. Depending on the teachers’ language strategies, they used English, German, French, and Ukrainian (or Russian) in teaching. Teacher 1 (T1) said that she mixed the languages depending on the student’s needs. If an English text was complex, students read it in English and drew out understanding in Ukrainian or Russian but talked about the text primarily in English.

T2 created an English-learning setting and encouraged multilingual practices, referring to the teacher as a co-learner of Ukrainian as their mother tongue. T3 represents this practice beyond monolingual norms as fluent language use, which does not imply understanding problems.

T4 and T5 emphasized that the language profiles’ primary objective is to enhance the student’s language skills in English. In this case, Ukrainian became an additional language in the learning process. The learners could use multiple languages (German, French, Ukrainian, and Russian). Ukrainian appeared in English classes, Russian in Ukrainian-language classes, French, German, and Latin in English-medium classes. The other teachers (T6-T8) noticed that multilingual practices observed at the university were fluid. They admitted that using many languages in a classroom was a pedagogical goal. Participants used Ukrainian to ensure understanding of English learning content and other foreign languages for facilitating discussion.
All the teachers saw it as an advantage to explore all available language resources and defined trans-language methods as a helpful tool for teaching English.

The teachers emphasized that this experimental environment is an essential aspect of multilingual practices. They created a space where the students could try their language skills and where they learn how to manage several languages in communication. It helped to encourage multilingual practices and support the legitimacy of first-language use.

The teacher discussion showed language attitudes and trans-language teaching methods used in multilingual practices to help students understand the learning content. They expressed the importance of mother tongue support in learning English. The choice of additional languages wares determined by what languages most students would grasp the particular idea they wanted to put across. These teachers described using various languages in the same event as valuable and pragmatic. It saved time and cut cultural barriers for students. Students could understand what they learn better.

Teachers did not need to master all the languages brought to class by students. They encouraged students to explore their ideas through the linguistic resources they possessed.

Implementing trans-language methods encouraged learners to think in at least two languages and explicitly draw comparisons and contrast ideas represented through the languages. Translanguaging was not a direct reproduction of linguistic forms but a development of meaning and overlapping of meaning units across several languages of writing and speaking.

**Discussion**

This research answers the central question of whether using multilingual practices and trans-language techniques can effectively enhance language teachers’ acquisition of English as a second language. It is also an attempt to examine what kind of multilingual practices and trans-language techniques the teachers use and how they facilitate the students’ language learning in intercultural communication.

The findings of this research echo multilingual patterns in previous literature; namely, translanguaging, as Canagarajah (2011) noted, is the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system.

The solutions of the study revealed positive experiences of adopting multilingual practices which oriented to the simultaneous use of different languages in the same lesson. Trans-language methods break boundaries between the target language and linguistic repertoires that students bring to class. Trans-language techniques to master English are at the core of the trans-language approach (or translanguaging), which goes beyond the exchange of the language of input and another of output as in the original conceptual framing by Williams (1996) and Baker (2015). The trans-language approach can be beneficial when learners use more than two languages as normal multilingual pathways (Garsia & Wei, 2014).

The research is in agreement findings of Blommaert and Rampton (2010) and shows that IFL teachers, under the auspices of maintaining bilingual education, always encourage monolingual classroom practices. Garcia and Wei (2014) concluded that teaching English is to take a more complex account of language use and match multilingual spaces.

One of the study’s findings is that multilingual practices provide students with multilingual spaces to transform personal identities. Students gravitated from perceiving themselves as
belonging to a particular language group to viewing themselves as users of languages that extend beyond discrete language boundaries.

Outcomes gave the reason to conceptualize classroom spaces like microcosms of societal multilingualism, as Hornberger and Link (2012), Wei (2022), and Makalela (2017) mentioned too. The results proved the validation of trans-language methods. The language experiences of students in the class were not different from their linguistic behaviors outside of class. Their performances of mixing languages showed that the boundaries between traditional language labels such as home language and mother tongue are fluid.

Translanguaging facilitates breakaways from artificial language boundaries and reconnection with L1 and L2 worldviews as a dynamic continuum of social and linguistic resources to enhance knowledge transmission.

This research supports the view of Tarnopolsky and Goodman (2014) that the studies of multilingual practices offer insights into the possibilities afforded by translanguaging in teaching English.

The multilingual communicative approach emphasizes what students do with languages. It offered an open-ended space to react to grammatical items emerging in situated language use to determine whether the language error would impede mutual comprehension. EFL teachers can transform monolingual practices into multilingual spaces.

The term translanguaging is transformational as it attests to the constant evolution of language practices and sees these practices as normal and natural. This research agrees with Cenoz and Gorter (2022), and Cenoz, Leonet, and Gorter (2022) that teachers who use trans-language methods as pedagogical practices index other cultural meanings, depending on the participants’ linguistic and cultural backgrounds. EFL teachers encourage students to use English, help them overcome language-related confusion about content in multilingual space, keep them moving forward in learning, and develop linguistic repertoires.

While many researchers document the usefulness and authentic nature of multilingual practices, a critique of the term and its implications is necessary (Carroll, 2017). The question remains: How to make this practice effective for students? Translanguaging directly from one language to another without strategies may do more harm than good. A de facto result of the lack of planning for the transitions in media of instructions terms “unplanned simultaneous bilingual education.” Khubchandani (2008) admits the importance of multilingual practice and calls for better planning for the transition in media of teaching to develop “positive attitudes to speech variations in multilingual repertoires.” The practitioners should use translanguaging strategically for effective communication (Mohanty, Panda & Pal, 2010) and determine which methods are the most effective.

The researchers defined the following teachers’ scaffolding strategies in multilingual practices:

1. Multilingual lexical contrasts – explicit attention to vocabulary in three to five languages.
2. Use of more than one reading-comprehension material: students read or listen to texts in one language and respond to questions in a different language, and vice versa.
3. Students compare and contrast various cultural contrasts in multiple languages, identify everyday situations bilingually, and give explanations in multi-languages (English, mother tongue, and other languages).
Conclusion

The study investigated the effectiveness of multilingual practices and trans-language methods in teaching English. It attempted to explore how multilingual practices exist within teaching English contexts. The results justified that strategic use of multilingual resources in the intercultural context may facilitate intercultural communication. Multilingual practices incorporate students’ communicative repertoires as resources for learning and intercultural communication. It gave the practitioners the ground to think critically about the advantages and limitations of adopting a trans-language approach. Findings emphasize the importance of respecting and building natural multilingualism and making multilingualism a resource, strategy, and goal. More research is necessary regarding multilingual practices’ impact on language acquisition: the purpose of using trans-language methods when switching a code and the types of modalities that occurred.

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References


Bottom-up Processing to Help Learners with Decoding: Planning, Implementing, and Reflecting on a Lesson

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Abstract
The researcher carried out the action research to experiment and experience the effectiveness of applying the theoretical aspects of bottom-up processing to help learners with decoding in listening lessons. The experimental lesson included six adult intermediate students (n = 6) from different backgrounds at an English language teaching professional development training undertaken at International House, Bangkok, Thailand in July 2021. The researcher planned the lessons after the literature review on bottom-up processing and surveying students’ needs and interests. The pre-lesson preparation included collecting the group profile, setting lesson aims and learning outcomes, analyzing the target language assuming learners’ existing knowledge, anticipating problems and solutions, planning the lesson procedures with appropriate teaching, and learning materials. and considering the timetable fit. The study aimed to find out the effectiveness of a listening lesson focused on bottom-up processing through self-reflection, and feedback from the observer, co-teachers, and students. The study was largely based on the collection of qualitative data through means of the researcher's post-lesson reflection, and feedback from the observation, co-teachers, and students, which functioned as research tools in the study. The data analysis found that bottom-up processing was learner-engaging and beneficial to students’ positive perception of improving their listening skills. In addition, they provided the researcher with insights into the steps of planning and administering a listening lesson focused on bottom-up processing identifying areas of achievement and improvement.

Keywords: Bottom-up processing, decoding, lesson plan, listening, planning, implementing, reflecting

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Introduction

The literature review and the researcher’s observation and experience have prompted this study to identify the gap in the teaching and learning process of listening skills in terms of bottom-up processing for decoding. Though learners are made aware of the cognitive aspects of top-down processing for facilitating listening, they are less aware of or unaware of the importance of Bottom-up Processing (BUP). In addition, the researcher and his colleagues have not conducted a lesson fully dedicated to making learners aware of the importance of bottom-up processing in listening comprehension. MacDonald (2020) and Roberts (2012) argue that the conventional listening lesson emphasizes much on the product rather than the process; while both top-down and bottom-up processing work in real-life listening, traditional listening lessons attend the former, and unattend the latter. Generally, scholars perceive that listening skills are given less importance than other skills in terms of classroom instructions because they think teaching different listening strategies including bottom-up processing which requires more strenuous efforts (Fachriza, Mafrudloh, Dipta, Virgiyanti, Nuraini & Nadifa, 2022; Al-Nafisah, 2019). Therefore, the limited focus on bottom-up processing in conventional listening lessons, as perceived by the researcher, hampered learners’ listening proficiency (Jose, 2022).

Furthermore, the lack of learner training in bottom-up processing for decoding, some learners’ inability to decode word boundaries in fast speech, the less emphasis on colloquial fast speech expression in textbooks, and students’ limited exposure to English spelling and pronunciation are often considered as linguistic and learning challenges related to bottom-up processing (Jose, 2022). The lack of effective practical application of BUP for decoding in listening skills, and its implication, as found by the researcher, therefore, caused a research gap in the area. The researcher, hence, designed this study to earn first-hand experience and insights in designing, implementing and reflecting on a lesson focusing on BUP for decoding in listening. In this context along with the researcher’s practical learning and the information derived from the review of the literature confirmed that the strategy of bottom-up processing is less emphasized in ELT, and this gap led to this study of planning, implementing and reflecting on the lesson to create awareness of bottom-up processing for decoding promoting listening comprehension among EFL/ESL teachers and students, and this aims to find out the important elements of the researcher’s reflection on the lesson and the perceptions of the lesson observer, the co-teachers, and students.

The objective of this experimental research is to understand the effectiveness of BUP in an ESL/EFL lesson in terms of planning, designing, and implementing it. This realization of the objective is based on the researcher’s self-reflection and evaluation, the observer’s feedback, and co-teachers’ and students’ perceptions of the lesson.

Based on the objective, the following research questions were formed.
1. What are the researcher’s reflections on the practical lesson?
2. What are the lesson observer, the co-teachers, and the student’s perceptions of the lesson?

Literature Review

The cognitive process of listening analyses and organizes phonemes into patterns that learners interpret and understand through inferences through bottom-up and top-down processing (“Listening Skills”, n.d.). Top-down processing, commonly practiced in listening skills, can be defined as cognitive processing in which learners predict or guess meanings of new information or words using their previous or background knowledge (Morley, n.d.). For instance, learners use the knowledge of their native country to understand spoken explanations about others’ countries;
Bottom-up Processing to Help Learners with Decoding

Jose

this demonstrates their ability to recall previous information, that is collected and stored from their experiences, to decode the meaning of what they listen to (Utomo & Sulistyowati, 2022).

Bottom-up Processing

In contrast to top-down processing, bottom-up processing is defined as learners’ mental ability to know information by processing and identifying linguistic phonemes without the help of schemata or background knowledge (Field, 1999). According to Utomo and Sulistyowati (2022), bottom-up processes refer to learners’ lexical awareness and knowledge of grammatical and syntactical aspects of the language. Studies reveal that students have difficulties in listening because they do not understand some words or phrases spoken and cannot make meanings; bottom-up processing is considered an effective strategy for addressing these listening challenges (Fachriza, et al., 2022). The researcher’s experience and observation inform him that BUP for decoding in teaching listening skills is less emphasized than top-down processing by ELT professionals. Moreover, listeners better comprehend the meaning if they apply their linguistic knowledge to the text or audio that they are listening to, and learners “gain understanding following an order that is available from sounds to word grammatical relations to linguistic meaning” (Fachriza, et al., 2022, p.273). Consequently, students rely on bottom-up processing to focus on the grammatical structure of the speech, word stress and sentences (Brown, 2004).

Richards (2016) mentions that when learners listen, they exploit the pronunciation, the grammatical structure of sentences, and keywords to decode the meaning of the content they listen to. To illustrate, learners understand spoken content referring to their knowledge of verb forms, and the store of vocabulary, and phrases (Bartram, 2016). Regarding learners, compared to L1 learners of English, L2 learners should be acquainted with sounds, stress patterns, and grammatical features that are different from their L1. Siegal and Siegal (2013) wrote that L2 learners required explicit practice for bottom-up processing, while L1 learners can subconsciously accomplish bottom-up cognitive decoding. Roberts (2012) suggested five processes of decoding while listening to fast speech; they are a) identification of phonemes, b) recognizing word boundaries, c) comprehending new words, d) recognizing meaning from sentence stresses, and e) understanding linguistic chunks. In addition, learners in a listening lesson can be provided with the audio transcript to compare their mishearing (MacDonald, 2020).

Regarding the accuracy of learners’ listening comprehension, Nation, and Newton (2009) comment that BUP is vital to decide the accuracy of learners’ linguistically accurate production of speeches and their grasp. In addition, Lynch (2009) reports that weak bottom-up processing encourages learners to depend too much on top-down processing, which may result in wrong guesses affecting their listening skills adversely. Another crucial area of fast speech that calls for BUP is features of connected speech as the pronunciation of a word in fast speech is determined by the sounds of words around it (Roberts, 2012). These connected speech features affect changes in sounds and the production of new phonemes or sounds (“Connected Speech”, n.d.). Furthermore, to practice bottom-up processing, Vargas, and González (2009) suggest three steps of implementation: a) identifying the vocabulary, b) preparing to take notes on a paper and) the audio, and they also encourage teachers to play the audio more than once enabling learners to listen to details, which is the main strategy of bottom-up processing. As reported by Jose (2022), the focal point of bottom-up processing is to make students aware of different features of the connected speech in fast speech such as catenation, intrusion, elision, and assimilation in addition to the pattern of stress and intonation in speeches.
Methodology

An online lesson, in the background of Covid 19 lockdown, was planned, scheduled, and implemented with an aim to facilitate bottom-up processing techniques for listening as part of the researcher’s continued efforts toward professional development training (See Appendix A). The lesson was designed after a satisfactory literature review on BUP. The students, participants in the training program, were intimated about the time of the lesson. Previously, the researcher collected their profile, and learning needs to plan the class to meet their level and requirements (See Appendix B). The observer (a senior Delta course tutor) was intimated and invited to the class, and co-teachers were requested to observe the lesson and give their feedback after the lesson. The observer and the teachers were given the lesson plan. At the end of the lesson, students were given a questionnaire to express their perception of the lesson on different items.

Lesson Planning and Procedures

To answer the research questions, the lesson was planned, and the lesson procedures (See Appendix A) were designed. Various elements of the lesson plan are discussed below.

Overview

An overview of the course, learners, and course focus are summarized below.

Course Overview

The course is run once a week for a month and a half. The learners meet on Saturdays from 4 pm to 5 pm, and three teachers are teaching different skills and language systems. The course covers other areas of language systems and skills. Though course participation is not mandatory for learners, most adult participants with diverse professional experience and academic qualifications attend lessons regularly with a keenness to study English.

Learner Overview

The group consists of a group of 15 learners who can be considered as a mixture of young adults, adults, and middle-aged (eight females and seven males) in the age range of 22 – 48. From the collected data, it is learned that most of them are professionals in different fields except for one, who is a university student. The common feature of the group is that they want to converse in English as much as possible, and they like to work in groups. Generally, all of them like to learn English, and they perceive that listening and speaking in English are paramount for advancing their career and profession. As a teacher, the researcher has felt that most of them need to review and practice various systems and skills to effectively meet their listening and speaking needs. Regarding their L1, learners are natives of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Palestine, Russia, Thailand, Turkey, and Vietnam; their being bilingual is another common feature of the group. The study included only 6 learners who attended every lesson regularly.

Course Focus

Learners are not pursuing any course or examinations specific to English, but all of them want to improve their English proficiency to enhance their careers. On the one hand, some learners wish to travel to English-speaking countries and work with English speakers. On the other hand, some other participants want to read books, watch and play video games in English. The youngest one said that he wanted to learn English to complete his university studies, and the eldest mentioned that she might want to use English for research. Accordingly, the course focuses on
learners’ advancing their general English emphasizing specific areas of language systems and skills that they need more support in the study.

**Individual Profiles and Need Analysis**

Understanding learners and their perceived needs for learning English are essential for the effective planning and delivery of an English language lesson. Teachers can use surveys using a questionnaire, one-on-one interviews, observations, and some formal or informal assessments (Nsouly, 2022, “Getting Started With”, n.d.) to analyse and find learners’ needs. Here the researcher surveyed the participants to collect data to analyse their needs and plan the lesson. Appendix B illustrates learners’ individual profiles and their specific learning needs.

**Lesson Aim**

1. All learners will be made aware of the importance of decoding reduced speech expressions in proficient speakers’ rapid speech in the context of listening to and watching a movie trailer. Meanwhile, some learners may be able to decode fast speech more effectively than others.

**Learning Outcome**

2. Most learners will listen to and decode reduced speech expressions in the movie speech analysis reinforced by some decontextualized examples.

**Language Analysis**

The following summarises the general definition of the language items, and tables one and two illustrate the specific language items and their analysis.

**Reduction**

Reduction or reduced speech refers to the sounds articulated less clearly, deleted or syllables merged into each other, making it difficult for unseasoned English speakers to understand proficient speakers in rapid speech (Warner, n.d.). Moreover, function words in speech are often reduced to a stream of speech.

**Table 2. Language Analysis 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Phonetic Transcription</th>
<th>Fast speech - Reduction focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pirates had infected the seas for generations.</td>
<td>/ˈpɪrəts hɛdɪŋfɪkʃən əd siːz fɔ dʒəʊnərɪfɪns/</td>
<td>Schwa /ə/ Catenation / hɛdɪŋ fɪkʃən/ Elision of /d/ Weak /ðw/ /fə/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So I vowed to eliminate them all.</td>
<td>/səʊ w ʌd/</td>
<td>Intrusive /w/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But then there was this boy</td>
<td>/ðə wɔz ðəz bɔɪ/</td>
<td>Intrusive /w/ Eluding /d/ Catenation /ðəz bɔɪ/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>follow him in</td>
<td>/fəʊləʊ hɪmɪn/</td>
<td>Reduced and weak forms / ðə wɔz / Catenation / hɪmɪn/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He took everything from me</td>
<td>/hi tɔkəvrədʒ frəmɪ/</td>
<td>Catenation / hɪmɪn/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And filled me with</td>
<td>/æn fɪld mə wɪð/</td>
<td>Weak / ən/</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table two describes the first set of language items which would be used to teach schwa /ə/ reduction, elision, catenation and weak /en/, and Table three lists the second set of language items which would be exploited to make learners aware of, and practice fast speech reduction focus introduced in Table one.

Table 3. Language Analysis 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentence</th>
<th>Phonetic Transcription</th>
<th>Fast speech - Reduction focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The dead have taken command of the sea.</td>
<td>/dədəv/</td>
<td>Assimilation /h/ to /s/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/kʌməndə də/</td>
<td>Catenation //kʌməndə də/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They are searching for Pearl, a girl, and a Sparrow</td>
<td>/ðeə/ /fa/</td>
<td>Reduced form /ðəə/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/fə/</td>
<td>Weak form /fə/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have heard stories of a mighty</td>
<td>/aɪv/</td>
<td>Reduced / aɪv/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>/stɔri:zəfə/</td>
<td>Catenation /stɔri:zəfə/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>killed thousands of men...</td>
<td>kild θauɔzənsə mən/</td>
<td>Eluding /d/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catenation /θauɔzənsə/</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Timetable Fit

In previous lessons, teachers delivered lessons on grammar, reading, speaking, and vocabulary. Learners were taught reported speech features, especially back-shifting, in the first class, followed by reading and speaking by respective teachers. While the speaking lesson was focused on turn-taking, the reading lesson emphasized the reading strategies. Also, the form and meaning of causatives in the English language system were taught to the learners. Moreover, the class just before this one dealt with form, meaning, and the use of specific intermediate-level vocabulary as part of the lexis system. In brief, some areas of language system and language skills such as speaking, and reading are covered in previous lessons. The one area that has not been covered yet is listening and writing skills, and this lesson on listening skills fits well in the series meeting learners’ needs to improve listening skills. Furthermore, the need analysis and the observation of learners’ classroom participation demonstrated that they have some difficulty in listening to each other and the teacher in English in discussions. Thus, the timing of the lesson matches well at this point of the course. This lesson, therefore, agrees with the overall course scheme of training intermediate learners of English from receptive skills to productive skills in an integrated framework.

General Lesson Commentary

As stated in the aims, the lesson was generally focused on raising learners’ awareness of the importance of decoding various speech features (stress, intonation, change of sounds, etc.) while listening to proficient speakers’ fast speech. The rationale of teaching the lesson is that decoding skills are seldom given much attention in listening skills, and the literature review has also informed the researcher about the importance of BUP for promoting decoding skills in listening. As for the approach, a Test-Teach-Test (TTT) approach exploiting guided discovery principles (Monroe, 2020) of setting tasks, giving feedback and monitoring was incorporated into the procedure to achieve the lesson aim of making learners aware of the significance of bottom-up processing in listening skills for decoding. TTT provides adult learners (Knowles, 1984) with frequent chances to interact with their peers and teachers, and learn from each other (Garside, 2019). The authentic context of listening to a movie trailer exposed learner to ungraded proficient
speakers’ fast speech, and sourcing such real-life materials are appropriate to facilitate language learning for higher-level learners (Lansford, 2014). In addition, the materials were carefully selected in the context, enabling learners to deal with real-life use of English. In the lesson, the researcher selected a movie trailer from an adventurous English ‘movie to expose learners to fast speech which they mostly lack in the scripted listening situations in textbooks. Regarding learners’ motivation, they were self-motivated to attend, and benefit from English lessons as evidenced by their need analysis. Luke and Justice (2016) report that motivation plays a major role in adult learners’ learning, and it enhances and mediates learning during instructions resulting in further motivation to pursue lifelong learning.

Assumed Knowledge

Based on the familiarity with learners, the researcher assumed the following points which would influence the lesson directly or indirectly.

1. The learners appeared intrinsically motivated to learn and wanted to improve their listening and speaking skills. Hence the lesson focus would be received well by the learners.
2. Regarding listening skills, the researcher strongly felt that the learners had all the necessary general listening skills to understand the genre and content of what they heard due to their age and experience. They had good gist and detailed listening skills.
3. Regarding learners, they were of distinct types influenced by their L1 and culture. Also, some learners were more proficient in English than others. Involving them in groups could facilitate knowledge and skill sharing, enhancing learning in line with the lesson aims.
4. About the present lesson, since learners were intermediate and upper intermediate level, they had a satisfactory level of English listening skills. Focusing on bottom-up processing might motivate them to engage further in lessons.
5. The original YouTube video of movie clips and other documentaries would also help them connect to the real-life natural fluent use of English. Some of them might have watched or heard about those videos, enabling easy top-down processing in preparation for bottom-up processing for decoding.
6. The contextual knowledge of learners was assumed to be high because they had been exposed to watching English movies and other English documentaries.
7. The presentation of proficient speakers’ accents through movie clips would raise learners’ particular interest in the lesson as most learners aimed to listen and speak proficient English.
8. Despite learners’ general listening skills, the researcher assumed that decoding was a comparatively newer concept for them. While this newness raised their interest in the lesson, this would also challenge them.
9. Learners might not be familiar with some vocabulary that they are going to listen to in the lesson, and this would affect their general comprehension.
10. Regarding the interaction pattern, the learners were familiar with student-to-student interaction through pair work and group work; however, the interaction pattern in this lesson on creating awareness of decoding for listening skills followed more of a teacher-to-student and student-to-teacher pattern. This change in interaction patterns could affect class dynamics.
11. Some learners might know the elision of /t/ and /d/ in fast speech, while others might not. This would present a win-win situation for the lesson where the knowledgeable could share
their knowledge with others and build on it; the novice would get an opportunity to construct knowledge.

12. **Anticipated Problems and Solutions**

Anticipating problems and possible solutions to problems at the planning stage better equip teachers in implementing their lessons, and achieving learning outcomes (Katherine, 2015). The followings are some such expected problems and possible solutions specific to the lesson.

The anticipated problems can be summarised as i) students might not hear the audio played, ii) learners might not be comfortable with the researcher’s pronunciation as this lesson was about proficient speakers’ fast speech features, iii) all students might not understand the researcher’s instructions, iv) some learners might not find it beneficial as they think that they are not going to speak or listen to experienced speakers anyway; they might feel that even proficient speakers in different places talk differently, v) the researcher might finish the lesson early or fail to finish the lesson on time, and vi) learners might think fast speech means speaking speedily.

The researcher was prepared with solutions to each problem mentioned and they address the listed problems, respectively. They are: i) the researcher would read the script aloud and fast, incorporating targeted reduced features of connected speech for learners to decode, ii) the researcher used a record of a proficient speaker’s speech throughout the lesson to limit his prompts, iii) the researcher would display his instructions on PPTs in addition to stating them. Strong learners might help others to understand the instructions better. The researcher would interfere in group work (breakout rooms) if they struggled with instructions, iv) the investigator would explain to them that it was not about the production (speaking), but about the recognition of certain features of colloquial or natural English speech for better listening comprehension, so it was essential to acquire enough decoding skills, v) if the lesson was finished early, the researcher prepared extra audio for decoding. If he took more time than planned, he would skip some training tasks, or give some as homework announcing to learners that the lessons would continue in the following class, and vi) the researcher would explain that fast English speech meant speaking English naturally, fluently, and correctly like a proficient speaker using words together. Roberts (2012) remarked that fast speech was not about the mere speed of one’s utterance.

**Findings**

The findings are analyzed and summarised below in terms of self-reflection and evaluation, feedback from co-teachers and the students in response to the researcher’s questions.

**The Researcher’s Self-reflection and Evaluation**

The researcher’s self-reflection and evaluation (See Appendix C) focused on the general achievement of learning outcomes, a few important strengths, and weaknesses in terms of planning and teaching. Regarding planning, the researcher reflected that the lesson was staged well, and it was contextualized. While the former allowed learners to measure their learning through different stages of the class, the latter helped learners to participate in the lesson purposefully and meaningfully by listening to real-life fast speech. By contrast, the weaknesses of the planning were poor timing and inclusion of too much content letting the researcher hurry through the lesson and giving learners insufficient time to finish tasks. Moreover, the clarity of the audio was not good enough, and the number of micro-audios could have been fewer.
The significant teaching strengths were achieving the learning outcomes and paying individual attention to the learners. Most students could effectively review and practice the selected elided sounds and reduced forms, and the researcher could elicit the target language items from the learners individually. In contrast, the weaknesses were teacher-centeredness and limited learner interaction. The teacher-centeredness could not provide learners with enough time to practice reduced forms and elided sounds among themselves, and it affected group work or pair work in which students could discuss their answers through peer teaching benefiting from each other. As part of the reflection and the action plan to strengthen weakness, the researcher has suggested extra practice tasks focused on elision and reduction in fast speech.

**The Observer’s Feedback**

The observer, despite many positive comments (See Appendix D), remarked that though the lesson was contextualized, all tasks were not related to the chosen context. The observer noted further that better organizing micro audios might impact the time the researcher spent making things happen in the class. Regarding students’ engagement, the observed said that the engagement level was high, and it was one of the strengths of the class. About the learner-to-learner interaction, the senior teacher or the observer mentioned that the researcher could have made better use of the breakout rooms and let students speak about how they did things. With reference to the positive feedback on achieving the lesson aim, the observer agreed with the researcher’s reflection that “Some learners could successfully review, and others could identify the reduced forms and elided sounds in English fast speech thus achieving the learning outcome”.

Generally, the observer commented that though the lesson was quite an engaging one, it was not fully an effective listening lesson. The observer said that the lesson planning showed the researcher’s comprehension of language and language learning and methodology. Both the planning and the implementation of the lesson reflected the researcher’s awareness of learners as individuals, and as a group; however, the execution of the lesson could have been more effective, resulting in better learning. A good range of relevant and realistic assumptions, convincing commentary, increased levels of mostly purposeful student participation, good use of feedback, attentive and supportive monitoring, and a focused class were some of the strengths of the lesson. On the other hand, the observer felt that lesson aims, and outcomes were less challenging, and the number of anticipated problems and solutions were limited. Moreover, there was a limited variety of teacher roles in the teacher-led class in addition to less effective teaching techniques and procedures, which are considered weaknesses of the lesson for improvement.

**Co-teachers’ Feedback and Students’ Feedback**

Separate Google survey links were shared among the researchers’ co-teachers and students after the lesson to collect their responses regarding the lesson. They were requested to mention at least some weaknesses and strengths of the lesson, and how they would like to see the class improved in the future.

A co-teacher remarked that the lesson outcomes were effectively achieved, and learners were engaged well throughout the course. Another teacher found ‘stressing on the form of the word and the pronunciation of the word’ quite interesting and caught her attention. In addition, the third teacher mentioned “practice to hear the words which are not easy to hear for a foreigner who is not a native speaker” is the strength of the lesson to the benefit of learners. On the drawbacks, one of the teachers responded that “instructions could be more effective to achieve an
effective interaction pattern” among students. Another teacher opined that “more time for participation, especially at the production stage” was required.

From the students’ point of view, one of the learners remarked that “I learned more about the native speaker tongue,” while another student stated that “the video from the PowerPoint not showing the proper video was not clear,” and this informs the researcher that he needs to pay more attention at the planning stage. Most students commented that the lesson helped them contribute to improving their listening skills.

Discussion
This study has yielded much-required insights into the process of planning and implementing a lesson for promoting decoding skills in listening through the process of bottom-up processing. The findings helped the researcher to find answers to the research questions: a) What are the researcher’s reflections on the practical lesson? and b) What are the lesson observer’s, the co-teachers’, and the student’s perceptions of the lesson?

Regarding the first question, the researcher could reflect on his lesson and find some negative and positive aspects of the process. The strengths of the planning were: a) the lesson stages and b) setting the lesson delivery in the context. Though the bottom-up processing focuses on linguistical elements, setting up a lesson in the right context is important. While the context helps learners to engage themselves meaningfully, carefully set stages of the lesson help them measure their progress. This also conveys the need for balancing top-down processing and bottom-up processing while the lesson focuses on the latter. The weak aspects of the planning were too many micro audios and failure on the part of the researcher to visualize the lesson time. Siegal and Siegal (2013) mention that learners especially L2 ones require careful and explicit practice of bottom-up processing in listening; to achieve this, teachers need to plan and implement each task thoughtfully assuming every possible challenge in the lesson. This apprises the researcher that bottom-up processing activities are time-consuming at times, and fewer achievable activities may be set giving learners enough time to comprehend, interact and practice the target items. Regarding teaching, it is important to involve learners in pair or group work so that they can peer teach and correct the pronunciation features emphasized in the study. The connected speech features such as elision and reduction may be teacher-taught and peer-practised as highlighted by Jose (2022). Moreover, the study found that there is a tendency towards teacher-centredness in lessons delivering bottom-up processing skills. In addition, it is important to analyse student needs before planning the lesson.

To answer research question two, the feedback from the observer highlighted the strengths such as a good range of assumptions, purposeful student engagement, supportive monitoring, and good feedback. The areas of improvement were the need for setting challenging aims, anticipating a wider range of problems, limiting teacher-centredness and using more effective teaching techniques. Similarly, the mixed responses from co-teachers found that students require more time for practice, and students’ focusing on linguistic items such as word stress and pronunciation in the lesson underlined the importance of engaging learners in bottom-up processing in English classrooms. The learner’s linguistic focus resembles what Nation and Newton (2009) stated in their study that BUP provides an opportunity for learners to enhance their awareness of different linguistic features. Finally, the students’ positive responses illustrate that lessons on bottom-up processing help promote their decoding skills in listening, and this agrees with the findings of other previous studies (Utomo & Sulistyowati, 2022; McDonald, 2020 Vargas & González, 2009).
Limitations of the Study

The study was carried out among 6 adult learners who were not regular EFL or ESL learners; therefore, the findings and conclusion may vary if the study was conducted among an increased number of learners with a higher volume of data. In addition, the lesson was administered online (Zoom) due to Covid 19 lockdown, whereas a similar face-to-face lesson may result in different dynamics and findings. The online playing of micro audios and grouping in break-out rooms, Internet connectivity of learners and the researchers, camera monitoring and so on caused an unfamiliar learning atmosphere in general. The lesson focused on BUP was the first of this kind in the series of lessons presented to learners, and the learners’ first-time exposure to the lesson may not have helped form a mature perception. Another follow-up lesson would have helped the researcher gain better insights.

Conclusion

Overall, the aim of understanding the effectiveness of bottom-up processing in an ESL/EFL lesson in terms of planning, designing, and implementing the lesson was satisfactorily achieved in the study. The experimental lesson on the bottom-up processing for decoding to promote listening skills has been professionally enriching. The detailed planning of the lesson enabled the researcher to consider different aspects of planning that are usually ignored before regular lessons. For example, in addition to the target language analysis in line with the aims and the lesson structure, the detailed group profile, the assumed knowledge, anticipated problems and solutions along with others gave a clear background insight about the lesson. In addition, the selection of authentic listening materials helped invite learners’ extraordinary attention to real-life fast speech appealing to their learning needs. The Test-Teach-Test structuring of the lesson enabled the researcher to measure and understand learners’ learning and levels before teaching TL to them, and this also helped the researcher to facilitate group work and peer teaching among slow and robust learners. Finally, the researcher’s self-reflection and evaluation generally matched with the input from the observer, co-teachers, and students, and all these, especially the feedback, equipped the researcher to implement similar lessons better, or follow-up sessions in the future.

Recommendations

On the grounds of the analysis, the findings and the conclusion, the following recommendations are made.

- Teachers and stakeholders in ELT should emphasize bottom-up processing in listening lessons.
- Activities for teaching bottom-up processing in listening lessons should be carefully set and implemented aimed at addressing learners’ specific listening issues such as word boundaries – intrusion and catenation, graded textbook listening versus listening to everyday speech, spoken grammar, and written grammar, and strong and weak forms.
- A thorough lesson planning, including learners’ needs and anticipating problems, can enhance the effectiveness of lessons.
- Experimental or practical lessons incorporating colleagues and an experienced observer can effectively contribute to professional development in specific areas of interest.
- An experimental lesson should be followed by a thorough self-reflection and evaluation focusing on the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson to reflect on the possible reasons and action plans for improvement.
Bottom-up Processing to Help Learners with Decoding

- Teachers should incorporate diverse teaching techniques to ensure effective learner participation in listening classes focusing on bottom-up processing.
- Further studies on teaching bottom-up processing in diverse groups of learners from different backgrounds and teaching modes (online, face-to-face) may be conducted for an increased understanding of the application of principles of bottom-up processing for enhancing EFL/ESL learners’ listening skills.

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References
Bottom-up Processing to Help Learners with Decoding


Monroe. (2020). *Teaching English with Guided Discovery for ESL*. Available at https://bridge.edu/tefl/blog/guided-discovery-for-esl/


Appendices
Appendix A
Lesson Procedure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Stages &amp; stage aims</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th>Materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 – 5 min.</td>
<td>Warmer &amp; Introduction&lt;br&gt;To raise learners’ interest in the lesson and attract their attention.</td>
<td>Warmer - Students watch and listen to a movie trailer. (2.25 min.)&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Teacher: Here is a video. What is the main idea of the video?</em>&lt;br&gt;<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrGyD4kHTSE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrGyD4kHTSE</a></td>
<td>SS – Video</td>
<td>YouTube Video (Handout)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 6 min.</td>
<td>Listening for gist (TEST)&lt;br&gt;To further engage learners in the context.&lt;br&gt;To diagnose learners’ difficulty and</td>
<td>After the video (Warm-up), teacher plays the audio and instruct learners to try to understand the topic.&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Listen to the audio again, and answer the following questions&lt;br&gt;1. What is the main idea of the video?&lt;br&gt;2. What problem are discussed in the video?&lt;br&gt;3. Does any aspects of conversation interest you? Why?</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;Teacher plays the audio. <strong>TRAILER AUDIO</strong> (1-2 min.)&lt;br&gt;Learners are divided into discussion groups to compare what they listened to and discuss.&lt;br&gt;BOR – 3 m.&lt;br&gt;Monitoring and Feedback session: Teacher will take turns in joining groups to understand their difficulty. After the discussion, random group members share their group answers.&lt;br&gt;Teacher elicits learners’ responses highlighting decoding challenges related to the lesson aim if any.</td>
<td>TT - SS</td>
<td>Audio of the same video. (Handout 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 6 min.</td>
<td>Listening for details (TEST).&lt;br&gt;To further engage learners in the context.</td>
<td>Teacher plays the micro recording twice matching the transcript (part 1) displayed on PPTs.&lt;br&gt;Learners see the cloze text and write their answers in the chat box/ on paper.&lt;br&gt;Teacher displays the answers.</td>
<td>TT - SS</td>
<td>PPTs Handout 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 – 10 min.</td>
<td>Decoding while listening&lt;br&gt;To create awareness</td>
<td>Teacher: <em>Now let us consider some features of the conversation that you have listened to.</em>&lt;br&gt;&lt;br&gt;<em>Are speakers speaking in fluent English? Do you find any differences between classroom listening?</em></td>
<td>TT -TT - SS</td>
<td>Handout 3 PPTs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Bottom-up Processing to Help Learners with Decoding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Handout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>8 - 10 min.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intensive Decoding training (TEST)</strong></td>
<td>Teacher plays extra micro-audios for learners to decode (All micro audios are from the same audio track played in stage 2) Learners type their answers in the chat box. Learners drills the pronunciation of reduced forms. Monitoring and feedback: Teacher.</td>
<td>Handout 5 (Audios 9 – 13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>8 - 12 min.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Consolidation (TEST)</strong></td>
<td>Teacher plays chunks of words (selected from stages 3 &amp; 4) in fast speech for decoding along with a few common chunks. Teacher asks learners to identify them in writing. Monitoring: Open Feedback and Discussion. Make sentences using those language chunks 3 – 4 min.</td>
<td><strong>TT – SS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5 -8 min.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Evaluation &amp; Feedback</strong></td>
<td>Teachers divides learners into groups and ask them to practice their sentence in fast speech. Teacher monitors group discussion. Feedback: Some sample sentences are elicited after the discussion. Additionally, teacher some points practised in the lesson. Teacher: <em>In fast speech, what happens when a word ends with a consonant and the following word starts with a vowel? E.g., from every place</em></td>
<td><strong>SS - SS</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TEACH**

- **About decoding in the fast speech.**

- **To train learners in decoding.**

- **Monitoring and Feedback:** Teacher drills correct pronunciation and plays the words in context.

**And listening to the video?**

- Teacher plays the phonemes in context for learners to better recognize the words in decoding process, and how they relate to each other. Learners drill the sounds.

- Teacher explains the targeted pronunciation features eliciting from learners, and highlighting linking, reduced forms (Analysis: Table 1). Monitoring and Feedback: Teacher drills correct pronunciation and plays the words in context. T. How do we pronounce ‘for’ and ‘the’ in spoken English?

**Handout**

- **Handout 4** (Audios 1 – 8)
- **Handout 5** (Audios 9 – 13)
- **Handout 6**
- **Handout 7**
Ss: ‘they are joined/linked’
Teacher: What happens to /t/ /d/ in most English fast speech?
Ss: ‘not pronounced clearly’- elided
T. Do you have any questions or comments? SS ....

1 - 2 Conclusion
Teacher thanks learners for their participation and concludes the lesson.

**Appendix B**

**Individual profiles and Need Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students (S)</th>
<th>Interests</th>
<th>Learning style &amp; Difficulties</th>
<th>Reasons for studying English</th>
<th>Appropriateness to the lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S1</td>
<td>Watching cartoon,</td>
<td>S1 is a bit shy, but attentive and interested in learning. He is the youngest, pursuing his university degree, and participates in lessons purposefully. He finds some difficulty in pronunciation and needs to improve his fluency.</td>
<td>He studies English for his learning and career while pursuing his bachelor’s degree. He also wants to make more friends who speak English.</td>
<td>As a student, he is eager to learn from his teachers. Also, his enthusiasm to improve his English listening and speaking skills will help him benefit from this listening skill lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S2</td>
<td>Reading and watching comedies.</td>
<td>An active participant in the discussion. Though he dominates discussions at times, he can keep the discussion busy. He is eager to attend lessons, and present in all classes. His English pronunciation is influenced by L1. However, he has a satisfactory level of English proficiency to accomplish challenging listening and speaking tasks.</td>
<td>S2 wants to improve his English-speaking skills. He is interested in getting to know English-speaking people and interacting with them. Also, he comes across English-speaking people in his workplace.</td>
<td>He can help others in group discussions. Decoding awareness tasks in the lesson can improve his pronunciation and comprehension. Moreover, since he is interested in watching movies and shows in English decoding awareness will help him listen, manage, and understand the content.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S3</td>
<td>watching films and TV series</td>
<td>S2 is attentive and willing to participate in group discussions. Though she attempts and succeeds in constructing</td>
<td>S2 studies English for professional development as an English teacher. Her attending classes is</td>
<td>S2 wants to improve communication with others, and this lesson on decoding listening will help</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Arab World English Journal**

www.awej.org

ISSN: 2229-9327
| **S4** | Listening to English programs, doing sports. | S3 is an active participant in the class. She is positively talkative and involved with group members. She pronounces some words with difficulty. Her English pronunciation also needs improvement. She was absent from one of the lessons. | Her experience of working as an interpreter will attract her extra interest in this listening lesson, for interpreters require good listening skills to understand and interpret messages in spoken English. This lesson addresses her need to improve English listening skills, especially her English pronunciation, which needs improvement. She can motivate others in the group through her active participation in making the best of the lesson. |
| | | S3 understands English is significant in her life. She understood it from working as an interpreter for some organizations in 2016. Therefore, she wanted to improve her listening and speaking skills to communicate with English-speaking people effectively. | |
| | | S4 actively participates in group discussions, and her level of English is above the class average. She helps other members to understand concepts well. She communicates in fluent English with some pronunciation difficulties. More exposure to natural English can advance her English proficiency. She has missed one lesson so far. | She takes a leading role in group discussions, and her input can help others understand the class well. The lesson will help develop her in listening to audios, especially to native speakers’ accent, and making meaning out of their talk. |
| | | S4 wanted to speak English fluently with her English-speaking colleagues. Moreover, she wanted to develop her overall English proficiency. | |
| **S5** | traveling, theatres | | |
Appendix C

Post lesson reflection and Evaluation

Overall comment: The lesson was focused on making learners aware of the importance of decoding in listening skills especially listening to fast speech in off-the-class situations. Overall, the lesson could achieve its learning outcome of making learners’ aware of reduction, linking and despite its drawback of less learner centredness, and the researchers felt that it was challenging enough to learners.

Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key strengths</th>
<th>Key weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Staging the lesson</td>
<td>1. Failure to effectively visualise lesson time and the content to be covered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Planning the lesson focus in the context.</td>
<td>2. Poor organizing, and inclusion of too many micro audio files on PPT causing confusing while administering.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did this impact on learners’ progress in the lesson?

1. Learners could progressively and logically engage in the lesson from lesson introduction, gist listening, focused decoding awareness activity to feedback and consolidation. And learners could measure the progress of their learning in the lesson.

2. Selecting the context of an English movie trailer gave learners an opportunity to engage themselves with native speakers’ fast speech meaningfully and purposefully.

How did this impact on learners’ progress in the lesson?

1. More content makes me hurry from one stage to another not giving much time for learner interaction. For example, the feedback session after slide 4 was planned as a group activity but changed to a teacher-student feedback activity to finish the lesson on time. I will cut short the content i.e., shorter listening transcripts and fewer audios.

2. Wrong audios distract learners’ attention. I need to be more selective, and I should include only fewer micro audios on each slide.
Suggestions for follow-up and consolidation

I would continue the lesson exploiting the second part of the audio script which I skipped in this lesson for decoding training and feedback. Learners will listen, and complete the cloze text, and compare and discuss their answers in groups or pairs. This is followed by their listening to speech chunks with reduced and elided sounds, writing them down and making sentences about themselves with those phrases. Finally, they will practice speaking and listening to those sentences in groups. This helps them personalise and practice fast speech in a learner-led manner.

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrGyD4kHTSE –

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching</th>
<th>Key strengths</th>
<th>Key weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Achieving the learning outcome</td>
<td>1. Teacher centredness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Individual attention – eliciting and giving feedback.</td>
<td>2. Poor learner to learner interaction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How did this impact on learners’ progress in the lesson?

- Some learners could successfully review and other could identify the reduced forms and elided sounds in English fast speech thus achieving the learning outcome.
- Since there were only five students, I could elicit answers from each student, and give everyone a part in T-S.

- This gives less time for learners to discuss elided items and reduced forms in the sentences among themselves. To address it, I will ask learners to do the practice task in group first, and then I will take their feedback.
- I need to pair and group learners after the testing stage for peer correction and feedback before the open feedback. Stronger and weak learners will benefit from each other. Need to improve breakout rooms management.

Suggestions for follow-up and consolidation

I would continue the lesson exploiting the second part of the audio script which I skipped in this lesson for decoding training and feedback. Learners will listen, and complete the cloze text, and compare and discuss their answers in groups or pairs. This is followed by their listening to speech chunks with reduced and elided sounds, writing them down and making sentences about themselves with those phrases. Finally, they will practice speaking and listening to those sentences in groups. This helps them personalise and practice fast speech in a learner-led manner.

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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrGyD4kHTSE –
Appendix D
The Observer’s Feedback

Overall comment
This was quite an engaging but not fully effective listening lesson. You have achieved all six assessment categories. There are some criteria within the categories which are not met or met only partially. Your planning shows satisfactory understanding of language and language learning and methodology. Both your planning and execution only partially reflect your awareness of learners as individuals and as a group. The execution demonstrates your ability to provide, and to respond to, learning opportunities on only some occasions in the lesson. As a result, your preparation and delivery resulted in slightly less effective learning. In your evaluation, you were able to identify some key strengths and weaknesses of the lesson and the plan and outlined how the learning could be taken further.

The key strengths of the lesson were:

- a good range of relevant and realistic assumptions
- mostly clear and convincing commentary supported by your research (5k);
- high levels of mostly purposeful engagement
- good use of feedback
- attentive and supportive monitoring
- clearly focused lesson

The key weaknesses of the lesson were:

- less challenging aims and outcomes;
- limited range of anticipated problems and solutions
- very limited variety of teacher roles – a rather teacher-led class
- slightly less effective teaching techniques and procedures
- some issues with the platform and materials delaying the class
Teaching Critical Media Literacy to Fight Fake News in Moroccan Higher Education:
Focus on Facebook and YouTube

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Received: 01/06/2022
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Abstract
Since the appearance of COVID-19, there has been a global concern over the unprecedented spread of fake news on social media. In Morocco, social networks have become principal tools for spreading a vast array of fake news on different events, namely those connected to COVID-19. The large spread of fake news also made teaching Critical Media Literacy a must today to fight its devastating effects in countries where it is still primarily ignored, namely at the university level. Therefore, the main aim of this study is to explore the types of fake news posts Moroccan university students are exposed to on Facebook and YouTube and to examine the pedagogies Moroccan teachers use to teach Critical Media Literacy in higher education to combat fake news.

A short survey, semi-structured interviews, and teaching materials were used to collect data on Moroccan university students’ exposition to fake news and the strategies Moroccan teachers use to effectively teach Critical Media Literacy. The findings showed that Moroccan students were frequently exposed to various fake news posts on different issues and were not equipped with enough tools to spot fake news on social networks. Moroccan university teachers also faced adverse challenges in implementing adequate pedagogies to enhance Critical Media Literacy.

Keywords: Critical Media Literacy, effective teaching, Fake news, media literacy, social networks

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Introduction

On September 3, 2017, Hilary Clinton tweeted: “I’m excited to sign up for @Verrit, a media platform for the 65.8 million! Will join me and sign up too” (Nichols, 2017, para. 1). She was speaking of Peter Daou’s media platform, which was launched in 2017. The ultimate goal of the site was to battle fake news and its effects during and after the American elections of 2016. The upsurge of fake news during and after the 2016 American elections was unprecedented, as can be seen in the following quote: “Our database contains 115 pro-Trump fake stories that were shared on Facebook a total of 30 million times and 41 pro-Clinton fake stories shared a total of 7.6 million times” (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017, p. 212).

The elections of 2016 also showed that social media had become an important tool for spreading a huge number of fake news stories with Facebook taking the leading role. Tandoc, Lim, and Ling (2017) explicitly blamed social media for spreading fake news: “Social media sites are not only marked by having a mass audience, but they also facilitate speedy exchange and spread of information. Unfortunately, they have also facilitated the spread of wrong information, such as fake news” (p. 3). In the same vein, Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) noted that “the most popular fake news stories were more widely shared on Facebook than the most popular mainstream news stories” (p. 212).

The recent increase in “nudging” has had adverse effects on internet users (Bernal, 2018; Gelfert, 2018; Kellner & Share, 2019; Khaldarova & Mervi, 2016; Silverman & Singer-Vine, 2016). This increase has also obscured the “availability of reliable, factual, and relevant information” and made the issue of disinformation and fake news a pedagogical concern in all countries (Weiss, et al., 2020, p. 2). Various studies have shown that there is a “pressing need” to create “a media-literate citizenry that can disrupt, contest, and transform media apparatuses” (Semali, 2003, p. 275). At the university level, critical media literacy has been used as a tool to develop critical media literate students in countries like America and Canada. However, the situation in other places is much different (e.g., the Middle East and North Africa) as the need for critical media literacy seems to be more urgent today. The present study, therefore, purports to fill in this knowledge gap to enhance the role of critical media literacy within academia in countries like Morocco.

To reach this end, the following research questions have been developed:

RQ 1: What types of fake news stories/posts have Moroccan university students been exposed to on Facebook and YouTube recently?

RQ 2: What strategies do Moroccan university students use to cope with fake news on social networks?

RQ 3: What strategies do teachers use to teach critical media literacy to fight fake news in Moroccan higher education?

RQ 4: What challenges do Moroccan teachers face in teaching critical media literacy in higher education?
The present study is divided into four sections. The first section reviews the previous literature on media literacy, critical media literacy, and the pedagogies of teaching critical media literacy at university. Section two discusses the methodology and the research design adopted in the paper. Section three presents the data findings related to the research questions. The last section provides a discussion of the findings.

Literature Review

This review of the literature discusses the relevant literature and media literacy, critical media literacy, fake news, and teaching critical media literacy in higher education. First, it deals with the difference between media literacy and critical media literacy. Second, it discusses the relationship between social networks and fake news. Finally, it presents the related literature on teaching critical media literacy in higher education to fight fake news on social networks.

From Media Literacy to Critical Media Literacy

Media scholars have given different definitions of media literacy (Alvermann, & Hagood, 2000; Brandt, 2001; Hunt, 2016; Kellner & Share, 2019; Kellner & Share, 2005; Norton & Hathaway, 2010). For Hobbs (2001), media literacy aims at “asking questions about what you watch, see and read” (p. 5). Thoman (1999), on the other hand, highlights the role of media literacy in helping students deal with the meaning of media messages by providing them with the necessary tools to go beyond the surface level: “media literacy (…) can equip students with the tools to understand not only the surface meaning of media messages, but also the latent one” (as cited in Semali, 2003, p. 274).

Other scholars think that media literacy can play a more important role in education (Kellner & Share, 2019, Weiss, et al., 2020). For Semali (2003), “media literacy can help foster critical thinking and discussion of media-related issues, including how media messages are created, marketed, and distributed, as well as their potential influence (or how they are received)” (p. 274). In other words, media literacy does not only help students develop critical thinking skills, but also gives them insights into the creation of media messages, how they are marketed, and their potential impact on different consumers. Lunt and Livingstone (2012) did not only discussed some different agendas of media literacy, but also highlighted the specific value of the citizenship agenda of media literacy:

The value of media literacy is also recognized by critical scholars and civil society advocates as part of a wider citizenship agenda, as a form of participation and inclusion, as a means of overcoming disadvantage, a means of community empowerment or, more tactically, as a preferable alternative to technical or regulatory content restrictions. (p. 117) In the above quote, Lunt and Livingstone state that the importance of media literacy lies in its wide reach and role as a means of empowering community members, fighting exclusion, ensuring social participation, and making people effective critical thinkers.
Critical media literacy, on the other hand, is relatively new in comparison to media literacy (Kellner & Share, 2019; Mendoza, 2010; Share, 2015). Scholars of critical media literacy education think that its role and teaching strategies are far more complex in contrast to media literacy (Mendoza, 2010). According to Kellner and Share (2007), critical media literacy “deepens the potential of education to critically analyze relationships between media and audiences, information and power” (p. 59). As such, critical media literacy has the potential to unravel the role media can play in manipulation, propaganda, ideology, and power. Kellner and Share (2007, p. 60) further explained that critical media literacy “focuses on the ideology critique and analyzing the politics of representation of crucial dimensions of gender, race, class, and sexuality” (as cited in Goering & Thomas, 2018, p. 3).

The Upsurge of Fake News on Social Networks

Fake News Defined

Before dealing with fake news in the past and now, it is deemed necessary to start with defining fake news. In her article on fake news, Watson (2018) concluded that “we must define and understand the development of fake news before we can successfully fight it” (p. 96). However, it is worth noting that although fake news is relatively new as a phenomenon, its definition seems to be problematic. One of the major problems in defining fake is that it overlaps with other terms, such as “information disorders”, “misinformation”, “disinformation”, and “mal-information”. Marwick (2018), for instance, argued that “hoaxes, memes (…) common ways of spreading problematic information” (p. 479). Goering and Thomas (2018) also warned: “the concept of fake news continues to evolve in front of our eyes. No questions asked, fake news, whichever version of it, is potentially deadly” (p. 2). What are, therefore, some definitions of fake news?

Golbeck, et al. (2018) gave a short definition of fake news as “information, presented as a news story that is factually incorrect and designed to deceive” (p. 19). In other words, all information that is not correct and which intends to fool or mislead its consumers is considered fake news. By deceiving the readers, these stories are believed to be true, shared widely, and can even go “viral”.

To define fake news, Tandoc, et al. (2017) analyzed 34 scholarly articles, published between 2013 and 2017. They, thus, came up with a more detailed definition of fake news, including its current meaning. They also made it clear that there was a strong link between social media and fake news:

Earlier studies have applied the term to define related but distinct types of content, such as news parodies, political satires, and news propaganda. While it is currently used to describe false stories spreading on social media, fake news has also been invoked to discredit some news organizations’ critical reporting, further muddying discourse around fake news. (p. 2)
Differently put, fake news’ definition has gained today other layers of meaning. Its definition has become more complex due quick spread of “false stories” via social media and as a means of attacking and shaking the credibility of news organizations.

For other scholars, defining fake news cannot be done without defining “real news”. In his book chapter entitled “Fighting Fake News in the Age of Digital Disorientation”, Williams (2018) started by defining “real news” first. He noted that “real news” stories can be defined as “information that is recent, relevant, reliable, historically framed, hegemonically hip, and multi-perspectival.” (p. 56). Accordingly, news stories not meeting these six criteria cannot be considered “real news” stories. In other words, these stories should instead be seen as types of fake news.

Social Media as Tools of Spreading Fake News

The connection between social media and the spread of fake news has been advanced by numerous scholars (Bonnet & Rosenbaum, 2019; Creech, 2020; Del Vicario, et al., 2016; Derakhshan & Wardle, 2017; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2018; Kellner & Shaw, 2007). Most of these scholars agree that social media have become an essential source of creating, consuming, and sharing information. Unlike traditional media, social media are inexpensive and easy to access daily. Social media have also made it possible for non-journalists to create news and compete with journalists at an international level (Tandoc et al., 2017). Unfortunately, the spread of fake news via social networks largely opened the door for the spread of fake news, too. This situation made it hard for the online receiver to distinguish between “real news” and “fake news”. Therefore, a logical question that needs to be asked now is: how do experts in the field define fake news?

Basing their definition on Wardle’s (2017) typology, Bakir and MacStay (2017) considered content and context essential features of understanding fake news:

We define fake news as either wholly false or containing deliberately misleading elements incorporated within its content or context. A core feature of contemporary fake news is that it is widely circulated online (…) where people accept as fact ‘stories of uncertain provenance or accuracy’. (pp. 1-2)

In this definition, the responsibility of the consumers/receivers of fake news is also made explicit, as they take such information for granted without checking its source or reliability.

Chen (2017) considered fake news a social problem that was created by new technology and should be seen as a virus spreading among Internet users. He concluded that fake news results from direct exposure to misinformation via the Internet: “Today when we speak about people’s relationship to the Internet, we tend to adopt the nonjudgmental language of computer science. Fake news was described as a ‘virus’ spreading among users who have been ‘exposed’ to online misinformation” (as cited in Creech, 2020, p. 7).

Tandoc et al. (2017) argued that both social networks and the users of their content were behind the spread of fake news. According to them, social network users do not often care enough to check the authenticity or “legitimacy” of the information they share: “Receiving information...
from socially proximate sources can help to legitimate the veracity of information shared on social networks. However, users seldom verify the information that they share” (p. 3).

In a nutshell, defining fake news is not an easy task due to several factors: (1) it is an old phenomenon, (2) it has evolved quickly in the twenty-first century, (3) social networks have added to the complexity of its nature, (4) scholars disagree on its definition, and (5) it is very similar to other phenomena, such as “hoaxes” and “memes”.

**Teaching Critical Media Literacy and the Issue of Fake News on Social Networks**

Media scholars often argue that media literacy and critical CML can be used to support and advance critical thinking among students (Feuerstein, 1999; Goering & Thomas, 2018; Hobbs & Jensen, 2009; Radeloff & Bergman, 2009; Share, 2015). In a study conducted by Feuerstein (1999) in Israel on students aged between 10 and 12, it was found that media literacy programs did not only promote “media analysis skills of pupils”, but also developed their “critical thinking skills” (p. 52). In the same vein, Radeloff and Bergman (2009) argued that developing media literacy skills can advance students’ critical thinking abilities. By engaging students in analyzing media texts and media roles, they found that students were able to ”watch carefully; think critically” (p. 168).

Other scholars maintain that teaching CML has the power to develop the “culture consciousness of citizenship” and can lead to “participatory democracy”. Karaduman (2015) argues that the role of critical media literacy is primordial in helping students become conscious citizens by exposing them to media’s “multidirectional perspectives.” The ultimate goal, therefore, is to have critical thinkers who can contribute to the creation of “stable democratic environments” (p. 3042). Kellner and Share (2007), on the other hand, started their study by exploring the theoretical bases of critical media literacy, and, then, moved to analyze “four different approaches to teaching it” (p. 59). They also thought that critical media literacy education research should be based on cultural studies and critical pedagogy to provide teachers with “practical applications for how to engage students in the classroom with critical media literacy concepts” (p. 68).

Still, other scholars focus more on developing models or frameworks of teaching CML (Bonnet & Rosenbaum, 2019). In 2011, Hammer developed a course where CML was perceived as “engaged pedagogy” (Hammer, 2011). Her students used “digital video montage” or “documentary” to produce their own media texts based on their perspectives. The students’ videos “often address issues related to social justice and/or the politics of representation” (p. 362). Rodesiler (2010) used “mode, audience, purpose, and situation” (MAPS) as a “protocol for critical media analysis” (p. 164) to help students become more autonomous and better critical thinkers when approaching media texts.

To be sure, CML pedagogy is evolving today and its role in promoting critical thinking, democracy, and active citizenship cannot be contested. Researchers in the field have also proved that teaching CML in the twenty-first century can have a paramount role in combatting fake news,
especially on social networks. However, extant literature shows that CML and its pedagogy in the MENA region have not yet received enough attention within academia.

**Methods**

This study is based on a mixed-methods approach. To be more specific, it is based on a “concurrent mixed methodology”. It is a method that allows the researcher to make use of both quantitative and qualitative techniques in both collecting the data and analyzing them.

**Participants**

This study was conducted at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Moulay Ismail University of Meknes, during the Fall Semester of 2021. Two different samples were used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. The data were collected via different instruments: (1) questionnaires for quantitative data collection, (2) interviews for qualitative data collection, (3) and some pedagogical documents, including the “Media and Visual Studies” course description, were also used for both quantitative and qualitative data.

The essential sampling strategy used in this study was purposive sampling (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2012). The sample was composed of Semester 5 students from the “Media and Visual Studies” classes. A total of 34 students participated in this study: 20 females and 14 males, aged between 20 and 50 years old. In addition, two teachers took part in the interview for qualitative data collection.

**Research Instruments**

As regards the instruments of the study, two different instruments were used to collect the data. First, self-report questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data. This instrument was used to collect different types of data: background information on the respondents, types of fake news they were exposed to, students’ strategies to check news stories, teaching strategies of media literacy, and challenges faced by teachers. To collect qualitative data, different tools and strategies were also used. The central instrument for qualitative data collection was the semi-structured interview with two teachers of media studies at the faculty. The interview was composed of some central questions about different aspects of teaching media studies and media literacy, such as “What teaching strategies do you use to teach media literacy?” and “What are obstacles that you face when teaching media literacy?” In addition to the questionnaire and interview, two different pedagogical documents were used. The lectures posted on the faculty platform were used to collect information on the media material and its content. The second source was the course description of “Media and Visual Studies,” which was also used for data collection and analysis.

**Data Analysis**

The obtained data were analyzed in two different ways, that is, quantitatively and qualitatively. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data, namely frequencies and percentages. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for two different objectives: (1) to calculate
percentages and frequencies, and (2) to make tables for displaying numbers and analysis. Qualitative data collected through the semi-structured interview and the pedagogical documents, on the other hand, were analyzed through qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content data analysis allowed the researcher to develop themes and categories related to teaching CML for analysis. Most of the themes and categories were developed from the literature on fake news and critical media literacy education. These themes and categories were, therefore, analyzed in relation to the quantitative data findings.

Results

This section aims to present the findings related to the research questions of this study. The first subsection concerns the types of fake news stories Moroccan students are exposed to. The second section is on the strategies Moroccan students use to spot fake news. The third subsection discusses the strategies used in teaching media literacy in Moroccan higher education. In the last subsections, the challenges of teaching critical media literacy in Moroccan higher education are presented.

Types of Fake News

To understand the types of fake news stories Moroccan students are exposed to, students were asked to give information on the most popular websites they visit. The results show that Moroccan university students are not so much different from students in other countries. Facebook (100%), Instagram, and YouTube (94.1%) are the most frequently visited social networks by Moroccan students as can be seen in Table one below:

Table 1. Frequencies of students' social networks usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social networks useda</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percent of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagged</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google+</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumblr</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Then, when asked about the types of stories Moroccan university students are exposed to, the respondents gave different examples. The findings regarding this issue revealed six most
dominant themes: (1) the death of a celebrity (e.g., Queen Elizabeth and Mr. Bean), (2) COVID-19 and the vaccines of COVID-19, (3) news by Algerian social network users, (4) news about the last Moroccan elections, (5) news about American presidents (Donald Trump and Joe Biden), and (6) news about the end of the world in 2020.

**Students’ Strategies to Spot and deal with Fake News on Social Networks**

Despite being aware of the dangers of fake news on social networks, it seems that an important number of students are still fooled by them. In this study, 44.12 % pointed out that they were sometimes victims of fake news stories; while only 11.76 claimed that they had never been fooled by these stories, as Figure two shows.

![Figure 2. Percentages of students fooled by fake news on social networks](image)

However, the findings show that Moroccan students use a set of strategies to spot fake news on social networks. The most frequent strategies are “checking the publisher’s name” (56.5%), “Looking for other such signs of authentic news, such as author’s name”: (56.5%), and “I question everything” (52.2%). Also, in responding to the question of why they check the reliability of news on Facebook and YouTube, most of the respondents referred to the lockdown and COVID-19. One of the respondents explained: “I think people are now more cautious about fake news due to their previous experience during the lockdown, at least they started to question the source of the information”.

It also seems that students’ awareness of the dangers of fake news made them reluctant to share fake news on Facebook and YouTube. The quantitative data showed that 91.18 % did not post fake news; while only 18 % admitted that they shared fake news on these social networks. Some students even considered posting fake news a crime that should be punished:

Personally, I think sharing fake news and helping it spread across the web could be harmful in many ways. Most people are vulnerable to fake news, they trust everything coming from
the internet, and it could be dangerous and life-threatening sometimes. I also think it was a
good idea to consider it a crime and create a punishment for it by the law.

**Strategies Used in Teaching Media literacy in Moroccan Higher Education**

The findings showed that lecturing, video analysis, and student presentations were largely
used in media studies classes. The frequencies and percentages of these strategies are summarized
in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching strategy</th>
<th>Yes (F)</th>
<th>Yes %</th>
<th>No (F)</th>
<th>No %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook reading</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>64.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article reading</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article critique</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>55.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video analysis</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-ended assignment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students’ presentation</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>88.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table two, the data show that lectures (100%), video analysis (94.1%), and students
presentations (88.2%) are the most frequently used strategies. These findings were partly
supported by the qualitative data, too. The interview data revealed that Moroccan teachers
sometimes used some of these strategies to foster a better understanding of media literacy.
Informant 2, for example, postulated that she used such strategies in teaching critical media
literacy: “paying particular attention to language use and values incorporated in media messages;
adapting UNESCO publications to my teaching, using videos produced by renowned scholars and
active organizations in the field; using my own video and open access tutorials”.

On the other hand, the data displayed in Table two also make it clear that other important
teaching strategies were limited and/or scarcely used, namely projects (11.8 %) and open-ended
assignments (23.2 %).

**Challenges of Teaching Critical Media Literacy in Moroccan Higher Education**

During the analysis of teachers’ responses about the challenges they faced in teaching
media literacy, several themes emerged. These challenges can be divided into three major
categories. The first category is related to the length of the program and logistics at the faculty
level. The respondents complained about several obstacles, including the lack of database in the
library, the absence of specialized classrooms for media studies, and the difficulties of conducting
projects at the faculty. Informant 2 said that: “We often teach in classrooms or theaters which are
not for media studies. This is a severe problem for teachers. Media should be taught in classrooms
equipped with enough material for media studies. The program is also too long to be covered in
one semester. We often cover just parts of the program”.

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The second category is connected to students. The findings show that two themes are frequently raised: teachers are not satisfied with (1) the number of students in the group and (2) the lack of students’ motivation and interaction in the media classes. According to informant 2, the number of students in groups is too large. We teach groups of more than 200 hundred students sometimes. There is also weak interaction in the classroom because most of the students do not read the articles at home, I always give articles to be read at home, but when I come to class and ask questions, I discover that very few students did their homework. I end up answering my own questions. Also, very few students are willing to give presentations.

The last category concerns the pedagogies used in teaching CML within Moroccan universities. The obtained data showed that teaching CML was not effective because of diverse handicaps. In other words, it seems that teaching CML to Moroccan university students is still based on traditional pedagogies, such as “lecturing”. Informant 2, for instance, summarized some of the pedagogical obstacles faced while teaching as such:

The key aspect of learning by doing is missing: no possibility for students to produce their own media messages; no access to recent publications because there is no open access. And there is not enough time to tackle all key units in media literacy.

Discussion

This paper has revealed important insights about the risks that Moroccan university students are exposed to on social networks, and the immense role that teaching critical media literacy can play in combatting fake news stories on these social networks in the twenty-first century. Despite this importance, enhancing CML in Moroccan universities is still limited due to several challenges (both material and pedagogical) that impede the teaching-learning process within Moroccan higher education.

At the practical level, teaching CML does not directly involve students in producing their own media content, which deprives them of developing critical media literacy through understanding how media production works. Second, teaching CML in Moroccan universities is not yet seen as “a participatory, collaborative project” (Kellner & Share, 2007, p. 62) and does not allow for “critical engagement with media” (Joanou, 2017, p. 44). That is, teaching CML literacy to Moroccan higher education students still needs to be more student-centered to help students understand how media texts are constructed “in more tangible terms” (Joanou, 2017, p. 45). Third, it is evident that the pedagogies used in teaching CML do not prepare Moroccan students to be “active citizens” and ready to take part in “building democracy” (Karaduman, 2015; Kellner & Share, 2007). Fourth, there is a total absence of training Moroccan teachers on how to teach CML in the Moroccan context. In other words, how CML is taught today in Moroccan universities depends only on teachers’ efforts, motivation, proactivity, and willingness to grow and develop professionally.
Obviously, then, there is an urgent need to develop a critical pedagogy of teaching media and CML to make Moroccan students “critical media literate” and “active consumers” and “producers” of media messages/texts in the twenty-first century (Weiss, et al., 2020). Of course, this cannot be achieved without changing the traditional curricula and moving beyond the traditional pedagogical practices. Media scholars today think that this requires the integration of the new advances in the internet, television, films, and videos (Nam, 2010; Semali, 2003; Williams, 2018). More importantly, to ensure the success of pedagogical reforms at university, teacher training on CML pedagogy and teacher development is no longer just “a choice” or “option” (Kellner & Share, 2007; Weiss, et al., 2020); they are a must (Kellner & Share, 2005; Share, 2015).

Conclusion

The central aim of this study was to explore the types of fake news posts Moroccan university students face on Facebook and YouTube and to examine the pedagogies Moroccan teachers use to teach Critical Media Literacy in higher education to fight fake news. The major findings of this study revealed can be summarized in some significant points. First, Moroccan university students are aware they are exposed to an array of fake news stories via Facebook and YouTube and use some techniques for fact-checking. It is also clear that the media study course has been very beneficial in developing students’ awareness of the dangers of fake news. At the level of teaching, teaching CML in Moroccan universities is not yet effective due to several impeding factors: (i) there is an absence of formal training on how to teach and test Critical Media Literacy in higher education, (ii) Media Studies classes are huge, lack essential logistics, and do not allow for effective teaching for CML, and (iii) research on CML teaching is still very scant in Morocco. Despite all these constraints, one of the main conclusions is that Moroccan teachers are aware of the importance of teaching CML to Moroccan students and its requirements. One of their ultimate goals is to enhance critical thinking skills and active learning among students to face the threats of some media texts, namely fake news. They, thus, endorse using effective strategies (e.g., projects, problem-solving, and scenarios) based on innovative methods of teaching CML.

Implications of the Study

One important implication of this study is that CML should be an integral part of the curriculum in Moroccan higher education today. A second implication is that teacher training is of tremendous importance in modern education. That is, teachers should be trained on how to implement CML in their classes to help students develop a “critical approach” (Kellner & Share, 2019) to media content. Third, academic research on CML should be encouraged in the MENA region. Finally, any educational policies and/or reforms at the university level need to consider CML.
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Essential Traits of Influential Professors in Virtual Teaching from EFLLs’ Perspectives

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Abstract

There are numerous ways to define the traits of influential professors, including behavior (such as warmth, civility, and clarity), knowledge (of subject matter and students), and beliefs, among many others. According to research; influential teaching can also defined as the capacity to improve student achievement. This; is only one way to express effectiveness, as stated. However; the preferred definition of high-quality teaching in the United States and many other countries is teacher effects on student achievement. Therefore; this study aimed to determine the characteristics of influential professors in Online Teaching at the English department. This study; believed to be significant for college professors who will show them how learners see successful professors and what characteristics they would like their professors to enjoy. This study contributes to the understanding of what students expect from their professors and will assist future EFL instructors in comprehending what students believe is expected of them. The findings of the present research showed that there are many essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching as stated by their students such as: being positive, teaching English to be used in and out of the virtual classrooms, enjoying online teaching, being flexible, punctual, etc.

Keywords: English as a foreign language learner, essential traits, influential professors, EFLLs perspectives, virtual teaching

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Introduction

There have been several investigations into the teaching of foreign languages worldwide, but Iraq and other Arabic-speaking nations have seen very few studies. This essay examines EFL instruction and perspectives from the viewpoints of undergraduate students enrolled in English and language programs at the College of Education for Women in Iraq and the College of Languages, respectively. It is frequently known that the English language plays an important role in communication, education, the media, business, and governments all over the world (Javid, 2010). It is also critical to research how students see instruction and learning. Their attitudes about language learning appear to be directly related to their comprehension of the course, their dedication to the class and giving them the chance to succeed in and be comfortable with their language learning program (Horwitz, 1988).

Language teachers must consider their students' perceptions of effective language instruction before they can adopt, grow, and sustain motivation throughout the academic year in a way that will promote learning. These opinions may include the preferences of the students about how their training should be presented (Lightbown & Spada, 2006). According to Beishuizen et al., (2001), effective teaching is not a static, stereotyped activity that can only be accomplished by using instructional methods. The long history of identifying behaviors linked to effective teaching has been illuminated by research in useful ways. Since Plato detailed how Socrates taught by posing questions to his audience, effective teachers have been the subject of research. Although researchers have agreed to study this highly sought-after field, there has been substantial debate over the characteristics of excellent teachers (Raymond, 2008; Stronge, 2002). It has been discovered that researchers have made an effort to provide multiple perspectives on this thorny subject. A rising body of research has sought to define the ideal characteristics of English language instructors from the viewpoint of the key stakeholders, including students (McCabe, Feghali, & Abdallah, 2008).

However, identifying these traits from the perspective of an English language learner (ELL) student is rare and alarming (Chen & Lin, 2009). According to Brown (2004), American teachers preferred a more communicative classroom whereas their students preferred a grammar-based approach. This shows that when it comes to the qualities of a successful foreign language teacher, teachers and students may have different ideas and expectations.

In a related study conducted in Iran, Ghasemi and Hashemi (2011) looked into students' perceptions of subject matter expertise, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective abilities as three primary categories for effective English language teachers. They discovered that specific teacher traits, such as reading and speaking skills, the capacity to pique students' interest in learning English, and the ability to foster students' motivation and self-confidence, were unanimously seen as desirable. Additionally, a lot of their participants underlined the importance of grammar and listening skills. On the other hand, Chen and Lin (2009) discovered that junior high school students in China generally valued teachers' personalities and relationships with them more than their subject-matter expertise. The teachers who participated in the survey also agreed that being
enthused, sociable, open-minded, respectful, and caring were essential traits of successful English language instructors.

Many new faculty members encounter a conundrum upon starting their academic careers. Being involved in the academic world necessitates a change in viewpoint as new faculty members advance from student to the professor (Magnuson, 2002). Although they claim to spend the bulk of their time on teaching obligations rather than research activities, Jones (2008) found that the majority of new faculty members had little to no teacher preparation (Gale & Golde, 2004). According to research, college student retention is several times cheaper than recruitment (Joseph, Yakhou, & Stone, 2005), so student retention becomes a crucial management challenge for institutions. This results in a greater focus on student's satisfaction with their educational experience (Lala & Priluck, 2011). Considerable thought should go into how students perceive things to fix deficiencies and improve instructor proficiency in the classroom. Professors can enhance the learning environment in the classroom by developing their interpersonal skills or simply by having a better awareness of the viewpoint of the students by learning what exactly the students value and even the unsatisfactory aspects (Davis & Swanson, 2001). The responsibilities and obligations of a good teacher nowadays are more demanding and difficult. Rubio (2009) emphasized: Today, anyone may become a teacher, but the question is whether everyone can become an effective teacher. It takes more effort and complexity than most people realize to be an effective teacher. In addition to having in-depth subject knowledge, effective teachers also possess strong management, organizational, and communication skills, the ability to plan lessons, and the ability to conduct fair assessments and evaluations. Additionally, an excellent teacher must foster a welcoming environment in the classroom, encourage passion and drive, and foster an active teacher-student interaction. Additionally, it suggests being kind, perceptible, and most importantly, enhancing learning.

The characteristics that will be obtained from the present study will help college teachers to identify their lacks and will guide them to students' needs which are an important element in the teaching-learning cycle. The information gleaned from this study should aid in a better understanding of the participants' perceptions of what makes a good instructor. This information can be utilized to get a deeper understanding of what makes good professors in the eyes of college students. The study's findings can be used by aspiring teachers as a guide and source of inspiration as they become ready for the teaching profession. Furthermore, it is critical to determine whether universal traits of successful college teachers vary significantly by student demographic traits. Therefore, the study tries to answer the following questions:

1. What are the essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments from student perspectives?
2. What are the significant differences between male and female students’ perspectives about essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments at both colleges of languages and of Education for women?
3- What are the significant differences between students’ perspectives about essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments at the college of language and those at the College of Education for women?

The present study aims at finding out:

1- Essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments from student perspectives.

2- Differences between male and female students’ perspectives about essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments at both colleges of languages and of Education for women.

3- Differences between students’ perspectives about essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments at the college of language and those at the College of Education for women.

This study is limited to:

1- The students in four levels of English departments at the College of Educational for Women and the College of Languages at Baghdad University.

2- Students who study virtually through the academic year 2021-2022.

The following terms were used in the study:

- Influential professors: who take the process of deciding which instructional methods, tools, and tasks have the best chance of promoting student learning. (Lowman, 1997).

- Professor: A teacher in college or university who ranks at the highest level after an assistant professor. He can stimulate strong positive emotions in students is what separates the competent from the outstanding college (Lowman, 1995).

- Essential Teaching Traits: "the principles and expectations a teacher upholds as shown by the practical methods employed to convey them" (Dun & Dun, 1979, p.242).

- English as a foreign language learner: Specifically, it refers to education provided by a college or university that offers English teaching in designated departments, such as the English department at colleges of Education, Languages, and Arts (Gajda et al., 2017).

- **Literature Review**

*Traits of Influential Professors in Literature*

Years ago, studies on the traits of powerful professors began. However, the majority of the research sought teachers' opinions rather than those of pupils (Verner, 2000). Although there was no agreement in the literature on what makes good professors, some qualities were repeated, including respect for students, the ability to explain concepts clearly, having good interpersonal skills, a sense of humor and the use of a variety of teaching techniques as well as technology in the classroom (Saafin, 2005) more precisely, the three qualities of comedy, classroom management, and clarity of instruction were more frequently mentioned. A study by Gruber, Reppel, and Voss (2010) revealed the importance of personality in general and supported studies that stress the importance of professors creating rapport with their students in particular.
Top Qualities of an Effective Virtual Professor

To be an effective online educator, you need a wide range of skills in addition to a solid academic background. People skills are essential, as is the ability to help others see things from your point of view. This is no easy feat. There is no one best approach to education, yet all great educators share a few commonalities. They know what they are doing, set clear goals with their students, have a positive attitude, are patient with their charges, and regularly assess their own performance as educators. Their ability to adapt their teaching strategies to the needs of both their pupils and the material being covered is a direct result of their awareness of the fact that students have different learning styles. As a virtual educator, you set the pace and mood for your students. If you can transmit your excitement and joy to your children, they will be more apt to share your feelings. When you are negative, unprepared, or irritable, though, your children will mirror these characteristics. Undergraduate students at Georgetown University have high expectations of their instructors and many distractions besides the material they are covering in class (Amerstorfer, 2021).

Positive

Keeping a positive attitude is key to keeping students interested. Teaching is more successful when students want to learn rather than when they need to learn for a grade or a degree. New TAs often perceive the additional power that comes with the job as a sign of respect for them. The students in your class should be seen as partners, not rivals. Teaching and learning have their share of challenges, yet it is still possible to enjoy time spent in the classroom. Keep your attention focused while being daring and creative. Enjoy yourself and look for ways to show them the exciting facets of your field (Hunt et al., 2009).

Prepared

The instructor ought to be well-versed in the subject matter covered. If you were forced to study assignments and attend classes like other students, it's understandable that you would comply. Most professors insist that their Graduate Teaching Assistants (TAs) sit in on lectures, even if the TA has never taken or taught the course before. Review key concepts and ideas in the subjects you will be teaching if it has been a while since you worked with them or if you have questions about them. Take some time to think about the most effective method to present the data, and then formulate a strategy. The presentation materials (overheads, diagrams, handouts, etc.) should be prepared in advance, and an outline or notes should be jotted down for quick reference. Don't wait until the first day of school to get started! (Johns et al., 2006).

Organized

The professor ought to have a lesson plan in place. His role is to provide examples of key concepts and crucial context to aid students in integrating all of their course-related work (reading, laboratories, exams, papers, lectures, etc.). He may select the most crucial ideas and demonstrate their connections because it is impossible to cover everything in a single lesson. Also, he needs to explain concepts so that students, whether from your course or earlier classes, can build on the knowledge they have already learned. He shouldn’t limit his attention to the lessons he’s giving
today. He may show the class how the subject they are learning today relates to later course material. An organized professor sets aim to conclude each lesson with a conclusion, pace himself to avoid running out of time in the end and keep his long-term objectives in mind (Fitzmaurice M. 2008).

**Clear**

The best teachers can simplify difficult ideas for their students. When you become an expert in a given academic field, it's easy to forget that your students may not have the same background knowledge as you do. Help students grasp and properly apply specialized vocabulary as they pursue expertise in your field. Many ideas can be better conveyed with the help of visual aids like diagrams, drawings, charts, slides, etc. Ensure that they can be read easily, are not in the way, and are placed neatly. You should also think about the significance of your body language. Behaviors that you may not have seen on your own can be picked up by someone else observing you teach (or, even better, by recording it) (Amerstorfer, 2020).

**Active**

The professor should stimulate student thought. Most pupils will only retain a small portion of what he teaches unless they are actively applying the ideas. A lecture is an effective approach to reaching a broad audience with information, but it is ineffective in giving pupils long-lasting knowledge and abilities. He might think about substituting other activities for standard lectures, discussions, or question-and-answer sessions during at least some of the class time. Small-group problem-solving activities should last no longer than a few minutes while yet allowing students to actively participate in the lesson (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014).

**Patient**

As a professor, he may attempt to recall what it was like to first learn something. Provide time for pupils to assimilate knowledge and respond to inquiries. It is acceptable for pupils to make mistakes so long as they can learn from them. Even for the most driven students, studying can be arduous labor. Instead of criticizing pupils when things go wrong, he should evaluate how he may modify his teaching style to reach them more successfully. Concepts, background information, or conclusions that are obvious to the lecturer may not be so obvious to a novice. Even professors must have patience with themselves. At times, teaching can be challenging and frustrating. He may need to afford himself the chance to make mistakes and learn from them (Walker, 2008).

**Fair**

The instructor must consider what it is like to be one of his students. Probably, he would want a teacher who set clear expectations, regularly implemented them, and could confess when they were wrong. Whether he deducts points from an exam question, assigns a low grade to a paper, or penalizes a student for submitting a late assignment, he should be able to justify his actions. It is advantageous if he has already set clear policies for the entire course and each task. Once he has established norms, he must follow them uniformly and consistently or he will lose credibility. If he makes a mistake or doesn't know the answer to a question, however, it is preferable to acknowledge it than to disregard it (Fitzmaurice, 2008).
**Special Habits for Effective Teachers**

There are certain habits of an excellent educator as follows:

**Enjoys Online Teaching**

Teaching is intended to be a very joyful and rewarding profession (although sometimes tough and exhausting!). Teachers should only enter the profession if they love students and aim to care for them from the heart. Teachers cannot expect pupils to enjoy themselves if they are not enjoying themselves. Professors should feel excitement, pleasure and happiness while they teach (Aarti, 2022).

**Makes a Difference**

There is a proverb that states, "With great power, comes great responsibility." As a teacher, you must be conscious and mindful of the immense responsibility that comes with your position. One of your objectives should be to improve their lives. How? Make them feel unique, protected, and safe in your classroom. Be the influence for good in their lives. Why? You never know what your pupils endured before entering your classroom on any given day or what conditions they will return to at home. Therefore, if they are not receiving adequate help from their families, you will supply it (Beere, & Broughton, 2013).

**Spreads Positivity**

Every day, the influential professor injects positive energy into the classroom. He shouldn’t forget to flash his wonderful smile as much as possible throughout the day. Even if he is facing his own difficulties in his own life, he should leave them outside the classroom door before entering the classroom. Personal problems need to be out of the teaching-learning process. Students deserve better than a professor taking out his displeasure on them. Regardless of how he is feeling, how much sleep he has had, or how frustrated he is, he must never show it. Even if he is having a terrible day, he should learn to put on a mask in front of the students and become a superhero in their eyes (it will make his day as well)! The professor is perpetually upbeat, joyful, and smiling. Remember that positive energy is contagious and that it is his responsibility to disseminate it. Effective professors do not let the negativity of others pull them down. Professors may send many positive messages while he is teaching or explaining a point of view (Walker, 2008).

**Gets Personal**

This is the most enjoyable and crucial aspect of being a great educator. He learns about his students' hobbies and interests so that he may connect with them. He doesn't forget to mention his interests, either! In addition, he must learn their learning styles so that he can cater to each student individually. In addition, he attempts to become acquainted with their parents. Speaking with the parents should not be considered a chore, but rather a privilege. Make it clear at the beginning of the school year that they can approach you at any time with any concerns. Additionally, make an effort to get to
know his coworkers on a personal level. If he can find a good support network in and outside of college, he will be a lot more confident (Fitzmaurice M. 2008).

**Gives 100%**

Whether conducting a lesson, producing report cards, or assisting a colleague, teachers should always give their all. He is teaching because he enjoys it, not because he feels forced to do so. Do it for self-improvement. Do so to motivate others. Do it so that his students will gain the most from his instruction. Give one hundred percent to himself, his students, his parents, his job, and everybody who believes in him. The only thing a teacher can do is never give up and do his best (Ibid).

**Stays Organized**

Effective educators never get behind on grading or filing student assignments. He does his best to stay on top of things and not allow the stack to grow above his head! It will save him a great deal of time over time. Additionally, it is essential to maintain an ordered planner and to plan! The effectiveness of last-minute lesson planning is unlikely. Lastly, he keeps a diary accessible and jots down his inspired ideas as soon as they occur to him. Then, build a plan to implement these suggestions (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014). The preparation and carrying out of a lesson are among a teacher's personal traits. One of a teacher's most vital features and one of their most essential qualities is organization. If a teacher lacks organizational skills, they may quickly lose track of deadlines, expectations, and student work. Most professors take notes with crucial points to remember for their next class after their session. By doing this, a good teacher may quickly prepare the material needed for future lessons and will also be aware of exactly what needs to be done (Aarti, 2022).

**Open-Minded**

As a teacher, he will be observed formally or informally on occasion; therefore, he should always offer his very best effort. He is continuously evaluated and condemned by his supervisor, instructors, parents, and students. Instead of feeling resentful when someone criticises his teaching, he should be receptive to constructive feedback and formulate an action plan. Demonstrate that he is the excellent educator he desires to be. There is always space for growth because nobody is flawless. Occasionally, others see what he cannot (Carrie, 2014).

**Has Standards**

Create standards for himself and his students. Ensure that students know what is acceptable and what is not from the outset. Remind the students, for instance, how he would like the assigned job to be accomplished. Is he the instructor that expects his students to provide their best effort and submit their best, most organized work? Or is he the teacher who cares little? He should realize that he cannot expect much unless he gives much. As the adage goes, "Practice what you preach" (Hagenauer & Volet, 2014).
Finds Inspiration

A creative teacher is a successful teacher, but it does not imply he must invent everything from scratch! He may draw inspiration from as many different sources as possible. Whether the information is from books, education, Pinterest, YouTube, Facebook, blogs, or TPT (Teachers Pay Teachers is an online marketplace where teachers buy and sell original educational materials). Whatever he has, he must continue to find it! (Carrie, 2014).

Embraces Change

Things do not always go according to plan in life. This is especially true regarding teaching. Teachers must be adaptable and move with the flow in the face of change. When a new principal arrives, a competent teacher does not grumble about the resulting adjustments. They do not feel the need to comment on how much better things were at their previous school or with their previous group of kids in comparison to their current situation. Instead of worrying about change, they should welcome it with both hands and demonstrate that they can handle every curve ball thrown their way (Johns et al., 2006).

Creates Reflection

Effective teachers reflect on their teaching to grow as educators. Consider what went well and what he would change for the future. He must remember that we all experience "failed" teachings on occasion. Instead of viewing it as a failure, consider it a valuable lesson and grow from it. His education and learning as a teacher are continuing. There is always more to learn and understand to improve his teaching abilities. Continue to reflect on his efforts and educate himself on his "weaknesses," as we all have them. Recognizing them and being able to work on them to enhance his teaching abilities is the most crucial step (Carrie, 2014).

Previous Studies

Some researchers were interested in investigating the characteristics of good teachers such as:

- With the help of Lee (2010), 163 first-year students in Japan have had their perspectives broadened. Use of students' L1 in class, encouragement of speaking, and a positive attitude were also deemed important, along with "linguistic skills in grammar," "speaking," "listening," "reading," "writing," and "culture."

- Saafin (2005) surveyed 136 Arab students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates to gauge their opinions on what makes a successful EFL teacher. On the questionnaire and in the interview, students rated teachers highly who displayed characteristics indicative of an "interpersonal relationship with students," such as "respecting and advising pupils," "being humorous," "nice," "fair," "caring," and "patient." The next category is "teaching and organization skills," which includes things like "using a variety of teaching approaches," "understanding their subject matter," "adapting to students' capacities," "checking for comprehension," and "explaining well".
- Witcher (2003) set out to determine what makes an excellent English instructor. He found that "enthusiasm," "friendliness," "open-mindedness," and "student respect" were the top five characteristics shared by highly effective English teachers. The key to being a successful English teacher is developing close relationships with your students. His research led him to the conclusion that excitement is the single most important quality someone can possess.

**Method**

This research followed a quantitative method represented by a questionnaire with 20 items distributed to 90 students electronically by using google forms. This section of the study will show the population as well as the participants in the study. Also, the research instrument and its validity and reliability were shown. Then a discussion of the results will be followed.

**Participants**

Students at departments of English language in the College of Education for women and the college of Languages at Baghdad University during the academic year 2021-2022, were divided into the two primary groups of this study's appropriate sampling participants. The sample consists of 90 randomly selected male and female students from the population.

**Research Instruments**

An open question was asked to the students: "What are the most essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching in the English department?" distributed electronically through google forms to students of various levels in the English departments of both colleges. Their responses were collected, analyzed, and reformatted into a 20-item constructed questionnaire. On a five-point Likert Scale (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, and strongly disagree), participants were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement. This questionnaire was distributed electronically through google forms to a random sample of 90 male and female English students from both colleges. Students were instructed to select the response option that best reflected their reaction to the statement, and their responses were collected and analyzed to determine the results of the study, see appendix A.

**Face Validity**

The researcher presented the questionnaire to experts in the same field of study to obtain their opinions and views on the validity of the items, and they agreed that it was appropriate and valid.

**Reliability**

To ensure the questionnaire's reliability, the researcher utilized a test-retest. The same instrument was administered to (20) students and repeated (14) days later. The results revealed a reliability coefficient between the first and second responses. This ensured the validity and dependability of the questionnaire, which was then administered to a sample of 90 students.
Results

In order to achieve the first aim of the present study which trying to find out essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments from student perspectives, the researcher calculated the weighted mean and the weighted percentage for each characteristic in the questionnaire according to students’ responses as shown in appendix B which; showed that items gained a weighted mean range between (3.311-4.466) and a weighted percentage range between (66.22-89.32).

The following table one showed questionnaire items rearranged to their weighted means and weighted percentages starting with the item that gained the highest values and ending with items with lower values.

Table 1. Rearranging items according to their weighted Mean and weighted percentage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item’s No.</th>
<th>Item’s description</th>
<th>Weighted Mean</th>
<th>Weighted Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Be positive</td>
<td>4.466</td>
<td>89.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teach English to be used in and out of the virtual classroom</td>
<td>4.422</td>
<td>88.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Help students to develop self-confidence to learn English well</td>
<td>4.333</td>
<td>86.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Listen to student’s opinions and let them express themselves</td>
<td>4.277</td>
<td>85.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Enjoy online teaching</td>
<td>4.244</td>
<td>84.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Well prepared for the online lecturing</td>
<td>4.088</td>
<td>81.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Have a high level of proficiency in English vocabulary</td>
<td>4.077</td>
<td>81.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Use varieties methods and techniques in teaching suitable to each topic</td>
<td>4.022</td>
<td>80.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Be flexible</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Have a good sense of humor</td>
<td>3.966</td>
<td>79.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Be punctual</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Alleviate students’ anxiety in English class</td>
<td>3.877</td>
<td>77.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pay attention to the personal needs of students</td>
<td>3.855</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Maintain a good classroom atmosphere using authority, if necessary</td>
<td>3.855</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Teach English in English</td>
<td>3.844</td>
<td>76.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Not discriminate between students and treat them fairly</td>
<td>3.822</td>
<td>76.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Be neat and tidy in online appearance</td>
<td>3.811</td>
<td>76.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Follow specific syllabus</td>
<td>3.688</td>
<td>73.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Stick to administrative rules and regulations</td>
<td>3.588</td>
<td>71.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Using spoken English well</td>
<td>3.311</td>
<td>66.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to achieve the second aim of the study, is to find out the differences between male and female students’ perspectives on essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments at both colleges of languages and of Education for women? the researcher used the T-test for independent samples to determine if there are statistically significant differences in students’ perceptions of the most important characteristics of effective professors when teaching English courses online based on the sex variable. Table two showed that the mean value for females was (78.183) with a standard deviation value (9.746) while the mean value for males was (78.200) with a standard deviation value (9.781).
Table 2. *T*-Test for independent samples in sex variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Calculated T-value</th>
<th>Tabulated T-value</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sign. 0.05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>78.183</td>
<td>9.746</td>
<td>0.008</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>78.200</td>
<td>9.781</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To achieve the third aim of the present study, the researcher used the *T*-test for independent samples to discover if there is a statistically significant difference in students’ perspectives about essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments about colleges variable. Table three showed that the mean value for the College of Languages was (78.066) with a standard deviation value (10.635) while the mean value for the College of Education for Women was (78.311) with a standard deviation value (8.792).

Table 3. *T*-Test for independent samples in the college’s variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College’s variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Calculated T-value</th>
<th>Tabulated T-value</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sign. 0.05</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College of Languages</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>78.066</td>
<td>10.635</td>
<td>0.119</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>Not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College of Education for Women</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>78.311</td>
<td>8.792</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion**

The results related to the first aim of the present study support the availability of the traits related to influential professors in English departments. It is obvious evidence that university professors are concerned and interested in having such standards and characteristics of effective teaching which serve the scientific and educational process. This result answers the first question of the present study which states: “what are the essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments from student perspectives? As shown in table 1. The first priority traits are: be positive, teach English to be used in and out of the virtual classroom, and help students to develop self-confidence to learn English well while the study of Saafin (2005) who asserts the three qualities of comedy, classroom management, and clarity of instruction. The results of Lee (2010), showed the importance of: use of students' L1 in class, encouragement of speaking, and a positive attitude.

The results related to the second aim showed that: there are no statistically significant variations in sex factors between females and males in students' perceptions of essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching in English Departments, where the computed *T*-value was (0.008) and the tabulated *T*-value was (1.99). This result answer the second question of the present study states: “what are the significant differences between male and female students’ perspectives
about essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments at both colleges of languages and Education for women?” as shown in table 2.

For the third aim, results showed that the calculated T-value was (0.119) which is lower than the tabulated T-value (1.99) at (88) degrees of freedom therefore, the answer to the third question of the present study which states: “What are the significant differences between students’ perspectives about essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments at the college of language and those at the College of Education for women?”, is that there are no statistically significant differences in colleges sample between Students' Perspectives about essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching in English Departments as shown in table 3.

Conclusion

The results of the present research showed that there are many essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching as stated by their students such as: being positive, teaching English to be used in and out the virtual classrooms, enjoying online teaching, being flexible, punctual, etc. The results revealed that there are no statistically significant differences between male and female students’ perspectives about essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments at both colleges as well as there are no statistically significant differences between students’ perspectives about essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching at English departments at the college of language and those at the College of Education for women. The above debate leads us to the conclusion that college language professors and their EFL students may share some common ground and different perspectives on the criteria of an effective online language instructor. Language instructors who care about their student's success should, therefore, be curious to learn what other professionals in their field value most and what their clients want most. Also, they need to be more positive and energetic through online teaching especially because they are dealing with their students through solid devices, which means and requires extraordinary efforts to gain the desired aims from their teaching. Using different techniques such as interactive games, recorded videos, oral discussions, etc. may help in delivering effective online teaching. College professors are the primary source of language available to students, their greater knowledge and proficiency in the language can also aid students in overcoming difficulties with their communicative abilities. Moreover, attending to students' needs will necessitate that professors offer individualized instruction as much as possible to cater to the idiosyncratic learning styles of different students (which requires a greater emphasis on educational psychology). This latter concern will be addressed more effectively if professors are willing to consider the level of their students and use the appropriate techniques and procedures at the appropriate proficiency level. However, this will only occur if professors are sufficiently committed to their teaching duties by rigorously preparing for the battlefield. The present study is limited to the students in four levels of English departments at the College of Educational for
Women and the College of Languages at Baghdad University specifically students who study virtually through the academic year 2021-2022.

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References

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**Appendices**

**Appendix A**. *A constructed questionnaire for discovering essential traits of influential professors in virtual teaching*

Please carefully review the following list. Choose the response that best reflects your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>An Influential Professors in Virtual Teaching is someone who should</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Be positive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Have a high level of proficiency in English vocabulary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Well prepared for the online lecturing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Follow specific syllabus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Use varieties methods and techniques in teaching suitable to each topic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Teach English to be used in and out of the virtual classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item No.</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Appendix B. Weighted mean and weighted percentage**
## Essential Traits of Influential Professors in Virtual Teaching

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>30</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>34</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>42</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.855</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.877</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Efficiency of Metaverse Platforms in Language Learning Based on Jordanian Young Learners’ Perceptions

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Abstract
This study aims to collect young Jordanian learners’ opinions about the efficiency of using Metaverse platforms in language learning, focusing on the system's perceived trialability, complexity, observability, and compatibility. It also aims to determine if it is appropriate for the future or should be used currently. The significance of the current study was to analyze the various technological changes that have occurred in the field of language learning to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of these changes on the students’ learning procedures of languages.

To achieve the study's primary goal, the researcher conducted the research during the academic years 2021-2022 on a sample of 50 high school students from different Jordanian schools. The study adopted a mixed-method approach, qualitative and quantitative. The researcher collected data from the participants through a refereed survey and various interviews conducted after the survey. Most young learners indicated that the Metaverse platforms could be used in various educational disciplines and fields. It could improve their knowledge of the language, and it could make the language course more enjoyable. However, they focused on the idea that they need more time to be ready to use Metaverse platforms in language learning, especially with oral language skills. The young learners believed the Metaverse platform has various advantages and could be used in the classroom soon. However, they noted that it could make learning challenging and distracting as it violates their class discipline.

Keywords: Education, language, Metaverse platforms, perceptions, young Jordanian learners,

Introduction

Due to the rapid emergence and evolution of social media and the Internet, researchers and computer scientists have been searching for new areas of innovation in virtual environments. These new technologies allow them to create better digital media content. The concept of Metaverse was first used in a science fiction novel written by Stephenson in 1992, which provided a 3D virtual environment. Through the creation of the Metaverse, individuals could interact and communicate with each other over the Internet. It has since been regarded as a world that has enhanced both space and physical Reality (Sari et al., 2020).

This concept allows users to imagine a variety of digital and real-world mirrors of the world, both non-existent and existent, for various purposes. Numerous studies have been conducted on using Metaverse in educational settings (Chen & Zhang, 2022). In 2009, researchers used it to create a problem-based learning environment that allows students and teachers to explore different ideas and solutions in the virtual world (Narin, 2021).

Using Metaverse, students can develop an interest in learning styles different from traditional methods. In a study conducted by Jung and Jeon, they noted that Metaverse could help improve students' immersion and motivation (Yang et al., 2022). Other studies conducted by Huh 2020 explored the Metaverse's importance in developing invariant fields of study. These studies focused on using Metaverse in real-life experiments (Huh, 2022).

To better understand the role of the Metaverse in developing learning styles, a conceptual model is necessary. This model will analyze the various aspects of the system and its effectiveness. It will also reflect the personal innovativeness and satisfaction of the users. The factors that influence the personal innovativeness of users are the ease of use and usefulness of the system (Jovanović & Milosavljević, 2022).

This study aims to collect students' opinions and thoughts about the potential use of Metaverse platforms in learning languages. It also explores their concerns about its practicality and potential impact on their future. Through answering the main study question: what is the impact of using the Metaverse platform as a tool in learning language?

The researcher aims to find out what kinds of features the platform offers and their perceived utility.

The study aimed to collect data about 50 high school students in Jordan from 2021 to 2022. Through a mixed-method research design, the researcher gathered information from the participants. In addition to the survey, the researcher could conduct interviews after the study.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Metaverse: An Overview

The term Metaverse was used to describe a fictional world where users would create and appear as avatars to imitate their interactions with other people in real life (Article & Narin, 2021). In this world, users interact with each other in a 3D virtual world. The characteristics of Metaverse, such as interactivity, persistence, and corporeity, make it an exceptional tool for creating a collaborative and autonomous learning environment. Its virtual world allows users to interact with each other and gain access to various resources. This dynamic setting also sets the stage for an innovative educational environment (Kanematsu et al., 2014).

The goal of the Metaverse system is to provide a continuous connection between the users and the virtual world. It eliminates the need for users to move to the real world. Another feature that allows users to create a more realistic environment is the ability to interact with the virtual
world's various avatars. The persistence feature is essential, allowing users to keep track of their conversations and data even after they leave the virtual world. This is because the changes brought about by the evolution of the Metaverse environment require an educated workforce and new organizational leadership models (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2022b).

Researchers can gain a deeper understanding of human behavior in an educational setting through virtual environments. This can help them design effective interventions that will help improve the quality of Education. For instance, educational institutions can improve their teaching and learning by providing a flexible environment that allows students and faculty to communicate with each other. In addition, educational institutions can improve their teaching and learning by providing a flexible environment that allows students and faculty to communicate with each other. This concept is also supported by the Metaverse, which refers to merging a real university with a virtual one (Collins, 2008).

Unfortunately, the single-stage analysis method used for analyzing various aspects of a project failed to support advanced decision-making capabilities. A study conducted by Sohaib and colleagues in 2020 revealed that the traditional method of performing a single-stage data analysis was not feasible due to the lack of linear relationships between model factors (Sohaib, Hussain, Asif, Ahmad, & Mazzara, 2020). The other main issue with this method was that it only highlighted linear relations between the variables.

The Metaverse system is related to the multiple learning systems that enhance educational institutions' teaching and learning styles. Recent studies have looked into various topics, such as gender differences and variations in students' attitudes. In particular, studies are focused on using social media in a blended-type learning setting to assess the effectiveness of a project. Due to the increasing number of technologies used in this type of learning, researchers must develop additional tools to track students' performance. One of these tools is eye-tracking technology. This method can monitor students' reading performance (Chen & Zhang, 2022; Sohaib et al., 2020). The increasing popularity of virtual reality has led to the emergence of a Metaverse system that will significantly impact the future of Education. Numerous studies have shown that virtual reality can positively and negatively impact the learning environment.

2.2. Metaverse in Education

According to a study conducted by Preston, the Metaverse is a new social form that combines multiple modern technologies (Preston, 2021). The rise of the Metaverse will significantly impact different aspects of human life, such as Education. Although technology will continue to play a significant role in developing the world's education system, a good education is still expected to be accompanied by technological advancements.

Metaverse is a multi-technology platform that can potentially transform how Education is conducted. It combines the latest technologies, such as Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality, to create a new world of learning. Several years ago, the concept of Augmented reality emerged in various applications. These allow users to see and interact with images in three dimensions. In some applications, users can scan an image, which will appear as if it is accurate (Jeon, 2021).

Although Metaverse has been used to describe various virtual reality-based technologies, how they will affect Education needs to be clarified. The world of Education is already influenced by existing technology. Various gadgets and media that can facilitate learning and work for humans have been created as part of the Metaverse. According to Wang et al., the platform aims
to create an immersive and self-sustaining virtual workspace for individuals (Lee, Woo, & Yu, 2022).

Even though the world of Education is already heavily affected by technology, it is still vital that the sector continues to develop and integrate the latest innovations to produce high-quality Education. Several organizations, such as universities and corporate offices, have started using the Metaverse technology. The widespread use of this technology has made it an essential component of the social networking site Facebook's future applications (Ortega-Rodríguez, 2022).

One of the positive effects of the Metaverse technology is its potential to improve the quality of Education. Through virtual reality, students can gain a deeper understanding of a theory. It can also allow them to interact with objects that they learn through. The widespread use of Metaverse technology has made it an essential component of the social networking site Facebook's future applications. The world is expected to eventually become three-dimensional (Siyaev & Jo, 2021b).

Even though Metaverse technology is already widely used, it is still important to note that its potential to transform Education is still immense. In the 21st century, the effects of this technology will significantly affect the way methods, techniques, and learning systems are conducted. Despite the technological limitations in the education world, people continue to embrace the Metaverse technology. Several universities in different countries, such as BrainSTEM University, the University of Cyprus, and Khon Kaen University, have started using the platform for Education. In Indonesia, Muhammadiyah University has started using the Metaverse technology (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2022a).

Through the Metaverse platform, we can connect Education and the future of virtual learning. Many possibilities will happen. To ensure that the learning process is still effective, teachers must adapt to the changes brought about by the current situation. Online learning has replaced face-to-face classes in most schools. This method of Education is commonly used in schools that require students and teachers to interact with each other on various social media platforms (Damar, 2021).

The lack of literacy between students and teachers is one of the main factors contributing to schools' low performance. The Metaverse platform should be used to connect students and teachers and improve education quality. On the other hand, teachers should provide a direct and authentic touch to students. The traditional role of schools has diminished due to the emergence of virtual learning facilities. Since teachers no longer have to be present in the classrooms to carry out their duties, the building is no longer necessary. As technology develops new immersive worlds, teachers must be equipped with the necessary skills to teach these new learners (Siyaev & Jo, 2021a).

Schools can be more beautiful and complete in the virtual world, with more facilities and a more comfortable atmosphere. However, the lack of interaction between students and teachers in the real world can affect the bond between students and teachers. This is because, in the virtual world, teachers and students only interact with each other through their avatars. Besides the usual activities related to the teaching and learning process, such as creating lesson plans and distributing textbooks, the Metaverse platform can also manage other administrative tasks. However, it still needs to be clarified if this system will be implemented in the country (Preston, 2021).

Education activities in the virtual world can negatively impact the relationships between students and teachers. For instance, if all activities are conducted in the virtual world, the lack of interaction between teachers and students can lead to the loss of social warmth. Compared to the
real world, the meta world allows students to feel more comfortable. However, encountering specific environments and people can also cause them different feelings. Because of the technological advancements in Education, teachers are still needed to facilitate and direct learning (Getchell, Oliver, Miller, & Allison, 2010; Narin, 2021).

Despite the availability of virtual teachers, it is still important to note that the real world will still not be as beautiful as the virtual world. It will require a balance between the teaching and learning process in the future. In 2022, Dewantara and colleagues identified the various disadvantages of the Metaverse platform. These include its high-quality graphics and complexity, which require much technology to operate correctly. It also costs much money to access the necessary tools to support it (Huh, 2022).

The emergence of Metaverse has opened up a new chapter in integrating technology into the education industry. Despite the various advantages of the meta world, it still needs to be determined if schools must adopt it. The Metaverse platform will eventually be used in the education industry as technology develops. It is now up to the teachers to develop their skills and knowledge about using technology to maximize its effectiveness (Lee et al., 2022).

2.3. Factors of Users' Satisfaction

The following describes a user's satisfaction and perception of an innovation's features, such as compatibility, complexity, and trialability. This tool is used to evaluate the adoption of new technology. Before a user's preference is established, expectations are typically formed regarding the perceived attributes of innovation. A user's expectations are usually established during the first stage of the adoption process. This stage indicates that the user's positive perception of innovation will likely be confirmed. However, if the expectations are not confirmed, the user might not adopt the new technology (Jovanović & Milosavljević, 2022).

This could lead to a reduction in the user's level of satisfaction and prevent them from continuing with the use of the innovation. A user's satisfaction level can be categorized as transaction-specific or cumulative. The former refers to the positive evaluation of the technology after experiencing it. On the other hand, the latter is the evaluation of the technology's overall satisfaction. According to Jones and Suh., 2000, the transaction-specific perspective is the main factor contributing to a user's overall satisfaction (Yang et al., 2022).

The perceived trialability of a new technology is also related to the intent to use it. Various studies have used this term to describe the positive impact of innovation on adopting a system. It refers to the ease of carrying out operations related to the innovation. Other concepts, such as the level of effort required to implement the technology and the risk involved in the operation, are additionally included in this concept. The perceived ability of new technology to be noticed and appreciated by other users is called perceived observability. This level of recognition can influence the adoption of the innovation. The idea of visibility can also stimulate discussion among other users (Jovanović & Milosavljević, 2022).

According to Greenhalgh et al., the compatibility factor is the degree to which users can readily adopt an innovation (Lee et al., 2022). This concept is also related to compatibility, which indicates that people are more likely to adopt an innovation if it is compatible with their existing practices. The perceived compatibility of new technology is also related to the learner's perception of its compatibility with their backgrounds, standards, and involvements. This concept suggests that users can quickly adopt the technology if it fits their preferences.
Studies have shown that if a new technology is perceived to be in line with a user’s needs, experiences, and values, the level of compatibility is high. The user's perception of the technology’s practicality can explain this positive relationship between the perceived usefulness and the compatibility factor. The complexity of under-used innovations is also referred to as the degree of difficulty that a user encounters when using new technology. This concept can describe the extent of the learner's perceived difficulty, which can affect their learning. Previous studies have shown that end-users avoid using new technology if they perceive it as complex (Huh, 2022).

According to Tobin, Hardgrave, and other researchers, complexity can negatively affect the use of technology. It is, therefore, crucial that the design and implementation of new technology are simple to make it easier for the users to use. Another factor that can influence the adoption of new technology is the perceived complexity of its features. This suggests that the complexity of innovation can prevent users from quickly adopting it (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2022b).

Despite the various studies conducted on the effectiveness of factors such as trialability, complexity, and observability, researchers have found that these properties can significantly impact the perceived ease of use and enjoyment of new technology. There needs to be more literature regarding the relationship between the perceived complexity, trialability, and observability of new technology and the satisfaction of its users. This study tries to fill this gap by examining the impact of these factors on the adoption and satisfaction of new technology.

2.4. Challenges in Using Metaverse in Education

The rise of the Metaverse is regarded as the next evolution of the Internet. It allows users to work, play, and communicate in a virtual world. With the help of powerful edge computing and wireless connections, Virtual Reality VR users can experience the world of virtual reality through various providers. Virtual reality systems are used in various ways to enhance the efficiency and safety of business and Education. They are also used to study and develop new learning experiences. Unfortunately, due to the complexity of these systems, they are not always accessible through fast internet connections (Huh, 2022).

Besides being expensive, simulation can be time-consuming and prevent users from using VR-based applications. Since many countries are still offline, students might need help to finish their studies or interact with the materials within the allotted time frame. The need for targeted students and the unwillingness of many learners to enroll in online courses can prevent the educational process from working correctly. If countries do not migrate their systems to the Metaverse, they cannot communicate effectively and efficiently (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2022a).

Various companies and governments have already started using the Metaverse and are expected to continue. Developers, architects, and tailors are also expected to collaborate and create a simulation of the system they want to share. This should involve working on the interaction, background functionalities, and systematic presentation. Although Augmented reality is already being used in various educational activities, it has yet to be ready to replace traditional classes. Instead, it will be combined with other learning tools to provide a more creative environment (Ortega-Rodríguez, 2022).

Although the Metaverse can explain complicated concepts in a way that simulates emotions and processes, only some of its materials and courses can be taught or displayed in the virtual world. This includes religious and physical activities. Although the benefits of using the Metaverse are still widely acknowledged, practicing may be a different story. For instance, while students can get a great experience by learning about tornadoes or volcanoes in a virtual environment, they do
not need to take special precautions. Conversely, in complicated surgery, patients need to learn all at once, which can be lengthy.

The Metaverse can provide various services, such as educational applications that can explain complicated concepts in a way that simulates emotions and processes. One of the main issues that can prevent students from using the Metaverse is the practice of learning. For instance, in civil engineering, many topics can be covered in lessons, but practice is more important. Students can experience the effects of errors and failures in real projects and labs. However, practicing in the real world can be different since variables can always be revealed during practice. The complexity of embedded systems and the increasing cost of technology are some of the factors that can prevent students from using this type of technology. Many students will take their studies independently when studying costs become high.

3. Method

The preferred method for this study was a mixed approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods. This method allowed for a more comprehensive understanding and improvement of research issues by taking advantage of both approaches. The quantitative portion of the study was carried out through a questionnaire that the researcher prepared. The case study was used to gather information about the young learners' perceptions concerning the effectiveness of using Metaverse platforms in language learning on the Metaverse.

3.1. Study participants

The researcher collected the demographic information of 50 high school students in Jordanian schools, ages 15-17, during the 2021-2022 academic period.

3.1.1. Demographics of Study Sample

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), a case study is a qualitative Research focusing on a single case. This type of research is usually conducted with a limited number of samples. The data collected from the participants are shown in Table one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Category</th>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study was conducted on 50 students, 22 (44%) female and 28 (56%) male. Regarding their age groups, those aged 16 were the most common participants, with 26 (52%) students, while those aged 15 and above were the least with 5 (10%) participants.

3.1.2. Research Instruments

The researcher used the literature review to develop the interview questionnaire. The quantitative part of the study involved the use of an opinion survey. A structured interview form was also used for the qualitative part. After multiple experts analyzed the questionnaire, it was given its final form.
The questionnaire's first section comprises questions about the participants' demographic information. It also has four questions about the Metaverse. Additionally, six Likert-type questions deal with using the platform in the classroom. The researcher validated the questionnaire's reliability with an accuracy of 0.89.

3.1.3. Statistical analysis

The quantitative data collected in this study were analyzed using the SPSS 24 statistical program. The qualitative data were analyzed through the content analysis method. The participants' names and opinions were coded according to the ethical rules.

The data analysis's reliability was calculated using the formula recommended by Miles & Huberman in 2015. The result of the analysis revealed that the reliability value of the data was 86%. Regarding literature, a reliable reliability coefficient of 70% or above is standard for research. Data analysis was conducted to avoid generalizations and comments. Some of the students' views were directly quoted to avoid these.

3.1.4. Research procedures

The qualitative part of the study involved using an interview form with four questions. The researcher meticulously ensured the questions were flexible, open-ended, and transparent. The experts' opinions were considered before the interview form was created. Following a pilot study, the researcher made necessary adjustments to the questionnaire.

4. Results

4.1. Questionnaire Data Analysis

The students were asked to assess the educational value of the Metaverse. The results of the survey can be found in Table 2.

Table 2. The percentages of knowledge of students participating in the study about the metaverse learning platforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever used the Metaverse platform before?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would you like to learn different languages using the Metaverse platforms?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Efficiency of Metaverse Platforms in Language Learning

AlSaleem

Do you expect that Metaverse platforms will make learning language more fun?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>33</th>
<th>66%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study used a five-answer questionnaire to gather information about the various aspects of the Metaverse to learn more about its use in learning language. The study revealed that most of the students (82%) who participated in it had never used the Metaverse platform. However, over 70% of the students said they would like to learn different languages via the Metaverse platform. 66% of the students claimed that the platform would enable them to learn languages in a fun way.

Table 3 shows that students agree that Metaverse can help them improve their language knowledge. The average score of those who believe it can do so is 3.3, with a p-value of 0.0020. They also think it can make the course more entertaining and motivate them to finish their studies with an average mean of 3.9 and p-value of 0.0000. The study results revealed that most students agree that the Metaverse has educational benefits in learning languages, with a mean of 3.4 and a p-value of 0.0020. However, they need more time to use it in a high school course.

Table 3. The various aspects of the Metaverse Platforms in language learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Metaverse can help me improve my language knowledge.</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>0.0020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The content of the course can be more entertaining with the help of the Metaverse platform.</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using the Metaverse platform can boost the motivation of those seeking to learn a language.</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>0.0002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The use of the Metaverse platform can be used in various courses at the high school level.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.0010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Shortly, the use of the Metaverse platform in language learning will be widely used in schools.</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.1. Interviews’ analysis

During the interviews, students were asked about the advantages of using this technology in various theoretical and oral courses. One student noted that it could be used in various language-learning courses.

One of the statements made by the students was that it was better suited for use in theoretical courses than in conversation skills learning; another student noted that it could be used in language learning courses such as those dealing with conversation. While discussing the advantages of using this technology in various theoretical courses, all three students noted that it needed to be more suitable for Education. Three of them also disagreed about using the Metaverse platforms in their lessons. The results of the open-ended question, which was used to gather students' views on the advantages of Metaverse in their lessons, showed that some students stated that it provided a fun learning environment, increased interest in the lesson, and reduced the time spent in class.
One of the students commented on the advantages of Metaverse by saying that it made the classes more fun. Another student noted that it increased the focus on the instructions. Another student said that it could help improve the students' visual understanding. Five of the students involved in the study stated that Metaverse platforms did not provide them with any benefits in the classroom. Eight students should have provided their views on the technology's advantages.

Some students noted that using Metaverse made learning difficult, while others said it was distracting. They also said that it could cause them to lose concentration. These disadvantages could prevent them from maintaining discipline in the classroom. Three students stated that it could cause them to lose focus and negatively affect their relationships. Another student said that it could also ruin their eyesight. Two students noted that the application would only work effectively if the Internet were strong. Another student said the need for more connectivity would prevent students from using the technology efficiently.

### 4.2. Results summary

To learn more about the platform's various features, the study conducted a 5-question questionnaire. Most students who participated in the study said they had never used Metaverse. Over 70% of them said they would love to learn a new language using the platform, and over half of them claimed that it would allow them to learn in a fun way.

The students noted that Metaverse helped improve their learning experience by making it more fun. Another said it increased their focus on the instructions and visual understanding. However, five students who participated in the study claimed that the platform provided them with no benefits.

Some of the students claimed that using Metaverse hurt their learning experience. They said it made it hard to focus and could distract them from their studies. Three of them stated that it could also affect their relationships. One student noted that it could affect their eyesight because it blocks their vision. Another student said they need more connectivity to prevent them from using the platform efficiently.

### 5. Discussion

The researcher seeks to discover what sets the platform apart and how it perceives its utility. The study was conducted on 50 high school students from Jordan from 2021 to 2022. Using a mixed-method approach, the researcher collected data on the students. Interviews were also conducted after the study. The researchers then tried to answer the questions about the impact of the metaverse platform on the learners’ language learning experience.

The study revealed that most students who used the platform had never used it before. Over 70% said they would like to learn a language using it, and more than half said it would let them have fun while learning. The researchers also conducted a 5-question survey to learn more about the platform's various features. According to the students, Metaverse improved their learning experience by making it more fun. It also helped them focus on visual understanding and instructions. However, some of them claimed that it did not benefit them. Some students noted that it made it hard to focus and keep their studies in order. They also said that it distracted them from their relationships. Another student said that they needed more connectivity to use the platform efficiently.
The objective of this study was to find out what young learners think about the efficiency of using Metaverse platforms in language learning and to analyze the various technological changes that have occurred in the field of language learning. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the effects of these changes on the students, various interview forms and questionnaires were used. The study results revealed that students had yet to use the Metaverse before. This is because they need to learn about its various features and are not used to its effectiveness in the classroom. Another reason why they do not use it is that it is not widely used. More research should be done on its effectiveness in teaching and learning (Park & Kim, 2022).

Due to the widespread use of the Metaverse by various technology companies and social media platforms, it has started to attract a wider audience. This has become apparent in computer engineering and other similar areas (Huh, 2022). The study results revealed that most students wanted to use the Metaverse in their classrooms. They believed it would provide them with a meaningful and permanent learning experience. In addition, they said that it would make the classroom fun and encourage them to participate in the classroom (Lee et al., 2022). It will also help them develop their skills in using this technology (Ortega-Rodríguez, 2022).

Metaverse's multiple functions will allow it to quickly gain widespread attention within the education sector. Although students hesitate to use the Metaverse in their studies, they believe it can be used in specific courses. They also noted that it could be used effectively in other fields, such as Education, business, and e-commerce. Virtual and Augmented Reality are two of the most recent innovations in the field of Education (Jovanović & Milosavljević, 2022).

It is also believed that the Metaverse can be utilized in various fields related to these technologies. Although the platform's initial applications were mainly focused on the entertainment industry, it has also been widely used in various academic fields (Lee et al., 2022). For instance, the concept has been used in various subjects, such as music and literature. According to Akour, the Metaverse can be used in various fields, such as mathematics, engineering, aircraft instruction, and more. It is expected to play a vital role in defense, aviation, and health, which will soon become part of our daily lives (Yang et al., 2022).

The study also revealed that the students think the Metaverse can help them improve their knowledge of a subject. They noted that it could also make the content more enjoyable and encourage them to participate in the classroom. They believe that the platform will be used in higher Education shortly. Despite the Metaverse's ethical and technical limitations, it is still considered a valuable tool for boosting student motivation. The study also revealed that the students think the Metaverse can help them improve their knowledge of a subject. They noted that it could also make the content more exciting and encourage them to participate in the classroom. It was also found that the platform can help students increase their curiosity and improve their learning process.

The students also believe that the Metaverse can be used as a support tool for distance learning. It can help them improve their understanding of a subject by allowing them to interact with it at any time and place. The students claimed that the Metaverse could also help improve the classroom's efficiency by increasing students' interest and attention. It can also teach dangerous and expensive topics that augmented reality cannot show.

It is also widely believed that the Metaverse can help students improve their understanding of complex subjects by allowing them to visualize their ideas in three dimensions. This technology could lead to the development of effective and efficient methods for Education. The students also noted that the Metaverse has various disadvantages and technical issues that prevent it from being...
used effectively in Education. These include the lack of Internet access, the technical issues related to the application, and the hardware limitations (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2022b).

Unfortunately, the Metaverse has various negative aspects. Some of these include its addiction to technology and screen addiction. It can also interfere with social life and prevent users from communicating properly (Yang et al., 2022). The students also noted that the malicious and unconscious use of the Metaverse could prevent them from learning. They said it could cause various problems in the classroom, such as noise and disorder.

When choosing the appropriate applications for the Metaverse, the developers must consider the features of the platform and the student level. To prevent these issues, it is essential that the developers thoroughly test the Metaverse's features and applications before they are used in the classroom. It is also recommended that the platform's infrastructure be brought to a level appropriate for the type of environment it is used in (Jovanović & Milosavljević, 2022).

The Metaverse should also be used to present various concepts, especially expensive or intangible ones effectively. These negative aspects can prevent the Metaverse from being used effectively in schools and create problems for the teachers and students who use it. To ensure that the technology is used effectively, it is essential that the developers thoroughly remove these issues.

When choosing the appropriate applications for the Metaverse, the developers must consider the features of the platform and the student level. In addition, it is essential that the developers thoroughly test the Metaverse's features and applications before they are used in the classroom. This will help prevent potential issues and improve the experience of the users. In addition to expensive or intangible concepts, it is also recommended that the Metaverse be used to present other dangerous or costly topics.

5.1. Conclusion
This research aims to gather the students’ opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of using Metaverse platforms when learning a language. It also aims to explore their concerns about the platform’s practicality. The researcher will look into the features and perceived utility of the platform. The study results revealed that most students who used the Metaverse platform for the first time had yet to experience it. Over 70% of them would like to learn a new language with the platform, and more than half said it would allow them to have fun learning. To learn more about its various features, the researchers conducted a 5-question survey. Many of the students claimed the Metaverse platform negatively affected their learning experience. According to them, it makes it hard for them to keep focused, and it can distract them. Some of them also stated that it affected their relationships. Another student noted that they might need more connectivity to use it effectively.

5.2. Recommendations
The goal of this study was to find out what students think about the use of the Metaverse in language learning. It is important to note that the results of the study should be carefully evaluated by policymakers, researchers, and practitioners. Students and educators will use the study results to learn more about the various aspects of the Metaverse and how it can be used in educational settings. They will also be used to develop future studies. The Metaverse is still in its infancy and has yet to be widely used in educational settings.
In the future, researchers should conduct more studies to analyze the Metaverse’s effects on variables such as retention, academic performance, and attitude. They will also be able to look into the factors that prevent the Metaverse from being preferred in Education. Besides this, future studies will be able to analyze the student’s satisfaction with the technology by looking into their educational level and geographic region.

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References


**Appendices**

**Appendix A**

**Questionnaire**

1. **Gender:**
   - Female
   - Male

2. **Age:**
   - 15
   - 16
   - 17

3. **Have you ever used the Metaverse platform before?**
   - Yes
   - No
   - Undecided

4. **Would you like to learn a different language using the Metaverse platform?**
   - Yes
   - No
   - Undecided
5. Do you expect the Metaverse platform to make learning a language more fun?
   o Yes
   o No
   o Undecided

6. In your opinion, which of the following statements is correct (you can choose more than one):
   o Metaverse platform can help me improve my knowledge of a language.
   o The content of the course can be more entertaining with the help of the Metaverse platform.
   o The use of Metaverse can boost the motivation of those who are seeking to learn a language.
   o Metaverse can be used in various courses at the high school level.
   o Shortly, the use of Metaverse will be widely used in classrooms.

Appendix B

Interview

During the interview, students were asked to answer three questions.
1. What are the advantages of using the Metaverse platform in language learning?
2. What are the disadvantages of using the Metaverse platform instead of real classrooms?
3. In what part of language learning can Metaverse be used?
Pragmatic Awareness of Speech Acts, Politeness, and Grice Maxims of Iraqi EFL Postgraduate Students

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Abstract
This study examines postgraduate students' awareness of pragmatic aspects, including Grice Maxims, Politeness, and Direct and Indirect forms of speech. According to Paul Grice's theory of implicature, which is considered one of the most important contributions to pragmatics, this paper discusses how postgraduate students can meet the cooperative principle when communicating effectively. It also outlines how does politeness principles influence obeying or violating the maxims and how is the use of direct or indirect forms of utterances prompted by politeness. Sixteen master's students of Linguistics and Literature were asked to take a multiple-choice test. The test will be represented along with the interpretation of each option given in each item. The initial point that the study investigates if belonging to two different groups (Linguistics and Literature) will result in various performances; this will be supplied with a clear-cut answer in the practical part. The theoretical part summarizes a literature review of the discoursal aspects understudy. In addition to clarifying maxims of quality, quantity, relation, and manner, the theoretical part discusses direct and indirect speech and how indirect speech is used to communicate perlocutionary effects. The conclusion will summarize the whole study by drawing upon the theoretical and practical parts simultaneously and providing further reasons for the variability and choice of one option over another.

Keywords: direct speech, Grice maxims, indirect speech, politeness, pragmatics awareness, Iraqi EFL postgraduate students

Introduction

Pragmatics forms the basis of this study. A pragmatic approach focuses on language structure and principles. It examines the relationship between language and context, which is encoded in a language's structure (Levinson, 1983). Pragmatists can analyze discourse using implicature or conversational principles, such as Grice's Cooperative Principle (CP) and Leech's Politeness Principle (PP). According to Leech (1983), pragmatics relates the sense and force of an utterance. Depending on the situation, this force may be direct or indirect. In pragmatics, information exchange is the main purpose of communication. Most people cooperate to convey their intentions and implicit meanings through their words. Thus, conversations are cooperative attempts based on shared goals and common ground.

According to Austin's early pragmatic theory, a distinction should be drawn between what is said and what is meant. Later on Grice, who is mainly Austin’s student, attempted to go further. That is, to systematize how a hearer gets from what is said to what is meant, from expressed to implied meaning. Grice formulates what is now called the cooperative principle, “Make your conversation on contribution as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged” (1975, p. 45).

Politeness is also considered to be one of the essential principles of the discoursal aspects of effective communication. Modern studies on politeness is influenced by Paul Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP). Due to the CP, meaning-making interactants tend to collaborate by following four maxims: Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner. If one or more of these Maxims is flouted to trigger polite inferences, politeness is triggered. For example, a speech partner might perceive one's sympathy by being more verbose than usual when delivering bad news. Therefore, one may break the Maxim of Quantity by saying more than necessary, but the other may perceive it as polite. Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983) are two fundamental theories that use a means-to-end approach to explaining politeness.

To this day, Brown and Levinson's framework continues to have a significant impact on this field, providing a universalistic model to capture politeness across languages and cultures. Politeness behavior, according to Brown and Levinson, is a highly logical phenomenon that occurs when the speaker threatens the hearer's public image or face. Politeness emerges with the other's face needs in mind: a speech act might threaten the other's "negative face," their need to be left alone, or "positive face," their wish to be recognized; the speaker picks politeness "strategies" based on the other's perceived face requirements.

The objective of this study is to raise postgraduate students' awareness of discursive aspects, which can be accomplished through pragmatic competence. It also aims to highlight the importance of pragmatic competence, which has an essential role in communicating effectively. Therefore, the study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent do post-graduate students observe the cooperative principle when communicating effectively?
2. For what purposes does the speaker use the CP and PP maxims in their conversations regarding illocutionary acts?

The theoretical part of this work consists of three parts: the first one presents a summary of Grice's maxims theory as well as a brief explanation of the cooperative principles, which describe how people interact with one another. The second part describes the concepts of politeness and its strategies and how these strategies can be used by people to maintain a balance in protecting the positive and the negative faces of each other and acting appropriately in social interactions. The third section presents a summary of speech act theory and an explanation of the speech acts related to this study illustrating direct and indirect speech and how perlocutionary effect is communicated using indirect forms of speech. The practical side explicates how the test will be formulated to suit the purposes and aims of the current study. The test will be illustrated along with the interpretation of each option given in each item. Then, the section on data analysis, discussion, and results will be as the following. It will present the choices which the postgraduate students have made and why. The results will show that other elements may lead to mastering discourse means instead of being restricted only to theoretical (textbooks) aspects. They will provide justifications for these variations among students concerning discoursal awareness. Finally, the conclusion will sum up the whole study by drawing upon the theoretical part and the practical part, simultaneously providing further reasons that underlie the variability and the choice of one option rather than the other.

Literature Review

Grice Maxims

The purpose of language is to convey and inform something through communication. Language is primarily used to transmit information, explain feelings, and maintain social relationships, so maintaining life is vital. Besides that, language is a way to communicate with others, which is done through speaking. For a conversation to occur, both speakers and listeners must be present. Grice’s four conversational maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relation, and Manner (Grice, 1989) are general rules that speakers adhere to, in that it is conspicuous if a speaker infringes upon such a maxim. In that situation, if the literal meaning of a speech is unsuitable or makes no sense to the hearer, the hearer will infer that there is a nonliteral meaning "behind" the utterance, which fulfills all of the conversational maxims once again. This process operates because of Grice’s cooperation principle, which is the most crucial colloquial concept over all others. (Bublitz, 2011) According to Grice (1975), participants are expected to make a "conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which they are engaged" (p.45).

Cooperative Principle

Cooperation requires that what people say in a conversation furthers the conversation's purpose. There is a reciprocal relationship between cooperative principles: speakers observe them,
and listeners assume that speakers are watching them. This allows for the possibility of implicatures, which are meanings not explicitly conveyed in what is said, but that can nonetheless be inferred. Grice proposed the notion of conversation according to the mutual code of cooperation. (Grice, 1975) In other words, the cooperative principle tries to work fundamental principles significantly by Humans when they speak (Davies, 2008).

Also, Grice offered a general rule that members in discussion ought to take after. In this way, he used the term "implicature." Conversational implicature causes us with the goal that our conditions succeed more than if they were actually "told," because our verbal trades are, at any rate to some degree, a cooperative effort; "each member in their perceiving of a typical reason commonly got heading and so on. "Thought maxims (and sub-adages), spoken to in the execution, add to comes about as to helful general rule." (Klemencic & Vogrincic, 2014, p. 2)

Davies (2008) says that when the superficial meaning of a speech does not come with Grice's maxim. Still, the situation offers that the speaker is interrogated with the cooperative principle, we must go away from the superficial to discover the implicit meaning of speaking (cited in Hadi, 2013). Few authors have hesitated to use Grice's conversational maxims. Like; Horn (1984) specified just three maxims, and Sperber and Wilson (1986) neglected the texture of maxims and condensed on the concept of relevance. Maxims indicate what members need to do with a specific end goal to chat in a maximally effective, balanced, and cooperative way (Levinson, 2007). Speakers can be said to cooperate in a conversation or create a pleasant conversation if they follow the whole maxims. Consequently, if they do not follow one of the maxims, they might be called uncooperative or violate the maxim in the discussion, or create an unharmonious conversation directly. But if they beak the maxims, they might be able to create unified communication because everyone will not tell someone what they need to know. Someone may have to break the maxims to maintain social harmony. The principle describes how effective communication in conversation is achieved in social everyday situations, especially in daily interaction. Grice has proposed four maxims:

*Maxim of Quantity*

In the Maxim of Quantity, speakers should give as much information as is necessary and should not provide too little or too much information. According to Grice, this maxim explains a certain kind of regularity in conversational behavior about the amount of information provided at each turn. The maxim of quantity refers to how much information is shared in conversations. During a conversation, the maxim of quantity requires you to:

i. Contribute as much information as you can (for exchanges).

ii. Do not add more information than is necessary to your contribution. An example of violating the rule is shown in the following:

A: Do you have school tomorrow?

B: I have classes all day, but I must go to the doctor when I'm finished.
In the example, B violates the maxim of quantity because B provides too much information rather than yes or no answers (Davies, 2008).

**Maxim of Quality**

The speaker is supposed to be sincere, to be saying something that they believe corresponds to reality. It is assumed that they will not make any false statements or claims for which they lack evidence. According to Grice, this maxim explains certain kinds of regularity in conversational behavior regarding the authenticity of the information provided at each turn. The maxim of quality requires the speakers' contribution. This maxim states:

i. Make sure your contribution is actual:

ii. Never say something you believe to be false.

iii. Never say something that you lack adequate evidence.

**Maxim of Relevant**

Maxim of relevance states that the speaker is supposed to be saying something relevant to what has been said before. Grice proposes this maxim as an explanation for a certain kind of regularity in conversational behavior concerning the relevance of the information provided at each conversation turn. When engaged in conversation, the maxim of relation needs you to be relevant. Maxim of relevance requests the speaker to provide pertinent information to the discussion, avoiding things that are not relevant to the discussion. Consider the following example:

A: How is the weather today?

B: It is rainy and cloudy.

In the example, B gives accurate information relevant to A's question (Davies, 2008).

**Maxim of Manner**

The speaker should be brief, orderly, and avoid ambiguity and obscurity. Grice presents this maxim as an explanation for a certain kind of regularity in conversational behavior according to the way information is given at each conversation turn. The maxim of manner is associated with how something is said in the conversation. When engaged in conversation, the maxim of manner requests you to be perspicuous. Example of violating the rule:

A: How is Kate today?

B: She's the usual.

In the example, B violates the maxim by responding with an ambiguous statement; the perceptions of Kate could be different (Davies, 2008). Bach and Harnish (1984) observe: “The speaker compromises the presumption (maxim) of manner (tacit) to avoid the offense to the hearer or the embarrassment to himself that explicit language would engender.” (p. 99)

**Politeness**

Politeness describes a social norm or a set of prescriptive social rules. Many linguists have aimed to research politeness, including Brown and Levinson (1987), who developed their "face theory" based on
the principles of our desire to be liked and not to be imposed. Politeness is using communicative strategies to create and maintain social harmony. This can be done in various ways:

1- Being contextually appropriate
2- Following social and cultural norms
3- Being socially positive by addressing face needs (Online Reference1).

The concept of politeness is essential in interpreting why people choose to say things in a certain way in written or spoken discourse and why they choose to:
A- Flout a maxim.
B- Convey an illocutionary act indirectly rather than directly.

Brown and Levinson (1978) talked widely about politeness. Their essential argument can be summarized as follows:
"When we enter into social relationships, we have to acknowledge and show an awareness of face. This is very much reflected in the way we interact with one another." (p. 122) The face is the public self-image.

**Politeness Strategies**

The purpose of politeness strategies is to spare the hearer's face, i.e., to avoid embarrassment or discomfort. Generally, we respect each other's self-image expectations; we consider others' feelings and do not commit Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). Face Threatening Acts are acts that violate the hearer's need to preserve their self-esteem and to be respected. For example, when you ask a classmate to lend you his class notes, you would be infringing on his right to his notes. i.e., you would be imposing on him to give you something that is his. Thus, Face Threatening Acts (FTAs) are often inevitable. Speakers can approve FTA with negative politeness that respects the hearer’s negative face. Or they can ratify the FTA with positive politeness, which respects the hearers’ positive face. Negative politeness is manifested in this study in the final fourteenth item, where the second speaker gives his account indirectly to not impose on the first speaker's privacy. The social distance is instantiated in the current study using positive face, which is reflected using mitigating devices and expression, e.g., "would you," "please," … etc. Face Threatening Act is shown in one of the options of the item where the invitation may be refuted resulting in Negative Politeness. Such acts will influence and be influenced by factors like age, social distance, degree of formality, role, and status (Paltridge, 2012).

In social interactions, people use four politeness strategies to maintain a balance between protecting the positive and negative faces of one another.
1. Off-record (Least direct- Most polite)
2. Negative politeness
3. Positive politeness
4. On record baldly (Most direct- Least polite)

These strategies would look like this if viewed continuously:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Off-record</th>
<th>Negative Politeness</th>
<th>Positive Politeness</th>
<th>On-record baldly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Least direct</td>
<td>Less direct</td>
<td>More direct</td>
<td>Most direct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most Polite</td>
<td>Very polite</td>
<td>Less polite</td>
<td>Least polite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Therefore, the less direct you are, the more polite you seem. In contrast, the blunter you express your needs, the less polite you appear. If you want to borrow your neighbor's vacuum cleaner, ask like this:

*Our vacuum cleaner*    *Could I, please, borrow your Susu, dear, I need to borrow* Get the vacuum cleaner!

---

**Off-Record Strategy**

An example about the off-record strategy:

*“Our vacuum cleaner just broke down! The floors are very dusty”*

When is this strategy appropriate? When one knows his neighbor very well, or when he knows his neighbor is the type who does not like lending their instruments and devices. In this context, there is no mention of an act to be asked. One does not say that you want to borrow the vacuum cleaner directly. The need is only hinted at, not mentioned: By hinting at it, you are very respectful of your neighbor’s autonomy. i.e., you are giving their the option of not taking the hint, and pretending that they do not understand you! This strategy respects the hearer’s possession and right to be autonomous and not violated by others.

**Positive Politeness**

This strategy is used when the social distance is less between the speaker and the hearer; they are close to each other (friends). Linguistic features which show closeness are:

1. Use a nickname addressing the hearer: “Susu”
2. Use an endearment term: “dear”
3. Use the definite article “the” instead of “your”
4. The time expression “right away”
5. Considering the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, how would the hearer feel if negative politeness was used instead?
6. The hearer would feel like a stranger because the speaker infringes on her positive face, i.e., her right to be liked and part of a group (a friend).

**On-Record Baldly**

This strategy seems to sound very impolite (e.g., give me your pen), but there are contexts in which it is the only suitable strategy such as a very close sister. In this context, the act is mentioned clearly and bluntly:”

1. Use the imperative syntactic structure (direct directive): “bring me”
2. Use the definite article “the” instead of “your”
Leech also suggested a relationship between politeness and indirectness; the more indirect/off-record a suggestion or request (for example, the 'I'm really thirsty'), the more polite the utterance is perceived to be. Therefore this 'saves face' is more than a direct request (Online Reference 3).

**Direct Speech Act**

An utterance is considered a direct speech act when there is a direct relationship between the structure and the communicative function of the word. The following examples display that the form correspondences with the function:

- A declarative is used to make a statement: “You wear a seat belt.”
- An interrogative is used to ask a question: “Do you wear a seat belt?”
- An imperative is used to make a command: “Wear a seat belt!”

Direct speech acts therefore explicitly illustrate the intended meaning the speaker has behind making that utterance (Yule, 1996).

**Indirect Speech Act**

Searle stated that an indirect speech is "performed by means of another" (Searle, 1995, p. 93). That means that there is an indirect relationship between the form and the function of the utterance. The following examples show that the form does not correspond with the function:

- An interrogative is used to make a request: “Could you pass the salt?”
- A declarative is used to make a request: “You’re standing in front of the TV” (Yule, 1996, p. 56). People tend to use indirect speech acts mainly in connection with politeness since they thus diminish the unpleasant message contained in requests and orders for instance. However, politeness is not the only motivation for indirectness (Leech, 1983). People also use indirect strategies when they want to make their speech more interesting, when they want to reach goals different from their partners', or when they want to increase the force of the message communicated (Thomas, 1995). The speaker does not explicitly state the intended meaning behind the utterance. It is the hearer’s task to analyze the utterance to understand its meaning (Online Reference 4). The hearer uses an indirect strategy, relying on the speaker’s ability to read between the lines (Harnish, 1984).

As Searle refers, to understand what is really meant, not only the context but also other illocutionary force indicators, including mainly stress and intonation are essential (Searle, 1976). In indirect speech acts the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he says by relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and nonlinguistic, together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer” (Searle, 1976, p. 31). It is the speaker who can influence the meaning. “What is added in the indirect cases is not any additional or different sentence meaning, but additional speaker meaning” (Searle, 1976, p. 42).
Methods

This study follows a qualitative design. The characteristic of the descriptive qualitative research design is shown in the purpose of the study in the enhancement of the Cooperative principles and politeness principles, the violation of the Cooperative principles and politeness principles, and the reasons for applying them. The study aims at uncovering and compare the similarities and differences between these two groups. The study aims at disclosing whether there are significant, balanced, or minor differences since these MA students belong to two different groups (Linguistics and Literature). The awareness of MA EFL students will be elicited by giving them a test that involves a set of situations. The test has been designed by drawing upon everyday life situations whether formal or informal. For each situation, three options are given. Each choice manifests a degree of discourse awareness. So, their selections will instantiate the degree of discourse awareness they have whether consciously or unconsciously. The aspects of discourse awareness included in this study are *Grice Maxims, Politeness, Direct*, and *Indirect speech acts*. The answers of Master students concerning discourse awareness will not only be a reflection of their academic study, but also a reflection of the accumulated social and cultural knowledge.

Participants

This study aims at investigating the discoursal awareness of postgraduate students. The number of participants in this study was 16 MA students. They have been selected from The College of Arts/Department of English/university of Baghdad, eight from Literature and eight from Linguistics. The pragmatic awareness of MA EFL students will be elicited by giving them a test that involves a set of situations. Most of the students selected in the current study are capable of understanding direct forms of speech.

Research Instruments

Test

Sixteen master's students of linguistics and literature were asked to take a multiple-choice test. The test will be represented along with the interpretation of each option given in each item. The first item of the test indicates three options:

a- a rough answer (impolite) that may lead the customer to leave the whole place
b- a polite answer within mitigating devices
c- a complete answer that shows the use of politeness strategies, mitigating devices, and giving an additional offer to help the customer.

The second item examines the maxim of quality:

a- shows politeness but it is not punctuated
b- combines politeness with punctuality
c- also lacks specification but is less generic than the first one.

The third item scrutinizes the maxim of quantity:
a- violates the maxims of quality which leaves no place to examine the maxim of quantity in this situation specifically
b- validates the maxim of quality but violates the maxim of quantity
c- is the optimal answer obeying both the maxim of quality and the maxim of quantity.

The fifth item tests the awareness of direct and indirect uses of linguistic forms:

a- shows direct use of language supplemented with a polite strategy (would you)
b- shows a direct use of language (bald on record strategy) and the speaker of this point is risking losing face in public
c- shows an off-record strategy whose perlocutionary effect may either be understood by the listener or not.

The sixth item shows the awareness of:

a- discourse markers
b- directness
c- mitigating devices to lessen the fierce of the opposed opinion.

The seventh item reflects the knowledge of the social class:

a- low
b- middle
c- high.

The eighth item shows again the comprehension of direct and indirect forms of speech with

a- shows null comprehension
b- showing the perfect knowledge of direct forms of speech which is superficial in this situation specifically
c- shows an optimal knowledge of the indirect use of language and supports it with the reasons which underlie the current state.

The ninth item indicates the awareness of degrees of solidarity:

a- distant subordinate
b- close subordinate,
c- close superordinate.

The tenth item examines the maxim of relation using three options:

a- general,
b- very optimal perspicuous answer which disambiguates and uncovers everything
c- an irrelevant answer.

The eleventh item manifests:

a- a direct strategy of politeness depending on which the speaker may lose face by refusal;
b- a brief answer so as not to float the manner maxim resulting consequently in insufficient communicative information
c- giving a blurred addition to serve a phatic function and to maintain the natural state of communication.

The twelfth item displays:
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a- a relevant answer but lacks the utilization of polite and mitigating devices like please, if you may,… etc.
b- an optimal relevant polite answer subsuming the mitigating device "if you don’t mind"
c- a relevant but surplus answer providing additional irrelevant information.

The thirteenth item shows the following:
a- a relevant and polite strategy but it violates the maxim of quantity
b- a relevant, optimal, and polite strategy which follows the maxim of quantity
c- Impolite answer is given using an imperative form.

The final fourteenth item indicates various interpretations which result from the use of indirect strategies:
a- an indirect response whose perlocutionary effect aims at preventing the first speaker from smoking. The second speaker supports his position using scientific evidence.
b- a direct clear accurate answer, here, the unhealthy nature of smoking is uncontroversial for the second speaker, it is taken for granted.
c- an indirect answer implies that the second speaker has given up smoking followed by an obvious statement to warn the first speaker about the bad effects of smoking. All this is made using indirect speech act techniques for the sake of politeness strategies so as not to threaten the first speaker's face, not to enforce the first speaker's privacy,… etc.

Results

The multiple-choice test has been distributed to 16 Master’s students from the College of Arts/ Department of the English/ University of Baghdad, eight students of linguistics and eight students of literature whose answers show that they are aware of discoursal means, but they vary in the use. Their answers reflect their everyday life experience rather than being restricted only to academic textbooks only, because students of literature do not study these aspects at all, yet, their performance on the test is very similar to that of students of linguistics. In some situations, students of literature master the use of discourse mean better than those of linguistics. So, their answers reflect social, cultural, and everyday experiences and not necessarily academic or theoretical experiences. This observation is similar to what Grice (1975) remarks that the cooperative principle describes how effective communication in conversation is achieved in social everyday situations, especially in daily interaction. The following table represents the frequencies of the postgraduate students' awareness of quality, quantity, relation, and manner maxims as well as politeness, and direct and indirect speech.

Table 1. The frequencies of the postgraduate students' awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantity</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table captures the times in which these discoursal aspects have been recognized by the students. The frequency of the maxim of quality is 62.5% which means that 10 students out of the selected data have recognized this maxim. Concerning maxim of quantity, only four students are aware of this maxim which is why it gains a frequency of 25%. Turning to the relation maxim, the frequency of differentiating it reaches 93.75% because 15 students out of 16 (from literature and linguistics) discriminate it. Manner and politeness maxims are interrelated and their degrees of awareness from the students' perspective are similar to a certain extent, the former is distinguished by 12 students and the latter by 13 students respectively resulting in the frequencies 75% and 81.25% successively. The students are capable of distinguishing the underlying meaning of utterance when it conforms to the linguistics form. Depending on the data of the current study, the direct forms have been selected by almost all students (14) which result in a frequency of 87.5%. Only two students have not recognized it. When matters get complex, the ability to understand indirect forms of utterance where the linguistic form does not correspond to inner meaning may be lessened and may be maintained by only a few individuals. Concerning the data of the current study, the indirect forms have been figured out only by half of the subjects eight which results in a frequency of 50%. The range of the awareness of these discoursal aspects is captured in the following figure.

Figure 1. The range of awareness of the discoursal aspects

After providing a quantitative account of the data as is shown above supported by the table and the figure, we now come to the qualitative aspect of the analysis, which is the core of the current study. In the first item, both groups of students mostly show complete awareness of...
politeness strategies and mitigating devices, and they give an additional offer to help the customer. Few students have chosen a rough (impolite) answer or a polite insufficient answer. In the second item, most students show politeness and punctuality via choosing (b) and politeness without punctuality (a) is rarely chosen. Regarding the third item, all students verify and follow the maxims of quality and quantity by choosing (c) with little variation. In item four, (b) is selected to obey the manner maxim (to be brief and accurate).

Concerning the fifth item, all students except one who chooses the rough expression show a direct use of language supplemented with a polite strategy (would you). In the sixth item, the answer of students can be distributed equally among the awareness of directness (b), mitigating devices (c), and discourse markers (a). The seventh item shows that the students have middle-class awareness mostly (c), low-class awareness frequently (a), and high-class awareness rarely (b). While answering the eighth item, the students form three camps: those with indirect awareness (c), those who comprehend the superficial (direct) forms of speech (b), and those with null comprehension (a), here, the students even do not approach a degree of the required message. In the ninth item, the lexical choice of the students shows their awareness of the linguistic use when dealing with close superordinate (a), close subordinate (c), and distant subordinate (b). In the tenth item, most students obey the maxim of relation, and the general and the irrelevant answers (a) and (c) are rarely given.

In the eleventh item, the students' answers arranged along a hierarchy with those on the top, which correspond to the use of a polite direct strategy accompanied with an invitation (a) but in this case, the speaker may lose face in public. The answer that is in the middle of the hierarchy is (b); it is presented to avoid the violation of the manner maxim which results in incomplete communicative information. The bottom of the hierarchy is represented by giving additional blurred information for the sake of phatic communion and to maintain the natural state of communication. In the twelfth item, all students show optimal relevance by selecting a brief polite, and relevant answer which subsumes mitigating devices "if you don't mind." Only one student has chosen the suitable third option, but it is surplus with additional irrelevant information. In the thirteenth item, all students show optimal, relevant, and polite awareness concerning restaurant situations and they obey the maxim of quantity as well. Concerning the final fourteenth item, students tremendously choose the indirect answer, which is used for the sake of politeness strategy so as not to threaten the first speaker's face, not to impose on his privacy,…. etc. Only one student has chosen the direct clear answer (b) where the unhealthy nature of smoking is uncontroversial to the second speaker, it is taken for granted.

**Conclusion**

This study aims to raise students' awareness of discursive aspects, which can be accomplished through pragmatic competence. According to the analysis of the students' answers, these answers have reflected the degree of awareness of discoursal aspects and show that the students' awareness is analogue (more or less) rather than digital (present or absent). The variability of their answers
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can be attributed to regional and social factors. The students show essential comprehension of quality, manner, and relation maxims, but sometimes they do not characterize the maxim of quantity. They present surplus answers believing that through such a strategy they will preserve the natural state of communication. Other times, they give shrunken insufficient answers so as not to infringe on other maxims. They rarely distinguish between the polite (show me the way if you don’t mind) and impolite (show me the way) forms of utterance. Both groups of students rarely recognize mitigation devices and discourse markers. When matters get complicated, the students may lose the awareness of one or more of these discoursal dimensions, if not all, and consequently may choose irrelevant answers. This study shows that despite the differences (educational, social, regional, biological, economic, etc.) people have, their awareness of discourse may be similar to a certain degree. The discoursal aspects are acquired depending on a general or personal experience and are not subjected to formal situations (schools or colleges). Discoursal knowledge can be adapted depending on the situation, participants, and the surrounding environment. Therefore, the students' answers have shown similar discourse knowledge to a certain extent. I think that this is the result of interaction with each other and adaptation to each other or the identical academic institution (Department of English/College of the Arts/University of Baghdad).

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References


**Appendices**

**Appendix A**

**Test**

In each situation you have three utterances. Choose the most appropriate one and put (√) next to it.

1- Hala asks the shop assistant if he has another size, so she says:

"Do you have only this size?"

The shop assistant answers:

A- Only this size is available.
B- I'm afraid I don't.
C- I don't, but I have another model that may fit you.

2- Ahmed wants to borrow Hamlet for Shakespeare from the library, so he says:

A- I would like to borrow a book.
B- I would like to borrow Hamlet for Shakespeare.
C- I would like to borrow Shakespeare.

3- Suha and Mona at the graduation party held by the dean.

Suha: Hello, you must be Mona from the geography department, Right?

Mona replies:

A- No, I'm Mona but I'm from the department of English.
B- Yes, I'm Mona from the department of Geography from section A.
C- Yes, I'm Mona from the department of Geography.

4- In a college interview, the interviewer asks Ahmed: May I ask you why you are interested to join our department.

Ahmed answers:

A- Your department has an impressive reputation; I think is one of your students may release my potential.
B- Joining your department may grant me a range of chances after graduation.
C- Because I don't have another choice.
5- Sherif asks Redwa to show him the way to the library.
   A- I don't know how to get to the library. Radwa would you mind showing me the way.
   B- Radwa show me the way.
   C- Sherif is looking forward and talking to himself "how can I get to the library" while Radwa is nearby.
6- Ahmed asks his friend Ali: Are you interested in Phonology or Syntax?
   Ali:
   A- Oh, I'm interested in um…. Phonology, but …..I don't have problems with syntax.
   B- In phonology, what about you?
   C- Unfortunately, I'm interested in neither.
7- Baher: Hello, I'd like to book a flight.
   Travel agent: Ok, well, there is a flight on the morning of August 18. It is 6000 pounds.
   Baher:
   A- Ouch, can you find a cheaper flight?
   B- Ok, I'll take it.
   C- What about another one with 3000 pounds.
8- Mona: The class to day is very hot.
   Zeki:
   A- No, not really.
   B- Yeah, a little bit, turn on the air conditioner if you like.
   C- Yeah, because they do not turn on the air conditioner, I'll turn it on.
9- Maher: Hello Nabil, what have you done yesterday in the job interview?
   Nabil: bad news.
   Maher:
   A- Don't worry Mr. Nabil. I'm sure you will find one because you are well-qualified person.
   B- Don't worry Mr. Nabil. I'm sure you will find one.
   C- Don't worry Nabil. Finding a job is a long and complicated process.
10- Waleed calls the customer service to complain.
    Waleed: I bought a smartphone from your store, and it needs to be repaired.
    Customer service:
    A- Can you tell me what the problem is?
    B- Can you give the qualities of your smartphone and the problem that needs to be fixed?
    C- Are you sure that you bought this smartphone from our company.
11- Sally: Are you reading the same poem, Suha?
    Suha:
    A- Yes, it is interesting, why don't you join me?
    B- Yes.
    C- Not totally, I'm skimming other new poems as well.
12- Bella asks Sam if he wants 'a cup of tea'.
    Sam:
    A- I want a cup of tea.
    B- Yes, if you don't mind.
    C- A cup of tea. You know the tea is made from the leaves of a bush called *Camellia Sinesis*.
13- The Waitress asks Mr. Smith if he has ordered something.
    Mr. Smith:
    A- Yes, Haddock and chips, please. It is an hot Italian meal.
    B- Yes, Haddock and chips, please.
C- Haddock and chips.

14. John offers a cigarette to his friend, Nuha: "Have a cigarette".

   Nuha:
   A- Have you ever heard the report that cigarette can cause severe health issues to all organs of the body.
   B- I'm trying to give up, because it is unhealthy.
   C- No, thanks. And I think you should not as well.

**Appendix B**

**Samples of the Subjects' Answers**

**S1**

1. Hala asks the shop assistant if he has another size, so she says: "Do you have only this size"?
The shop assistant answers:
   A- Only this size is available\(\sqrt{\text{ }}\).
   B- I'm afraid I don't.
   C- I don't, but I have another model that may fit you.

2. Ahmed wants to borrow Hamlet for Shakespeare from the library, so he says:
   A- I would like to borrow a book.
   B- I would like to borrow Hamlet for Shakespeare\(\sqrt{\text{ }}\).
   C- I would like to borrow Shakespeare .

3. Suha and Mona at the graduation party held by the dean.

   Suha: Hello, you must be Mona from the geography department, Right?
   Mona replies:
   A- No, I'm Mona but I'm from the department of English.
   B- Yes, I'm Mona from the department of Geography from section A.
   C- Yes, I'm Mona from the department of Geography\(\sqrt{\text{ }}\).

4. In a college interview, the interviewer asks Ahmed: May I ask you why you are interested to join our department.

   Ahmed answers:
   A- Your department has an impressive reputation; I think being one of your students may release my potential\(\sqrt{\text{ }}\).
   B- Joining your department may grant me a range of chances after graduation.
   C- Because I don't have another choice.

5. Sherif asks Redwa to show him the way to the library.

   Sherif:
   A- I don't know how to get to the library. Radwa would you mind showing me the way\(\sqrt{\text{ }}\).
   B- Radwa show me the way.
   C- Sherif is looking forward and talking to himself, "how can I get to the library" while Radwa is nearby.

6. Ahmed is asking his friend Ali: Are you interested in Phonology or Syntax?

   Ali:
   A- Oh, I'm interested in um….. Phonology, but …..I don't have problems with syntax.
   B- In phonology, what about you?\(\sqrt{\text{ }}\)
   C- Unfortunately, I'm interested in neither.


   Travel agent: Ok, well, there is a flight on the morning of August 18. It is 6000 pounds.

   Baher:
   A- Ouch, can you find a cheaper flight?
   B- Ok, I'll take it\(\sqrt{\text{ }}\).
   C- What about another one with 3000 pounds?
8. Mona: The class to day is very hot.
Zeki:
A- No, not really.
B- Yeah, a little bit turn on the air conditioner if you like .
C- Yeah, because they do not turn on the air conditioner, I'll turn it on √.

9. Maher: Hello Nabil, what have you done yesterday in the job interview?
Nabil: bad news.
Maher:
A- Don't worry Mr. Nabil. I'm sure you will find one because you are well-qualified person.
B- Don't worry Mr. Nabil. I'm sure you will find one.
C- Don't worry Nabil. Finding a job is a long and complicated process √.

10. Waleed calls the customer service to complain .
Waleed: I bought a smartphone from your store, and it needs to be repaired.
Customer service:
A- Can you tell me what the problem is √ ?
B- Can you give the qualities of your smartphone and the problem that needs to be fixed?
C- Are you sure that you bought this smartphone from our company?

11. Sally: Are you reading the same poem, Suha?
Suha:
A- Yes, it is interesting, why don't you join me?
B- Yes.
C- Not totally, I'm skimming other new poems as well √.

12. Bella asks Sam if he wants 'a cup of tea.'
Sam:
A- I want a cup of tea.
B- Yes, if you don't mind √.
C- A cup of tea. You know the tea is made from the leaves of a bush called Camellia Sinesis.

13. The Waitress asks Mr. Smith if he has ordered something.
Mr. Smith:
A- Yes, Haddock and chips, please. It is a hot Italian meal.
B- Yes, Haddock and chips, please √.
C- Haddock and chips.

14. John offers a cigarette to his friend, Nuha: "Have a cigarette."
Nuha:
A- Have you ever heard the report that cigarettes can cause severe health issues to all organs of the body .
B- I'm trying to give up, because it is unhealthy.
C- No, thanks. And I think you should not as well. √

S2:
1. Hala asks the shop assistant if he has another size, so she says: "Do you have only this size"?
The shop assistant answers:
A- Only this size is available(√).
B- I'm afraid I don't.
C- I don't, but I have another model that may fit you.

2. Ahmed wants to borrow Hamlet for Shakespeare from the library, so he says:
A- I would like to borrow a book(√).
B- I would like to borrow Hamlet for Shakespeare.
C- I would like to borrow Shakespeare.

3. Suha and Mona at the graduation party held by the dean.

Suha: Hello, you must be Mona from the geography department, Right?
Mona replies:
A- No, I'm Mona but I'm from the department of English.
B- Yes, I'm Mona from the department of Geography from section A.
C- Yes, I'm Mona from the department of Geography (✓).

4. In a college interview, the interviewer asks Ahmed: May I ask you why you are interested to join our department.

Ahmed answers:
A- Your department has an impressive reputation; I think being one of your students may release my potentials.
B- Joining your department may grant me a range of chances after graduation (✓).
C- Because I don't have another choice.

5. Sherif asks Redwa to show him the way to the library.

A- I don't know how to get to the library. Radwa would you mind showing me the way (✓).
B- Radwa show me the way.
C- Sherif is looking forward and talking to himself "how can I get to the library" while Radwa is nearby.

6. Ahmed is asking his friend Ali: Are you interested in Phonology or Syntax.

Ali:
A- Oh, I'm interested in um…. Phonology, but …..I don't have problems with syntax.
B- In phonology, what about you (✓).
C- Unfortunately, I'm interested in neither.


Travel agent: Ok, well, there is a flight on the morning of August 18. It is 6000 pounds.

Baher:
A- Ouch, can you find a cheaper flight.
B- Ok, I'll take it.
C- What about another one with 3000 pounds (✓).

8. Mona: The class to day is very hot.

Zeki:
A- No, not really.
B- Yeah, little bit turn on the air conditioner if you like (✓).
C- Yeah, because they do not turn on the air conditioner, I'll turn it on.

9. Maher: Hello Nabil, what have you done yesterday in the job interview?

Nabil: bad news.

Maher:
A- Don't worry Mr. Nabil. I'm sure you will find one because you are well qualified person (✓).
B- Don't worry Mr. Nabil. I'm sure you will find one.
C- Don't worry Nabil. Finding a job is a long and complicated process.

10. Waleed calls the customer service to complain.

Waleed: I bought a smartphone from your store, and it needs to be repaired.

Customer service:
A- Can you tell me what the problem is?
B- Can you give the qualities of your smartphone and the problem that needs to be fixed (✓) ?
C- Are you sure that you bought this smartphone from our company.

11. Sally: Are you reading the same poem, Suha?
Suha:
A- Yes, it is interesting, why don't you join me?
B- Yes.
C- Not totally, I'm skimming other new poems as well (√)

12. Bella asks Sam if he wants 'a cup of tea.'
Sam:
A- I want a cup of tea.
B- Yes, if you don't mind (√)
C- A cup of tea. You know the tea is made from the leaves of a bush called Camellia Sinesis.

13. The Waitress asks Mr. Smith if he has ordered something.
Mr. Smith:
A- Yes, Haddock and chips, please. It is an Italian hot meal.
B- Yes, Haddock and chips, please (√)
C- Haddock and chips.

14. John offers cigarette to his friend, Nuha: "Have a cigarette."
Nuha:
A- Have you ever heard the report that cigarette can cause severe healthy issues to all organs of the body.
B- I'm trying to give up, because it is unhealthy.
C- No, thanks. And I think you should not as well (√)
The Effect of Blogs on Jordanian EFL Eighth-grade Students’ Achievement in English

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Abstract
This quasi-experimental study assesses the usefulness of blogs as teaching and learning tools for the EFL at Jordanian schools in Amman. The study focuses on the increased significance of the English language for the international competence of Jordan and its workforce. The study also assesses the benefits that blogs can provide for eighth-grade students. To answer the question of what effect do blogs have on improving reading and writing skills, the researchers used a sample of students from two schools in Amman, and undertook a quasi-experimental study by applying a pretest-posttest design. The researchers selected a sample of 72 eighth-grade EFL students in Amman and divided them into control and experimental groups. The regular EFL curriculum was administered in both groups, but supported with a blog component for the experimental group. The results indicated a significant improvement in the students’ reading comprehension skills and writing competence when using blogs. The study recommends that teachers promote active participation of the students on blogs.

Keywords: Blogs, English achievement, EFL 8th-grade students, reading comprehension, writing competence

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Introduction
The use of blogs and Information Communication Technology (ICT) is a central element of the transformation in all aspects of life. Web 2.0 presents significant opportunities by employing the internet and online applications in an interactive manner. Using blogs can provide a practical tool for supporting learner-centered interactive learning. The use of blogs can also give teachers feedback, which is a useful role in the language learning process. This suggests that blogs can have a big impact on how EFL students perform. Blogs can give a practical learning environment for the students through an active and social learning approach. Further, blogging offers a beneficial tool for constructing knowledge from past experiences, and developing ideas collaboratively with peers and teachers; hence it can provide EFL students with a more influential learning environment.

Furthermore, the feedback given in blogs is characterized by permanency and the capacity to encourage group knowledge, offering the opportunity for a safe environment of greater student participation. The ease of accessing these blogs as a learning tool can also influence their use and applicability. Besides, the feedback given by the teachers affects the perceptions of the students, which indicates that the outcomes of Jordanian EFL students can be significantly influenced by the utilization of blogs and how they are perceived.

Learning English today requires learning how to read, write and communicate effectively in an electronic environment. Blogs have been promoted as teaching and learning tools for Jordanian students because they are perceived as highly beneficial and exciting tools. A recent study (Mohamed et al., 2023), reveals that adopting electronic blogs can help secondary school students raise their self-esteem. The study shows that the use of electronic blogs in the classroom influences self-esteem and the development of secondary students. According to Zarei and Al-Shboul, (2013), some key benefits of using blogs include improving the level of the obtained feedback and the students’ English language skills. This paper argues that blogs can improve the processes of English language learning, which increases their relevance as tools for promoting student outcomes in Jordan.

Therefore, the concern of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of blogs as a tool for teaching and learning English language. The study aims at investigating the use of blogs at EFL classrooms in two schools at Sahab District in Amman, Jordan, and how blogs can improve the outcomes of the students in learning English, which is important in modernizing the country and preparing EFL students for the global workforce. It is also significant in that using blogs in teaching and learning English at EFL 8th-grade classrooms is considered as a valuable tool that could create more interactive and collaborative classrooms and provide a beneficial framework for future implementation. In this regard, the following research objectives are set as:

1. To investigate the effect of blogs in improving English language reading competence of EFL students in Jordan
2. To find out the effect of blogs in improving writing competence of Jordanian EFL students
3. To assess the impact of blogs in promoting interactions and feedback between teachers and students in the EFL classroom

In this vein, the following research questions spring from the previous research objectives:
- How can the use of blogs improve achievement in reading for EFL students in Jordan?
- What is the significance of blogs as a learning tool for improving the writing competence of Jordanian EFL students?
- What is the impact of blogs in promoting interactions and feedback between teachers and students in the EFL classroom?

**Literature Review**

Technological tools are not only preferred as pedagogical strategies, but are also highlighted as more effective than traditional learning environments. It is also considered a preferred learning environment for the present generation due to their preference for technology. In the recent age where the internet has become ubiquitous, teachers should learn how to use it to get more practice for their students in their learning environments. Blogs, also called weblogs, are online journals that can be easily updated by the user. While they were not initially developed as a learning tool, they can provide teachers with opportunities to familiarize their students with online strategies. They also help students to create a threat-free environment to put their newly discovered skills to the test (Aliakbari & Mohammadi, 2016).

The benefits of blogs in creating learning environments are associated with promoting learning autonomy. Blogs provide authentic learning contexts for EFL learners with limited opportunities for expressing themselves in the target language. They can express themselves more effectively in this learning environment because they do not face the inhibition or intimidation that may be present in face-to-face settings. Further, Noytim (2010) argued that there are three types of educational blogs that can be implemented for teaching. These include learner blogs, tutor blogs, and class blogs. Based on the purpose of the instructor in formulating the blog, other categories of blogs are literature response blogs, classroom news blogs, and mirror blogs. According to research conducted, blogging allows students to experiment with new languages without stress. As a result, students will be able to improve their writing fluency, and they can be introduced to different perspectives and develop persuasion and reasoning skills.

Aljumah (2012) published an empirical study examining student perceptions and attitudes towards the use of blogs as educational tools. The sample for this survey was Saudi students majoring in English, and the results indicated a positive perception of using blogs in English writing classes. Learners recognize the benefits of using blogs, including motivating students to use the language by facilitating interaction with peers (Sad, 2013). Abdel-Haq and Al-Sobh (2010) conducted a study concerning the assessment of positive perceptions and associated benefits of e-learning in the Jordanian context. An experimental design focused on the web-based writing program for EFL students. A statistically significant difference was found in the test scores of the students in the experimental group.

The usefulness of blogging was examined in terms of opportunities for writing practice both inside and outside of the classroom (Kazanc & Caner, 2020). Learners' attitudes toward its use in writing classes and blogging were also investigated. Students completed English writing assignments online and used blogs to interact with their peers. The results showed its effectiveness in improving students’ writing achievement. The findings in other settings have shown similar findings regarding the use of class blogs as indicated in Alenezi (2022). The study used a sample of Saudi EFL students learning using Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL). A major aspect of the conclusions was that the students’ perceptions about the usefulness of blogs were based on their experience in using them.

A sample of EFL students in Palestine showed that blogging had a significant and positive effect on their writing skills. Using a pre-post quasi-experimental design, the use of blogs has proven effective in creating a collaborative writing environment. It also improved not only their writing skills, but also their level of active participation in writing tasks. Although many studies
have been conducted in Arabic-speaking countries to evaluate the usefulness of blogs in teaching EFL students, there is no generalizable study evaluating the applicability of blogs in Jordan. is in short supply. For instance, Zarei and Al-Shboul (2013) evaluated students' perceptions of their speech and language learning process using blogs. To assess the effectiveness or significance, it is crucial to conduct thorough research. It is important to conduct detailed research to measure the effectiveness or importance of blogging for teaching and learning English to the beginning-level EFL students.

Alenezi (2022) investigated how Saudi EFL students felt about enhancing their writing skills through blogging. It was also intended to assess how useful blogs are as a tool for improving students' writing skills. Five of her EFL sophomores from the English department of a Saudi educational institution participated in this study. Participants had completed a writing skills course, which was a prerequisite for study. During data collection for this case study, we conducted semi-structured interviews to explore students' blogging experiences. Data from semi-structured interviews were analyzed thematically. The results showed that students rated the use of class blogs positively as a useful strategy in EFL writing lessons. Others also admitted that the blog helped them write more effectively in English. They also highlighted how blogging has helped them create an interactive learning environment where they can learn from each other and share their experiences and perspectives. Finally, the study highlights the importance of introducing blogging into EFL writing classes and suggests including blogging in college writing curricula.

In addition, Siddique et al. (2023), measured how well blogging helped high school students strengthen their writing skills. Students' English writing was assessed based on text structure and content. Using real-world experimental methods, the study compared the effects of blogging and pen-and-paper tools at a public boys' high school. Sixty-eight sophomores were randomly assigned to two mixed ability groups; post-pretest blog (n=34) and pen and paper (n=34). During the 8-week treatment period, students in both groups produced 24 texts (essays, summaries, and character sketches) from the lectures according to the experimental timetable. Six experienced English specialists were part of the group that reviewed the pre- and post-tests. A similar-structured posttest was administered eight weeks after therapy to establish any differences. Two raters assigned different weights to each component of the created rubric when assessing students on both assessments. Each participant received an average score determined by two raters. Peer reviews and peer critiques set blog groups apart from the rest. The conclusion of the study showed that blogging has a significant impact on the structure and content of writing. Kids were motivated to write with enthusiasm by technology, the internet, peer review and peer feedback.

Mohamed et al. (2023) examined how the use of e-blogging in the classroom affected self-esteem and development in middle school students. A quasi-experimental methodology (experimental) was used in this study. There were also a dependent variable (EFL self-esteem development) and an independent variable (Internet blog use). A group of first-year secondary school students was the study's subjects. Researchers used Internet blogs to teach them. The self-esteem scale was the instrument used to answer the research questions. The study revealed that the use of e-blogging can improve the self-esteem of middle school students.

**Methodology**
The study follows a positivist approach where the researchers assume that truth is objective and quantifiable. The ontological assumption of this study is that truth is measurable and defined in a manner that is scientifically evaluated. In line with this philosophy, a positivist approach was
adopted in the study where statistical analysis would be undertaken to test a defined hypothesis (Baskarada & Koronios, 2018). The study follows a deductive approach. The authors seek to test a theory about the association between using blogs and the English language competence of eighth-grade students in Jordan.

The study was designed as quasi-experimental research with a control and experimental group to determine the effect of blogs as tools for teaching English language to eighth-grade Jordanian EFL students. The study design was influenced by an empirical approach that aims to assess how interventions affect student performance. A quasi-experimental design was implemented by randomizing participants and using probabilistic methods to test associations between dependent and independent variables (Cohen et al., 2013; Saunders, et al., 2019).

**Participants**
The research participants in the study were eighth-grade students in Jordan undertaking EFL. The reason behind choosing eighth-grade students was that they had not been studied in previous research. Studies assessing the use of blogs in teaching EFL have focused on secondary schools and tertiary institutions in the academic year 2021/2022. The current study addresses this issue by targeting elementary school students in the upper primary levels where they may be able to apply blogs in their learning activities (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The participants of the study were sought from two schools at Sahab District in Amman, Jordan. The sample was derived randomly from two schools in the district and the eighth-grade students were selected for the control and experimental groups. The two schools had 72 students in the eighth grade, which provided an effective sample for the study. Participants were randomly assigned to the study and divided into control and experimental groups at both sites. The experimental group consisted of 36 of her students, 16 of them from one school and 20 of them from the other school.

**Research Instruments**
The eighth-grade students in the two schools were subjected to the regular EFL curriculum. However, to answer the research questions posed, the experimental group received an EFL curriculum supported by a blog maintained for the class as a platform for interaction and discussion by students and their teachers. Throughout the course of the program, which took six weeks, the researchers asked students to write two English essays, each consisting of a first draft, a second and a final draft. The two essays were of the compare and contrast type and a definitional essay. Students’ reading comprehension was also assessed using reading comprehension tests administered before and after the intervention period. A structured questionnaire was used to assess students’ perceptions and views of their interactions with teachers, as well as the feedback students received on their assignments and discussions on their blogs. A pretest was also conducted before the study to provide a comparative basis for evaluating the impact of the intervention on student outcomes.

**Findings**
Two groups of participants underwent a standard English reading and writing test. Pre-test literacy scores were measured for the two groups and differences between them were reviewed using t-tests for equality of means of independent samples. The analysis indicated that the two groups did not differ significantly. The p-values for the independent samples tests for writing and reading were .102 and .158, respectively, indicating that the groups were relatively similar.
The control group continued with the regular curriculum, and the writing was graded by the teacher and returned to the teacher for revision. The experimental group used the blog for sharing ideas and peer reviewing each other’s work. The final essays were graded and used to assess the writing competence of the students in both groups.

**Post-test Outcomes**

The posttest was presented to the students to assess their performance in the two areas of EFL competence and English language achievement. The mean scores for the control and experimental group are presented in table two in the appendices section. The results indicated a significant difference in the mean scores of the two elements for the control and experimental groups. Writing competence differed significantly as shown by the independent sample test where the mean score for the experimental group was 72.55% compared to 64.68% for the control group. The p-value of the t-test indicated that the means and variances of the writing competence for the control and experimental groups differed significantly. The same was true for students' reading scores, with a post-test score of 61.82% in the control group compared to 65.90% in the experimental group. The t-statistic for reading comprehension was 3.854 (p-value = .000). The results indicated that after the intervention, the experimental group performed better than the control group on the two aspects of reading and writing competence.

The other element of the research was to assess how the intervention influenced the competence of the students by comparing the pretest results and the posttest outcomes. The writing competence scores for the students increased from 63.53% to 70.26%, which indicates that the intervention played a significant role in changing the respondents' writing competency level. Regarding reading competency, the test results increased from 59.17% to 65.03% after the intervention. The comparison was made for the experimental group, and the results of the independent samples test show that the improvement was significant for the group. The t-statistic for the independent samples test for writing competence was 3.082 (p-value = .000), indicating a significant improvement in the post-test results. The test results for reading competence increased significantly as shown by the t-statistic of 2.714 (p-value= .000), revealing a significant positive impact of the EFL curriculum with blog support.

The feedback and interactions between the teachers and students through blogs were investigated. The structured questionnaire responses indicate that 75% of the respondents felt that blogs provide a practical framework to increase interactions with teachers. The level and perceptions of the students about the feedback indicate that they considered it to have a significant impact on their learning outcomes and relations with the teachers. Seventy-eight percents of the students reported that blogs allowed them to use English in a formal academic manner as opposed to chatting. Almost 80% of the respondents considered the blogs a beneficial platform for relating among themselves.

**Discussion**

Given the above findings of the study, and based on the research objectives and questions mentioned in the introduction of the study, this section discusses the findings of the study. The questions include: the significant role of blogs as a learning tool in improving reading and writing competence of Jordanian EFL students, and the impact of blogs in promoting interactions and feedback between teachers and students in the EFL classroom. To answer these questions, the results of this study revealed that using blogs as a tool for teaching EFL in Jordan is a beneficial
tool. These findings are in line with those of Aljumah (2012) regarding the positive perceptions of students and teachers on using blogs as a teaching and learning tool. The web-based writing program used in this study appears to provide a useful tool for teaching and learning EFL to 8th-grade students. One of the critical aspects of blogging as a tool for teaching and learning EFL is that it allows students to practice using the language in and out of class. In this case, the approach is presented as highly beneficial in improving the writing and reading skills of the students.

In addition, a theory in favor of blogging regarding its impact on reading literacy is that it provides an opportunity for students to engage in written communication in a formal way. Interacting with peers and teachers online empowers students to express their thoughts with confidence. Another noteworthy aspect of the blog as a tool for teaching and learning is that it is more interactive than the traditional class. The interactive nature of learning on blogs is supported as being more effective because it promotes the student’s autonomy. The learning that takes place in computer-mediated environments is more learner-centered. Instead of the teacher being the sole producer of knowledge, the students also engage actively by commenting on peers’ work and responding to feedback from the teacher, which manifests a positive and significant impact on writing skills, as indicated by Kazancı and Caner (2020) and Alenezi (2022). These students have been focused on older students in secondary and tertiary institutions; however, the research shows that they are applicable to eighth-grade as well. The significant improvement in student reading and writing skills presents support for the different opportunities that it provides for the students. Blogging allows students to work with colleagues and develop formal writing skills. In line with previous findings, using blogs promotes confidence in the students and develops their language capabilities through active participation and feedback (Soufi, et al., 2017).

In line with the responses to the questionnaire, blogging is appropriate for improving the level of interaction and feedback in class. This can motivate students to learn as they can receive feedback in a relaxed environment. Blogs also allow sharing of ideas; hence the students reported that they felt they were learning more in this case than in the traditional platform alone. One of the key responses was that students favored a blended learning approach in which the regular curriculum was enhanced with blogging elements.

Conclusion
This study is concerned with evaluating the effectiveness of blogging as a tool for teaching and learning English reading and writing skills, in particular. The purpose of this study was to examine the use of blogs in EFL classrooms of two schools at Sahab district in Amman, Jordan, and how blogs improved student outcomes in learning English language, contributing to the modernization of the country. The study concludes that blogs are a useful and effective tool for teaching EFL. A study of eighth graders in Jordan showed that incorporating blogging into the regular curriculum significantly improved learning outcomes for EFL students. It should be recognized that blogs are added as an element to enhance student learning, not to replace traditional classroom strategies. It provides a framework for sharing knowledge and practicing ones writing skills through discussions. Blogging allows students to share information freely and makes interactions less anxious than in face-to-face settings. In this case, the benefits of blogs in promoting learning outcomes on the identified elements are clear.
Recommendations
The study proposes some key recommendations that can be derived from this research. These include the need to integrate a class blog in EFL programs. Teachers should be encouraged to get their students to actively share on these platforms to enhance their reading and writing skills. The modalities of sharing can be aligned with the competence of the students in reading and writing where they can undertake peer review of each other’s work and also provide helpful feedback. The platforms can be used in evaluating reading comprehension and undertaking discussions that consider the role of the students as active producers and consumers of knowledge.

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References


**Appendices**

**Appendix A**

Pretest - Independent samples t-test

Table 1. *Pretest - Independent samples t-test*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</th>
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<td>Sig.</td>
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<td><strong>Writing competence test</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>.051</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equal variances not assumed</td>
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Appendix B

**Descriptive statistics for posttest outcomes**

Table 2. *Descriptive statistics for posttest outcomes*

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<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
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<td>Writing competence test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading comprehension test score</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Appendix C

**Descriptive statistics for pretest - posttest results for the experimental group**

Table 3. *Descriptive statistics for pretest - posttest results for the experimental group*

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<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
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<tr>
<td>Writing competence test</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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Teaching Anxiety in Foreign Language Classroom: A Review of Literature

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Abstract
Foreign language teaching anxiety is a complex phenomenon recently receiving increasing attention. Negative emotions, such as anxiety, may significantly impact a teacher's professional practices, identity, and student's ability to learn a foreign language. Recognizing such feelings is crucial for language teachers, learners, and researchers to improve language education quality and promote successful learning outcomes. Therefore, this narrative research review examines the causes, effects, and possible interventions for anxiety about foreign language teaching. This review aims to explore the current state of research on the topic, identify gaps in the literature, and suggest future research directions. This review provides a narrative synthesis of the literature on FLTA through a systematic, comprehensive search on teaching anxiety among foreign language teachers. The study highlights that students and EFL teachers are prone to anxiety during the language teaching-learning process. When EFL teachers try to alleviate their students' anxiety, they may experience anxiety that can negatively impact their teaching behavior. The literature on teacher foreign language anxiety (TFLA) is sparse compared with EFL learners' studies. Researchers have yet to explore the unique psychology of EFL teachers. Hence, the consequences of such an experience are highly questionable. Therefore, it is essential to address EFL teacher anxiety before evaluating how teachers can alleviate student anxiety.

Keywords: Foreign Language Anxiety, Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety, EFL teachers, Narrative Review

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Introduction

Language learning and teaching are complex processes involving linguistic but also social and psychological factors. Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) is the discomfort or apprehension that students experience from learning and using a foreign language. This anxiety can affect a student's language learning abilities. In addition, it can also affect teachers and significantly affect the effectiveness of their foreign language teaching. By understanding the causes and effects of Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety (FLTA), educators can develop strategies to help teachers manage and overcome their anxiety, ultimately leading to better student language learning outcomes. This narrative review article aims to present various definitions of anxiety, discuss its fundamental aspects from philosophical and psychological viewpoints, and summarise prior research on anxiety in language learning. In particular, this review aims to map the literature research on FLTA and provide an opportunity to identify its significant factors and implication on the language teaching-learning process.

Literature Review

Researchers have recognized over several decades that emotional experience is integral to mental processing and behavioral performance, with important implications for foreign language learning and teaching (Mercer, 2018). According to Krashen (1982), Foreign language learning (FLL) is well known to be affected by emotional factors such as FLA that may challenge learners to progress in learning a foreign or a second language. FLA is the unease, nervousness, or fear that language learners experience when studying a foreign or second language in a classroom setting (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986; Krashen, 1982; Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021; Pipuš, 2021). FLA is a common experience among language learners due to several factors, such as fear of making mistakes, fear of negative evaluation, and worrying about not understanding or being understood by others (Balkaya, Arabacioğlu & Çakir, 2020; Horwitz, 2001; Kobul & Saraçoğlu, 2020). It can impair performance and language learning outcomes (Horwitz et al., 1986) and, conversely, lead to worry, despair, low self-confidence, lack of self-esteem, and difficulty retaining new information (Pipu, 2021; Toyama & Yamazaki, 2022). Further, several cohort studies indicated that EFL teachers are still considered learners and susceptible to foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA) (Horwitz, 1996; Ghanizadeh, Goldast & Ghonsooly, 2020; Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). FLTA is a type of performance anxiety triggered by various factors, such as perceived language proficiency, self-doubt, cultural differences, classroom dynamics, fear of making mistakes, and inability to convey information effectively to learners (Horwitz, 1996; Kobul & Saraçoğlu, 2020; Rivers, 2022). Studies have shown that high anxiety levels can ultimately affect the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. For instance, FLTA can significantly impact a teacher's work enjoyment, well-being, ability to plan and deliver lessons effectively, and overall job satisfaction (Fraschini & Park, 2021; 2022).

By advancing our understanding of FLTA, researchers, educators, and practitioners can gain insight into improving effective interventions and strategies for promoting teacher well-being and quality of teaching and learning outcomes. Given the complex nature of FLA compared to many other disciplines, studies ultimately showed that anxiety among EFL teachers is either significantly based on the rationale that they are indeed non-native EFL users or they suffer from anxiety due to the generic teaching profession (Aydın & Uştok, 2020). Besides, language is the goal and the medium of instruction (Aydin, 2016). Contrary to the extensive studies of EFL learners, researchers have not thoroughly explored the unique psychology of EFL teachers (Kobul
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Reviewing the literature shows a shortage of systematic narrative reviews about FLTA. Therefore, this study aims to expand our knowledge by reviewing the current literature about FLTA by following proposed guidelines (e.g., Byrne, 2016; Ferrari, 2015; Green, Johnson & Adams, 2006; Harvey, Williams, Hernandez-Morgan, Fischer & Neelankavil, 2022) to identifying its causes and effects, and knowledge gaps for further research.

Method

This narrative review seeks to answer the question, 'What is foreign language teaching anxiety as a concept entails, and what is its significance in the language teaching process?' This review aims to provide a narrative synthesis of the literature on FLTA. According to Green et al. (2006), narrative reviews are comprehensive narrative syntheses of published information. They provide a broad view of an issue by synthesizing the literature and encouraging discussions without targeted questions or assumptions.

The narrative literature review may save researchers time by condensing much information to a few pages and assist decision-makers in identifying, evaluating, revising, and avoiding research pitfalls. It may assist in verifying assumptions and provide insight into previous research processes (Green et al., 2006). Although the literature review procedure is usually less systematic, this review followed Byrne (2016), Ferrari (2015), Green et al. (2006), Harvey et al. (2022), and the PRISMA statement as a guideline throughout the review process. Therefore, this paper may be considered a systematic narrative overview (Green et al., 2006). The subsequent sections describe a detailed description of systematic data collection and analysis procedures.

Search and Selection Strategy

The search strategy was initially implemented on September 2021 and included several steps. First, the purpose of this review was initially informed by a preliminary literature search of already published studies within the area of interest. (Byrne, 2016; Green et al., 2006; Harvey et al., 2022). This narrative review includes full-text publications that explain the FLA published in English until July 2022. Second, specific search terms (such as foreign language anxiety, foreign language learning anxiety, and foreign language teaching anxiety) were selected and used on three electronic databases (WoS, Scopus and Google Scholar). In addition, a snowball search for relevant articles was conducted through websites such as Connected Papers, Open Knowledge Maps, and Inciteful.

The process of review consisted of several screenings. Following the systematic search, published articles were first selected based on their titles and abstracts imported into Mendeley, where duplicates were removed. Then the remaining papers were reviewed critically to determine whether they met the review's stated objective based on the following criteria: main findings, limitations, quality and interpretation of the results, and the conclusion's impact in the field (Ferrari, 2015). As a result, all publications proceeded through the synthesis process (423 publications) were published between 1967 and 2022, including books, book sections, reviews, and research articles.

Synthesis

The authors reviewed and thoroughly annotated every publication in the final sample, considering its background, methods, and overall conclusions. The data was collected and then tabulated. Synthesized themes were then developed from the data found in the literature review
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(Green et al., 2006). Then, each article's content was summarised and organized into topic-specific tables. The sample categorization was double-checked several times to ensure the accuracy of the results. Once the synthesis process was accomplished, this narrative review reports the major emerging themes and research trends with selective citations deemed relevant under each theme.

**Discussion**

This paper provides an overview of FLTA identified in the published literature. The search aims to be comprehensive rather than assess available resources' methodological quality. Based on the synthesis results, the FLTA can be characterized by three major themes: anxiety, foreign language anxiety, and anxiety associated with teaching a foreign language.

**Anxiety in the literature**

Emotions are crucial and play a big part in human life regardless of age, gender, religion, or nationality (Wollheim, 1999). Anxiety is a common emotion that arises when a person feels threatened and incapable of adapting to a given context (Horwitz et al., 1986). Previous studies have been concerned with different aspects of anxiety and have come up with various interpretations. For example, Scovel (1978) defines anxiety as "a state of apprehension, a vague fear" that emerges in response to a particular situation (p. 134). Anxiety is the state of being prepared or ready to react to harmful conditions (Barlow, 2004). Anxiety is a normal response to potential threats since it is a productive alarm system (Winton, Clark & Edelmann, 1995). This alarm allows us to react to and deal with prospective threats. Anxiety is also fleeting, indicating that it lasts briefly until the threat fades or becomes bearable (Bishop, 2002). Rapee and Heimberg (1997) state that anxiety results from three systems working closely together. First, the cognitive processing system associates with the thoughts that arise when something is unusual or flawed. Second, the physiological system relates to the physical changes that often evolve due to anxiety, such as rapid heartbeat or difficulty breathing. Finally, the behavioral system is responsible for the typical tendency to leave or avoid situations.

Social researchers concur that anxiety is categorized into three main subcategories: trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Scovel (1978) defines trait anxiety as a persistent anxiety tendency. In other words, those with significant trait anxiety are predicted to feel anxious at each moment (Spielberger, Jacobs, Russell & Crane, 1983). State anxiety, as the term implies, is an emotion that arises mainly in the short term. It is a temporary change in an emotional state that results from external stimuli, resulting in instant irritation of the emotions (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991). Situation-specific anxiety is based on the principle that some situations are more likely to trigger anxiety than others (Horwitz, 2016; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991).

Furthermore, Anxiety research distinguishes between facilitating and debilitating anxiety in education. To provide an example, Scovel (1978) states that facilitating anxiety encourages learners to fight new activities in the classroom, whereas debilitating anxiety impedes learning and encourages avoidance behavior. According to Horwitz (1996), the anxiety experienced by foreign language learners differs from other anxieties in any discipline. Therefore, understanding the anxiety triggers may assist in understanding learners' and teachers' hesitation to interact in English.

**Foreign Language Anxiety**

Research on the effects of anxiety on Foreign Language Learning (FLL) was conducted using the state-trait anxiety paradigm in the 1970s, yielding contradictory findings (Gerencheal &
Mishra, 2019). According to Horwitz et al. (1986), FLA significantly differs from state and trait anxiety because it appears primarily in FLL classrooms (see Figure one). Horwitz and her colleagues defined FLA as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning experience" (p. 128). They contend that FLA is situation-specific anxiety responsible for unpleasant emotions towards the language, which differs from other academic anxieties because it necessitates more self-concept and self-expression (Horwitz et al., 1986). MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) devised an experiment using nine anxiety scales to demonstrate the validity of Horwitz and her colleagues' classifications, concluding that language anxiety significantly correlates with a proficiency level in a foreign language FL, while general anxiety is not. The same goes for Chen and Chang (2004), who indicated that FLA is distinct from other forms of anxiety.

![Figure 1. Classification of FLA (Adapted from Horwitz et al., 1986)](image)

Theoretically, FLA is essential in interpreting the process of FLL (Horwitz, 2001). Among the most influential theories in second language acquisition is Krashen's (1982) Affective Filter Hypothesis. This theory emphasizes how emotional variables such as motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety can affect students by interrupting information from the brain's language acquisition system. Once the emotional filter is active, learners may feel anxious, stressed, and lose self, which is detrimental to their success (Krashen, 1982). According to the literature, learning a foreign language can provoke a distinct form of anxiety which could be worsened due to the situational characteristics of FLL.

**Causes and Effects of FLA**

Other studies suggest possible origins of language anxiety by considering three perspectives: the learner, the teacher, and the teaching methods. For instance, Young (1991) identified six general causes of anxiety, including (a) intrapersonal and interpersonal fears, (b) student attitudes toward language learning, (c) teacher attitudes toward teaching the language, (d) interactions between teachers and students, (e) instructional practices, and (f) language test. According to Horwitz et al. (1986), the three most common causes of FLA are communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Communication anxiety refers to the fear or nervousness one experiences when interacting with others in a language they are trying to learn. On the other hand, fear of negative evaluation occurs when individuals are anxious about making mistakes and being corrected frequently. Test anxiety is associated with performance and triggered by fear of failing.

Besides, Sparks and Ganschow (1991) introduced the Linguistic Coding Deficit Hypothesis, which has led to a debate over whether language anxiety is crucial in causing poor language achievement. This hypothesis indicates that deficiencies in the first language may
interfere with FL abilities and become the primary source of poor achievement in FLL. In response to the LDCH, Horwitz (2000) claims this hypothesis emphasizes cognitive ability and overlooks the substantial differences between first- and second-language development. According to Bailey, Daley & Onwuegbuzie (1999), anxiety is not solely the result of a deficiency in the first language. Still, it is a fundamental emotional condition that can impair the cognitive functioning of language learners. MacIntyre (1995) also argues that the leading causes of language anxiety are the social and communicative components of learning a new language. Accelerating language learning requires understanding the contextual factors and effects that contribute to language anxiety.

It is clear from the extensive evidence in the literature that FLA can be outlined in five significant impacts: academic, social, cognitive, affective, and psychological. Academically, high FLA levels can impair performance and achievement in FL learning (Horwitz et al., 1986; Horwitz, 2001; Mercer, 2018; Williams & Andrade, 2008). Students with high anxiety levels are less likely to interact socially (Rapee & Heimberg, 1997). Cognitively, FLA impedes the cognitive processing system of a learner from receiving and processing new information correctly (Krashen, 1982; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989). Considering FLA's affective impact, anxiety often manifests through worrying, fear, despair, and a general lack of self-esteem (Pipuš, 2021) and is inversely associated with students' attitudes and motivation to learn an FL (Liu & Huang, 2011). Last, psychologists like Rapee and Heimberg (1997) state that high anxiety levels can negatively affect the body's physiological state, including sweating, trembling, irregular heartbeats, blushing, and tense muscles.

Students and teachers are susceptible to anxiety during the EFL teaching-learning process. Since the field of language education has prominently focused on reducing anxiety among EFL learners, the possibility that even EFL teachers are susceptible to FLA seems to be disregarded (Horwitz, 1996). Therefore, addressing EFL teachers' anxiety is critical before evaluating how teachers can ease student anxiety.

Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety

As with all novice EFL teachers, it is reasonable to assume that most teachers are no exception to going through critical moments of anxiety (Kim, Sung-Yeon & Joo-hae, 2004). As stated by Horwitz (1996), while EFL teachers are required to alleviate their students' anxiety levels, they may experience anxiety that may adversely impact their teaching behavior. Any novice EFL teacher, either native or non-native, would experience some degree of anxiety. According to Greis (1984), non-native trainees at ESOL typically suffer considerable anxiety compared to native speakers due to their perception that they cannot acquire the language at the same level as native speakers. Therefore, they assume their students may prefer a native speaker as their EFL teacher. Horwitz (1996) stated:

"Even though language teachers are supposed to be high-level speakers of their target language, language learning is never complete. Most non-native language teachers are likely uncomfortable speaking their target language. When feelings of inadequacy in the target language are frequent and unrelated to a real competence assessment, they parallel the anxiety reactions in inexperienced language learners..." (Horwitz, 1996, p. 365).

Horwitz (1996) noted that although the quality of language teaching is affected by such fears, it would significantly affect teachers' mentality and sense of satisfaction. Mercer (2018) reiterated Horwitz's point, claiming that a lack of language skills and low self-efficacy could trigger FLA in EFL teachers. EFL teachers are traditionally viewed as part of the learning context,
not independent actors (Mercer, 2018). As a result, the discipline needs to gain a deep understanding of EFL teachers' role in FLL to enhance the efficiency and dynamism of EFL classrooms.

The Significance of Teacher Psychology

In contrast to the extensive studies of EFL learners, researchers have not thoroughly explored the unique psychology of EFL teachers (Kobul & Saraçoğlu, 2020). First, it is crucial to understand why literature places such a high value on learners. The ultimate goal of the education system is to help students reach their full potential in the classroom. Teachers are hired, and educational institutions are established because of the students (Hattie, 2008). It is reasonable that this discipline seeks to understand the psychology of individuals who are supposed to be the primary beneficiaries of educational systems (Mercer, 2018). In addition, the learner-centred movement is a recent trend in language teaching that may have deepened the dominance of attention to learners (Mercer, Oberdorfer & Saleem, 2016). An unintended effect of this movement also appears that scholars have underestimated what Hattie (2008) highlights as the second most crucial element of variation: teachers' beliefs and practices. Focusing less on EFL teachers seems to have underestimated teachers as people with interests, goals, and personalities (Mercer, 2018).

However, understanding the psychology of EFL teachers is vital for two main reasons. First, EFL teachers are considered critical actors in the educational process (Holmes, 2005). Mercer et al. (2016) argue that EFL teachers with high levels of satisfaction and self-efficacy can deliver innovative and practical lessons much better. Due to the complexity of their instruction increases, EFL teachers face stressors such as technological literacy, institutional commitments, student behaviour, job insecurity, low language proficiency, and language anxiety (Mercer, 2018). Horwitz (1996) claims that EFL teachers should be ready to communicate in the language in front of their students at all times, unlike math or history instructors who can prepare the necessary materials for a specific lesson. With these considerations in mind, it seems imperative to find ways to support EFL teachers so they can survive and thrive in their careers.

The second reason is that teacher psychology profoundly influences learner psychology (Mercer, 2018). The contagion process connects the psychology of teachers and students and affects the teaching-learning process (Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021). More specifically, students' perceptions of their EFL teachers' psychological state determine their attitudes toward the teacher and alter their emotions. Another thing to consider is the two-way interaction between teacher and student, meaning that the latter is not just a passive observer of the former's behavior and vice versa (Mercer, 2018). The impact of EFL teachers on student achievement and well-being extends beyond their content and delivery methods. Put differently, the psychology of EFL teachers can affect students psychologically, individually and collectively, increasing the need for measurements to reduce uncertainties in EFL teachers.

Measuring Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies are used to evaluate foreign language anxiety to ensure validity and reliability. Qualitative research techniques include diaries and interviews. Interviews and diaries can be tailored to gather specific information, which can help researchers gain insight into participants' emotions. Using many data sources allows triangulation, increasing study validity and cross-checking findings (Creswell, 1999). For quantitative methods, scales are utilized. Before the turn of the millennium, the lack of an adequate measurement
hampered research on FLA for a long time (Kobul & Saraçoğlu, 2020). Horwitz et al. proposed a significant measure, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS), considered one of the major initiatives in the field. The FLCAS is a self-report tool with 33 questions designed to explore aspects of FLA among EFL learners. Their work pioneered and established a new research instrument on a 5-point Likert acknowledged by linguists such as MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) and widely utilized for assessing FLA among learners and teachers (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2022). Like vein, several other initiatives evolved in the literature to measure FLA. For instance, Kim (2000) developed the Foreign Language Listening Anxiety Scale (FLLAS), consisting of 33 items on a 5 Likert scale. Similarly, Second Language Speaking Anxiety Scale (SLSAS) was established by Woodrow (2006) and contained 12 items with a Likert scale from 1–5 to measure communication anxiety within and outside of the classroom.

Further, Horwitz (1996) contributed to the literature by developing the Teacher Foreign Language Anxiety Scale TFLAS to explore the anxiety experienced by EFL teachers and its influence on FL classrooms. A total of 18 items were rated on a Likert scale of 1–5 to stimulate respondents' FLA. The influential work of Horwitz gave rise to a renewed interest in using new scales measuring FLTA among EFL teachers apart from the standpoint of learning EFL (Aydin & Ustuk, 2020). Accordingly, TFLAS has been utilized in a wide range of previous investigations (e.g., Dişli, 2020; Kunt & Tüm, 2010; Liu & Wu, 2021), and it has been established that several EFL teachers exhibit FLTA.

As a result of their study, El-Okda and Al-Humaidi (2003) developed the Foreign Language Student Teaching Anxiety Scale to assess EFL teachers' anxiety levels. The scale contains 34 items categorized into six dimensions: interactions with students, peers, fellow teachers, supervisors, lesson planning, and classroom management. In like manner, İpek (2006) created an instrument called Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety Scale measuring the FLTA. The study produced a five-point Likert scale encompassing 26 items distributed across five categories: anxiety regarding teaching a specific FL skill, apprehension about FL performance, fear of making mistakes, comparison to other teachers, and use of the native language. Likewise, Aydin and Ustuk (2020) established Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety Scale (FLTAS) to measure anxiety levels among EFL teachers. The instrument includes 27 items with a Likert-scale (1=rarely to 5= always) that underpins five significant factors associated with FLA from two perspectives: language users and teachers, such as teaching inexperience, self-perception of language proficiency, fear of negative evaluation, lack of student interest, and difficulties with time management.

Equally important, research attention in physiological data monitoring and analysis gradually turns to technological advances to assess FLTA. According to Rivers (2022), FLA researchers are urged to broaden the existing methodological repertoire beyond experiencing self-report measurements and incorporate data collection and analysis technology combining high-integrity measures like Heart Rate Variability (HRV) and Electro-Dermal Activity (EDA). An advantage of this approach is that it can help researchers record autonomic nervous system arousal during real interaction contexts under different contexts (Rivers, 2022).

**Anxiety Provoking Factors**

Despite recent research acknowledging FLTA, there seems to be a lack of comprehensive studies to recognize all perspectives of FLTA compared to the FLA that students experience (Aydin & Uştuk, 2020). The anxiety experienced by EFL teachers may merely be a continuation of how they felt as EFL learners (Horwitz, 1996), as considerable research has shown that many EFL learners suffer from FLA. Consequently, EFL teachers can still endure FLA based on their
experiences as EFL learners (Horwitz, 2001). Additionally, as pre-service EFL teachers reach the end of their teaching training program, they may get frustrated by emotions of ineptitude and anxiety about utilizing the language (Tum, 2015). They would begin to doubt whether their language abilities will be adequate to meet the demands of their future EFL classroom (Horwitz, 1996). Recent evidence provided by Balkaya et al. (2020) illustrated that pre-service EFL teachers did not perceive themselves as sufficiently proficient due to a lack of confidence and fear of language mistakes. Perhaps those anxious EFL teachers who may have been in EFL classrooms where impeccable pronunciation and grammar were heavily emphasized will tend to adopt a purely linguistic approach to their teaching (Horwitz, 1996).

As well-documented by a large and growing body of scientific research, culture profoundly influences human cognition, and it is essential to highlight this distinction explicitly (Kobul & Saraçoğlu, 2020). Numerous academic studies have shown the ideological differences between Eastern and Western cultures in light of what Hofstede (1984) called collectivist and individualist societies. In other words, although communicative language teaching is widely recognized, it is commonly regarded as a Western innovation that doubtfully seems to be a cure in contexts influenced by eastern cultural traditions (Kobul & Saraçoğlu, 2020). As a natural consequence of their difficulties speaking out, collectivist EFL users are more likely than individualistic speakers to suffer shyness, embarrassment, and anxiety in EFL classrooms (Toyama & Yamazaki, 2022).

Another critical point is that the responsibilities of EFL teachers typically ascribed by the culture may contribute to FLTA. The common belief may persuade EFL teachers that they are accepted as fluent language speakers and feel stressed about how others perceive them (Tüm, 2019). In Libyan culture, for example, EFL teachers in Libya are often seen as the sources of information. Their primary responsibility is to pass on what they have learned to the next generation (Orafi, 2008). As a result, most teachers are more concerned with expanding their understanding of the subject matter than improving their teaching approaches. This means that culture significantly impacts human cognition, and what inspires anxiety in one culture may not be so in another, and vice versa (Kobul & Saraçoğlu, 2020).

Language teaching is a challenging profession in which EFL teachers may be required to cope regularly with various complex challenges. Several studies suggest that language teachers strive to balance their professional and personal lives properly. Teachers with heavy workloads need help to accomplish duties and commitments in their personal and professional lives (Fraschini & Park, 2022). Teachers want to combine family and teaching responsibilities; nonetheless, lengthy working hours prohibit them from achieving their objectives (Fraschini & Park, 2021). However, insecurity and self-doubt may readily lead to persistent language anxiety if they are regularly repeated (Tum, 2015). Consequently, this leads to dissatisfaction with natural language development and excessive expectations of being excellent language teachers (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). Therefore, it would be naive to assume that teachers could handle any emotions of ineptitude or anxiety they might experience in the EFL classroom if they were just granted teaching credentials (Tum, 2015).

The Significant Impact of Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety

Even though several investigations have revealed varying degrees of FLA among pre-service and in-service EFL teachers (Alrashidi, 2022; Ghanizadeh et al., 2020; Liu, Yan & Fu, 2022; Yagın Ekşi & Yılmaz Yakışık, 2016), it has not been extensively investigated if this feeling of language anxiety would alter their teaching practices in EFL classes. In a systematic research
review, Vorobel (2022) reviewed 197 research articles about distance foreign language teaching and found that modes of course delivery received the most attention, while only two studies investigated teachers' psychology, such as anxiety.

Nevertheless, evidence suggests that FLTA affects the EFL teaching-learning process. First, Horwitz (1996) stated that FLTA could minimize the amount and quality of information learners receive from teachers. However, the evidence suggests that FLA negatively affects instructors' efficiency in EFL classes. Tang (2007) indicated that inadequate language proficiency might negatively affect teachers' confidence in teaching, pedagogical decisions and classroom performance, and students' language communication skills. Considering this, teachers who experience anxiety may intentionally reduce their language use in class and avoid participating in language-focused activities that may expose their EFL deficiencies (Tum, 2015).

Second, Horwitz (1996) presumed that teachers' anxiety could be transferred unintentionally to students. According to the contagion process, learners' psychological conditions can be amended by their teacher's emotions (Moskowitz & Dewaele, 2021). As a result, EFL teachers' psychology may affect students individually and collectively, which signifies that the latter is not only a passive observer of the former's behaviours but vice versa (Mercer, 2018).

Finally, regular experiences of FLTA among EFL teachers would inevitably decrease their work enjoyment and negatively impact their well-being (Horwitz, 1996). Therefore, significant levels of FLTA may be detrimental to the efficacy of the FLL process. Horwitz recommended that by considering all these repercussions, efforts should be made to help EFL teachers' feelings about FLTA before beginning their careers.

Conclusion
This narrative review characterized and described the nature of Foreign Language Teaching Anxiety (FLTA) in the published literature. Examining the relevant literature regarding Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) demonstrates that anxiety poses a difficulty in learning and teaching. Although several investigations reveal that foreign language anxiety negatively affects the foreign language learning process, there is currently no solid evidence about the causes and effects of teaching anxiety in a formal educational setting. The literature on foreign language teaching anxiety is sparse; thus, the consequences of such an experience are highly questionable. A thorough understanding of the causes of foreign language anxiety would help to find ways to reduce this problem. In other words, how FLTA affects many parts of the instructional process, and how this affects teachers and students should be considered in multiple educational settings. When these impacts are considered collectively, it becomes evident that FLTA warrants further investigation.

Implications
In principle, the insights gained from this review can give rise to scholars, researchers and language teachers to recognize the dynamics behind anxiety feelings and their relationship with language teaching and learning. In addition, this review may assist teacher educators and policymakers in EFL contexts in conceptualizing the nature of anxiety among EFL teachers to design effective syllabus training programs that are contextually appropriate. Thus, EFL teachers can benefit from more productive and healthy practicum experiences.
Strengths and Limitations

This narrative review used rigorous and transparent methods guided by Green et al. (2006), Byrne (2016), Harvey et al. (2022), and the PRISMA statement as a synthesis and narrative protocol. The authors reviewed each citation and article and revised it before implementation. The search strategy included three electronic bibliographic databases and the snowball technique of relevant data in three search engines to ensure a broad literature search. In addition, using a bibliographic manager (Mendeley) confirmed that all citations and articles were adequately accounted for during the process.

Although efforts have been made to be as comprehensive as possible, this narrative overview has not identified all relevant information in the published literature. Our search algorithm primarily employed English terms commonly utilized for foreign language teaching anxiety (FLTA), and it is conceivable that other terminologies may exist as well. Furthermore, the overall search strategy may have been biased toward databases and overlooked some relevant studies as Web searches were screened for inclusion in this review. However, we encountered some challenges during the citation selection processes reported in this review due to writing space constraints. Therefore, further studies in this field are suggested to examine a specific aspect of such emotion, such as the causes or the effects of FLA, to include more in-depth information. On another remark, the characterization and interpretation of the included reviews were also subject to reviewers’ bias.

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Teaching Anxiety in Foreign Language Classroom

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Influence of Language Coaching Techniques on Undergraduate Students’ Motivation in the Process of Foreign Languages Teaching at Non-linguistic Specialties

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Abstract
The application of coaching techniques is popular in the worldwide practice of specialist training and is used in various fields. However, the problem of introduction of coaching techniques in foreign languages learning in Ukraine remains insufficiently covered and requires a more detailed study. This paper aimed to study the influence of language coaching techniques (LCT) on undergraduate students’ motivation in the process of foreign language teaching at non-linguistic specialties. The study sought to answer the main research questions: 1. What effect would LCT have on undergraduate students’ motivation to learn foreign languages at Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University (TNPU) in Ukraine? 2. How will the students perceive LCT while learning languages? The research employs qualitative methods (scientific observations, analysis of student activity results) to substantiate research theoretical grounds; quantitative methods (testing and self-assessment reviews) to identify the efficacy of LCT, communicative methods (conversations, discussions), and methods of mathematical analysis to do calculations of the collected research data. The conducted experiment involved randomly chosen 62 second-year students of the first (bachelor) higher education level of non-linguistic specialties of TNPU. The study concluded that the applied LCT at foreign language classes during the experiment provided positive dynamics in the growth of students’ motivation to knowledge acquisition. The findings would have practical significance for teachers of foreign languages who want to organize the learning process and make it more effective.

Keywords: Foreign languages, language coaching techniques, motivation, non-linguistic specialties, training, students

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Introduction

The development of modern society requires highly qualified specialists in different fields of industry, who can communicate effectively and interact productively with foreign colleagues. Proficiency in a foreign language has become crucial for a specialist’s personal and professional growth. Foreign languages enhance human intellectual potential, enable the formation of national and universal values, foster intercultural tolerance, assist in social integration and active citizenship, and broaden career opportunities. The ability to use a foreign language fluently is irrefutable proof of their professionalism.

Now, when the development of Ukraine’s relations on an international level is strengthening, there is an urgent need for a new approach to the methodology of foreign language teaching to students of non-linguistic specialties. Despite the fact that educators at higher education institutions in Ukraine pay a lot of attention to foreign language teaching, undergraduate students demonstrate relatively insufficient level of foreign language competence. The lack of undergraduate students’ motivation has a negative impact on foreign languages learning and, consequently, on their performance.

Students are more motivated to learn a foreign language when they see and understand its importance, realize their progress in the language learning process, and believe that knowledge of a foreign language is closely related to their future professional activities. Understanding students’ needs and expectations allows a teacher of a foreign language to choose the most appropriate teaching methods and techniques and organize the learning process by setting achievable goals. Each student is motivated to study a foreign language for a different reason. Some of the motivations could be internal, while others might be irrelevant. Intrinsic motivation is inherent to students motivated by their desires; in contrast, students who are inspired by an outside factor have extrinsic motivation.

Educators are constantly searching for effective methods of learning to ensure the appropriate level of undergraduate students’ knowledge and their readiness for future professional activities. The application of coaching techniques is popular in the worldwide practice of specialist training and is used in various fields. However, the problem of introduction of coaching techniques in foreign languages learning in Ukraine remains insufficiently covered and requires a more detailed study. Furthermore, the analysis of scientific sources reveals that there is a contradiction between traditional approaches in language learning and application of the coaching experience to the individual needs of the students. Language Coaching Techniques (LCT) may enhance personalized learning, but this can sometimes conflict with standardized assessment methods or curriculum requirements.

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of LCT in foreign language teaching to Ukrainian undergraduate students of non-linguistic specialties. The findings would have practical significance for teachers of foreign languages who want to organize the learning process and make it more effective. Thus, it is important that English teachers take more concern on LCT and help students improve their achievements in foreign language proficiency. Recognition of language coaching will benefit to teachers’ understanding and choosing effective training techniques for designing and conducting foreign language classes.

The study sought to answer the following research question: 1. What effect would LCT have on undergraduate students’ motivation to learn foreign languages at Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk
Influence of Language Coaching Techniques on Undergraduate Students’ National Pedagogical University (TNPU) in Ukraine? 2. How will the students perceive LCT while learning languages?

This paper starts with the acknowledgement about theoretical fundamentals of concepts coaching, language coaching and LCT in the literature review. Then the methodology section briefly summarises the research design, participants, instruments used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Finally, it presents sections with conducted research findings, discussions, and conclusions.

**Literature Review**

**Concept of Coaching**

Researchers’ interest in coaching has become evident in recent years. According to Al Hilali, Al Mughairi & Kianet, et al. (2020), professional training and development of employees focuses on specific goals and skills but may also have some effects on the individual’s characteristics, such as confidence and social communication (p. 41).

Over time, the concept of coaching accumulated ideas from specialists and experts in different fields who contributed to its development. Thus, Gallwey (1997), was the first to introduce and define coaching as a new method of training that emphasized the students’ awareness through a set of questions and guidelines to help them succeed. Whitmore (2002) and his colleagues were the first to take coaching into the workplace and coined the term “performance coaching” in the early 1980s.

The English term “coach” derived from the Hungarian word “kocsi”, which means “of Kocs”, the name of a small Hungarian town where horse-drawn carts and carriages were previously constructed. The term “coach” became associated with a trainer who carried their students along a path of learning.

Since then, the coaching has become a unique kind of educational engagement based on reflections on cutting-edge practices in the fields of mentorship, corporate consulting, psychological consulting, and even psychotherapy (Grant & Cavanagh, 2011; Shchur, 2020).

Over the past ten years, the use of coaching in educational settings has increased significantly worldwide. It has been implemented in schools, colleges, and higher education institutions to help students, teachers, and leaders succeed (Lord, Atkinson, & Mitchel, 2008; Tarwiyah, Bharati, & Dwi, 2018).

Mohamad, Rashid, & Yunus, et al. (2016) examined the views of School Improvement Specialist Coach on their roles in coaching English language teachers in Malaysian primary school. They found that coaching has a significant impact on teaching practices and teacher professional development (p. 269). Nonetheless, the examination of the scientific literature reveals that there is no single definition of the term coaching. In modern scientific literature, coaching is defined as a philosophy about training technologies used for teaching new ways of thinking and behaving that are essential for successful interpersonal interaction and effective personal and professional self-development. Thus, Niewerburgh (2012) defines the term coaching as:

A one-to-one conversation focused enhancing learning and development through increasing self-awareness and a sense of personal responsibility, where the coach facilitates the self-directed learning of the coachee through questioning, active listening, and appropriate challenge in a supportive and encouraging climate. (p. 6-7)
According to Bachkirova, Cox, & Clutterbuck (2014); Phaekwamdee, Na Ayuthaya & Kiattisin (2022), who studied theoretical perspectives, contexts, genres of coaching, and the ways of its practical application for professional needs, this term relates to the process of life-long human development, that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools, and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders” (p. 3).

The analysis of scientific sources provides a framework to argue that coaching is a system of helping a person identify and reach a decision about their characteristics (Knight, 2009); and is a component of a person-oriented approach (Whitmore, 2002; Wilson, 2020). Some researchers (Whitmore, 2002; Knight, 2009; Rakhimova, 2021) state that the process of coaching bases on the following principles: teachers’ receptivity; organizational process, which follows stages from building trust to collaborating and reflecting; challenging, which requires overcoming tension between knowledge and beliefs; promoting: administrative support; proof: evidence of change, impact, and capacity building; and promise-projecting of the future role. The cornerstone of coaching is enhancing a person’s awareness and responsibility to optimize their capabilities and performance by shifting the emphasis from a person’s weaknesses to their strengths, triumphs, and potential. It avoids judgment, blame, and limiting beliefs while leaving behind mistakes and failures.

Any person-oriented approach usually has a model of coaching at its core. Whitmore (2002); Kunos (2017); Hawk (2020); Mayuni, Leiliyanti, & Palupi, et al. (2022) paid attention to studying various coaching models and their structural components. The coaching methodology enables the coach to engage the student in a rational, understandable, and developing discussion about the subject or problem. Additionally, it offers a foundation for applying coaching methods to the learner. By introducing them to the student in a familiar, secure, and clear language, using a model also helps the learner.

Kunos (2017) defines a coaching model as “a kind of framework based on a process approach that serves as a useful structure in practice, helping to position the current process” (p. 41). The most popular coaching models are as follows: GROW, SMARTER, WOOP, Solution-Focused Model, STEPPA, GENIUS, CLEAR, FUEL, etc. For example, Whitmore (2002) created the model GROW in the late 1980s. Each letter in this acronym means the following: G stands for goal (goals and aspirations); R stands for reality (current situation, internal and external obstacles); O stands for options (possibilities, strengths, and resources); and W stands for will (actions and accountability).

Figure 1. CROW coaching model [GROW Coaching Model]
Each stage of the coaching foresees the conversation between a coach (teacher) and a student (or a group of students). Sample questions that encourage students to assess their performance and think critically are listed in accordance with each stage of the model. (see Table one).

Table 1. Example Questions for the GROW Model [GROW Coaching Model]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Reality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you want? What is your aim for this discussion/session?</td>
<td>What is happening at the moment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How would you like it to be?</td>
<td>How important is this to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does that look like?</td>
<td>On a scale of 1–10, if an ideal situation is 10, what number are you at now? What number would you like to be at?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will you be saying to yourself?</td>
<td>How do you feel about this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will that enable you to do?</td>
<td>What impact is this having on you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will other people be saying to you?</td>
<td>What’s on your shoulders?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What will you have that you don’t have now?</td>
<td>How does this impact other areas of your life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagine three months from now, all obstacles disappeared, and you have achieved this…</td>
<td>What are you doing to achieve your goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do you see/hear/feel?</td>
<td>What are you doing that is getting in the way of your goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What new elements are in place?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is different?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Options</td>
<td>Will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What could you do?</td>
<td>What will you do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What ideas do you have?</td>
<td>How will you do that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What alternatives do you have?</td>
<td>When will you do it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there anything else?</td>
<td>Who will you talk to?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If there were anything else, what would it be?</td>
<td>Where will you go?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What has worked in the past?</td>
<td>Is there anything you need to put in place before that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What steps could you take?</td>
<td>How committed are you to taking that action?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who could help you with this?</td>
<td>What will it take for you to commit to that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where could you find out the information?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How could you do that?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When considering the coaching model in the context of foreign language instruction, it is crucial to remember that both the teaching and educational components are equally important. Coaching is done more in the advising approach “teacher (mentor) – individual” than in a “teacher – group” framework. It enables teachers to increase students’ language performance. Moreover, it is essential to consider this basic coaching principle and remove any psychological barriers like the fear of making grammar mistakes, being misunderstood or misunderstanding a foreign interlocutor, failing to memorize new vocabulary, or the inability to converse in a foreign language during transferring information. Overcoming these barriers can be achieved by motivating the learner to link the process of gaining knowledge and skills according to the set goal, divided into segments.

Despite the significant number of coaching models, they have some standard features:

− the distinct organization, which distinguishes one model from the other (Hawk, 2020);
− each of them based on the principle of collaboration (Mayuni, Leiliyanti, Palupi, et al. (2022);
each of them pursues such fundamental values that underpin coaching’s core philosophy and mission (a trusting and open environment; honest, open communication between a coach and a student; the importance of the student’s objectives and their implementation, etc.) (Kunos, 2017).

Language Coaching

Language coaching has become increasingly popular among professionals in the field of language education in the beginning of the twenty-first century. The term language coaching (also known as “lingua coaching”) is a method that incorporates coaching concepts into the context of language acquisition. Kovács (2019); Rakhimova (2021) define the concept of language coaching as a conversation-based process the purpose of which is to organize optimal language acquisition or determine language goals, where both parties (teacher and students) are equal partners. The framework of language coaching involves strategies directed at utilizing intrinsic motivation and developing learning awareness. Instead of working with pre-defined class objectives language coaching focuses on the students’ communication outcomes and learning processes in their professional and personal settings. The goal of language coaching is to encourage the student to carry out the activities that self-reflection and critical evaluation of their language usage.

The role of a language coach is to support and empower the learner on their self-led learning journey, and to assist them in defining and using the tools they need to progress in their target language. Turchyn & Tsar (2021) note, that in contrast to the traditional method of training, where the teacher himself determines the subject, learning material and methods of teaching students, language coaching, shifts the emphasis from the teacher to the student, which makes learning person-oriented.

Thus, language coaching addresses the psychological, motivational, and practical aspects of language acquisition. It helps students become more conscious of the factors that influence their learning. Language coaching applies the principle that students can self-direct their language study, meaning that they are responsible for all decisions about learning process. Teachers who want to apply language coaching in their classroom should know more about the most effective LCT incorporated in foreign language teaching.

Language Coaching Techniques in the Process of Foreign Languages Teaching

When applying coaching strategies, linguistic coaching promotes effective, engaging, and accessible language acquisition. In contrast to traditional teaching methods (Paling, 2014), in which the teacher has to “cut off” anything unnecessary for the lesson to conform to the plan, thereby restricting the students’ creative abilities, the structure of the language coaching session is sufficiently flexible and is determined by the prior experience of the students.

The researchers (Knight, 2009; Lord, Atkinson, & Mitchell, 2008; Yefimova & Zhytyska, 2017; Wilson, 2020) identify the conditions and prerequisites for successful coaching application. According to these studies, LCT are necessary for enhancing students’ language abilities, developing their personal language awareness, and boosting motivation either at the beginning of the course or during the study process.

As Fölscher-Kingwill & Terblanche (2019) indicate, coaching sessions follow a structured procedure that includes questioning tactics and communicative discussions. They encourage students to consider several solutions to the problem. The coach (teacher) should stay neutral.
throughout discussions but observe the degree of students’ motivation and commitment during these conversations. These sessions can take place in person, online, or in groups. Initially, the coach and students define goals and objectives. Then they develop strategies and steps to achieve their objectives (p. 160).

Some studies (Knight, 2009; Tarwiyah & Dwi, 2018; Juraeva, 2020) stated that asking open-ended questions is one of the main coaching techniques used to guide the individual in the proper direction and facilitate them to take the actions required to reach the desired outcomes. Open-ended questions foster thinking and the ability to conduct self-analysis and self-evaluation based on observing data about one’s activities and help people make the right decisions in challenging circumstances. Having analyzed the psychophysiological features of speech activity, Shchur (2020) pointed out four stages of linguistic coaching support for students to develop their foreign language competence:

1. – establishing the objectives, planning, and preparation for foreign language activity;
2. – carrying out the language activity;
3. – reflection on the language activity;
4. – using reflection results in practice to increase the level of foreign language competence discussing the results of the speech activity” (p.145).

These stages are presented in the Figure two below:

![Figure 2](https://www.awej.org/images/article.jpg)

*Figure 2. The continuous cycle of development of foreign language competence (Adopted from Shchur, 2020, p. 145)*

The researchers (Baageel, 2020; Samoilova & Serhienko, 2020; Dmitrenko & Budas, et al., 2021; Kankan, 2021; Barrera, 2022) examined the ways to increase students’ motivation while learning a foreign language. They distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation defines a person’s inherent desire to perform a specific activity on their own or from the sense of accomplishment gained from completing or simply undertaking a task. Contrarily, extrinsic motivation refers to the outside factors influencing a person’s behaviour. Experts believe that using modern technologies and active teaching techniques in the foreign language educational process at all stages is the key to facilitating students’ motivation and the efficacy of foreign language lessons.

Also, various incentives (money, prizes, appreciation) or other rewards bringing pleasure and enjoyment can reinforce students’ extrinsic motivation. Both forms of motivation are essential in students’ language acquisition. According to Samoilova & Serhienko (2020), inner motivation...
is more significant for a person since it directly influences the success of the learning activity. According to her study, “a foreign language teacher must establish conditions for students to shift from external to internal motivation and build a growing educational environment in which students can realize their strengths and needs in learning a foreign language” (p. 47).

The literature analysis showed that most studies demonstrate that intrinsically motivated students outperform extrinsically motivated students when learning a foreign language.

Methods
As mentioned above, this paper aimed to study the influence of LCT in foreign language teaching to Ukrainian undergraduate students of non-linguistic specialties at Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University (TNPU). To generalize the research data, we used qualitative methods (scientific observations, analysis of students’ activity results) to substantiate research theoretical grounds; quantitative methods (testing and self-assessment reviews) to identify the efficacy of LCT; communicative methods (conversations, discussions), and methods of mathematical analysis to do calculations of the collected research data.

Participants
Experimental verification of the investigated problem took place at TNPU (Ukraine) at the faculties of geography, chemistry, and biology. The conducted research encompassed the first and second terms of the 2020–2021 academic year. During the research, 62 second-year students of the first (bachelor) higher education level of non-linguistic specialties participated in the experiment conducted at TNPU. The students were randomly assigned to two groups. There were thirty students in the Experimental Group (EG), and thirty-two students in the Control Group (CG). In the EG, 16 students were females, and 14 were males. The CG consisted of 17 females, and 15 males. In terms of gender, the groups were almost similar. The participants possessed the A2-B1 level of English mastery.

Research Instruments
The research instruments included: three grammar and vocabulary tests (specially designed to check students’ outcomes at the end of each stage of the experiment: placement test, intermediary test, and final test); the LCT involved conversations and discussions according to the GROW model (see Table one); learning materials used during English classes (textbook “On Screen B2” by V.Evans & J.Dooley (Express Publishing)); and during German classes (textbook “Sicher! Deutsch als Fremdsprache B2” by M. Perlmann-Balme, S. Schwalb, & M. Matussek (Hueber Verlag), audio-recordings, and specially designed tasks in the electronic system Moodle.

Research Procedure
Our experimental research involved the following stages: diagnostic, procedural, and reflexive-analytical. At the diagnostic stage, we analyzed the current level of undergraduate students’ foreign language proficiency through placement grammar and vocabulary test. At the procedural stage the LCT applied in the EG involved conversations and discussions according to the GROW model (see Table one). In addition, students fulfilled learning tasks and specially designed assignments in the electronic system Moodle according to the curriculum. The students in the CG had their traditional classes and used the same learning materials as the students in EG. At the end of the procedural stage both groups took the intermediary grammar and vocabulary test.
At the reflexive-analytical stage of the research, we used final grammar and vocabulary test to observe the dynamics of undergraduate students’ foreign language proficiency over the course of experiment, analysed students’ self-assessment reviews. Finally, we employed methods of mathematical analysis to do calculations of the collected research data gained in both groups.

Results

The Diagnostic Stage

At the diagnostic stage of the experimental research, we determined the student’s current level of foreign language proficiency through the placement grammar and vocabulary test. While determining the appropriate level of linguistic proficiency the scope of knowledge was studied through tests, control tasks, credit, and examination session analysis. We employed Usova’s step-by-step and post-operational assessment described by Chudina (2010), to convert qualitative indicators into quantitative ones. Thus, we calculated the scope of knowledge acquisition in a subject according to the formula: \( K = \frac{n}{N} \), where \( K \) is the coefficient of completeness of knowledge acquisition; \( n \) is the number of learned items (correctly named and characterized); and \( N \) is the total number of concepts in the theoretical material determined for learning. We chose the coefficient of firmness (\( P \)) of knowledge acquisition in a subject, knowledge of psychological characteristics of students, and methods of pedagogical communication using the formula: \( P = \frac{K_1}{K_2} \) where \( K_1 \) is the coefficient of the number of learned concepts after the first test; \( K_2 \) – coefficient of knowledge acquisition after further verification. For evaluation, we used a scale (Table two) that meets the requirements of the European credit transfer system for the organization of the educational process.

Table 2. Correlation of national grading scale and ECTS scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1-34 (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>35-59 (FX)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproductive</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60-74 (DE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>75-89 (BC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>90-100 (A)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of the test results, after-test activities and some conversations with students also suggested that students possess uneven degrees of motivation for foreign language learning. Our observations proved that students with better grades demonstrated great commitment and willingness to study.

The Procedural Stage

At the procedural stage the experimental research involved applying LCT during foreign language classes in the EG. Specifically, students of the EG held conversations and discussions according to the GROW model (see Table one). To encourage their critical thinking and the ability to conduct self-analysis and self-evaluation based on their learning outcomes students got the task to write self-assessment reviews. In their reviews students had to answer the following questions: 1. How active have you been at the lesson? What encouraged you to do this, and vice versa, what hindered your actions? 2. Did you set a goal at the beginning of the lesson? Have you reached it? What prevented it? 3. Prioritize your actions today in the lesson. Which ones are familiar to you
and which ones were performed for the first time? 4. Identify typical life situations for you. Assess the knowledge got during the lesson for each situation by the following criteria: necessary / unnecessary, important / unimportant. 5. Continue each sentence. I have already known... I could do it... I learned it... Now I can... I want to know more... I want to do., etc.

Students in the CG followed their traditional educational approach at foreign language classes and also wrote self-assessment reviews. At the end of the stage both groups completed summary grammar and vocabulary test. Below, we displayed the dynamics of undergraduate students’ foreign language outcomes in CG and EG (see Table three).

Table 3. Dynamics of students’ foreign language outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Diagnostic stage of the experimental research</th>
<th>Procedural stage of the experimental research</th>
<th>Dynamics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Number of students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>CG 6 EG 5</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>CG 5 EG 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>CG 10 EG 8</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>CG 9 EG 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproductive</td>
<td>CG 9 EG 10</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>CG 10 EG 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient</td>
<td>CG 5 EG 5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>CG 5 EG 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>CG 2 EG 2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>CG 3 EG 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As seen in table three, the students demonstrate the reproductive level of foreign language proficiency (28.2% – CG and 33.3% – EG); students with the sufficient level (15.6% – CG and 16.7% – EG), and insignificant amount of students possess knowledge at the high level (6.3% – CG, 67% – EG) at the diagnostic stage of the research.

After completing the procedural stage of the experimental research, there were students in the EG possessing reproductive level (36.7%) and those who demonstrated the sufficient level (30.0%) in foreign language proficiency. A limited percentage of students (10%) in the EG had their initial level estimated. At the same time, students’ determination and deeper involvement in learning a foreign language were evident in contrast to CG. The collected data suggest positive changes for students in the CG as well, but they are less noticeable. Thus, the students in the CG preserved their previous level of language proficiency.

The Reflexive-analytical Stage

At the reflexive-analytical stage of the research, we studied the dynamics of students’ foreign language outcomes after applying LCT and compared the changes of their attitude to learning a foreign language in both groups. Students took final grammar and vocabulary test comprising the material of both previous tests that enabled us to compare their results at each stage of the experimental research. The comparative analysis of the obtained data made it possible to observe
that due to the introduction of LCT at foreign language classes, the number of students in the EG possessing low levels decreased by 6.7% and 9.5%, respectively. Notably, the number of students with sufficient (up 13.3%) and creative (up 6.7%) levels increased. In the CG, we also observed positive dynamics, but it was not decisive and did not have a significant impact on the overall picture of undergraduate students’ performance.

Figure three presents generalized data on the dynamics of students’ foreign language outcomes.

Figure 3. Dynamics of students’ foreign language outcomes

Considering the analysis of students’ self-assessment reviews and researchers’ observations, there were obvious changes in students’ attitudes toward learning a foreign language. Although the participants in both groups showed that they can perceive, comprehend, and assess their achievements effectively, the students in the EG outperformed their counterparts in the CG. The employment of LCT in foreign language classrooms led to a notable qualitative growth in students’ intrinsic motivation. This indicates that students can critically evaluate their achievements, motivate themselves and others to perform work, cooperate with others, creatively use acquired skills and abilities, and apply them effectively in practice. They can develop competencies that determine the achievement of positive results. All of the above mentioned confirms the effectiveness of LCT.

Discussions

Considering the first research question of our study on the effective influence of LCT on undergraduate students’ motivation to learn foreign languages at TNPU (Ukraine), it should be noted that there is a lot of foreign research on coaching techniques. (Niewerburgh, 2012; Kunos, 2017; Hawk, 2020; Wilson, 2020). Numerous studies emphasize their practical application for professional needs in various fields. (Yefimova & Zhytska, 2017; Tarwiyah, Bharati, & Dwi, 2018; Mayuni, Leiliyanti & Palupi, et al., 2022). In recent years, LCT has gained more popularity in foreign language teaching worldwide as it contributes to the development of students’ capabilities and is person-oriented. This study supports previous findings of both foreign (Bukhari & Bahanshia, 2013; Paling, 2014; Baaqeeel, 2020; Kankan, 2021; Barrera, 2022) and Ukrainian researchers (Juraeva, 2020; Samoilova& Serhiienko, 2020; Rakhimova, 2021) claimed that LCT promoted the development of undergraduate students’ motivation in foreign language settings. Our findings proved that students with a relatively high level of intrinsic motivation demonstrated
better results in foreign language learning, while students with extrinsic motivation manifested short-term motivation and their level of performance was lower. Accordingly, the effectiveness of LCT for university students is undeniable.

The second research question dealt with the students’ perceptions of LCT while learning foreign languages. Our observations revealed some difficulties the students encountered during communication. The first was connected to possessing an insufficient level of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, which made it difficult to express their ideas. Another problem was related to their psychological barriers, which prevented them from active participation in communication. The barrier-free atmosphere created by the application of LCT helps to increase students’ confidence; they feel free to express their opinions and defend them, which teaches them to be more independent, decisive, and interact with others. It was obvious, that students perceived LCT positively. Such a conscious approach to language learning increases their motivation to learn foreign languages, which is confirmed by our obtained research data.

Conclusions

The introduction of language coaching in foreign languages teaching at non-linguistic specialties is one of the innovative and effective means that improves undergraduate students’ motivation to study foreign languages as well as efficiency, flexibility, and productivity. This article has presented the result of exploration how language coaching training helps increase communicative competence, inspires students to explore their creative potential, and fosters reflection abilities. The result revealed that there was a significant difference on foreign language proficiency between students taught using LCT and those taught conventionally without them. The study demonstrated that language coaching contributed to students’ communication skills as it showed that the students in the EG achieved better results than those in the CG. Thus, it is important that English teachers take more concern on LCT and help students improve their achievements in all types of speech activity. Recognition of language coaching will assist teachers to understand and decide which training techniques are effective for designing and conducting foreign language classes.

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Academic Writing of Saudi Graduate Students: Issues and Improvements
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Abstract
This study investigates research writing difficulties encountered by Saudi graduate students at a Saudi university and seeks to offer interventional guidelines accordingly. A fuller understanding of these difficulties will contribute to the development of instruction aimed at improving students’ research writing skills. The main question this study addresses is this: What are the major academic writing problems facing Saudi graduate students? The investigation used an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach involving 87 participants at the University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The data were collected through a 20-item Likert scale questionnaire completed online by 85 Saudi graduate students (37 males, 48 females; 69 majoring in English, 16 majoring in other subjects) and semi-structured interviews conducted with two faculty members. The quantitative data were analyzed statistically using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and the qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Results revealed that most students experienced difficulties related to language, argumentation, and research-article genre when composing research reports in English. Both the participating students and teachers thought the most serious academic writing challenges for Saudi graduate students were presenting complex information in clear sentences and building strong arguments. In contrast, the least problematic task was finding and documenting sources. Regarding evaluating sources, writing Literature reviews, and using technical vocabulary, most students were unsure of their abilities. Besides, English majors and other majors had similar perceptions of difficulties in three out of four significant aspects of research writing. As far as documenting sources is concerned, the perception varied significantly between the English-major and other-major students. The findings of the present study can assist stakeholders in identifying instructional needs in research writing in the Saudi Arabian context, and our guidelines will make research writing less difficult for Saudi students.

Keywords: Academic writing, English as a Foreign Language, Foreign Language, English as a Second Language, graduate students, research writing difficulties

Introduction

A primary concern for Saudi graduate students is academic writing which is directly linked to success in college and beyond (Freedman, Hull, Higgs, & Booten, 2016; Lahuerta, 2017; McDonough & Crawford, 2018; Rosário, 2019). However, writing clear, coherent, and syntactically-developed prose is a student challenge (Hamzaoui, 2021; Harris et al., 2017; Ruscetti, Krueger, & Sabatier, 2018) as it requires the writer to fulfill a number of distinct but related tasks: gathering and ordering content; shaping content into correct and clear expressions; and, meeting the genre requirements. Many researchers (Hanauer, Sheridan, & Englander, 2019; Hyland, 2016; Hyland, 2016; Lin & Morrison, 2021) have studied the academic writing problems facing First Language (L1) and Second Language (L2) writers. Whys and wherefores for L2 writers’ academic English writing difficulties are the following: writing in ESL or EFL; weak educational background; non-traditional nature of the graduate student (Haggis, 2006; Owler, 2010). Of the specific sources of L2 writing difficulties identified in the literature, the following are the major ones: vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics of writing; (Ferguson, Pérez-Llantada, & Plo, 2011; Phuong, 2021; Singh, 2017); discourse organization (Flowerdew, 2019; Hanauer & Englander, 2013; Komba, 2015; Mahammoda, 2016); and, genre conventions (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Finn, 2018; Kao & Reynolds, 2017) amongst others.

Although researchers such as Hyland (2016) and Maxwell-Reid and Kartika-Ningsih (2020) maintain that academic writing in English is as much a challenge for L1 writers as it is for L2 writers, other experts, such as Alsied and Ibrahim (2017), Hanauer, Sheridan, and Englander (2019), and Lin and Morrison (2021) have argued that L2 writers experience greater difficulties composing research reports compared with their native counterparts.

Academic writing problems faced by Saudi L2 graduate students remain a sparsely-studied subject. While many researchers have investigated L2 students’ issues with writing paragraphs and essay assignments, few have investigated whether these problems haunt L2 writers. This study was also conducted because anecdotal evidence in Saudi Arabia suggests students' notions about their research writing difficulties are often fuzzy. These students say research writing is challenging but cannot specify why. Finally, to our knowledge, few studies in Saudi Arabia have explored research writing difficulties of Saudi students in Saudi universities. Our online search for background literature for this study returned many works exploring Saudi college students' issues with constructing sentences, paragraphs, and essays. Still, we could find few inquiries into research-writing problems of Saudi students in Saudi universities.

This study aims to identify the research-writing difficulties encountered by Saudi graduate students at a Saudi University. To collect quantitative data, we designed a Likert-scale questionnaire, which was completed online by the volunteering students. The qualitative data for the study came from semi-structured interviews conducted with two in-service faculty members at the University of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia. Based on our findings, we also offer guidelines to make research writing less difficult for Saudi graduate students. This study, thus, sets out to foreground the significant obstacles to research writing in English experienced by Saudi students and to identify the instructional needs in L2 research writing within the Saudi Arabian context.

This study set out with the aim of assessing Saudi graduate students' academic writing. Hence, the overarching research questions of this study are:

1. What are the major kinds of problems graduate students at Jeddah University face when writing up their first research paper?
2. What are the major characteristics of the research-writing problems facing graduate students at the University of Jeddah?
3. What guidelines can be offered to make research writing less difficult for graduate students at the University of Jeddah?
4. To what extent do the English Major and the Other-Major students differ in their perceptions of research-writing difficulties?

This study provides an significant opportunity to advance the understanding of the specific research-writing problems facing Saudi graduate students in Saudi universities. A fuller account of these difficulties will contribute to developing instruction aimed at improving students' research writing skills. Additionally, this study could be used to identify areas of enhancement in academic preparation programs offered for Saudi graduate students in Saudi universities and highlight the characteristics of effective writing.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows. First, the literature review section discusses relevant past studies on academic writing difficulties encountered by L2 students, identifying gaps in the literature. Next, the study participants, research instruments, and methods of data analysis are described. The findings are then presented and discussed, followed by recommendations for stakeholders and the limitations of the study. The paper concludes by recapitulating the major findings of this study.

Literature Review

Writing Difficulties for L2 Students

Looking to ascertain English-writing issues with Vietnamese students, Phuong (2021) analyzed data from 50 English Majors at Tay Do University, Vietnam, and concluded that the participants found timed-writing tasks most difficult, followed by vocabulary and grammar. Poor background in English was also a noticeable problem. The least difficult task was reported to be the ordering of information. This study is relevant to the present one as it concentrates on graduate students and hence the results of our research could indeed be comparable to those of Phuong’s (2021).

While Phuong (2021) focused on academic English difficulties, Riadil (2023) investigated the difficulties the students perceived and the steps they took to surmount those difficulties. Analyzing data from students (n=25) from the English department, Universitas Tidar, in the academic year 2021/2022, this study found that the students experienced the most serious issues with grammar, followed by difficulties associated with the writing style and English vocabulary. To overcome the problems, the students used four strategies (independent writing, think-aloud, modelled writing, and guided writing strategy) of which independent writing was practiced most commonly.

In a related research, Hirano (2014) studied students in an American college and found that writing tasks in disciplines other than English were easy, but the ones in Freshman English class were hard for the students. The students’ problems were in vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics of writing. However, according to faculty feedback, these linguistic lapses only occasionally led to communication breakdowns, and students often surmounted these obstacles. A follow-up to the study of Hirano (2014) could have led to more fruitful findings in the sense that students’ level, educational background and opportunities are relevant in accounting for academic performance including academic writing.
Academic Writing of Saudi Graduate Students: Issues

Academic Writing of Saudi Graduate Students: Issues

Research-writing Difficulties for L2 Students

Language-specific Issues

Surveying 85 supervisors across 28 departments at Stanford University, Casanave and Hubbard (1992) concluded that L2 students writing doctoral research encountered more difficulties than their native counterparts and that these shortcomings related to the sentence than the paragraph. Similarly, Sadeghi and Khajepasha (2015), examining the research-writing problems facing Iranian postgraduate students found that major difficulties related to grammar and style. In contrast, Cooley and Lewkowicz (1995, 1997), investigating supervisors and students at the University of Hong Kong, found that faulty argumentation affected research reports more than linguistic errors. Likewise, Dong (1998), investigating L2 postgraduate students at two American colleges, concluded that students struggled with developing and ordering ideas. Similarly, Manchishi, Ndhlovu, and Mwanza (2015) examined the research-writing problems confronting Zambia University graduate students and identified the following problems: vague research topics; unfamiliarity with the subject register; and, weak literature review. As is evident here, the foregoing discussion of the literature on L2 researchers’ writing issues reveals divergent perspectives, with some studies finding surface errors to be the major issue while other studies finding discourse-level issues to be the formidable challenge. It means that fresh inquires are needed to determine what kinds of writing difficulties trouble specific student samples in specific settings the most.

Genre-specific Issues

Besides the sentence and paragraph level problems, L2 students experienced difficulties specific to the research article genre. For example, Many L2 students did not discern the appropriate content for their sequencing in a research-report element (Parry, 1998; Thompson, 1999). In one study, focused on the Discussion section of the RA, Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006) interviewed students and their supervisors and found that students struggled with composing the Discussion for three main reasons. First, they thought, wrongly, the Discussion should summarize results and explain them in isolation. Secondly, some students were unaware of the appropriate content for the Discussion section. Thirdly, students had difficulty rendering numerical data into clear, well-developed English sentences. Likewise, Alsied and Ibrahim’s (2017) study of 42 Libyan EFL undergraduates and their four teachers at a Libyan university found that students experienced difficulties meeting several genre requirements of research writing, such as formulating a research problem, gathering and analyzing data, and writing a cogent literature review.

Besides selecting the wrong content, students sometimes inflated the relative worth of their work by making inadequately-supported big claims about their topic and conclusions. In contrast, some other L2 students have been reported to underplay the significance of their study. This imbalance has been attributed to the students' limited proficiency in English (Parry, 1998; Thompson, 1999) or failure to consider the expectations of the discourse community (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001).

The Saudi Arabian Context

Writing Issues with Saudi Students

Many researchers have investigated writing problems confronting Saudi learners. In his case study, Yassin (2023) investigated the challenges facing Prince Mohammad Bin Fahd University undergraduate students in writing topic sentences for the argumentative essays they
wrote for a writing course they took in 2018. The findings revealed five issues: imprecision, wordiness, lack of orientation, faulty mechanics, and shaky grammar. In another study, involving 109 Saudi female undergraduates at King Abdulaziz University, Khadawardi (2022) identified the following issues: spelling mistakes; shaky grammar; and faulty discourse organization. In another study, Alzamil (2020) analyzed 48 compositions by 24 Saudi English major students and found that many texts suffered surface errors: errors in capitalization, spelling, and the articles. In a related study, Alharbi (2019), surveying 74 Saudi undergraduates, reported that many students found sentence and paragraph writing problematic. They listed these problem areas: capitalization; punctuation; sentence structure; topic sentence; supporting details.

While the studies by Yassin (2023), Khadawardi (2022), Alzamil (2020), and Alharbi (2019) had undergraduate students as participants, Al Fadda's (2012) analyzed academic writing challenges facing 50 postgraduates at King Saud University and reported that many students could not write correct English. The problem areas included pronoun usage, subject-verb agreement, and sentence combining.

Research-writing Issues with Saudi Students

Qasem and Zayid (2019), investigating 60 undergraduates and a few of their teachers at the University of Bisha reported that composing the Results section and documenting sources were the hardest-to-surmount obstacles for students. Significant as it was, this study did not distinguish the major problems from the minor ones and did not associate student perceptions with supervisor perceptions. Compared with the findings from Alsied and Ibrahim's (2017) study, it is clear that different student samples perceived different research-writing tasks to be the most daunting. This points to the need for further, and extensive, research before any meaningful generalizations can be made about research-writing challenges facing L2 students.

To sum up, the foregoing review of the relevant past studies carries two core implications. One, L2 learners, including Saudi graduate students, face multifaceted challenges when writing research reports in English, ranging from issues with grammar and writing style to argumentation and genre conventions. Two, the studies discussed above identify discrepancies vis-a-vis the kinds of writing difficulties and their relative seriousness. Coupled with the fact that the literature on the research-writing challenges facing Saudi L2 learners is unusually sparse, what is needed is further inquiries to provide a clearer view of what kinds of writing challenges trouble the Saudi L2 researchers the most.

Method

This study used an explanatory sequential mixed methods design. In this approach, quantitative data collection is followed by qualitative data collection to expand on the quantitative findings (Creswell, 2013). In the quantitative phase, we administered a Likert-scale questionnaire, which the participating students completed online. In the qualitative phase, we conducted semi-structured interviews with the faculty members. The justification for this approach is that the quantitative data and findings furnish an overall picture of the research problem; further analysis, through qualitative data collection, is required to sharpen the general picture. In addition, it allows an inclusive investigation of the studied phenomenon and provides a more thorough assessment of the participating students' academic writing.

Participants

Employing purposive sampling, a total of 85 Saudi graduate students (37 males and 48 females; 69 Majoring in English, 16 majoring in other subjects) and two serving members of the
Faculty, all at the University of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, participated in this study voluntarily. All the student participants identified themselves as L2 speakers of English. The participating instructors hold doctoral degrees in English and are experienced in research supervision.

**Research Instruments**

Following its piloting, a Likert-scale questionnaire was finalized, comprising 20 items (statements) divided into four sections of five statements each: the process of research; the elements of a research report; the writing of a research report; the documenting of sources in a research report. Each section represented a major aspect of research writing, and statements therein were framed to elicit students' perceptions of their own competence in specific research-writing tasks. As for the semi-structured interview, upon our invitation, two in-service faculty members at the University of Jeddah agreed to be interviewed. The idea behind using two different data collection instruments was to obtain a nuanced understanding of the issue at hand by using two different data sources, allow the exploration of diverse perspectives, and address the present study's multilayered research questions.

**Research Procedures**

A total of eighty-five students completed the questionnaire online. The response rate, thus, was 100 percent. The students ranked their responses on a five-point psychometric Likert scale ((1=strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= neutral; 4= agree; 5 = strongly agree). The semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face in English with two members of the faculty. To make each interviewee feel as comfortable as possible, the interviewees were timely contacted, informed of the interview protocol and briefed about the study focus and objectives. Each of the two instructors was interviewed twice. Each interview lasted 30-40 minutes.

**Data Analysis**

A combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was used in the data analysis. The quantitative data were analyzed in the SPSS. The general characteristics of the distribution of scores were obtained by calculating means and standard deviations for each item (see Tables one to four). The quantitative data were subjected to an independent sample t-test too to see if the English-Major group and the Other-Major group differed in self-perceptions of research-writing difficulties (see Table five).

Table 1. The process of research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know what a strong research question is and how to create one</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to craft a strong thesis statement from a research question</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to search for and record information from online and print sources</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to evaluate information gathered from various sources.</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to avoid logical fallacies in a research argument.</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall mean</strong></td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Table 2. The elements of a research report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am conversant with the elements and structure of a research report</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know the basis on which information is included in or excluded from the literature review</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can construct a cogent narrative of relevant previous work on the subject</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to translate data into sentences and paragraphs.</td>
<td>1.79</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how data analysis differs from data discussion.</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall mean</strong></td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>0.71</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. The writing of a research report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am familiar with the jargon of my chosen research field.</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to construct syntactically mature sentences of different types</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to match a specific idea to a specific sentence type</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to develop and link paragraphs and sections of a research report</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to revise a research report for focus, content, style, and correctness.</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall mean</strong></td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. The documenting of sources in a research report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Explanation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am familiar with the different documentation styles used in academic domains</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how different kinds of sources are cited within the text in the APA</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to avoid pitfalls in the APA in-text citation</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how different kinds of sources are recorded in the APA References list</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to avoid pitfalls in preparing the APA list of References</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall mean</strong></td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. t-test for the difference between English language major candidates and other major in terms of perceived difficulties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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The qualitative data were analyzed thematically. We first read the transcripts to obtain a general sense of the interview. Next, we coded them manually, breaking the text into parts and labelling them to develop descriptions and themes (Saldana, 2021). We especially looked for information that echoed, extended, or contradicted the students' responses, adding depth to quantitative data through concurrence, complementation, or contradiction. Themes and codes were checked and piloted by colleagues and were described to be representative, valid and reliable.

Results

Quantitative Findings: Students' Perceptions of their Research-writing Difficulties

To collect quantitative data, a 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire was administered. Divided into four parts of five statements each, the parts represented major aspects of research writing, and statements therein were formulated to elicit students' perceptions of their competence in specific research-writing tasks.

Showing the descriptive statistics, Tables one to four list the means and standard deviation for each item in the questionnaire, summarizing the descriptive statistics relating to the participating students' perceptions of their research writing competence. Table one focuses on the process of research, and Tables two to four concentrate on the elements, the composing, and the documenting of the research report, respectively. Table five presents the t-test results on the difference between the English-Major and Other-Major students concerning the perceived problems in the major aspects of research writing.

Most students reported facing challenges in all four major aspects of research writing. On average, the toughest aspect was 'the elements of a research report' (M = 2.45 SD = 0.71), followed by 'the writing of a research report' (M = 2.73 SD = 0.81), 'the process of research' (M = 2.90 SD = 0.71) and 'the documenting of sources in a research report' (M = 2.93 SD = 0.88). To 13 questionnaire items, the average response was 'disagree', to five, 'neutral', to one, 'agree', and to another one item it was 'strongly disagree'. This indicates that, as it stood, the students could not fulfill most of the research-writing tasks. For them, shaping data into sentences and paragraphs was the toughest task. The least problematic task was finding and recording information.
Regarding evaluating sources, writing a Literature Review, using jargon, and APA in-text citation, the students, on average, were unsure of their abilities.

**Process of Research**

Table one summarizes the students’ perceptions of their understanding of the research process. As the table shows, on average, the students had a relatively poor understanding of research process (M = 2.9, SD = 0.71). Of the five aspects of research process, on average, three — creating strong research questions (M = 2.84, SD = 0.9), crafting strong thesis statements (M = 2.31, SD = 1), and avoiding logical fallacies (M = 2.6, SD = 1) — were perceived to be difficult, and one — finding and recording information (M = 4.1, SD = 0.8) — was perceived to be easy. About one aspect, information evaluation (M = 3.2, SD = 0.9), the average response was that of uncertainty.

**Elements of the Research Report**

Table two provides descriptive statistics on the students’ perceptions of their competence in developing the elements of a research report. As the table shows, most students found the task difficult (M, 2.45 SD, 0.71). Of the five aspects of developing research report elements, shaping discrete information into clear and well-developed sentences and paragraphs was labelled the toughest task (M, 1.79 SD, 1.01). The other difficulties were the following: appropriate content for the Literature Review (M = 2.35 SD = 0.9); the understanding of the research report structure (M = 2.51 SD = 0.9); and, the difference between findings and their interpretation (M = 2.6 SD = 1.1). Concerning crafting a cogent literature review, most students were unsure of their abilities (M = 3.00 SD = 0.87).

**Writing of a Research Report**

Table three summarizes the students’ perceptions of their ability to compose a research report. As the table shows, most students found the writing of a research report problematic (M = 2.73 SD = 0.81). The toughest task was writing syntactically-developed sentences of different types (M = 2.3 SD = 0.97), followed by developing and linking discourse units (M = 2.65 SD = 0.9), revising the paper for focus, content, style, and correctness (M = 2.75 SD = 1.17), and expressing ideas in appropriate sentence types (M = 2.96 SD = 0.9). Regarding their familiarity with the subject register, the students, on average, were unsure of their competence (M = 3.00 SD = 1.1).

**Documenting of Sources in a Research Report**

Table four summarizes the students’ perceptions of their understanding of research documentation. Most students found the task difficult (M = 2.93 SD = 0.88). Of the specific aspects of documentation, preparing the APA list of References correctly was perceived to be the most challenging (M = 2.75 SD = 1.01), followed by familiarity with different documentation styles (M = 2.93 SD = 1.1) and recording different kinds of sources in the APA References list (M = 2.95 SD = 1.01). To the in-text citation of sources in the APA style (M = 3.00 SD = 1.01) and avoiding pitfalls in the APA in-text citation (M = 3.00 SD = 1.10) — the average response was ‘neutral’: the students were unsure of their skills in those aspects of documentation.
Difference between the English major and other Major in Terms of Perceived Difficulties in Research Writing

Table five provides data on the difference between the English major and the other major in terms of perceived writing difficulties. For three areas of difficulty, there was no significant difference between the two groups: the process of research (t=0.81, sig=0.41); the elements of a research report (t=0.22, sig=0.82); the writing of a research report (t=0.98, sig=0.32). For one area, documenting sources, there was a significant difference between the two groups (t = 2.1, sig= 0.03).

Qualitative Findings: Teachers' Perceptions of their Students' Research Writing Difficulties

Qualitative data were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews conducted in English with two members of the faculty. Each interview lasted 30-40 minutes. The interview transcripts were read for patterns of similarities and differences. From the analysis of the interview data, three themes emerged: linguistic challenges; argument-specific challenges; and, genre-specific challenges. Overall, based on their experience, the interviewees thought that research writing was considerably hard for students and that presenting complex information in clear, syntactically-developed prose was the biggest challenge. The second most serious problem, again according to both interviewees, was the students' difficulty with crafting a cogent research argument. The interviewees regarded surface errors as a noticeable but only occasionally serious weakness in students' research writing.

Linguistic Challenges

Difficulties in Matching Linguistic Structure to Rhetorical Purpose

Describing the toughest research-writing issue with his students, T1 (Teacher 1) mentioned the students' inability to match sentence structure to rhetorical purpose. Elaborating, he said students sometimes expressed closely-related ideas in choppy sentences and unrelated information in long, ill-structured sentences. Moreover, T1 said, excessive nominalization and overstuffed sentences were also noticeable.

Often, students would tell me they could present complex ideas well in Arabic but communicating the same in English was difficult. They did not quite know how to capture complex information in a single, or a couple of, well-written English sentences. (T1)

Commenting on the most prominent shortcoming in the students' research writing, T2 (Teacher 2) identified a similar problem. He said, "his students' paragraphs felt choppy." When asked to revise, the students often ended up creating hard-to-read sentences with excessive coordination, unnecessary subordination, or information overload. Moreover, many students could not reduce clauses to phrases.

Our students need to master some basic stuff in rhetorical grammar such as matching grammatical subject to logical subject and putting the main action in verb. Students also need to master cohesive devices. Finally, they should learn the basic sentence patterns for these patterns capture the basic kinds of messages. (T2)

Difficulties in Lexis and Grammar

Another category of the linguistic challenge was word-choice and grammar. Both T1 and T2 thought their students struggled with grammar and lexis. However, T1 pointed out that surface errors were usually not serious.
Irritating as they are, surface errors seldom obscure the intended meaning. Even if the draft has errors in articles, prepositions or concord, I would still see the writer's point. This, however, is not to say surface errors can be left unattended. I do believe correctness is a requirement in academic writing. What I do not believe, however, is that correctness is a virtue. (T1)

Sharing his views on difficulties in lexis and grammar, T2 (Teacher 2) made a slightly different point. For him, depending upon their type, surface errors could be serious too. Well…some surface errors do hinder communication. For example, when students use faulty clause structures, wrong verb tense or wrongly-positioned adverbs – these lapses obscure meaning. (T2)

**Argument-specific Challenges**

Both instructors pointed out that many student research reports were weak in argumentation. The most serious lapse was the weak claim-support structure (T2) and logical fallacies (T1).

**Lack of Claim-support Structure**

T2 reported that sometimes the students left their topic sentences and thesis statements unstated or vaguely worded. On other occasions, there would not be enough supporting details to prove the point.

Academic writers should state their thesis clearly and then establish it with adequate details. However, I have found student texts where the thesis is missing or the evidence is inadequate. When this happens, the reader fails to grasp or accept the point being made. (T2)

**Presence of Logical Fallacies**

T1 regarded logical fallacies as a generic problem with student research writing, mentioning cherry-picking the evidence and hasty generalization as the two most frequently-occurring fallacies.

Sometimes, when checking the student Literature Review against the literature, I would discover that the gap identified by the student has already been addressed by the studies excluded from the student paper. Besides, I have also seen papers making big recommendations based on scant evidence. (T1)

**Genre-specific Challenges**

The instructors identified two genre-specific problems. First, many students did not know the appropriate content for sections of the research report. In this regard, T1 spoke about the absence of a research gap in student papers. Secondly, T2 referred to the Discussion sections not relating findings to the relevant literature.

**Lack of Demonstration of the gap in the literature**

T1 (Teacher 1) referred to the Introductions as merely summarizing the literature, without identifying the research gap. Such Introductions, T1 asserted, failed to justify the studies they were part of.

In my experience, student papers almost always introduce the subject, establish its importance, and describe previous studies. But, many RAs fail to establish the rationale. The writer fails to convince the reader there are important questions that need to be addressed. (T1)
Logical disconnect between findings and previous studies in the Discussion section

Mentioning a frequently-noted flaw in the student research papers, T2 remarked that many Discussion sections simply restate findings and then summarize the relevant previous studies, not showing where the findings fit in the ongoing discussions on the subject.

In the Discussion section, students should tell the reader how their findings interact with the literature. But many students, perhaps because they do not understand the function of the Discussion, merely repeat results and literature review there. (T2)

Discussion

This study aimed to foreground research-writing problems confronting Saudi graduate students at a Saudi Arabian university. We surveyed students and interviewed faculty members. The data were analyzed statistically and thematically. Here, we return to our research questions, bringing together the findings of this investigation and contextualizing them within a discussion of relevant previous studies.

RQ 1: What are the major kinds of problems graduate students at Jeddah University face when writing up their first research paper?

We began our study by asking: “What are the major kinds of problems graduate students at Jeddah University face when writing up their first research paper?” Our results show that Saudi graduate students experience linguistic, rhetorical, and genre-specific difficulties. In both student perception and supervisor opinion, linguistic problems marred students' writing more than rhetorical or genre-specific problems. The toughest problem was rendering complex information into clear, syntactically-mature sentences. This shortcoming took many forms: choppy sentences; excessive coordination; illogical subordination; information overload; and inappropriate sentence structure. These findings resonate with the following studies on L2 research-writing issues: Casanave and Hubbard (1992), Sadeghi and Khajepasha (2015), and Bitchener and Basturkmen (2006). Our findings align closely with Casanave and Hubbard's (1992) conclusion that L2 writers struggle more with grammar and style than with argumentation. To explain the precedence of linguistic challenges over other kinds of challenges, we argue that L2 writing places an additional cognitive burden on the writer (Flowerdew, 2019; Lin & Morrison, 2021). L2 writers find it harder to write as effectively in L2 as they would in L1 because they have to master both linguistic resources and rhetorical conventions of a different culture.

The next challenge, in both the students' and the supervisors' views, was crafting an effective research argument. Many student papers had lapses in argumentation: facile claim-support structure; weak rationale for the project; and, logical fallacies. These shortcomings produced negative consequences: a research report reading more like a collection of inadequately-supported claims than like a well-developed argument. This finding generally supports the conclusions of researchers such as Cooley and Lewkowicz (1997), Dong (1998), and Qasem and Zayid (2019): failure to develop, organize, and connect ideas weakens students' work more than surface errors do.

Vis-à-vis evaluating sources, writing a literature review, and using jargon, most of the students were unsure of their abilities. Here, our findings are at some variance with the conclusions reached by Manchishi, Ndhlouvu, and Mwanza (2015), who investigated research-writing problems confronting graduate students at Zambia University and found that the students could not compose a strong literature review and were not quite familiar with the subject register. This discrepancy is linkable to students' heterogeneous educational backgrounds and the temporal gap between the
two studies. The Zambia University participants did not have prior acquaintance with the research report elements, which led to issues with the literature review section. In contrast, the University of Jeddah has a research-methodology course in place at the undergraduate level, which introduces students to research methods and research-report elements.

**RQ 2: What are the major characteristics of research-writing problems facing graduate students at Jeddah University?**

From the students' self-reporting and the supervisors' opinions, it emerged that many students experienced linguistic, rhetorical, and genre-specific difficulties when writing research reports in English. Specific linguistic difficulties included the following: faulty sentence structure; choppy sentences; information overload; faulty concord; wrong use of articles, prepositions, verb tenses (past and present), and adverbs. Overall, these findings corroborate much of the previous scholarship on the subject. For instance, inappropriate sentence structure figures as a serious shortcoming in L2 research writing (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Sadeghi & Khajepasha, 2015). Besides the sentence-construction issues, the students, sometimes, misused articles, prepositions, pronouns, verb tenses, and concord. These findings are consistent with the findings from the following previous studies: Alharbi (2019) identified the articles, prepositions, and irregular verbs as major areas of difficulty; Hind Al Fadda (2012) concluded that grammaticality was difficult for Saudi postgraduate students. The problem areas included pronoun usage, subject-verb agreement, and sentence combining.

Besides the linguistic issues summarized above, students faced rhetorical and genre-related issues, too. Specific rhetorical issues included developing, organizing, and connecting ideas in discourse units. Many students struggled with topic sentences and supporting details. Some students did not know much about the role of cohesive ties in crafting units of discourse. These results are consistent with previous findings that identified discourse organization and paragraph construction as major areas of difficulty for L2 writers (Alsied & Ibrahim, 2017; Cooley & Lewkowicz, 1997; Dong, 1998). Regarding genre-related issues, many students experienced difficulties in the following areas: appropriate content for elements of a research article; apt hedging; and, convincing evidence to justify the need for their proposed research. These findings bolster the assertions made by the following researchers: Thompson (1999) argued that many L2 students did not know what kinds of information combined to form the elements of a research report and how to sequence ideas in a research paper; Hirvela and Belcher (2001) found that some L2 students failed to match the voice (linguistic stance) in their writing to the expectations of discourse community partly because they were not proficient users of hedge-creating modal auxiliaries; Alsied and Ibrahim's (2017) found that formulating a research problem was a major problem for Libyan undergraduates because they did not quite know how to highlight gaps in the literature and present them as a rationale for their research.

**RQ 3: What guidelines can be offered to make research writing less difficult for Jeddah-University graduate students?**

From our quantitative and qualitative findings, the toughest difficulties for the students were expressing complex information in clear, syntactically-mature sentences and building a cogent argument. We offer the guidelines accordingly. To write clear sentences, make the logical subject the grammatical subject, express action in the verb, keep the whole subject short (six to eight words), and keep the subject and verb close together. The following examples illustrate the point.
a. There is a belief among some researchers that consumers’ choices in fast food restaurants would be healthier if there were postings of nutrition information on their menus. (Unclear)

b. Some researchers believe that consumers would choose healthier foods if fast food companies posted nutrition information in their menus. (Clear)

These guidelines resonate with several other studies (Bacon, 2018; Harris, 2018; Williams & Bizup, 2014). For example, Williams and Bizup (2014) warns writers against using empty or long subjects and not putting action in verbs. He also warns against long gaps between the subject and the verb. Likewise, Bacon (2018) recommends matching grammatical subject to sentence subject, using only necessary modifiers, and putting the core predication in the main verb.

To write syntactically-developed sentences, combine sentences and manipulate sentence structure. When combining sentences, ensure you have chosen the appropriate conjunction. For example, the sentence 'The patient was alive, but he was critically ill' relates equal ideas. However, the sentence 'Although John tried hard, he failed the exam' relates unequal ideas. Regarding sentence-structure manipulation, follow these guidelines: When using a complex sentence, express your main point in a short (10-20 words) independent clause; explain key ideas in free modifiers; and, reduce clauses to phrases and phrases to words.

These guidelines are in line with the advice contained in other works on sentence style (Broadhead, 1981; Harris, 2018). For example, Broadhead (1981) advises technical writers to put the core message in the independent clause, peripheral details in modifiers, and key explanations in free modifiers. Harris (2018) advises writers to express complex information thus: select propositions; identify the key proposition; determine the relationship between propositions; express the key proposition in the independent clause and put the remaining propositions in phrases or words; link propositions into a shapely sentence.

To craft a cogent argument, follow these basic guidelines. Avoid selection bias; show the gap in the literature; make specific, manageable claims; acknowledge the counterpoint; and, link your findings to relevant past studies. Our guidelines on argumentation echo the advice contained in the following other studies (Faigley & Selzer, 2018; Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, & Walters, 2022; Salkind, 2018). For example, Salkind (2018) regards the lack of a research gap and sparse description of the research problem as major weaknesses in research reports. Likewise, Lunsford, Ruszkiewicz, and Walters (2022) warn the writer against selection bias.

RQ 4: To what extent do the English-Major and the Other-Major students differ in their perceptions of research-writing difficulties?

We ran a t-test to see whether English-major and other-major students perceived research writing difficulties differently. For all but one major area of difficulty, there was no significant difference between the two groups. For one domain, Documenting Sources, English-major and other-major students differed significantly. For the process of research, the elements of a research report, and the writing of a research report, the difference between the two groups was insignificant. One reason English majors and other majors reported largely similar research-writing experience is that their educational background from school to college is largely similar as far as the English curriculum is concerned. At college, both English majors and other major students learn research writing by trial and error rather than systematically. Therefore, their problems are largely similar.
Recommendations of the Study

Based on our overall findings, we recommend the following: First, Saudi graduate students should be imparted sustained training in rhetorical grammar. This will enable them to choose grammatical structures best fit their communicative needs. Secondly, argumentation should be integrated into courses of study so the students understand discipline-specific aspects of argumentation. Thirdly, instructors should prioritize students' research writing problems. We have found the most serious problems for students are the ones concerning the clarity and coherence of the message and the ones concerning selecting and sequencing information within the elements of a research report. Finally, peer reviewing should be emphasized in research programs as it would make students look at the drafts of their classmates with a critical eye, and in identifying areas of improvement in others' work, the students would improve their own selves as writers of research article given that a peer review would pave the way for the work to be assessed for quality, relevancy, and accuracy.

Moreover, this research has thrown up questions requiring further investigation. What is now needed is a cross-national study involving graduate students from various universities in Saudi Arabia. A natural progression of this study is to develop a model of academic writing for Saudi graduate students that caters for their needs and goals.

Limitations of the Study

Several important limitations need to be considered. First, the numbers of participating students and teachers were relatively small. Second, this study involved participants from a single Saudi university, which means the conclusions of the present study cannot be safely generalized to other Saudi students and universities. Finally, since the conclusions of this study flow partly from the analysis of students' perceptions of their own research-writing competence, the possibility of at least a few erroneous student responses affecting, albeit mildly, the findings of the present study cannot be completely ruled out.

Conclusion

The main aim of this study was to identify the research-writing difficulties encountered by Saudi graduate students at a Saudi University and offer remedial guidelines accordingly. The findings from this research can be summarized thus. As regards the quantitative findings, most of the students reported facing challenges in all four major aspects of research writing. For them, presenting complex information in clear sentences was the toughest and finding and recording information was the least problematic task. Regarding the qualitative findings, overall, the interviewees thought that research writing was considerably hard for students and that presenting complex information in clear, syntactically-developed prose was the biggest challenge. The second most serious problem, again according to both interviewees, was the students' difficulty with crafting a cogent research argument. The interviewees regarded surface errors as a noticeable but only occasionally serious weakness in students' research writing.

Findings from this study resonate with the conclusions reached by other researchers exploring the research-writing problems confronting L2 writers as well as offering insights into the kinds and seriousness of Saudi research-writing difficulties. One such insight was that translating complex information into clear and syntactically-mature sentences and crafting cogent paragraphs troubled Saudi students the most. Another major finding was that weak argumentation (facile claim-support structure, failure to establish the need for the project, and logical fallacies)
impaired student research frequently. Many research reports by Saudi graduate students suffered from lapses in argumentation. Moreover, failures to develop, organize, and connect ideas impaired students' work, too. About some aspects of research writing, namely evaluating sources, writing a strong literature review, and using technical vocabulary, most of the participating students were not sure of their abilities. Interestingly, the least problematic aspect of research writing for most students turned out to be finding and recording information. Finally, we also found that the English major and other-major students had largely similar perceptions of their research-writing issues. According to the t-test results, for all but one (Documenting of Sources in a Research Report) major areas of difficulty, there was no significant difference between the English major and the other-major students.

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References


Speech Acts of Apology and Request by Arab Postgraduates with Malaysian Supervisors

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Abstract
This study investigates the pragmatic and linguistic competencies of Arab postgraduate students and native English-speaking postgraduate students in Malaysian universities, focusing on their speech act strategies for requests and apologies. Using qualitative methods such as Discourse Completion Tests and conversations, the study addresses three research questions related to pragmatic and linguistic forms, gender differences, and cultural norms in English-speaking settings. The participants consisted of 95 individuals, including an equal number of males and females from four universities in Malaysia during the academic year 2022-2023. Of the participants, 32 were of Arab origin, and 63 were native English speakers. The study found significant differences in response rates between the two groups and emphasized the importance of understanding cultural norms for effective communication. The findings suggest that learners from Arab countries must comprehend the differences between cultural norms and conventions in English-speaking environments to communicate efficiently. The study has implications for assisting Arab-speaking graduate students in improving their communication abilities and promoting cross-cultural understanding in academic settings in Malaysia.

Keywords: Apology, Arab Postgraduate Students, Malaysian Universities, Pragmatics, Request, Speech Act, Supervisors.

Introduction

In earlier times, learning a language was primarily associated with acquiring linguistic norms and organization with the cultural aspect largely ignored. Globalization and technological advancements have made it easier for diverse cultures around the world to come together and have influenced the usage of language. For an efficient interaction, an individual's communicative ability in any language is essential. The foundation of a communication system is the discourse acts of a language specifically in educational institutions. Someone with communicative competence uses a variety of speech acts to achieve communication objectives in a language (Alzeebaree & Yavuz, 2017). When two people engage with one another, the types of speech acts that are utilized the most frequently are requests and apologies. An apology is offered when one person is responsible for offending another, but a request is given when one person asks for the assistance or permission of another person. Learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) employ the language as a tool of demand the most often out of all the other sorts of speech actions. Structures such as imperatives, declarative, and interrogatives are typically utilized while expressing it.

The students' reactions differ depending on the circumstances. The feelings change in each circumstance, ranging from dissatisfaction to irritability, and therefore the many actions of speech are used to describe the feelings. The more unpleasant possibilities elicit conditions that occur when dissatisfaction levels rise (Kreishan, 2018). As a result of this, as well as social considerations, instances of demanding and apologizing arise. A discussion is performed with the native Arab-speaking students from the university, focusing on their speech acts of apology and requests with the professors. In their English conversation, students are more likely to make grammatical errors. This is owing to their language features' lack of proficiency. To become fluent in a language, one must first become familiar with its numerous grammatical patterns. The degree of proficiency indicates how well a student knows the language, and it is possible to improve one's level of competence by improving one's understanding of the language.

The study in context, or pragmatics, is a subfield of linguistics. Studying how people convey their ideas and engage in various settings is what this academic discipline is all about. The capacity to use language effectively in different situations is known as "pragmatic competence," and it is crucial for ESL students (ESL). The notion of "speech actions" suggests that both direct and indirect ways of speaking may be equally successful in communicating ideas. In direct speech actions, the speaker uses language that is in line with his or her aims and meaning, whereas, in indirect speech acts, the speaker uses language that is at odds with his or her objectives and meaning. Brown and Levinson, Austin and Searle, Blum, and Kulka, and House and Kasper are just a few of the scholars who have studied the many kinds of requests and how they are phrased. Brown and Levinson were the first academics to examine this topic. They discovered that several different approaches, both direct and indirect, were utilized in the process of making requests and that these approaches were employed frequently. As a result of the lack of student contact, several scholars have emphasized the necessity for pragmatic training in EFL environments. The primary
emphasis of this talk is on the significance of identifying how the influence of culture may be seen in linguistic use. Pragmatics is a subfield of linguistics that examines language use in various social circumstances. Those who do not speak English as a first language must study the culture of the people with whom they converse if they want to have good dialogues. To communicate successfully, students must comprehend the many ways that individuals express sorrow or make requests. The primary focus of this study is to identify the influence of culture on Arab-speaking students’ speech acts of apologies and requests in their English conversations with professors. The research objectives are to determine the types of speech acts used, identify the linguistic strategies employed, and analyze the cultural influence on speech acts of apologies and requests. The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the understanding of the role of culture in shaping language use in EFL environments, particularly in the speech acts of apologies and requests.

This paper is structured as follows: Section one provides the introduction and background of the study, Section two presents the literature review, Section three describes the methodology used in the study, Section four presents the results and analysis, and Section five concludes the paper with a discussion of the findings and their implications. The following research questions were examined in further detail in the current study.

1. In terms of general request and apology strategy utilisation and patterns, what were the dissimilarities and similarities between ASPS and NESPS?
2. To which level are ASPS capable of selecting acceptable pragmatic and linguistic forms while executing request and apologies speech acts?
3. What are the differences in techniques and patterns used by female and male ASPS when making apologies and requests? Are there variations in the language and pragmatic forms used by each gender in these speech acts?

**Literature Review**

The importance of pragmatic competence for L2 learners in effective communication has been widely recognized (Hymes & others, 1972; Ishihara, 2010). Recent studies have also emphasized the significance of pragmatic competence in language learning. In order to achieve effective communication, speech acts must be used, as they allow people to perform a wide range of functions such as commanding, requesting, apologizing, thanking, suggesting, insisting, advising, and expressing. The phenomenon of speech acts occurs anywhere and everywhere, including the classroom setting (Alharbi, 2018). Moreover, pragmatic competence is considered an essential component of communicative competence (Chen et al., 2022).

Recent research suggests that pragmatic competence should be taught explicitly to L2 learners. For example, Alemi and Haeri (2020) argue that "pragmatic instruction can help L2 learners to develop their pragmatic competence by raising their awareness of the social and cultural norms of the target language community" (p.86). Similarly, Smith (1993) stresses the importance of deliberate instruction in developing pragmatic competence.
While some studies have focused on the acquisition of specific speech acts such as apologies and requests (Masaoud, 2019; Alzeebaree & Yavuz, 2017), others have looked at the development of pragmatic competence more broadly. For example, Alfghe and Mohammadzadeh (2021) conducted a study on the impact of language input on the development of pragmatic competence among L2 learners. Their findings suggest that "exposure to authentic language input that reflects the social and cultural norms of the target language community can facilitate the development of pragmatic competence" (p. 12).

Despite the growing interest in pragmatic competence, there is still a research gap when it comes to how best to teach and assess pragmatic competence in L2 learners. According to (Ahmed and Zakaria, 2018) "there is a need for more research on how to effectively teach and assess pragmatic competence in second language learners" (p.75 ). This research gap is particularly relevant given the challenges associated with teaching and assessing pragmatic competence, which is considered a complex and multifaceted construct ((Alfghe and Mohammadzadeh, 2021)Therefore, future studies should focus on developing effective pedagogical approaches and assessment tools for teaching and evaluating pragmatic competence in L2 learners.

**Speech Act Theory**

In the domains of (EFL) and (ESL), J.L. Austin's Speech Act Theory from 1952 is widely used ESL. According to proponents of this approach, language activity goes beyond simple communication to the attainment of specified objectives. When someone says "I'm sorry" to indicate remorse, they are really apologizing. Refusing an invitation requires more than a simple "no"; it is an active rejection of the offer. Given that the Speech Act Theory argues that these activities may be done differently across cultures, EFL/ESL students must understand how to implement them. It examines the possible effects of speakers' use of language, including how their intended listeners could understand what they said. As explained by Austin, an utterance is composed of three sorts of linguistic acts: elocutionary action (what is spoken), illocutionary act (what is intended), and elocutionary act (what is meant) (1970). The linguistic names for specialized uses of words and phrases are illocutionary activities. Students of English as a Foreign Language or English as a Second Language may benefit from a deeper understanding of this concept while learning grammatical structures such as apologizing, declining an offer, and making a request. Since it describes the functions of words, the Speech Act Theory may be applicable here. When a person says "I'm sorry," they are doing three independent but interconnected actions: (a) expressing remorse; (b) speaking the words. The Speech Act Theory is thus an essential idea in ESL/EFL schools. It emphasizes the need of preparing students with the information and skills to grasp the linguistic requirements of real circumstances in which they may use a specific language. Students should have a thorough understanding of this concept to navigate social situations including an apology, invitation refusal, or request in the target language. This event will allow students to practice their language abilities with native speakers and boost their overall ability.
Speakers transmit linguistic intents like apologies, requests, promises, compliments, pieces of advice, offers, gratitude and refusals through what they say. Speech acts could be grouped into five types, according to Searle, Kiefer, and Bierwisch's (1980) classifications.

1. Directives (commands, suggestions, requests)
2. Representatives (reports, assertions, claims)
3. Expressives (apologies, complaints, thanks)
4. Declarative (declarations, decrees)
5. Commissives (promises, threats, offers)

When it comes to communication, you have the option of using either a direct or indirect approach to accomplish the same thing. When one engages in direct communication, the speaker can transmit their precise intention and mean through the use of their words, however, when one engages in indirect communication, the meaning may be interpreted in a variety of various ways by the hearer. According to Bach and Harnish (1979), the aims and attitudes of the speaker stimulus the behaviour of the listener, and this is especially true when it comes to directives. The hearer's behaviour is controlled by the speaker's goals and attitudes. According to Soler and Jordà (2001), for an activity to be successful, both the speaker and the hearer need to be present for it, and the hearer needs to acknowledge the speaker's objectives before the activity can be finished.

Request Speech Act

Requesting something is a frequent speech act in everyday encounters, and language acquisition pragmatics devotes much attention to it. It is viewed as demeaning behaviour in which the speaker seeks to gain an advantage at the expense of the listener. It is essential to complete this action correctly, as a mistake can cause bad emotions. To prevent offending when making a request, strategies have been categorized based on previous research (Trosborg, 1995). This assists the speaker in adjusting their request for the most favorable response. Requests are observed in all languages, and this has a substantial impact on the cultural norms of many languages. It's vital to make requests in conversation, but it's easy to come off as hostile if you don't phrase them properly. Several studies have investigated the pragmatics of language acquisition in the setting of question-and-answer exchanges. Asking for what you want is a fundamental human skill. If you want to keep the peace and avoid offending people, you need to make sure that demands are being carried out correctly. The key to effective communication is a shared appreciation for the nuance in requests. This can be accomplished by employing approaches based on an earlier study, which will assist the speaker in adjusting their request for the most favourable response. There are four different types of strategies:

a) Direct
b) Indirect
c) Conventionally-Indirect (Speaker-Based)
d) Conventionally-Indirect (Hearer-Based)
The taxonomy developed by Trosberg (1995) classifies several methods that can be used to bring about the results that are wanted. This may involve employing a variety of strategies when it comes to taking the hearer's book, for example. Research has been carried out in the Arab world to investigate the best ways to put forward requests in an environment like this one. Individuals prefer making straightforward requests to their close relatives and friends, according to research. They employ indirect requests with supervisors and prefer to utilise them in this case. In another study conducted by Al-Gahtani and Roever in 2015, the development of second-language Arabic requests was examined among individuals with diverse linguistic backgrounds in Saudi Arabia who were enrolled in a Modern Standard Arabic intensive program at four levels. The findings revealed that the students utilized indirect requests when communicating with their supervisors and showed a preference for this type of request in such situations. Their straightforwardness in requests is related to the Saudi standard, they disclosed. When making a request, Moroccans are more likely to use a roundabout approach than their Arabic-speaking counterparts. Studies done in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, as well as one done in Libya, provide evidence of this. Three separate investigations have shown that Moroccan speakers are more inclined to use indirect techniques like modelling and indirect questioning. You can see how Moroccan Arabic requests are categorized in Table one.

### Table 1. Interlanguage pragmatics: Requests, complaints, and apologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Request Realization Strategies</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>The speaker makes a direct request with no other additional message</td>
<td>&quot;Can you pass the salt, please?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventionally Indirect</td>
<td>The speaker uses a conventional indirect request with a preparatory or softening statement, such as &quot;I wonder if you could&quot; or &quot;Would you mind&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;I wonder if you could help me move this table?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Record</td>
<td>The speaker uses a vague or ambiguous statement intending to request without directly stating it</td>
<td>&quot;It's cold in here&quot; (meaning &quot;Could you close the window, please?&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Politeness</td>
<td>The speaker emphasizes the positive social relationship with the hearer and requests in a friendly, considerate way</td>
<td>&quot;You're such a good cook! Would you mind sharing your recipe with me?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Politeness</td>
<td>The speaker avoids imposing on the hearer and requests in an apologetic, deferential way</td>
<td>&quot;I'm sorry to bother you, but would you mind lending me some money?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Record</td>
<td>The speaker uses a vague or ambiguous statement to request without directly stating it</td>
<td>&quot;It's cold in here&quot; (meaning &quot;Could you close the window, please?&quot;)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note 1. Adopted from Trosborg 1995 Interlanguage Pragmatics page 412*
Apology Speech Act

Apology fulfils the human courage to show regret for wrongdoings. It is described as taking action to protect social standards and maintain peace, as well as assisting in the restoration of relationships. Apology falls into the 'expressive' category, based on Searle's theory of how to categorize different kinds of speech. As a result, it might be used to indicate remorse about anything. For example, the apologizer reveals how he or she thinks about others, but it is impossible to determine what the apologizer's goal is. On the other hand, the apologiser should deliver an honest sense of responsibility, sorrow and solution for him or her to have an impression on the listener. In this case, if those three components are missing from the confession, it would become ineffective. Apologizing is often seen as a face-saving gesture for the presenter and a face-threatening action for the listener. Consequently, the apologiser attempts to reduce self-praise while maximizing self-criticism. An apology is the most difficult discourse act to make because it frequently involves other speech actions such as offers, requests, and so on. Furthermore, an apology typically has an underlying connotation that varies based on the social situation. The presenter must employ various methodologies to deliver a successful apology speech act. The table shows how apology tactics are classified. In the latest research, it is also employed to analyse the apologetic speech act. A variety of factors, including social standing and societal disparities, influence apology strategies. According to the findings of various research, L1 learners have an impact on how they apologise in L2. The use of English apology tactics by Arab English learners is researched in various settings in the Arab context, and it is stated that the transfer of pragmatics from Arabic contributed to spiritual principles and cultural standards such as age and sex. Table 2 represents the taxonomy of apology realization strategies by Trosborg (1995).

Table 2: Taxonomy of apology realisation strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apology Strategy</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary Force Indicating Device</td>
<td>I apologize, I'm sorry, Excuse me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of Regret</td>
<td>I'm really sorry, I'm so sorry, please forgive me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation/Account</td>
<td>I had no intention of hurting you, I was under a lot of stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reparation</td>
<td>I'll make it up to you, what can I do to make it up to you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repetition/Commitment</td>
<td>It won't happen again; I promise to never do it again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expression of Empathy</td>
<td>I understand how you feel, I'd be upset too</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgment of Responsibility</td>
<td>It's my fault, I take full responsibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


To better grasp, the knowledge of speech acts norms and pragmatic competencies, the present research intended to investigate the request and apology tactics and behaviour of a group of Arab postgraduate respondents in creating the questions of speech of acts.
Method

The study employed a qualitative research approach to analyze the apology and request methods among Arab post-graduate students. The participants were 95 individuals, with an equal number of males and females, selected from the advanced level, which is the 7th and 8th semesters, from four universities in Malaysia (UKM, UTM, UPM, and UM) during the academic year 2022-2023. Of the participants, 32 students were of Arab origin, and 63 were native English speakers. All the participants had the same degree of English skill and comprehension of the scenario to maintain consistency. The data collection techniques used in the study included a Discourse Completion Test (DCT), conversations, and self-reported data. sampling technique called purposive sampling.

Participants

The sample consists of 95 post-graduate students from four universities in Malaysia (UKM, UTM, UPM, and UM) during the academic year 2022-2023. There were an equal number of male and female participants. Out of the 95 participants, 32 were of Arab origin, and 63 were native English speakers. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, and all participants were at an advanced level, which is the 7th and 8th semesters, and had the same degree of English skill and comprehension of the scenario to maintain consistency.

The table shows that the distribution of participants varied across the universities. UKM had the highest number of participants, with a total of 25, followed by UTM with 27 participants, UPM with 25 participants, and UM with 18 participants. The number of Arab students was relatively consistent across the universities, with 7-9 students in each. However, there were more native English speakers in UTM and UKM, while UM had the lowest number of participants overall.

Table 3. Distribution of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Arab Students</th>
<th>Native English Speakers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UKM</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTM</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPM</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UM</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Instruments

In the last century, pragmatics has adopted a variety of data-gathering techniques. Initially, questionnaires were the primary data-gathering method, particularly in inter-language and cross-cultural pragmatics. Even though questions remain the primary instrument for data gathering, additional techniques have evolved throughout time. Multiple-choice, the Discourse Completion Test (DCT), and rating scale questions are the three primary forms of surveys used in pragmatics. The DCT is a common method for data collection in pragmatic research. It is simple to use and gives a vast quantity of information in a short amount of time. This form of survey collects data.
that closely resembles actual dialogue and gives insight into communication trends. A DCT including six requests and apologies as well as demographic information was used for this investigation. Participants were instructed to see themselves in the particular circumstance and behave as they would in reality. Talk (solicited conversation, actual discourse, role-play) and autonomous oral and written forms of self-reporting are additional ways of data gathering in pragmatics. The conversation is a common strategy for collecting data in pragmatic research because it gives the ability to witness the dialogue between two or more individuals. This strategy gives insight into the context and emotions of conversations and facilitates comprehension of the subtleties of communication.

Frequently, oral and written modes of self-reporting are employed to acquire data about language use. This data is utilized to determine linguistic communication and language usage patterns and trends. For instance, a survey may be done to discover the most often used terms in a certain context or the most frequently used expressions of courtesy. This kind of data collection may also be utilized to detect linguistic variety across various social and cultural situations. Overall, pragmatics research employs some data-gathering techniques. The three primary approaches are questions, discussions, and self-reported data. The Discourse Completion Test (DCT) is a common data collection tool that is simple to administer and yields voluminous data in a short amount of time. Other approaches, such as dialogue and self-reported data, may be utilized to discover linguistic variance by providing insight into the context and emotions of communication.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative study approach entails collecting data from observations as well as literature to analyse apology and request methods among Arab post-graduate students. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and the National Education Association of Speech-Language Pathologists (NESPS) were analyzed for this study in terms of the requests and apologies that they make. For the analysis, the data were placed into a framework that classified requests as either direct, indirect, conventionally-indirect (hearer-based), or customarily indirect (speaker-based). The purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of the patterns of speech actions and techniques utilized by both groups.

If there is a direct and significant relationship between the function and structure (for example, please open the door), then this is an example of a direct request. On the other hand, a conventional indirect request (could you hand me the notebook?) is related to the "cultural prerequisites required for its accomplishment as conventionalized in the language." An example of an indirect request is when a person says something like "I have to be in the school within an hour." This type of request is made without directly referring to an illocutionary act. According to a semantic formula, "a sentence, word, or phrase that fulfills a given semantic criterion or approach; any one of these may be employed to accomplish the acts," and "any one of these or all of these could be employed to do the acts." Using descriptive statistics, an investigation was carried...
out to determine the extent to which respondents made use of all of their strategies overall. Multiple research participants evaluated the provoked data using a 5-point Likert scale, with the range of responses going from "entirely inappropriate" to "entirely appropriate" for the questionnaire that was given to assess the competence of socio-pragmatics, and from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" for the questionnaire that was given to assess pragmatism. This was done so that the linguistic and pragmatic validity of the participants' responses could be evaluated.

**Research Procedures**

The study was conducted in several stages, including participant selection, data collection, data analysis, and interpretation of the findings. The following is a detailed description of the procedures that were followed in each stage:

1. **Participant Selection**: The participants were selected using purposive sampling, which involved selecting participants who met specific criteria related to their educational level, English proficiency, and cultural background. The inclusion criteria were as follows:
   - Post-graduate students at an advanced level (7th and 8th semesters).
   - The same degree of English skill and comprehension of the scenario to maintain consistency.
   - An equal number of male and female participants.
   - Students from four universities in Malaysia (UKM, UTM, UPM, and UM) during the academic year 2022-2023.
   - 32 students were of Arab origin, and 63 were native English speakers.

2. **Data Collection**: The data collection techniques used in the study included a Discourse Completion Test (DCT), conversations, and self-reported data.
   - **Discourse Completion Test (DCT)**: The DCT was used to elicit data on participants' apology and request strategies. The participants were presented with scenarios that required them to apologize or make a request, and they were asked to complete the speech act in writing.
   - **Conversations**: The conversations were conducted in a natural setting where participants were asked to engage in conversation with one another. The conversations were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.
   - **Self-reported data**: The participants were also asked to complete a socio-pragmatic and pragmatism questionnaire to assess their competence in socio-pragmatics and their level of pragmatism.

3. **Data Analysis**: The data collected from the DCT, conversations, and self-reported data were analyzed using qualitative research methods. The data from the DCT and conversations were transcribed and analyzed using the framework developed by ASHA and NESPS, which classified requests as either direct, indirect, conventionally indirect (hearer-based), or customarily indirect (speaker-based). The self-reported data were
analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the extent to which respondents made use of all of their strategies overall.

4. Interpretation of Findings: The findings of the study were interpreted based on the analysis of the data collected. The results were presented using tables, graphs, and descriptive statistics to provide a comprehensive understanding of the patterns of speech actions and techniques utilized by both groups. The research questions and objectives were addressed by drawing conclusions from the findings and discussing their implications.

Overall, the study was conducted for six months, starting from August 2022 to January 2023. The following is a timetable of the different stages of the research:

- August-September 2022: Participant selection
- October-November 2022: Data collection
- November-December 2022: Data analysis
- January 2023: Interpretation of findings and report writing.

Result and Discussion

*In terms of general request and apology strategy utilisation and patterns, what were the dissimilarities and similarities between ASPS and NESPS?*

Table 4. *Total approaches utilized by the groups (RQ 1)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>ASPS</th>
<th></th>
<th>NESPS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conventionally-indirect (hearer-based)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conventionally-indirect (hearer-based)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. *The individual approach utilized by the groups (RQ 1)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>ASPS</th>
<th></th>
<th>NESPS</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperatives</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hints</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventionally- indirect (speaker-based)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wishes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventionally- indirect (hearer-based)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. Total approaches utilized by the groups (RQ 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>ASPS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>NESP</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>141%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventionally-indirect</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(hearer-based)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>812%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7. The individual approach utilized by the groups (RQ 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>ASPS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>NESP</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Imperatives</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obligations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventionally- indirect</td>
<td>Wishes</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(speaker-based)</td>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>752%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8. Total approaches utilized by the groups (RQ 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>ASPS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>NESP</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>106%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventionally-indirect</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>667%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(hearer-based)</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. The individual approach utilized by the groups (RQ 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>ASPS</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>NESP</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td>Imperatives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Obligations</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td>Hints</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventionally- indirect</td>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>78.8%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(hearer-based)</td>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 10. The individual approach utilized by the groups (APO 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>ASPS</th>
<th></th>
<th>NESP</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating: Device)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating: Device &amp; Explanation)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (Indicating- Device &amp; offer of repair)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (Indicating-Device &amp; responsibility- acknowledgement)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (Indicating Device, offer of repair &amp; responsibility acknowledgement)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 11. The individual approach utilized by the groups (APO 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>ASPS</th>
<th></th>
<th>NESP</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating!:Device)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating!: Device &amp; Explanation)</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (Indicating-Device&amp;offerof repair)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (Indicating-Device &amp; responsibility- acknowledgement)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 12. The individual approach utilized by the groups (APO 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>ASPS</th>
<th></th>
<th>NESP</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating:Device)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (Indicating: Device &amp; Explanation)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (Indicating: Device, responsibility acknowledgement)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (Indicating-Device&amp;offerof repair)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. To which level are ASPS capable of selecting acceptable pragmatic and linguistic forms while executing request and apologies speech acts?

This research question could be split into two portions. The first dealt with the socio-pragmatics side of language: Is the student's response appropriate from a socio-pragmatic standpoint? The second portion of the question dealt with the pragma-linguistic form or the linguistic features of the language: Is the participant's response correct in terms of grammar and structure (pragma-linguistically)? To respond to those certain two sub-questions, 4 professional and competent researchers judged the ASPS responses using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "completely inappropriate" to "completely appropriate" for the first sub-question and "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" for the second sub-question.

Table 13. Request Speech act (Socio-pragmatics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RO1</th>
<th>RO2</th>
<th>RO3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>3.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 14. Apology Speech act (Socio-pragmatics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>RO1</th>
<th>RO2</th>
<th>RO3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15. Request Speech act (Pragma-linguistics)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Req 1</th>
<th>Req 2</th>
<th>Req 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>3.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows the results of the analysis of the request speech act strategies used by Arab postgraduate students in Malaysian universities, using three different requests (Req 1, Req 2, Req 3). The results indicate that all three requests were considered valid by the researchers, with no missing data. The mean scores for the three requests were relatively similar, with Req 3 scoring the highest (3.32) and Req 2 scoring the lowest (3.06). The standard deviation scores suggest that there was some variation in the responses, particularly for Req 3.
Tables 15 and 16 show the results of the descriptive statistics for the request and apology speech acts as judged by the four investigators. The mean ratings for each of the three requests and apologies for situations were very similar. The respondents had greater difficulty replying to the second and first situations of a request than they exhibited in the third, and they had more difficulty reacting to the second instance of apologies than they did in the third. The survey respondents were usually suitable, as per the average score for both apology and request.

3. Is there a substantial variation in the entire strategy use and patterns in the performance of apology and request speech acts and in the suitable pragmatic and linguistic forms utilized between female and male ASPS?

### Table 17. The strategy used by male and female respondents (RQ 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperatives</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obligations</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hints</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 18. The strategy used by male and female respondents (RQ 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventionally – indirect (hearer based)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>78.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 19. The strategy used by male and female respondents (RQ 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperatives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conventionally – indirect (hearer based) | Obligations | 2 | 6.2 | 4 | 7.5
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
 Ability | 22 | 68.8 | 47 | 88.7 |
 Willingness | 3 | 9.4 | 2 | 3.8 |
 Total | 32 | 100 | 53 | 100 |

Table 20. Independent sample t-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sie.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Req 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>.223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Req 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.13</td>
<td>.402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Req 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20 displays the results of a t-test that compared the mean grades of female and male students. The researchers' scale reveals how the four researchers rated the various linguistic and pragmatic varieties of the request speech act. In this latter scenario, the results show a quantitatively significant difference between groups for the requesting speech act (females and males). In addition, the first and third request scenarios showed a marginally significant gender gap between female and male respondents. The groups' request methods were consistent with one another in the first and third cases. Results indicated that as compared to males, females had higher levels of pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic competence while engaging in and carrying out request speech actions.

Table 21. Individual strategy used by male and female respondents (APO 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating – device)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating – device &amp; explanation)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating – device responsibility acknowledgement)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating – device &amp; offer of repair)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating – device explanation &amp; responsibility acknowledgement)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32(100%)</td>
<td>53(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 22. The individual strategy used by male and female respondents (APO 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating – device)</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating – device &amp; explanation)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating –device explanation &amp; responsibility acknowledgement)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23. Individual strategy used by male and female respondents (APO 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating – device)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating – device &amp; explanation)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating –device responsibility acknowledgement)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illocutionary force (indicating –device &amp; offer of repair)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 24. The finding of the Independent sample t-test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apo</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apo1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>.063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apo2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>.283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apo3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

The study aimed to investigate the pragmatic performance of request and apology speech acts by Arab-postgraduate students of English Education. The findings contribute to the existing
literature on cross-cultural communication and provide valuable insights for ESL and EFL teachers in developing their students' pragmatic competence.

The results presented in Tables two, five, six, and seven offer valuable insights into the differences between the techniques used by the ASPS and NESPS groups when performing the preliminary and second scenario of the request speech act. The study shows that the ASPS group preferred a more direct and expressive approach, while the NESPS group used techniques that involved both the speaker and listener. Both groups used indirect language when making requests, with the conventionally-indirect technique being the most common, and the ability-based technique ('Could/Can you?') being the most frequently used. However, the wish-based technique was more common in the NESPS group. In terms of apologies, both groups used similar strategies, with the IFID+EXPL formula being the most commonly used. The findings suggest that gender plays a role in the way individuals employ speech acts in different situations, with males using more explicit and direct tactics, while females tend to use more ambiguous and indirect approaches.

The results showed that males tended to use more explicit and direct request tactics, while females preferred more ambiguous and indirect approaches. The study found that the IFID and EXPL were the most commonly employed apology tactics among Arab postgraduate students. The first request was more challenging for respondents to complete than the second and third, but the participants were able to effectively actualize the request and apologies speech acts, indicating a good understanding of the speech acts and their pragmatics. The study also revealed that students at private universities exhibited a higher level of pragmatic competence than their counterparts at public institutions. The study proposes a grading system to assess the appropriateness of linguistic and pragmatic features in different speech act scenarios, which can help develop more effective communication strategies.

One limitation of the study is the relatively small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the study only focused on Arab postgraduate students of English Education, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts and populations. Moreover, the study did not explore the role of individual factors such as personality traits, motivation, and language proficiency in the participants' pragmatic competence. Future research could investigate these factors to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence pragmatic performance.

Conclusion

The main aim of this paper is to investigate the ability of Arab postgraduate students to apologize and make requests in English, as well as to examine the differences in speech act performance between male and female participants. The significance of pragmatic competence in language learning is emphasized, particularly in the context of Arab culture where linguistic deficiencies can lead to communication issues. In the Arab culture, English learners' deficiency of linguistic knowledge leads to communication issues in executing acceptable speech actions and interpreting the true intent of what has been said. This highlights the significance of conducting research into the speech actions of requests and apologies. The research examined Arab postgraduate students' ability to apologize and request speaking acts. The findings show that when executing speech acts of request, pupils prefer to employ straightforward and expressive forms. In addition, male participants utilised more direct and explicit techniques in both request and apology speech actions than female participants. The final findings indicate that post-graduate students' pragmatics vary greatly when it comes to the apologies and request components.
apology, which is regularly practised among students and also by students with teachers, has accounted for a significant portion of the speaking activity. There are other mediator factors which require the competence level and age group to be employed as predictors in our results. Finally, this research found that Arab postgraduate male EFL learners have greater socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic competence in executing speech acts like requests and apologies than female participants. Altogether, the results of this research are anticipated to encourage EFL/ESL teachers and students to think about pragmatic knowledge in developing the language and to raise students' understanding of English socio-cultural standards of realization of speech acts.

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References


Factors Influencing Interpersonal Interactions among Students from Different Nationalities Using English Language as the Primary Means of Their Daily Communication

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Abstract
This study evaluated factors influencing interpersonal communication among local and international students of a Malaysian public university. The embedded design of mixed methods was applied to conduct this study. This study had 220 participants from both local and international students of the mentioned university. Based on their agreements, 12 participants were interviewed to strengthen the survey data. Based on the results, the participants were using the English language as the primary means of their daily interactions with their peers from different nationalities, and the levels of their English language proficiency and their daily interpersonal communication had mutual effects on each other. According to the results, around 80% of the participants had experienced some interactions with students from other nationalities at the university campus. Based on the results, their daily interactions helped the participants to improve their English language proficiency and to gain some new social and cultural information about different people. Keywords: collaborative learning, English language, English language proficiency, interpersonal communication.

Introduction
Communication and interactions have played a vital role in enabling humans and nations to shape the new world and achieve the so-called modern value and aspect of globalization. From all aspects of communication, interpersonal communication (IPC) is the key and essential value of contemporary life for all human beings. According to Chen (2022), people can improve their conversation abilities through conducting helpful interpersonal communication. To have proper and effective interpersonal communication, interpersonal communication competence (IPCC) and English language proficiency (ELP) are among the main requirements (Yamao & Sekiguchi, 2015; Yoshida, Yashiro & Suzuki, 2013). The primary means of education for international students at Malaysian public universities is the English language (MoHE, 2012). Thus, ELP is among the essential requirements for interactional students of Malaysian public universities to conduct proper interpersonal communication with their peers from other nationalities.

According to Kraiger and Kirkpatrick (2010), interpersonal communication competence is an essential predictor of success in business and professional achievements. Good levels of IPCC and ELP are also among the factors that enable students to have successful university-related and after university lives and find more employment opportunities (Lin, 2011; Sarwari, Abdul Wahab, Mt Said & Ashikin, 2018; Wilkinson, Morrow & Chou, 2008; Goh & Chan, 1993). Wade (2008) stated that daily interpersonal communication among students from different nationalities helps them to share their findings and knowledge. Moreover, the university environment is the first location for many people to achieve their aims, and experience different kinds of interactions in their lives. English language proficiency could influence daily interactions among international students from different nationalities at Malaysian public universities who use the English language as the primary means of their interactions (Sarwari & Abdul Wahab, 2018; Sarwari, Ibrahim & Ashikin, 2016). A good level of skills to interact with individuals from different nationalities may also help students to have more social and academic achievements at multicultural university campuses. However, according to Ding (2021), because of the lack of verbal interactions, students at Chinese universities mostly have higher structural and grammatical skills in the English language rather than higher communication skills. As argued by Lusting & Köester (2006), the ability to interact in different intercultural backgrounds is an ever more significant ability of everyday life.

Interpersonal communication is a key factor for students of higher education institutions for capacity building. According to Hargie (2021), it is clear that skillful interpersonal communication is essential to success in the professional and personal lives of individuals. According to Aidoo (2012), interpersonal communication skills help students to be more successful in their after-university careers. Interpersonal communication skills include the ability to communicate and interact, to motivate and influence, and also to be able to establish relationships based on trust, good attitudes, values and beliefs, and also transparency (Katz, 2003). However, local students of Malaysian universities may learn many things from interactions with their international counterparts and vice versa. But it is not easy for all Malaysian students to visit several foreign countries to achieve this goal. Thus, the presence of international students at Malaysian universities is a good chance for both Malaysian and international students to interact, gain new knowledge, and improve their communication skills. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate factors affecting interpersonal communication among local and international students of a Malaysian public university. The results from this study may be helpful for both researchers and policymakers in the future.
Factors Influencing Interpersonal Interactions among Students
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Theoretical Framework
This study is conducted under the theoretical guidance of the Contact Theory of Allport (1954). The contact theory, which is one of the leading intergroup and interpersonal contact theories, was developed and introduced by Allport (1954) in his “The Nature of Prejudice” book (Dovidio, Gaertner & Kawakami, 2003) and introduced the peaceful progression framework of communication. According to the Contact theory, the process of communication begins with the sheer contact that leads to competition, which paves the way for accommodation and, as the final step, reaches assimilation. According to the theory, interactions will bring positive outcomes under the four conditions, which are: 1) Equivalent rank in the situation, 2) Shared interests or aims, 3) Intergroup collaboration, and 4) Formal support (law, authorities, traditions, or environment). The theory became famous among strategy makers in the 1950s as the means for supporting cultural integration efforts among American people, especially, when the Supreme Court of the United States highlighted the benefits and importance of interracial contact in its famous decision on integration Brown v. Board Education (1954). The Contact theory became a leading hypothesis in providing the foundations for applicable plans for improving intergroup communication for more than five decades (Aidoo, 2012).

Moreover, Chickering and Reisser (1993) believe that the improvement of social contacts among university students is essential for their lives; because, when they stay in the university environment, they become members of a diverse and new community that requires them to communicate with the individuals from various backgrounds. Furthermore, Hamilton and Woodward-Kron (2010) focus on the importance of assessment of the relationship between language and communication. Yamao and Sekiguchi (2015) argued that language is the primary means of interaction among individuals. However, the English language is the main means of communications among local and international students at Malaysian universities (Sarwari & Abdul Wahab, 2018). Consideration of the proposed steps of the contact theory will make it clear that this theory can cover study of interpersonal communication in an academic environment.

Methodology
Participants
This study had 220 participants from both local and international students of a Malaysian public university, as local N = 110 and international N= 110. Of 220 participants, 147 of them were male, and 73 others were female. From the male participants of this study, 97 of them were international and 50 of them were Malaysians. Also, 60 of the female participants were local and 13 of them international students. According to the results, the $M/SD$ score of local participants, 45.63/6.16, was higher than international participants’ 41.75/6.66. Also the $M/SD$ score of the female participants was more elevated than males, at 45.27/6.63 and 42.91/6.60 respectively. Local participants belonged to almost all states and ethnicities of Malaysia, and international participants were from 16 different nationalities with different cultural norms. Table 1 shows the frequencies and countries of international participants.
Factors Influencing Interpersonal Interactions among Students

Sarwari, Abdul Wahab & Said

Tab.1. frequencies of international participants based on their countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Design
An embedded design of mixed methods with the predominant role of the quantitative approach applied to conduct the current study. One of the classifications in mixed methods is embedded design, in which, for the primary data, a data set plays a secondary and supportive role in a study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). A survey through direct distribution of questionnaires was conducted to collect the quantitative data as the primary approach in this study and the interviews were done to enrich the data. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), the researchers apply this (embedded) method when needed to comprise the qualitative or the quantitative data on answering a question in a quantitative or qualitative study with a more significant number of participants. However, direct interviews could strengthen the findings. According to Light (2001), individual interviews offer remarkable richness and depth. The predominant method for this study was the quantitative method to enable the researcher to collect data from a large number of participants. The second process was the interviews to have direct views and assertions of some participants to strengthen the survey results.

Instruments
The main device of this study was the survey questionnaire. The questionnaire included demographic information, interpersonal communication competence, and factors affecting interpersonal communication. The quantitative instrument was designed based on Likert scale, and each item of the instrument had four options from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 4 (Strongly agree) as structured check-boxes. As asserted by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), to collect quantitative data, the process might include the use of a structured checklist as well. A package of 12 open-ended interview questions also was prepared for the qualitative data collection. The qualitative data consists of information that is open-ended, and the researcher conducts the participants’ interviews to collect it (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Before preparing the final instrument, researchers check the questionnaire by conducting a pilot test from a small number of participants (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005). To check the reliability of the instruments, a pilot test applied before the process of data collection. The pilot test had 14 participants from both local and international students of the said university. Based on the results from the pilot study, Cronbach’s alpha rating for the survey questionnaire was .743.

Data Collection Procedure
The quantitative data collected directly from both local and the international students of UMP. During the survey, questionnaires distributed randomly. Through a survey instrument, the
researchers collect the quantitative data and to deepen their survey results and they conduct interviews from a few of the participants of their survey (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The qualitative data collected by conducting direct interviews with both local and international students of the university. From all participants of the quantitative survey, based on their agreements, 12 of them, including six Malaysians and six international students, were interviewed directly for the qualitative data, and all interviews were audio-taped. It is preferable to tape the discussion; because, it helps the researcher to have the recorded voices of the interviewees instead of thinking about what the interviewees said during the discussion (Slavin, 2007). At the same time, all interviews had done under a parcel of 12 open-ended interview questions. In a survey, mostly all participants are interviewed through the same questions (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005).

Findings
Quantitative Findings
According to the feedback given, from all 220 participants, 57.8% of them had already experienced some daily, many times per week or at least weekly IPC with students from different cultures and nationalities at the university campus. At the same time, 60.1% of them were able to understand most parts of the messages and conversations when talking with students of different nationalities. The primary purposes for the majority of local and international participants of this study were educational and social issues. Academic issues reported by 47.7% and social issues by 28.2% as their primary purposes for being involved in interactions with different people.

Moreover, of all participants, 85.4% of them agreed that their daily IPC helped them to improve the levels of their ELP. Almost all participants, 207 of them, were happy when they interacted with different people. The vast majority of the participants (78.2%) accepted that they had interactions with their classmates regardless of their countries and ethnicities. Of 220 participants, 197 of them admitted that their interactions at the UMP campus were beneficial for their private and public lives, and 51.8% of them reported lack of English language proficiency (ELP) as the leading cause for not being able to begin and continue IPC with people from other countries, ethnicities and cultures.

Qualitative Findings
From all 220 participants of this study, 12 of them interviewed for the qualitative data. Based on the demographic information, six interviewees were Malaysians and six others were from six different countries. All interviewees coded as below and the given codes will be mentioned in the results, as 1, MS1, a Master’s Malay-Malaysian student; 2, MS2, a degree Malay-Malaysian student; 3, MS3, a degree Indian-Malaysian student; 4, MS4, a degree Indian-Malaysian student; 5, MS5, a degree Malay-Malaysian student, and 6, MS6, a senior degree Chinese-Malaysian student. And international interviewees as 1, IS1, a master’s student from Afghanistan; 2, IS2, a Ph.D. student from India; 3, IS3, a Ph.D. student from Algeria; 4, IS4, a senior degree student from China; 5, IS5, a degree student from Yemen, and 6, IS6, a master’s students from Nigeria.

Personal Communication Characteristics
According to the answers from the interviewees, all of them had some interpersonal communication with students from different nationalities, had the willingness to have and continue their daily interactions to increase their collaborative learning, and acknowledged the effects of the English language proficiency on the processes of their daily interactions. For example,
participant IS2 said that “I have a good level of interaction with international and Malaysian students, because my English language is good, and it helps me a lot during my stay and study [at the university].” Participant MS4 said that “My interpersonal communication with international students is quite good and I feel comfortable when interacting with them, but sometimes the levels of our English language proficiency and our different accents affect our daily interactions negatively.” And participant IS6 said that “I have a lot of Malaysian classmates and we have too much interpersonal interaction, and always I contact them, and ask questions from any of them and mostly we interact to solve our academic issues and sometimes we also interact for social issues.” Statements as mentioned earlier show the involvement of both local and international students of UMP in interpersonal communication, and also these assertions are supportive of the quantitative findings on the participation of students in interpersonal communication.

Statements of the participants also illustrated that their daily interpersonal communication with different people in the University environment had positive effects on their personal and academic lives. For example, participant IS4 asserted, “My involvement in IPC helped me a lot. At first, when I came here, I had many problems, I wasn’t able to go to Kuantan city or ask a question from lecturer or classmate because of my lack of English language skills, but my interactions with local and international students helped me to solve the mentioned problems.” And his statement was supported by views of IS2, as said, “My communication with local students helped me a lot. When I learn a few words from their language, it helps me when I go shopping, and also in the offices, I can ask them anything that I want.” And “interactions with international students help me to learn some new things, and have good effects on my life” as pointed out by MS4. Participant MS5 said that “As we have different ideas and cultures, therefore, my communication with international students will help me to learn more things about their cultures and have collaborations with them.” The mentioned view is supports the positive role of daily interactions among students in increasing teamwork among them.

Similarly, almost all participants of this study mentioned a lack of English language proficiency (ELP) as the main factor that affects the process of IPC among them negatively. As participant MS1 said that “The most important factor that has negative effects on our interactions is English language proficiency.” Participants IS4 also said that “The English language is the main problem for us to interact successfully.” Participant IS2 suggested that “To have better communication, international and Malaysian students must improve their English language proficiency and gain the essential communicative skills.” According to this suggestion, students could be more successful in their interactions with different people by improving their language proficiency. The above mentioned qualitative results support the quantitative findings of this study.

**Discussion**

This study aimed to evaluate factors affecting interpersonal communication (IPC) among local and international students of a Malaysian public university. Based on the answers of the participants, the vast majority of both local and international students of the mentioned university had some experiences of daily interactions with their peers of different nationalities, cultures and ethnicities during their stay and study at the university. Based on the results, English language proficiency (ELP) was the main affecting factor of the process of interactions among the participants. According to the results from this study, almost all participants reported that their daily interactions positively affected their personal and academic lives.
Based on the results, their contacts and interactions with students from different nationalities helped the participants to gain some new social skills and cultural information, improve the levels of their ELP, and to have better educational achievements. Wade (2008), based on the results of a study on the influence of academic environment on the personal competence of individuals, asserted that the main effects of the presence of different people in the college environment would increase skills in interaction with people of other races, ages and diverse backgrounds, and it will bring diversified professional employees.

Moreover, the results from both quantitative and qualitative data confirmed that there were all opportunities available for the participants on the university campus to have interactions with their peers from different cultures, ethnicities and countries. At the same time, their good levels of English language proficiency, the availability of opportunities in the university campus, personal willingness of the participants to be involved in IPC with their peers, their eagerness to gain new cultural information and positive effects of their interactions on their personal and academic lives were among the main positive factors that affect the process of IPC among local and international students of the university. Based on both quantitative and qualitative results, all participants pointed out that the lack of ELP had the main adverse effect on their daily interactions. According to the qualitative interviews, the development of ELP levels among both Malaysian and international students would increase and improve the levels and quality of their IPC as well. However, most of the findings mentioned above are new and may be helpful for university students, university officials, and future researchers.

Conclusion
This study assessed factors affecting interpersonal communication (IPC) among local and international students of a Malaysian public university. The findings of this study confirmed that there have been enough opportunities at the university campus for students from different cultures and nationalities to be involved in IPC, and the levels of their English language proficiency (ELP) been identified as the main factor that affected daily interactions among the participants. The results illustrated that both local and international participants of this study already had some interactions with other students from different cultures and countries during their stay and study at the university campus. The findings from this study also illustrated that the involvement of both Malaysian and international students in IPC was beneficial for their public and private lives. As they gained some new cultural information, they also learned how to communicate with different people. The results from this study identified the lack of ELP as the main factor that affected the process of interactions among the participants. The results from this study may encourage university students to interact more with their peers from different cultures and nationalities. The mentioned results could help future researchers in their studies of related issues.

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English Language and Communicative Proficiency of Saudi Tourism and Hospitality Students: A Present Situation Analysis

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Abstract
This study investigates the level of proficiency of Saudi tourism undergraduates in various language skills and sub-skills, grammar, and tourism vocabulary. It also evaluates the present teaching materials used at the colleges of tourism and hospitality. A mixed-methods approach has been used in this study. A Likert-scale questionnaire was administered to two hundred nine (n=209) STU to gather quantitative data. The qualitative data was generated by interviewing one vice dean of academic affairs, one head of the English department, and 10 teachers. Both instruments were self-developed and standard procedures were followed to determine their content validity and reliability. The descriptive analyses were run to interpret the quantitative data whereas the qualitative data were presented through verbal responses of the participants. The results have informed that speaking and listening skills are the weakest followed by writing and reading skills respectively. They are also weak in English grammar, tourism-related vocabulary, and various language sub-skills. The teaching materials presently taught at the colleges of tourism and hospitality in Saudi Arabia do not suit their specific tourism needs. It is strongly recommended that indigenous teaching materials should be developed to meet the professional needs of Saudi tourism undergraduates taking into consideration their present proficiency in various language skills, sub-skills, tourism-related vocabulary and grammar. Furthermore, the local and cultural requirements and preferences of Saudi tourism undergraduates should be considered while developing the teaching materials to ensure effective English language practices.

Keywords: communicative proficiency, ESP teaching materials, hospitality students, present situation analysis, tourism

Introduction

Saudi Vision 2030 is a futuristic roadmap for economic development and one of the major areas is the promotion of the tourism industry. Saudi Ministry of Tourism (2022) states that KSA targets to “increase the contribution of the tourism sector in the GDP from its current rate of 3% to more than 10%, creating one million jobs, attract 100 million tourists and spend SR 115 billion to build 150,000 hotel rooms by 2030”. Alhowaish (2016) states that during the last few years, tourism has been given top priority by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) policymakers and they viewed “the tourism industry not only as a source of revenue but also, more importantly, as a way to diversify their economy and solve their unemployment problems” (p. 1). The Travel and Tourism Competitive Report (2017) reveals that Saudi Arabia outperformed the other countries of the region in upgrading the kingdom’s cultural resources significantly and Saudi Arabia has achieved an annual growth rate of 18% in the hospitality industry in 2014. It is stated that “nowadays, the role of English is important for the tourism industry as a means to communicate, negotiate, and execute transactions with tourists by tourism employees” (Prachanant, 2012, p. 117). English is the lingua franca of the present century and is the most widely used official language which is frequently used in “international affairs, trade and commerce, tourism, and so on” (Rahman, 2016, p. 43). This emerging realization of the significance of the English language in the field of tourism has initiated teaching the English language to the tourism workforce. It has also been reported that ‘English for Tourism Marketing (ETM)’ remains one of the most sought-after domains of English for specific purposes courses in which the workforce is trained in promoting tourism and handling various real-life situations of tourists’ activities in the English language (Simon, 2012). It has been revealed that development of the human resource is of utmost importance in developing the tourism marketing industry. Rahman (2016) suggests that one of the most “vital aspects of the tourism sector is communication between the people associated with this business and the tourists” (p. 39). Therefore, effective communication skills in the English language of the workforce related to the tourism industry are an extremely important factor in attracting international tourists and promoting tourism.

Research reports that Needs Assessment (NA) is a key factor and an inevitable component of all English for specific purposes courses for syllabus designers, developers of appropriate and relevant teaching materials, classroom teachers, and evaluators (Wannapok, 2004; Dehnad, Bagherzadeh, Shoaleh, Hatami, & Hosseini, 2010). The role of NA has been acknowledged in all kinds of English language courses including ETM which aims at addressing learners’ specific needs (See for examples Al-Khatib, 2007; Jamil, 2014; Puspitasari, 2018; Salisna, Harahap, & Sofyan, 2019; Noor, 2019).

Saudi Arabia is spending huge resources to promote and execute English language teaching. English language centres and English language institutes have been established at all Saudi universities to provide English language facilities to Saudi EFL learners. It has been reported that “despite the enormous efforts of the Saudi government to improve English teaching and learning in the country, students’ English proficiency remains unsatisfactory and far below expectations” (Alrabai, 2016, p. 21). The same findings have been revealed by much research (see for example Alhawsawi, 2013; Al-Khairy, 2013; Alharbi, 2015; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Ismail, 2015; Alsamadani & Ibnian, 2015; Javid & Almalki, 2018). Saudi Vision 2030 has set ambitious targets in the field of tourism and hospitality which needs a skilled workforce proficient in the English language to effectively communicate with international tourists. Considering the low English language proficiency level of Saudi EFL learners, it seems inevitable to offer special ESP courses.
to Saudi aspirants in the field of tourism and hospitality. Along with special courses offered in various fields of tourism and hospitality by some Saudi universities, exclusive colleges have also been established to train the Saudi tourism workforce. Much research has offered valuable insights into the fact that a systematic NA is inevitable to identify ESP learners’ target needs as well as their Present Situation Analysis (PSA) so that appropriate teaching materials are developed, moderated, or selected to achieve the best results (Moattarian & Tahririan, 2014; Yundayani, 2018; Noor, 2019). It has been found that no such systematic process has been adopted in the colleges of tourism and hospitality situated in various regions of Saudi Arabia to develop tailor-made teaching materials. A comprehensive and all-encompassing NA procedure must be followed which should engage “the subject specialists, the language course designers and teachers and students” (Jordan, 1997, p. 22). This large-scale PSA investigation is an attempt to fill this research gap so that all the stakeholders are investigated thoroughly to forward reliable and authentic recommendations based on the empirical data to design suitable curricula and develop appropriate teaching materials to meet the ETM needs of the Saudi tourism workforce.

This large-scale study attempts to identify the following research objectives:
1. To establish the current level of proficiency of Saudi tourism undergraduates (STU) in various language skills
2. To determine the present level of proficiency of STU in various listening sub-skills
3. To ascertain the present level of proficiency of STU in various speaking sub-skills
4. To discover the current level of proficiency of STU in various sub-skills of vocabulary and grammar
5. To evaluate present ESP course materials used at CTH.

Literature Review

It has been reported that ESP courses are narrower in focus as they target to fulfil the specific needs of the learners. It is further reported that “ESP views learners in terms of their work or study roles and that ESP courses focus on work or study-related needs, not personal needs or general interest” (Indrasari, 2016, p. 63). All kinds of ESP courses follow the same procedure and are “tailored to the specific learning and language use needs and goals of identified groups of students” (Johns & Price-Machada, 2014, p. 472).

Wozniak (2010) states that NA is the first step in developing tailor-made teaching materials for any ESP course and this should include identifying current competence in various language skills and sub-skills as well as a target needs to successfully carry out language-related tasks in the target situations. West (1994) informs that broadly speaking NA is identifying “what learners will be required to do with the foreign language in the target situation, and how learners might best master the target language during the period of training” (p. 1). Much research has reported that NA is a broad term that embraces several aspects of ELT. Yundayani, Emzir, and Rafli (2017) state that NA is a major driving force and serves as an umbrella for various pedagogical processes of teaching and learning. This comprehensive process incorporates “students’ goals and backgrounds, their language proficiencies, their reasons in taking the course, their teaching and learning preferences, and the situations they will need to communicate in future” (Yundayani, 2018, p. 119). A growing mass of research has offered valuable insights into the significance of NA as an ESP “course development process” (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 19). It has been identified as “a careful assessment of a particular group’s specific language learning needs and target situation” (Johns & Price, 2014, p. 472), “the key defining feature of ESP (…), the first step for ESP”
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(Dudley-Evans, 2001: p. 133) and “the corner stone of ESP” (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 122). Since the inception of ESP, NA has been identified as “the irreducible minimum” (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987: p. 53) and “a key instrument” (West, 1994, p. 2) for all ESP courses. This leads to the conclusion that in “every genuine ESP course, needs assessment is obligatory, and in many programs, an ongoing needs assessment is integral to curriculum design and evaluation” (Johns & Price-Machado, 2001, p. 49).

ESP learners’ specific needs in terms of learner situation analyses (LSA), target situation analyses (TSA), and present situation analyses (PSA) form the basis of NA processes which then “are reflected in the development of specific approaches and materials, aiming to satisfy their present or future academic, vocational or professional purposes” (Liu & Zhang, 2020, p. 206). PSA has been identified as the starting point of any ESP course and it includes the learners’ “weakness and strength in a language, skills, and learning experience” (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998, p. 125). Alharby (2005) suggests that TSA and PSA are two major NA models and “researchers continue to use one of these models as their theoretical base depending on the circumstances of the conducted research” (p. 20). Robinson (1991) reports that PSA is a systematic attempt to ascertain what the learners are like at the beginning of a course and what their strengths and weaknesses are in various English language skills.

A growing mass of research has offered valuable insights into various aspects of PSA. Gusti (1991) states that PSA is an attempt to analyse the present learning and teaching situation at an institution and it should encompass the learners’ proficiency, pedagogical expertise of the faculty members, teaching content, ESP syllabus as well as the previous results (cited in Yundayani, 2018). Hyland (2006) describes that ESP mainly concerns itself with the current proficiency level of the learners, their ambitions during and after an ESP course, what is their ability at the beginning of the course and what is their target level of proficiency, their knowledge about the ESP course and what are their expectations and demands related to the course. Duddley-Evans and John (2009) also consider PSA an instrument to determine the learners’ present proficiency in various skills and language use. It has been considered an important procedure to assess the learners’ ability to what they can do with the target language presently (Hossain, 2013). PSA is identified as an umbrella that covers the learners’ present lacks in various language skills and sub-skills and “can be seen as the process to find the students’ lacks which cover the discrepancy between necessity and what the students have already known concerning with the subject and related with their current skills and performance” (Yundayani, 2018, p. 120).

It is recommended that PSA should involve all stakeholders to gather data including the learners, the faculty members, and the administration (Jordan, 1997). Richterich and Chancerel (1980) have presented a comprehensive model for generating data for a systematic PSA. They have recommended that there should be three major sources of collection of information for this model including the learners themselves, institutions where these ESP courses are taught, and target organisations where ESP learners will serve. They have further elaborated that ESP practitioners should thoroughly investigate all these stakeholders related to the learners’ level of proficiency in various language skills and sub-skills, available resources, and their views about various aspects of ELT. A growing mass of research has reported the development of teaching materials and teaching practices based on the comprehensive NA of ETM to train the workforce in the field of tourism (Simion, 2013; Afzali & Rezapoorian, 2014; Puspitasari, 2018).
Method

This investigation employed a mixed-methods approach to generate rich data. The quantitative data were collected through a questionnaire and the qualitative data were generated through semi-structured interviews. A Likert-scale questionnaire has been used for collecting data from a large population of Saudi Tourism Undergraduates (STU) from the colleges of tourism and hospitality (CTH) at Taif and Madinah Munawara. It has been reported that questionnaires are quick and cheap tools to collect data from large cohorts (Dörnyei, 2007). Semi-structured interviews have been conducted to investigate STH faculty members and administration to generating rich and in-depth data as Dörnyei (2007) has recommended that interviews help in probing respondents more deeply to collect comprehensive data.

Research Instruments

The researcher developed a Likert-scale questionnaire to elicit the participants’ responses relate to the proficiency of STU in various English language skills, sub-skills as well as the effectiveness of present ESP teaching materials used at CTH located in Taif and Madinah Munawara. The survey questionnaire was sent to three experts in the field to determine the content validity of the instrument. Their comments and suggestions were incorporated into the final version of the questionnaire. It was translated into Arabic to avoid any linguistic challenges as it was meant to be administered to STU studying at Taif and Madinah Munawara. The Arabic version of the questionnaire was pilot tested with twenty-four (n=24) students from the same academic context. Inter-item consistency was calculated through the Pearson correlation matrix for all items of the questionnaire. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient remained at 990 which is a high value to generate reliable data. All questionnaire items were retained in the final instrument. The second instrument was a semi-structured interview protocol to investigate CTH faculty members and administration of the relevant colleges related to the student’s proficiency in various language skills, sub-skills as well as evaluation of teaching materials currently taught at CTH.

Participants

The population of this mixed-methods study was STU, the faculty members as well as the administration of CTH situated in Taif and Madinah Munawara, Saudi Arabia. Two hundred ninety (n=290) STU have responded to the questionnaire and recorded their responses. A convenience sampling technique is used to collect data for this study. Ten faculty members, the head of the English department at CTH Taif and the vice dean of academic affairs at CTH Madinah Munawara have been investigated through a semi-structured interview.

Ethical Considerations

The final versions of the instruments were submitted to Taif University's ethical committee and permission letter number 42-137 was issued on 17-3-2021. Furthermore, the Taif University vice president issued the request letters to the deans of CTH to facilitate the collection of data. The researchers have ensured all the participants the confidentiality of information and use of data for this investigation only.

Results

The results of the quantitative data generated through the questionnaire responses have been presented in tables and in-depth qualitative data results, produced through semi-structured
interviews, have been recorded in detail in this section as well. It has been reported that ESP researchers need to triangulate data from various sources to reach reliable findings (Cowling, 2007; Flowerdew, 2010) because “the students’ perceptions of their language needs and their language abilities were very often different from those of other stakeholders in an educational entity” (p. 36, Kusnawati, 2014). Therefore, the researchers triangulated the quantitative data with rich qualitative data gathered through in-depth interviews with other stakeholders.

Table 1. The current level of proficiency in language skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Language skills proficiency</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Listening skills</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.7897</td>
<td>1.41197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Speaking skills</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.6931</td>
<td>1.34356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>English for tourism vocabulary</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.2241</td>
<td>1.21472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>English Grammar</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.3138</td>
<td>1.25949</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The descriptive analyses of the responses of STU have indicated that they have low proficiency levels in all language skills as evidenced by the mean value of less than three. Furthermore, all items of this category have a high Standard Deviation (SD) of more than one indicating that there exist major differences in the perceptions of the participants regarding their proficiency level. Minimum and maximum values assigned to all these items ranged from one to five indicating a group that bears wider differences in their proficiency in various language skills. English for tourism vocabulary and grammar have been assigned minimum mean values suggesting their low proficiency in these skills. The participants reported the highest mean for their listening skills followed by writing skills. Speaking skills have been perceived as the weakest of all language skills.

The qualitative data generated through semi-structures interviews have partially verified the quantitative results. ‘English grammar’ and ‘listening skills’ have been identified as the weakest areas and STU have been reported to have medium low proficiency in other skills. P1 has stated that ‘writing is the weakest and listening and speaking are also weak’ and he has further reported that ‘students are ok in vocabulary but very weak in grammar’. It has also been stated that ‘I find my students very weak in tourism vocabulary and grammar’ (P6). P11 has reported that ‘majority of students are weak in all language skills’.

Table 2. The current level of proficiency in various sub-skills of listening skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Sub-skills of listening</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Listening and understanding clients’ personal details</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.7310</td>
<td>1.43247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Listening and understanding</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.7759</td>
<td>1.49095</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table two details the results of descriptive analyses of various sub-skills of listening and it has been revealed that STU bears low proficiency in all sub-skills as evidenced by low mean values ranging from 2.73 to 2.88. Relevant higher proficiency has been reported in listening and understanding suggestions, feedback, and clients’ complaints respectively. Results have indicated that STU is the least proficient in understanding the client’s personal details as well as comprehending major accents of the English language used by international tourists. Extremely high SD suggests that STU differ significantly in their perceived proficiency in all sub-skills of listening.

The faculty members and STU have seen eye to eye as far as the weakest areas were concerned and understanding the client’s personal details and major accents have been unanimously identified as the weakest listening sub-skills. It has been reported that ‘students at tourism college are not good in dealing with different accent which is very important because we receive tourists from different countries’ (P1). The faculty have reported that STU bears low proficiency in understanding the clients’ complaints, feedback, and suggestions whereas the quantitate data have reported medium low proficiency of STU in these sub-skills. P9 has stated that ‘they have some problems with these actions.’ The comparative analyses show that STU has considered itself more proficient in all listening sub-skills as compared to the perceived proficiency as reported by the faculty members. For example, P11 has stated that ‘many students are weak in all these listening activities but some students are good in these sub-skills’.
Table three presents the results of the data generated through the descriptive analyses of STU’s proficiency in various sub-skills of speaking tasks they need during their professional life. ‘Greeting and bidding farewell’ and ‘apologizing and presenting excuses’ have been reported medium high mean of more than 3 indicating the participants’ proficiency in these sub-skills respectively followed by ‘offering help’. It has been revealed that the participants of the study were least proficient in ‘asking about tourists’ requirements’ and requesting tourists for their feedback and suggestions. All other items of this category have been allocated medium-low mean values indicating that STU needs to be taught these speaking sub-skills to discharge their duties effectively in the field. High SD informs wider differences in the perceived proficiency level of the participants in the target sub-skills.

The comparative analyses of data of this category have revealed the same trend of reporting higher proficiency in speaking sub-skills by STU as compared to the faculty. Both the faculty members and STU have reported that the weakest speaking sub-skills are asking about tourists’ requirements and requesting feedback. ‘Students at tourism college face major problem in asking for feedback and requirements’ has been reported by P 5. Similarly, the data generated from both sources have exhibited similar findings about comparatively high proficiency of STU in ‘greeting and bidding farewell’, ‘apologizing and presenting excuses’, and ‘proving directions’. STU has reported medium-low proficiency in the important sub-skill of ‘describing places’ whereas the faculty members have revealed that STU is very weak in this sub-skill.

Table 4. The current level of proficiency in various sub-skills of vocabulary and grammar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Task Description</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Apologizing &amp; presenting excuses</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>providing directions</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Providing information about social etiquettes</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Offering help</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Suggesting and advising</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>giving information about tourist destinations</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Giving trip information</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Asking about tourists’ requirements</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Requesting feedback</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Requesting for suggestions</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Describing places</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Speaking with comprehensible pronunciation</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.46</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Least proficiency has been recorded in vocabulary and grammar sub-skills as evidenced by extremely low mean values which ranged from 2.506 to 2.586. The highest mean remained at 2.586 for using ‘grammatically correct questions’ followed by ‘using appropriate tourism vocabulary’. Using appropriate tenses, grammatically correct statements, and appropriate punctuation were assigned the least mean values.

The faculty members have revealed that STU is the weakest in using appropriate tourism vocabulary and appropriate punctuation. It has been stated that ‘they are at beginner level in tourism related vocabulary’ and ‘I believe that they are better in grammar than punctuation’ (P1). The same finding has been asserted by P5 who said that ‘my students are good in grammar and they can use right tenses’. The majority of the faculty members have presented the same findings related to the items of this category.

Table 5. Present ESP course material evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Present ESP course material effectively meet students:</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English for tourism needs</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.8103</td>
<td>1.08556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Listening skills needs</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.8862</td>
<td>1.03777</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table five presents descriptive analyses of the items related to the evaluation of present teaching materials taught at CTH situated in Taif and Madinah Munawara. The extremely high mean of 4.04 has been allocated to the item ‘local course content should be developed based on students’ needs’ which highlights the need of developing tailor-made teaching materials based on STU’s specific needs. All other items have been allotted medium mean values. It has been reported that the present teaching materials used at CTH do not fulfil the English for tourism needs of STU. The comparative analyses suggest that the listening and speaking skills of STU are being somewhat catered for through present teaching materials whereas it does not address ‘English for tourism needs’ and ‘writing skills needs’ as the lowest mean has been assigned to both these items. It has also been revealed that present teaching materials are not appropriate for fulfilling the reading skills, writing skills, vocabulary, and grammar needs of STU as well.

In contrast to the perceptions of STU, the qualitative data have revealed that present ESP teaching materials do not cater to the specific needs of STU. P1 has expressed that ‘all needs of the students are not met and it is good to change teaching material’. P5 has also stated that ‘I strongly believe that present teaching material does not match with student needs and we teach them lot of general material’. The vast majority of the faculty members have reported that the proficiency level of STU in listening and speaking skills is of medium level as teaching material cater to these skills but writing skill is not sufficiently covered in it. P8 has said that ‘textbooks do not have much writing skill exercises and students do not like these activities and they are weak in writing’. The qualitative data have indicated that present teaching materials do not cater to the local and cultural requirements of STU as well because tourism colleges have to use commercial textbooks available on the market. These textbooks have not been written for STU specifically. P1 has reported that ‘our teachers have to delete some units which are not suitable to our culture as they deal with some subjects which are not appropriate. We must write textbooks in Saudi Arabia’. All faculty members have strongly demanded that it is extremely important to conduct proper needs analyses of STU and develop indigenous material so that their specific needs are addressed properly to enable them to discharge their duties effectively in various fields of the Saudi tourism market. P1 has asserted that ‘we need own material, for sure, especially when it is part of Saudi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Speaking skills needs</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.8759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reading skills needs</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.8414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Writing skills needs</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.8103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Vocabulary and grammar needs</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.8448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Local and cultural requirements</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.8517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Local course material should be developed</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>4.0414</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


vision 2030 to entertain and attract international tourists’. It has also been stated that ‘I hope that I teach my students with teaching material prepared in Saudi Arabia, especially after looking for their special tourism needs. I am really happy’ (P 10).

Discussion

The results have revealed that STU is quite weak in all language skills. It has been reported that STU is the least proficient in ‘speaking skills’ followed by ‘listening skills’. The findings are in line with Moattarian and Tahririan (2014) who have investigated Iranian tourism management students and reported that they are unable to communicate in English and “students’ low level of proficiency compels the ESP teachers to focus their attention on general English rather than ESP…… the teachers have to suspend a variety of effective teaching activities” (p. 15). They have stated that teachers have to resort to L1 to ensure proper understanding. The findings have also disclosed that STU is extremely deficient in ‘English for tourism vocabulary’ and ‘English grammar’ respectively. A lot of research conducted in the Arab world, especially in Saudi Arabia has revealed that Saudi EFL learners face major challenges in coping with various language skills of English in continuing their respective studies effectively (Javid, 2011; Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Ismail, 2015; Alrabai, 2016; Javid & Almalki, 2018).

The descriptive analyses have also indicated that STU faces problems with vocabulary and grammar sub-skills. They have issues with using appropriate tourism-related vocabulary during their studies at CTH. Similarly, they have been reported as the least proficient in using grammatically correct conditional sentences, using appropriate punctuation and tenses respectively. The results have revealed their weakness in using grammatically correct statements and questions as well. The same findings have been reported by Prachanant (2012) who investigated 40 tourism employees working in Thai tourism companies and their “usual problems are using inappropriate words and expressions in speaking” (p. 124). Noor (2019) also reveals that the tourism workforce in Perlis, Malaysia have serious issues with using appropriate vocabulary and language structure in their communication.

Results of this study indicate that STU is weak in all listening sub-skills, especially in understanding clients’ personal details as well as comprehending major accents used by international tourists. The findings are in line with Prachanant (2012) who has reported that the Thai tourism workforce is unable to comprehend the foreign accents of international tourists. The findings of Prachanant (2012) partially confirm the findings of the present study related to proficiency of STU in various speaking sub-skills as well. Jamil (2018) has investigated tourism students in a polytechnic institute who have acknowledged that they have an extremely low proficiency level in oral communication skills. Noor (2019) has also reported that the tourism workforce in Perlis, Malaysia is deficient in pronouncing words correctly, speaking coherently, and understanding the speakers who “speak too fast” and use “unfamiliar accents” (p. 77). Aldohon (2015) investigated 46 tourist police and revealed that “speaking too fast in English by foreign tourists is the most serious problem for Jordanian tourist police. The other difficulties they encountered included, using inappropriate English in speaking, lexis shortage and inability to use grammar for writing” (p. 56).

Coskun (2009) used a mixed-methods approach and investigated second-grade tourism students and reported that “the average level of English in the classroom is A2 according to Common European Framework standards and listening-speaking skills are perceived as the most needed skills at work” (p. 1). He has also reported that tourism students and hotel employees from
Taiwan have revealed that low proficiency in oral and written communication is significantly related to job acquisition in the field of hospitality.

Data generated through the quantitative and qualitative tools have revealed that both STU and the faculty members have strongly recommended that the present teaching materials are not appropriate and that in-house teaching materials should be developed after thoroughly investigating the ETN of STU. It has been reported that the present teaching materials do not cater to the specific needs of STU related to four English language skills, tourism-related vocabulary, and English grammar. Findings are in line with Puspitasari (2018) who has stated that teaching materials currently used at Banymas tourism college do not sufficiently meet the specific needs of the tourism workforce and even after taking English for tourism courses, they do not have effective communication skills to interact with the target tourists. Similar findings have been published by Zahedpisheh, Abu Bakar, and Saffari (2017) who have investigated employees of the tourism and hospitality industry of Malaysia and reported that existing teaching content does not fulfil their specific needs and “a curriculum relating to English for the international tourism and service industry need to be carefully designed and created to suit the specific learners’ needs and wants” (p. 91). They have used a mixed-methods approach to investigate all stakeholders of the Diploma in Tourism Management Programme at Politeknik Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin, Perlis, Malaysia, and suggested that “it is highly recommended that the EHP course developer and stakeholders work together to improve the existing EHP courses, especially in terms of oral communication sub-skills” (p. ii).

It has also transpired that the present teaching materials do not meet the local and cultural requirements of STU as well and they have to do additional efforts to effectively deal with foreign-culture content. Furthermore, some content does not match local culture and traditions and the teachers have to quit those units or exercises which causes an additional challenge to compensate for the missed content. A host of studies conducted in various parts of the world have reinforced the finding that it is extremely important to develop indigenous teaching materials based on the specific needs identified through PSA and TSA of the workforce related to various tourism sectors. Puspitasari (2018) strongly recommends developing in-house EFT materials to teach tour agents, hospitality staff, and employees of the Culture and Tourism Office of the Banyumas Regency. The major finding of Moattarian and Tahririan (2014) “based on the results obtained from the questionnaire and interviews was that many teachers and students find current ESP courses unsatisfactory in addressing their specific needs” (P. 13). The same finding was reported by a growing mass of research in the field that commercial ESP teaching materials do not cater for the specific needs of the learners (Rasekh & Simin, 2012; Lin, Wu, & Huang, 2013). The highest mean has been allocated to the item which elicited the participants’ responses towards developing indigenous teaching materials based on STU needs. This finding is in line with the study of Salisna, Harahap, and Sofyan (2019) conducted at Tour and Travel Department at Vocational High School Negeri 1 and Vocational High School Negeri 7 in Bengkulu City and recommended that “course materials should be developed based on the existing syllabus and by taking into account the students’ academic and future occupational English needs” (p. 10). Onoor (2015) has also confirmed the findings of this study and concluded that it is a prerequisite for positive results to develop a tailor-made indigenous ESP syllabus for hotel and management students at the Technological College of port, Sudan based on their specific needs and lacks.
Recommendations

The results have disclosed that the speaking and listening skills of STU are the weakest. They are found quite weak in various English language sub-skills as well. Furthermore, the use of correct punctuation and suitable grammatical structure are serious problems faced by STU. They are also deficient in using appropriate tourism-related vocabulary as needed in various tourism marketing situations. The results of this large-scale study transpire that commercial teaching materials presently taught to STU at CTH located in Taif and Madinah do not suit their specific tourism needs. An important finding of this study is the execution of a comprehensive NA procedure to develop in-house teaching materials for STU. The participants of this study have exhibited their dissatisfaction with the present teaching materials in terms of addressing the specific needs of STU, consideration of the level of proficiency of STU and cultural appropriacy, etc. It has been strongly recommended by STU, the faculty members, and the college administration that indigenous teaching materials should be developed based on the students’ professional needs taking into consideration their present proficiency in various language skills and sub-skills. The participants have also strongly recommended considering the local and cultural requirements and preferences of STU in developing teaching materials to facilitate the learning process. The findings have also revealed that the participants of the study are comprised of mixed-ability groups and bear significant differences in their proficiency in all language skills and sub-skills.

Based on the findings of this investigation, it is strongly recommended that indigenous teaching materials should be developed based on the TSA and PSA of STU. It is strongly suggested that the target teaching materials should emphasize more on oral communicative skills and sub-skills as STU have been found the least proficient in these areas. It is also recommended that sub-skills of various language skills as presented in the ‘result section’ of this study should be incorporated into the teaching materials as the participants have reported that STU has low or medium proficiency in all these areas. Furthermore, it is also extremely important to incorporate tourism-related vocabulary so that STU have sufficient practice in using appropriate lexical items according to the requirement of the target situations in their academic and professional life. A variety of exercises related to using appropriate grammatical structures and punctuation should be included in local teaching materials to enable STU to communicate accurately according to various target situations. It also seems unavoidable to take into consideration the local and cultural requirements and preferences of STU in developing teaching materials to maximize learning possibilities. This will relieve STU of the additional burden of coping with unfamiliar foreign cultures as well as avoiding any embarrassing situation during their studies caused by inappropriate cultural content. Furthermore, it will also ensure coverage of all activities related to grammar, vocabulary and language skills, and sub-skills as skipping culturally inappropriate content present in commercial textbooks cause comprehension issues because some important teaching content needs to be skipped. The material developers should incorporate activities of varied difficulty levels to engage high-proficiency students as well as to facilitate students with low proficiency.

Limitations and Future Study

A major limitation of this mixed-methods study is the inclusion of the students, the faculty members, and the administration from CTU situated in two cities in Saudi Arabia. An ideal situation is the inclusion of participants from more cities in the KSA. Future studies should include workforce serving in various sectors of the Saudi tourism industry as well so that crash courses
may be developed based on TSA and PSA to provide on-job training to the Saudi tourism workforce to augment their communicative competence in the English language.

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Almalki is an Associate professor of linguistics in Taif University with research interests in the area of Applies Linguistics, Language acquisition, learning and teaching. Other areas of interest are acquisition of syntax by second language learners. He wrote his PhD on the Interpretation and production of definiteness by Second Language Learners. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1464-4176

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ESP and Business English for Postgraduate Students in the Department of Economics, Tahri Mohamed University, Bechar, Algeria

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Abstract
To bridge the gap between the ongoing demands of the fieldwork and the outcomes of the actual teaching, all the Algerian universities, with all the kinds of specialties they provide, embrace the learning of English for more specialized purposes and try to deliver curricula that maintain the balance between the two sides. The teaching of such a technical language for the postgraduate students presents a challenge for ESP practitioners since they are asked to submit an overall knowledge of the language alongside particular business English needed to accomplish a variety of tasks that are required from the students in the academic spheres or the professional settings. Most of these ESP practitioners are general language teachers and are asked to cover the growing needs of their learners in their fields of specialty. However, this current teaching situation reveals several serious obstacles which prevent the teaching outcomes from reaching their goals. Even though most of the literature review devoted to Business English teaching focused on the professional demands to maintain the specialized registers, the current investigations show that the presented ESP sessions are still twining with general English ones and deprived of reaching the postgraduate students’ academic as well as professional desires. Moreover, the study uses a case study of eighteen first year doctorate students at Tahri Mohamed university, Bechar, Algeria to investigate the research. The data collected was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively through a delivered questionnaire and a semi-structured interview given to the teacher so as to present his views about the teaching situation. The analysis of the collected data allowed the researcher to claim that the ESP courses presented in these classes are not satisfactory since they do not meet the learners requirements and thus, suggest a number of interesting recommendations that may help in the improvement of the teaching/learning situations. As a result, the current study is done with the purpose to shed light on the teaching/learning situation and then providing a profile of the specific target needs of these researchers, which helps while designing a suitable syllabus appropriate to their special fields of interest.

Keywords: Business English, English for Specific Purposes, learners’ centeredness, syllabus design

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Introduction

Regarded as the international language of communication, English realizes different goals for different people, students, and workers. Its high status encourages several scientists and researchers to learn English in order to have access to and get various documents and references produced in English. The accessibility to a large body of scientific literature in English aids researchers in retrieving information from different sources, which may be helpful for them to enlarge their fields of study and update their research.

Being consistent with the most recent developments necessitates efficient and professional access to information available in English; Algeria, like the other mounting nations, has integrated English into its educational system. The teaching of the English language is adopted at university in different branches as English for specialization such as in Biology, Engineering, Exact Sciences, and Economics. The domain corresponds to situations where the learner has particular scientific reasons to study English. The learned language is a set of appropriate words and expressions which can fit the specific needs of learners in different contexts. It is referred to as English for Specific Purposes or ESP.

To contribute to national and international scientific growth, it is necessary to acquire and obtain academic discourse to exchange information through, for instance, conferences and publishing articles. Thus, learning English is very important for academic research of graduate and post-graduate learners who wish to follow scientific development.

The Algerian universities and Tahri Mouhamed University, with no exception, include English teaching in all its faculties, in our case, the departments of Economics. It has been observed that English language skills are needed in organisms like Sonatrach, tourism agencies and banks, and many economic enterprises.

Moreover, it has been noted that although students were exposed to the English language for an extended period, they still lack the ability to elicit appropriate information from documents. ESP students are supposed to receive completed general courses of English, and since it is integrated into the curriculum, they acquire essential knowledge within their “licence” and engineering degrees; however, subjects ‘specialists continue to consider the teaching situation to be negative since it does not meet the students’ real needs.

The current study is realized to shed some light on the teaching of English for Specific Purposes in Algerian Universities taking the University of Tahri Mouhamed in Béchar as a case study. Moreover, the investigation tries to analyze the postgraduate students’ requirements and fit them with the current teaching outcomes and, by the end, try to provide some suggestions and recommendations so as to bridge the gap between the two ends. Thus, the principle objectives behind doing this humble research are stated as follows:

• To investigate the ESP teaching situations in general and that of Business English in particular within the classes under study.
• To specify and analyze the students’ different requirements.
• To present some suggestions and recommendations so as to balance the students’ needs and the teaching outcomes.

The present research focuses on providing the suitable data that helps in designing an appropriate ESP syllabus for the students at the Department of Economics at the university of Bechar through raising the following research questions:

1) To which extent is the degree of adequacy between the actual teaching material and the needs, lacks and wants of these students?
What can be done to further assist business students to develop the kinds of skills they will require to operate appropriately?

To respond the above mentioned research questions, the study extracts some literature related to the subject to formulate an idea about the specific teaching needed by the these specific classes. After this, it identifies and analyses the learners’ language needs and wants to finally allow the researcher to present some suggestions and recommendations that may improve the current teaching/learning situation and thus meet the students wants from joining such classes.

Literature Review

**English for Specific Purposes**

English for Specific Purposes or Special Purposes appeared as it is known today in the early 1960s as a result of the failure of general English courses to meet the growing needs of its learners whose demands of the language in their fields of interest cannot be ignored. ESP has developed gradually to be an essential area of interest for all those who are concerned with the various types of activities required by their disciplines. The enormous variations of the learners’ fields of interest necessitate higher linguistic competencies with a rich vocabulary repertoire, among which technical and scientific language are suitable to these fields of study. In the same vein, Basturkmen said: “language is learnt not for its own sake or for the sake of gaining general education, but to smooth the path to entry or greater linguistic efficiency in academic, professional or workplace environments”. This exhibits the influential role of ESP in helping the learners to build up the required competencies needed in their academic as well as workplace sphere.

A great deal could be written about the origins of ESP. According to Hutchinson & Waters (1987:6), three common reasons led to the appearance of ESP:

- The growing requirements of the New World after World War II.
- A revolution in linguistics.
- The focus is on the learner.

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) explained that two historical periods played an important role in the creation of ESP: the end of World War II and the Oil Crisis in the 70s. Likewise, with the end of the II World War, there has been a novel expansion in several domains such as science, technology, and economy all over the world:

“an age of enormous and unprecedented expansion in Specific, technical, and, economic activity on an international scale. For various reasons, most notably the economic power of the United States in the post-war world, the role of international language fell to English.”. (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p 6)

As a result of what has been stated earlier, there should be a lingua franca of the modern time, and obviously, English was given this honorable status. This status was strongly supported by the economic power of the United States during the post-World War era. Furthermore, the Oil crises that happened in the early 1970s precipitated Western money and knowledge towards the oil-rich countries and, along with it the English language. Consequently, the teaching of this language attested an intense pressure as the number of its demanders was growing day after day. English nowadays turned to become the subject of interest of different people all over the world out the language teachers.
ESP and Business English

The rapid growth brought by globalization helps develop ESP, and Business English has been part of that growth. ESP in Strevens’ classification (1977) is split into occupational and educational segments.

Occupational language is also split into three sections: pre-experience, simultaneous and post-experience. These different aspects of language need are relevant to Business English since business students are learning the language related to the field of their work, i.e., pre-experience, and those who are already doing the job are likely to be interested in post-experience aspect.

Business English courses can be used similarly to ESP courses, since they can embrace both general practices with appropriate lexis and grammar for business communication. Johnson assumed that “Business English is much broader than other varieties of ESP because of the number of different purposes for which it is taught.” (Johnson, 1993, p 201).

ESP Course

Throughout the 1970s, the history of English language teaching has turned out from Art to science and from EGP to ESP, and then language teaching researchers involved themselves in course design since the number of ESP learners became numerous. As a result, most of the learners, together with the teacher, start struggling with large classes, slim course books, limited contact hours, and poor language outcomes.

Successful teaching of the language evidently requires a selection and an arrangement of the teaching items and materials depending on many criteria such as: a prior definition of the objectives, proficiency level to be developed, learners’ needs and lacks, duration of the training and so on. Thus, the syllabus is considered an instrument by which the teacher, together with the syllabus designer (if not the same person), work hard to achieve a degree of fit between the needs and the aims of the ESP learners. (Mumby, 1978,p2)

Nevertheless, there is a general agreement among most ESP practitioners that all ESP courses are designed with the aim to provide the specific skills together with special vocabulary required by the learners in accordance with their fields of interest: thus, the tutors should know how to integrate the content learning along with the language teaching to assure positive outcomes and then a number of variables should be taken into consideration in any kind of ESP teaching operations.

ESP in Algeria

Within Algerian universities, the teaching of English is generally taking place in the English department as well as in some specific departments such as Exact Sciences, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Computer Science, Economics and Commerce, Sociology, and so on. (Miliani, 1993,p115)

The teaching of English in these departments seems to be inadequate because of a lot of factors. These factors generate a disadvantageous situation for both the teaching and the learning of English for specific purposes, some of which can be stated as follows:

- The teacher themself/themselves is not well trained for the teaching of scientific and technical English.
- A void of two years of English teaching at the university level.
- The heterogeneity of the students’ level.
The lack of teaching hours allotted to the English subject.

The inexistence of a syllabus as well as materials needed for the teaching of specific English.

All these negative aspects help in one way or another in the degradation of the teaching as well as the learning situation of the target language i.e., English.

Despite the relevant importance English has in the field of business, it is still low ranked in the Algerian educational system at universities. The students consider it as an additional subject even if it is a compulsory module. They are aware that such a language is of great importance to fulfil their target needs, but they still deal with it less seriously than the other ‘main’ subjects included in the curriculum.

Method

In the domain of scientific and academic research, the success or the failure of the investigations depends on the followed procedures as well as on the data collection tools and the suitability of the target sample population. These research elements should be selected carefully and appropriately so as to set the research questions and validate the proposed hypotheses.

To collect data about the teaching/learning situation, the students’ needs, and the different difficulties faced by both the teachers and the learners in the realization of the teaching goals, the researcher opted for the case study as a research method. The latter is highly acknowledged since it exposes the case under investigation, especially in the field of educational research. Cohen et al., (2008) said that it provides: “ …a unique example of real people in a real situation, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theory or principles.” (p128)

Participants

Research investigation cannot succeed without an appropriate choice of the sample population since the results obtained from the studies applied to it will meet the overall objectives of the research and then generalized to the whole population; for this reason, the process of sampling may be defined as “selecting a group of subjects for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the larger group from which they were selected” (Gay, 1987, p 101). Dörnyei (2007,p 96), in his words explains the notion of sample as: “the group of participants whom the researcher actually examines in an impractical investigation.” He adds that the word population refers to: “the group of people whom the study is about.” (p96)

The case study was carried out in the department of Economics of Tahri Mouhamed University, Bechar, Algeria, during the academic year of 2019-2020. The study sample was composed of eighteen first-year doctorate students from three different specialties: Management, Finance, and Marketing. Moreover, the study invited the only teacher to participate in the collection of its data, not with the aim to generalize the findings but instead to expose the real teaching/learning situation under study.

Research Instruments

With the purpose to enrich the data sources, the researcher opts for a diversification of the instruments: thus, an administered questionnaire which is consisted of two different types of questions; close-ended questions which require the “yes” or “no” answer from the informants and multiple-choice questions with a proposed list of responses that need to be selected by the
respondents; was handed out to point out the students’ needs and lacks when dealing with the language. Moreover, the teacher was asked to give his views about the teaching situation through a semi-structured interview.

Findings

After passing through different stages of data collection using a number of instruments, the researcher starts analyzing the data gathered from the students’ questionnaire, the teacher’s interview, and the teaching/learning setting observations.

It can generally be said that the obtained results showed that the ESP courses presented in these classes are not satisfactory since they do not meet the students’ requirements: thus, the teaching outcomes are considered to be insufficient due to a number of factors: the unclear learners’ wants, the designed syllabus which is not drawn in accordance to the students’ actual requirements and finally to the absence of some training sessions for the teacher showing them how to teach ESP and BE. Another remarkable remark is that all the participants in the research agreed on the importance of mastering the English language in both academic and professional settings. Still, the degree of proficiency in the language differs from one learner to another because of a number of factors such as the previous knowledge of the language and the interactivity with the matters dealt with. The analysis of the students’ questionnaire exhibits that 75% of them have an intermediate level of the language while the 20% of them consider their language proficiency as being at a beginner level.

Figure 1. Learners’ language proficiency

In addition to what has been stated, the interviewed students said that they deal with English for Academic Purposes when realizing their research during their classes, but each of them aims at using it to fulfill some specific personal purposes: their suggestions were organized in the following table which shows the different preferences of the students.
Table 1 *Students preferences*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purposes of Using English</th>
<th>N° of Students</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading extended articles in their fields</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in national and international conferences</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking parts in oral interactions</td>
<td>09</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succeeding in examinations</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing articles</td>
<td>06</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents answers exhibit a diversification of purposes from using the target language in their academic sphere, 60% study the language to participate in conferences, 50% opt to take part in oral interactions but still all of them, the 100% study it to pass the examinations.

Moreover, the research spotted some light on the importance of maintaining the four language skills of these young learners. Their answers vary in accordance with their preferences; the listening and speaking skills seem to be the most needed skills among the others since these researchers opted to participate in different scientific manifestations.

To sum up, the general analysis of the gathered data reveals that both the students and their teacher face a number of constraints during the ESP classes. They are summarized as follows:

- Most of the students have just an intermediate level of the language.
- The students lack the practice of the language since English is used mainly in classes.
- One hour and a half per week are not enough to satisfy the various needs of all the students.
- The lack of ESP training for teachers; ESP teachers are part-time general English teachers.
- There is no collaboration between the ESP teachers and the subject specialists from the departments.
- There are no teaching materials provided to the teachers to guide them.

To provide answers to the two research questions, the researcher focused on the needs analysis of the students which undergo the target needs extracted from their lacks and requirements. Thus, their needs were identified and analysed so as to check the degree of adequacy between them and the provided teaching. Unfortunately, the inadequacy of the existed ESP teaching and the real needs of the target situation creates a remarkable gap between the two sides as a result, the teaching of ESP in general and of business English in particular should be reviewed. Moreover, ESP courses, not only in the university under study but in most of the Algerian universities are not taught in the universal norms. Furthermore, the obtained results showed that the teaching of ESP in the Algerian universities failed to satisfy the requirements of its learners because of a number of factors such as the administrative constraints, the lack of the suitable teaching materials, the lack of cooperation between the ESP tutors and the subject matter specialists, the timing allocated to the ESP modules and the poor language knowledge of the students.

**Suggestions and Recommendations**

In fact, there is an actual necessity to build a suitable pedagogical framework that modifies the foreign language policy within globalization requirements. The university has to create new
strategies and new ways of thinking. This challenge has to be developed by a strong educational institution since it is regarded as an influential force in the socio-economic development of the country. In sum, the language policy should take into consideration the creation of opportunities for the development of such a field.

The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has to provide the essential efforts of improving such a primordial part of the EFL policy because of its precious contribution to socio-economic development. However, it is always difficult to convince students to change their attitudes towards foreign language learning. Moreover, in a region that is worth future research, one may wonder about the task of teachers, and the social and political participation in improving learners’ motivation. Answering these types of questions will help to change the vision towards foreign language teaching.

In fact, there is a true necessity to build a suitable pedagogical framework that modifies the foreign language policy within globalization requirements. The university has to create new strategies and new ways of thinking. This challenge has to be developed by a strong educational institution since it is regarded as an influential force in the socioeconomic development of the country. In sum, the language policy should take into consideration the creation of opportunities for the development of such a field.

Conclusion
The present research work was done with the aim of identifying and analyzing the teaching/learning situation for post-graduate students in the departments of Commerce and Economics at the University of Bechar. The data collected and analyzed showed that there is a big gap between the teaching outcomes and the learners’ real needs; for this reason, a serious refinement of the current teaching/learning situation should be done by the ESP practitioners together with the matters specialists of the target fields. Additionally, a number of administrative considerations should be reviewed, such as the provided syllabi, the allocated time and the available teaching materials, so as to ameliorate the teaching outcomes and satisfy the learners’ needs.

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Phonological Features of Saudi Arabian Anthroponyms

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Abstract
Beyond its traditional function, phonology has been demonstrated to play a significant role in the gender marking of given names in some Germanic languages. However, this significance has not been investigated for Semitic languages, including Arabic. Therefore, irrespective of the classical gender-identification approaches (i.e., familiarity, morphology, semantics, and pragmatics), the present study examines whether the phonological structures of Saudi first names may solely reveal the gender of that name. The first names of Saudi males (N= 237) and Saudi females (N=419) drawn from the registrar of a Saudi university in Riyadh were analyzed according to various phonological variables, including the number of phonemes, the number of syllables, the distinction between open vs closed syllables, the manner of articulation of name-initial and name-final sounds, stress position, in addition to the state of the glottis. The quantitative study finds that compared to male names, female names have fewer phonemes, tend to begin with an open syllable, are more likely to be stressed in the second position, are more likely to end with a vowel or a voiceless consonant, are more likely, to begin with, a glottal stop and a trill, and are more likely to end with a vowel or a glottal fricative.

Keywords: manner of articulation, phonemes and syllables, phonological features, Saudi Arabian Anthroponyms, stress position

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Introduction

Traditionally, familiarity, morphology, semantics, and pragmatics offer insight into differentiating masculine names from feminine names. However, research on some Germanic languages proves that phonology can also play a reliable role in the gender identification of names (See section two below). Unfortunately, there is a lack of studies on whether this phonological approach works for Arabic, which constitutes a gap in the literature that the present study attempts to bridge.

Proper nouns or proper names are typically names of people, animals, products, locations and fictional characters (Mojapelo, 2009). Among these categories, the names of persons have received much research concern (e.g., Anderson, 1994). In addition, the linguistic features of personal names (e.g., morphological and semantic), non-linguistic elements (e.g., familiarity), and pragmatic cues have all been thoroughly studied for different languages (See Rodina, 2007 for a review). Such studies typically suggest that in a given socio-cultural community, the gender associated with personal names can be inferred from their morphology, semantics, familiarity (e.g., Alford, 1988), and some pragmatic cues in communication (Garnham, Oakhill, & Reynolds, 2002, Al-Zumor, 2009).

Whorf (1956), for example, claimed that many languages contain subliminal yet provable and culturally relevant categories. He elaborates that English names, such as Fred, George, Mary, and Isabel, lack a gender morphological marker, like the Latin -us or -a, but they are still easily recognizable by English speakers who immediately associate them with the appropriate gender. He clarifies that familiarity and experience with these names are the reason for this association. Similarly, if a native Arabic speaker is asked to identify the gender of any Arabic personal names, e.g., خالد (khālid; /xɑːlɪd/), ماجد (mājid; /maːdʒɪd/), or كريم (karīm; /kɑːrɪm/), they will on such basis immediately and correctly recognize them as masculine names.

Intriguingly, however, research suggests that the phonological structure of first names may serve as a gender indicator independent of morphology, semantics, pragmatics, and familiarity. Unfortunately, as most of this research focuses on English and other western names, we do not know if this hypothesis holds for eastern names such as Arabic. The present study attempts to fill this lacuna in the literature.

The topic is best studied in ‘traditional names’ (e.g., Whissell, 2001). As the Saudi variety of Arabic presumably preserves traditional names more frequently than the other varieties of Arabic, Saudi names have been chosen as the subject of this study, which investigates whether there are phonological structures in Saudi first names that suggest their gender. The study is a quantitative and contrastive analysis of Saudi first names according to a set of phonological variables, including the number of phonemes, the number of syllables, open vs closed syllables, the manner of articulation of name-initial and name-final sounds, stress position and glottal status. It would be interesting to know whether the gender of Saudi first names can be determined phonologically.
Review of Related Literature

In contrast to traditional male names, traditional female names tend to contain a more significant number of sounds and syllables, end in a vowel or sonorant, and exhibit non-initial stress, according to phonological studies on English-given names (Slater & Feinman, 1985; Cutler, McQueen, & Robinson, 1990; Barry & Harper, 1995; Cassidy, Kelly, & Sharoni, 1999; Whissell, 2001; Ackermann & Zimmer, 2021). Similarly, according to a popular name book, the most elegant names for newborn girls typically feature multiple syllables, many vowels, and rhythmic patterns (Rosenkrantz & Satran, 2014).

Wright and Hay (2002) revealed a significant difference between the ending segments of male and female names (masculine names were much more likely to end with an obstruent), but not for the initial name segments. The researchers also found the number of syllables in male and female names the most prominent phonological bias. Similarly, Slater and Feinman (1985) concluded that English male and female favourite names gravitate toward a possibly “perfect” pattern consisting of a monosyllable ending in a consonant. In addition, the rate of change for female-preferred names was considerably less pronounced than that for male-preferred names.

Other studies explored phonology and the gender of names through the rules of ordering names (binomials), which generally place the man’s name first in pairs. Linguists have identified two possible explanations for why men’s names are typically placed before women’s names—name phonology and name popularity. Cooper and Ross (1975) contend that in binomial pairs, words with initial sonorants precede words with initial obstruents, whereas words with final obstruents precede words with final sonorants. Based on Cooper and Ross’ (1975) phonological constraints, Wright and Hay (2002) examined popular names in American English. They established that male names are marked by “First Position Phonology” (i.e., phonological characteristics that lend them to be preferable in first position), whereas Second Position Phonology specifies female names. It has been hypothesized that phonological distinctions between male and female English names are a cause (Wright, Hay, & Bent, 2005), a result (Cutler et al., 1990) of the propensity to address males before females.

Experiments have been conducted to determine the relevance of purely phonological characteristics in distinguishing the traditional gender of a name. For example, Wright (2006) presented the test participants with forty fictitious names to determine whether or not they naturally assigned gender to these names. The subjects categorized one-syllable and consonant-final names as male names and two-syllable and vowel-final names as female names. Similarly, Cassidy et al. (1999) reported that names were classified as male or female more rapidly and precisely when they possessed phonological characteristics that they claimed were typical of a gendered name.

Akermann and Zimmer (2021) examined a sample of popular first names from thirteen countries and concluded with language/cultural overreaching correlations and language-culture-specific correlations between the names used for the same gender. Finally, Aloufi (2022) investigated the phonetic symbolism of names and concluded that voiceless obstruents are more
prevalent in male names than in female names, whereas sonorant consonants are more prevalent in female names than in male names.

To our knowledge, it is still unknown whether these results accurately apply to languages other than English. However, we are aware of only one study, conducted by Wierzbicka (1992) on Polish given names, which concludes, with numerous exceptions, that Polish feminine names tend to end in –a, and Polish masculine names tend to end in a consonant, thus providing some support to the findings above. Reference to Arabic in a few studies is sporadic and does not provide clear patterns and tendencies.

A thorough examination of the existing literature reveals the lack of comprehensive studies on the capability of Arabic phonology to indicate gender. Therefore, this study analyses Saudi Arabian names to determine if these phonological characteristics apply to Saudi names.

**Method**

The study relies solely on phonological variables to determine whether Saudi Arabian first names are gender-differentiated. Other traditional factors, such as semantics, pragmatics, and familiarity, are beyond the scope of this study.

**Data Collection**

The names were extracted from the registrar of a private Saudi university in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to form the data set. By filtering the names by nationality, only Saudi Arabian first names were considered. In addition, a jury of Saudis double-checked the list to ensure that the names were Saudi first names, such as مشاعل (mishāʿil; /muʃaːˈil/), فهد (fahad; /fahad/). Less traditional or contemporary Arabic names, such as أمل (ʾamal; /ʔaːməl/), فادي (fādī; /faːdiː/), were also included, whereas foreign or ‘loan’ names, such as Cynthia, Toleen, were excluded.

Furthermore, names were not counted multiple times during statistical analysis. For instance, the most common Saudi female names in the data were نوره (nūrah; /nuːrəh/) and سارة (sārah; /saːraːh/), with 240 and 188 students bearing these names, respectively. محمد (muḥammad; /muˈhæmːaːd/) and عبد الله (ʿabdallah; /ˈabdəlːaːlːaː/) were the most famous names, with 220 and 182 students bearing these names, respectively. However, these four names were counted only once in the analyzed data set.

After filtration, validation, and inclusion of only a single occurrence of each name, the population of the present study comprised 419 female names and 237 male names.

**Data Analysis**

All names were phonemically transcribed and analyzed according to seven phonological variables, including:

a) The average number of phonemes and syllables;

b) Whether each syllable was closed or open;

c) Stress position;

d) Whether the initial and final consonants were voiced or voiceless;

e) The breakdown of the word’s initial vowels and consonants; and
f) The manner of articulation of the initial and final consonant

The quantitative analysis averaged the number of male and female names containing each of the variables above. In addition, the variables with significant frequency differences between male and female names were identified and graphed. The examples of names appear throughout the discussion in both transliteration and phonemic transcription.

**Results**

*Average Syllables and Average Phonemes*

![Graph showing average phonemes: Males Vs. female names](image)

*Figure 1. Average phonemes: Males Vs. female names*

**Closed vs Open Syllables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable Description</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>p-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Begin with open</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>0.0814</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>closed + open</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.0032</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open + open + open</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.0118</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open + closed</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>0.0052</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open + open</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0.0012</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. Male vs female names (open vs closed syllable)*
Phonological Features of Saudi Arabian Anthroponyms

Al Tamimi & Smith

Figure 2. Beginning Syllable: Open vs Closed

Stress Position

Table 2. Male vs female names (stress position)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td>( p )-value</td>
<td>Significance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mono</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>0.4141</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
<td>0.0309</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3. Stress Position (Women)
Table 3. Stress and gender dependence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mono</th>
<th>First</th>
<th>Second</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Initial and Final Consonant: Voiced/less

Figure 5. Final Consonant: Voiced/less (Women)
Figure 6. Final Consonant: Voiced/less (Men)

Table 4. Female vs male names (voiced/less)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>p value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Proportion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial voiced</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>57.0%</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>0.1176</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial voiceless</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>36.3%</td>
<td>0.5074</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final voiced</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final voiceless</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Word Initial Vowel and Consonant Breakdown

Figure 7. Name -Initial Vowel and Consonant
Table 5. *Female vs male names (word-initial)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>$p$-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/R/</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>0.1034</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/r/</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>0.0092</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/m/</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>$6 \times 10^{-4}$</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ʕ/</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>0.0000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Manner of Articulation of Initial and Final Consonant**

![Figure 8. Manner of Articulation of Initial Consonants](image)

Table 6. *Female vs male names (manner of articulation of initial consonant)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>$p$-value</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trill 'r'</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>0.0056</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glottal stop</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>0.0464</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>0.0098</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fricative</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>33.2%</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>0.0088</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasal</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>16.0%</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>0.0426</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

**Average Syllables and Average Phoneme**

As demonstrated in Figure One, the average number of syllables in the sample’s male and female names showed little difference (2.23 vs 2.14, respectively). To determine whether the true averages differ significantly, we tested the hypotheses where the null was $H_0$: “the true means are equal”, and the alternative was $H_1$: “the true means are not equal”. Since the resulting $p$-value of this $t$ test was $0.1001$, which is greater than the significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, we could reject $H_0$ and conclude that the difference between the true means was not statistically significant.

However, the average number of phonemes in male names was 12.69% higher than in female names (6.04 vs 5.36), as shown in Figure One. Again, a similar $t$-test was conducted to determine whether this difference was statistically significant. The test’s $p$-value was $p$-value =
3.84510 (-6). Since it was less than the significance level, we rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that the average number of phonemes in female and male names differs significantly.

**Closed vs Open Syllables**

As stated in section three above, each name was analyzed based on its pattern of open and closed syllables. Open syllables are, by definition, syllables that end with a vowel, e.g., the first and second syllables in هوضي (mū.ḍ; /muː.ḍːiː/), and closed syllables end with a consonant, e.g. the first, second and fourth syllables in عبدالعزيز (‘ab. dul.’a. ziːz; /ʔab. dul.ʔa. ziːz/). Many patterns found in this respect for both genders were surprisingly similar; however, a few patterns exhibited an apparent tendency toward male or female names, as seen in Table One above.

The most prominent pattern was whether or not the name started with an open or closed syllable. As shown in Table One and represented in Figure Two, women’s names tended to have a higher tendency, to begin with an open syllable than men’s names (61.8% vs 54.9%, respectively). However, the -z test used could not reject the null hypothesis that the true proportions were equal; thus, the tendency is not very significant.

There is a dearth of research comparing open vs closed syllable patterns in first names, particularly in the manner described above, which impedes appropriate comparison. However, based on our findings, we can conclude that Saudi women’s names do not tend to begin with an open syllable more frequently than men’s names. In contrast, the difference between male names and female names is notable in the other four patterns in Table Two.

**Stress Position**

Male and female names seemed to have a similar likelihood of being monosyllabic (7.2% vs 7.6%, respectively). In the data, سعد (saʿad; /saʕaːd/) and لين (līn; /liːn/) are examples of typical monosyllabic male and female names, respectively. Moreover, the likelihood of the stress position being in the first syllable was not significantly different between male and female names. The stress position can be seen in the first position in the names شادي (shādī; /ʃaːdiː/) and ديم (dim; /diː.maː/), male and female names, respectively.

However, the probability of the primary stress falling on the second or third position varied significantly. Female disyllabic names, such as رنين (ranīm; /raːniːm/) are more likely to place the primary stress on the second syllable (46.8%) than male disyllabic names (39.2%). In contrast, male multisyllabic names, such as عبدالرحمن (‘abdulrahmān; /ʔabdulraːhmaːn/), are more likely to place stress on the third syllable (12.2%), whereas only 4.1% of female multisyllabic names do so. This variation can be seen by comparing Figures Three and Four above.

Z-tests were conducted to determine whether these statistics accurately represented the true proportions; the results are summarised in Table Two. All p-values are below the significance threshold. In all three cases, we can conclude that the ratio of female names differs significantly from that of male names. This result is consistent with what was revealed for English names in
several studies reviewed in Section two above (e.g., Slater & Feinman, 1985; Cutler et al., 1990; Barry & Harper, 1995; Cassidy, Kelly & Sharoni, 1999; Whissell, 2001).

A chi-square test ($\chi^2$) was used to check whether the stress position depends on or is independent of the name gender. Table Three demonstrates that the null hypothesis is $H_0$: “the stress position is gender-independent”, whereas the alternative hypothesis is $H_1$: “the stress position is not gender-independent”. The calculated test statistics is $\chi^2 = 22.802$. There are three degrees of freedom, and the associated $p$-value for the test statistic is $p$-value $= 4.441 \times 10^{-5}$. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the stress position is gender-dependent.

**Initial and Final Consonant: Voiced/less**

The initial consonant in male names was voiced 63.3% of the time, whereas it was voiced 57.0% in female names. In contrast, the initial consonant in male names was voiceless 36.3% of the time, while it was voiceless 38.9% of the time in female names.

Examining the final consonant in male and female names revealed significant differences. As seen by comparing Figures Five and Six, the final consonant was voiced in female names 41.8% of the time and in male names 83.5% (roughly double). In female names, the final consonant was voiced (being a vowel) 25.5% of the time, but only 0.8% in male names (almost never). هنا (hanā; /hana:/) is one example of a female name in this category. The final consonant was voiceless 32.7% of the time in female names and 15.6% in male names (roughly half). These differences can also be seen by comparing the same figures above.

The statistical inference confirmed the sample’s conclusions; see Table Four. Furthermore, the $p$-values for the z-tests regarding the voiced/voiceless initial consonant were greater than the significance level, so the null hypothesis could not be rejected. Therefore, we conclude no significant differences between male and female names regarding the voiced/voiceless initial consonant.

Most literature did not focus on whether initial or final consonants were voiced or voiceless but rather on whether names began with a sonorant or an obstruent, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

**Word Initial Vowel and Consonant Breakdown**

Analyses were conducted on the frequency with which names began with a particular phoneme. There was a slight variation in frequency between female and male names for many phonemes. These are the most notable exceptions:

/ʔ/ and /r/ began female names more frequently than male names (as in أروى (ʾarwā; /ʔrwa:/ and رماح (rimāḥ; /rɪmɑːːh/, respectively). Specifically, the /ʔ/ began in 9.5% of the female names as opposed to only 5.9% of the male names; similarly, /r/ began in 10.5% of all female names as opposed to 4.6% of male names.

/m/ and /s/ began male names much more frequently than female names (as in مالك (mālik; /maːlɪk/) and عبد الإله (ʿabdulʾilāh; /ʔabdulʔɪlɑːh/, respectively). Specifically, /m/ began with 16% of
male names compared to 7.4% of female names. Similarly, /ʕ/ began 17.3% of male names compared to 6% of female names. This comparison revealed the largest difference between any two phonemes. The most notable comparisons between female and male names can be seen in Figure Seven.

The results of the statistical inference are summarised in Table Five. There is no difference between the proportions of male and female names starting with /ʔ/; however, the proportions are significantly different in the names beginning with /r/, /m/, or /ʕ/. This finding is difficult to relate to the existing literature, which focused on whether English first names began with sonorants or obstruents. In their study on English binomials, Cooper & Ross (1975) suggest that male names tend to start with a sonorant, whereas female names with an obstruent. However, our research could not reach a general conclusion, as specific phonemes tended to initiate male or female names, as described above.

**Manner of Articulation of Initial and Final Consonant**

The most notable differences in the manner of articulation of initial consonants, as demonstrated in Figure Eight above:

Trill ‘r’, glottal stop, and liquid tend to characterize the initial consonant of female names. Specifically, trill ‘r’ begins in 11% of female names compared to 4.6% of male names; glottal stops begin in 10.5% of female names compared to 5.9% of male names; and liquids begin in 4.5% of female names compared to 0.8% of male names. رم‌ح (rimāḥ; /rɪməħ/), أنوار (ʾanwār; /ʔaːnwar/), and ليال (layāl; /laːjāl/) are examples of female names whose initial consonants can be described in terms of the manner of articulation as trill ‘r’, glottal stop, and liquid, respectively.

Comparatively, fricative and nasal sounds tend to more frequently characterize the initial consonant of male names, e.g., فارس (fāris; /faːris/) and حسن (ḥasan; /hɑːsan/, respectively). Specifically, fricatives begin in 43.5% of male names compared to 33.2% of female names, and nasals begin in 22.4% of male names compared to 16% of female names.

All tests conducted on hypotheses yielded p-values smaller than the confidence level. Consequently, as shown in Table Six, the respective proportions of female and male names differ significantly.

As shown in Figure Nine, male names tend to end with the glottal fricative ‘h’, e.g., ساره (sārah; /sɑːrah/) and نوره (nūrah; /nuːrɑ/) or with a vowel typically the long vowel ‘a’ if the ‘h’ was dropped name- finally, e.g., سارا (sārā; /sɑːra/) and نورا (nūrā; /nuːrɑ/). Statistically, female names end with ‘h’ 21.2% of the time, compared to only 3% with male names. Similarly, female names end with a vowel 26.7% of the time, compared to 11% with male names.

The figure also shows that male names are more likely to end with a stop, nasal, or trill ‘r’ (28.3%, 23.6%, and 14.3%, respectively) as in يزيد (yazīd; /jaːziːd/), سلطان (sulṭān; /sul ῅ tɑːn/), and منصور (manṣūr; /mans’uːr/, respectively. It is worth noting that the same manners tend to characterize initial female names, as in دانه (dānah; /dɑːnah/), موسمي (mʊǧːi; /muːdɪːi/), ريم (rīm; /rɪm/;
Phonological Features of Saudi Arabian Anthroponyms
Al Tamimi & Smith

However, female names less frequently end with this manners11.7 %, 16.7%, and 6.7%, respectively), as in شهید (shahd; /ʃaːh/), رنیم (ranīm; /raniːm/), and منار (manār; /manaːr/).

Hypotheses tests produced p-values smaller than the confidence level. Therefore, as shown in Table Seven, the respective proportions of female and male names are all significantly different.

Again, our findings matched the literature only partially. Our finding that female names tend to begin with the glottal fricative and male names with a nasal is the only finding that matches the literature on English names that claim that male names tend to begin with a sonorant, while female names tend to begin with an obstruent (Cooper & Ross, 1975) and that male names tend to end with obstruents (Wright & Hay, 2002). Our findings that female names begin with a trill ‘r’ and a liquid and that male names begin with a fricative do not align with the existing literature. Similarly, our findings that female names tend to end with a vowel and male names tend to end with a consonant are the only ones that correspond to the existing literature. Our additional findings that female names tend to end with a vowel and male names with a nasal do not align with previous research, such as that of Wright (2006) and Cassidy et al. (1999, 2005).

Conclusion
This study examined male and female Saudi names to determine whether their gender could be deduced from phonological variables. Multiple variables indicate a tendency for Saudi first names to be male or female to varying degrees. In particular, it was found that female names tend to have fewer phonemes and a higher tendency to begin with an open syllable than male names. Similarly, female names tend to place stress on the second syllable more frequently than male names, which tend to place stress on the third syllable more regularly than female names. No significant differences existed between male and female names regarding whether the initial consonant was typically voiced or voiceless. However, the final consonant was significantly more likely to be voiced in male names than in female names, where it was significantly more likely to be voiceless or voiced (being a vowel). The glottal stop ‘ʔ’ and the trill ‘r’ began female names more frequently than male names. The nasal ‘m’ and the pharyngeal ‘ʕ’ were much more likely to begin male names than female names. The Trill ‘r’, the glottal stop ‘ʔ’, and the liquid ‘l’ are more likely the manners of articulation to begin female names, whereas fricatives and nasals are more likely to begin male names. Finally, female names are much more likely to end with the glottal fricative ‘h’ or with a vowel, typically the short vowel ‘a’, while male names are more likely to end with a stop, nasal, or trill ‘r’ (features that often began female names). It would be difficult to conclude that a single phonological variable could determine the gender of a Saudi name. However, the combination of the variables in question could conceivably account for the ability to identify the gender of a Saudi name correctly.
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References


Abstract
This study seeks to investigate patterns of linguistic variation in Saudi press reportage, revealing how the language of press reportage in Saudi Arabia differs from or resembles that of British press reportage. This research is significant as no previous study has attempted to find the differences and similarities between the English used in Saudi press reportage in comparison with British Press reportage. This study aims to analyze linguistic variation between the categories of Saudi press reportage of the selected countries and to see which category of the news resembles British English the most. For this purpose, a corpus of Saudi newspaper reportage was compiled. Biber’s (1992, 2006) multidimensional model explored the linguistic variations among the Saudi and British press reportage sub-categories. ANOVA was applied to measure the significant statistical differences among them. The results indicated that Saudi business reportage is the most informational, narrative, and explicit among all the sub-categories of British press reportage and the rest of the sub-categories of Saudi press reportage. Saudi sports reportage is the most non-argumentative, and British business reportage is the most abstract among other sub-categories. The results provided substantial evidence that English used in Saudi press reportage is a distinct register indicating that Saudi English is a different variety of English. This study will support the pedagogical practices regarding English for academic purposes and in academic language teaching classrooms.

Keywords: Arab English, multidimensional analysis, register analysis, Saudi English, Saudi press reportage

Introduction

Wide non-native varieties of English emerge due to the spread of English around the world. Several researchers attempted to study Englishes used in different parts of the world (Ahmad & Ali, 2017; Ali, 2020; Biber & Conrad, 2009; Shakir & Deuber, 2018). However, English, written and spoken in Saudi Arabia, has not been given considerable attention. It attempts to establish Saudi English (SE) as a different variety of English. The study investigates patterns of linguistic variation in Saudi Press Reportage, revealing how the language of press reportage in Saudi Arabia differs from or resembles that of the British Press Reportage. This study is a corpus-based multidimensional analysis of English used in Saudi Arabia. It is significant in developing a specialized corpus of Saudi English newspaper reportage and exploring how Saudi English (SE) is variant from or similar to British English (BrE).

The methods used for studying world Englishes are criticized for heavily relying on individual linguistic features yielding highly subjective and misrepresentative results. This study, however, used Biber’s (1992, 2006) multivariate techniques to study linguistic variation, providing a multidimensional perspective. It further divided the news reportage of both countries into three sub-categories to draw an internal comparison and study variation in detail. Thus, the present study aimed to analyze Saudi Press Reportage (SPR) in comparison with British Press Reportage (BPR) through Biber’s (1992, 2006) multidimensional approach.

Literature Review

Many researchers recognize World Englishes as non-native varieties of English (Kachru, 1983; Kirkpatrick, 2020; Melchers et al., 2019; Tupas, 2022), and they have remained the focus of great interest for many reasons. Kachru and Nelson (2011) affirmed that American and British English are acknowledged to be “legitimate for educational purposes” (p. 164) all over the world. English, however, is expanding, and at this point, ‘more varieties of English are developing’ (Melchers et al., 2019, p. 225). Tupas (2022) named these English “Unequal Englishes” (p. 723). Kachru and Nelson (2011) assert that as linguists, language teachers, and learners, studying the nature of the variation in Englishes is essential. Their work on World Englishes shows that “African Englishes display similar linguistic structures, language use, and abstract inventiveness as do Asian Englishes” (p. 4).

Grove (2009) investigated the status of what she termed ‘Hong Kong English’ in the light of the framework developed by combining Kachru’s (1983) three circles, Moag’s (1982) life circle of non-native Englishes, and Schneider’s (2007) postcolonial Englishes. She concluded that Hong Kong English did not completely serve as a language. Tan (2012) looked at the status of Singaporean English through the framework of Kachru’s (1983) concentric circle theory and Schneider’s (2009) model. However, these studies were based on instances of individual linguistic features and peculiar occurrences of localized expressions, which were criticized for not being regular patterns of variation.

With the introduction of multivariate statistical techniques and multidimensional analysis emphasizing the co-occurrence of linguistic features, the approaches and methods which explore individual linguistic features became unreliable and, therefore, unpopular. A significant body of research has been produced using Biber’s (1992, 2006) multidimensional approach (Biber et al., 2015; Biber & Egbert, 2016; Egbert, 2015; Nesi, 2009; Sardinha & Pinto, 2014; Shakir & Deuber, 2018). It was later enhanced by Xiao (2009), who explored variation across twelve registers and
five varieties of English in the International Corpus of English (ICE) through the MDA approach. He enhanced the MDA and annotated the corpus for grammatical and semantic categories.

So far as English used in Saudi Arabia is concerned, only a few studies have been conducted. The research by Mahboob and Elyas (2014) examined how English in Saudi Arabia has been adopted to meet local needs and practices. The paper analyzed English language textbooks used in Saudi Arabia and concluded that Saudi English mainly follows the grammatical norms of standard English. The paper pointed out certain inconsistencies in using features that represent local cultural norms and practices. The results of this study indicate that English in Saudi Arabia is being ‘nativised’, and this nativized/ localized English represents the local culture and their social and religious beliefs. Other research works (Al-Belehi, 2021; Algaraady & Mahyoob, 2021; Alghammas, 2020) studied the writings of EFL learners. However, their scope was limited to error analysis and students’ perspectives toward learning English.

While some studies analyzed newspapers from the content analysis perspective (Alarfaj, 2013), the gender perspective also gained the attention of some researchers (Akeel, 2010; Arabi, 1994; Bashatah, 2017; Basmaeel, 2008). However, linguistic analysis of the Saudi English newspaper language remained neglected. Hardly any research study analyses Saudi English from a variationist perspective using a multidimensional approach. So, there was a need to conduct a study that analyses the language of press reportage in the Saudi context by using a comprehensive approach. The current study attempts to investigate the sub-categories of SPR in comparison with BPR.

Method

A specialized corpus of Saudi English newspaper reportage was developed for this study. For the compilation of the corpus, three Saudi newspapers and three British newspapers were selected. The newspaper reportage was divided into three sub-categories: World, Sports, and Business. Riyadh Daily, Arab News, and Saudi Gazette, from Saudi Arabia and The Guardian, The Sun, and Daily Mail from Britain were selected. The data was taken from one year, i.e., 2017 to 2018. The detail of the number of texts from each newspaper is given in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Newspaper</th>
<th>Business Reportage</th>
<th>Sports Reportage</th>
<th>World Reportage</th>
<th>Total</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arab News</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riyadh Daily</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Gazette</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sun</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Mail</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The corpus consists of 900 text files from six newspapers. It consists of approximately one million words.

Research Procedure

The first step was to select texts and develop the specialized corpus. After the text files were marked up and cleaned, the data was tagged using Biber’s (1992, 2006) multidimensional tagger. The tagging of the corpus provided a standardized database to study the linguistic variation in Saudi and British press reportage. Later the raw scores were transformed into normalized scores.
Then factor analysis was conducted to determine the co-occurrence relationship among the linguistic features. The next step was the computation of dimension scores. After that, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to find the statistically significant differences among the sub-categories of Saudi and British press reportage. Finally, a qualitative interpretation of the functional parameters underlying the quantitatively identified co-occurring linguistic features and dimensions was provided.

Analysis and Discussion

The first dimension consists of a continuum ranging from positive to negative polarity, named Informational and Involved discourse. According to Biber’s 1992 MD model, on D1, a text with a frequent occurrence of private verbs, that deletion, second-person pronoun, hedges, discourse particle, wh-questions, wh-clauses, etc., (the features with positive loadings) marks the presence of involved discourse, while frequent use of nouns, preposition and attributive adjective (the features with negative loadings) indicates that the text is inclined towards informational discourse.

The results in figure 1 revealed variations in Saudi and British press reportage. Saudi business reportage (SBR) is more informational than British business reportage (BBR). The mean score of SBR (-21.75) indicates that it is more informational than BBR (-12.3). Likewise, Saudi sports reportage (SSR), with a mean score of -15.52, is more informational than British sports reportage (BSR). BSR, with a mean score of -10.8, shows less informativeness in its discourse production. The results of the world reportage show the same trend. The mean score of Saudi world reportage (SWR), i.e., -19.33, is more than that of British world reportage (BWR), i.e. -12.3.

The following extract has been taken from the Saudi newspaper, Arab News. Linguistic features like nouns, prepositions, and attributive adjectives perform the function of producing informational discourse.

Al-Falih said the deals will have a positive impact both on the economy and the people of the Kingdom, as hundreds of thousands of jobs will be created for the Saudi youth. Touching on the oil sector, the minister said the Kingdom believes that extending the oil-cut agreement is enough to drain oil inventories. “Extending the current agreement on global oil supply cuts until March next year and adding one or two small producers to the pact, should be enough to reduce oil inventories. (CSST13SBAN)
Saudi Business Reportage (SBR) is the most informational in its discourse production among all the sub-categories. The bold words in the excerpt are examples of the linguistic features that produce informational discourse.

Dimension two is labeled as *Narrative vs. Non-narrative concerns*. Positive scores indicate that the specific variety is related to narrative discourse, whereas negative scores indicate that the focus of the writing is non-narrative. The positive mean scores are characterized by the frequent occurrence of the *past tense verb*, *third-person pronoun*, *verb-perfect aspect*, and *public verbs*, while the negative scores, by *present tense verbs*, *pronoun it*, *that deletion* and *place adverbial*. On this dimension, SBR and BBR show marked differences in discourse production. Where SBR, with a mean score of -1.04, produces non-narrative discourse, BBR, with a mean value of 0.74, shows narrative concerns. SSR uses narrative discourse with a mean value of -0.6, while BSR, with a mean score of -0.09, shows a mixed-purpose discourse. The closeness to the zero-dimension score indicates that the discourse has a mixed purpose (Biber, 2009). BSR uses both positive and negative linguistic features in its discourse. Both countries show narrative discourse while reporting world news. However, SWR, with a mean score of 0.99, is slightly more narrative than BWR (0.8).

![Figure 2](image_url)

*Figure 2.* Linguistic variations across Saudi and British press reportage on D2

SBR is more non-narrative than British news reportage and the most non-narrative among all the other sub-categories of Saudi press reportage.

The following excerpt has been taken from the Saudi newspaper, *Saudi Gazette*.

He said the social security program counts beneficiaries and their dependents as a family, not individuals because they are registered in the data system with the possibility of adding more dependents. Khateeb clarified that what he said about Saudi Arabia having cinema houses would not be outside the framework of the official procedures and policies that the Kingdom was following in all its projects to attain sustainable development. (CSST57BSG)

In the above excerpt, the bold words are examples of linguistic features that produce narrative discourse.

On dimension three, positive scores indicate that discourse is explicit, while negative scores highlight situation-dependent discourse. Figure 3 shows that SBR (5.81) is more explicit
than BBR (3.26). In contrast, BSR, with a mean score of 0.77, is more explicit in its discourse production than SSR (0.21). Like business reportage, Saudi reportage is more explicit than British reportage in reporting world news. The results of the present study indicate a significant difference in the mean scores of SWR and BWR. Other studies on Asian Englishes also show similar patterns. For instance, Ali et al. (2020) found Indian world reportage showing a prominent difference from British world reportage. However, interestingly, while both Saudi and Indian newspapers are quite different from British newspapers in producing world reportage, they show marked differences from each other. With a mean score of 5.64, SWR indicates that it uses more linguistic features that produce explicit discourse than BWR (2.68).

Figure 3. Linguistic variations across Saudi and British press reportage on D3

The following excerpt has been taken from the Saudi newspaper, Riyadh Daily. The First Meeting for Senior Officials in charge of implementing the last Arab summit resolution on terror combat and social development wrapped up here today, under the chairmanship of Egypt's social solidarity minister Dr. Ghadah Wali, who is also the head of the executive bureau of the Arab social affairs ministers council, and the participation of senior officials from Arab countries. In a final communique, the meeting denounced all terror operations that hit the Arab as well as other parts of the world, last of which were in Barcelona and Finland. (CSST37SBRD)

In the above-given example, the presence of coordinating conjunctions, nominalization, and wh-clauses are examples of linguistic features that produce explicit discourse.

Dimension four is labeled as Overt expression of argumentation/persuasion. In the 1992 analysis, dimension four contains features with positive weight only. Linguistic features like adverb within auxiliary, modal of necessity, persuasive verb, subordinating conjunction-conditional, infinitive verb, and modal of prediction produce argumentative discourse on the positive polarity of this dimension. However, figure 4 shows that both countries have negative weight in producing discourse. On dimension four, features like third-person pronoun, private verbs, and hedges mark the presence of non-argumentative discourse.
Exploring Lexico-Grammatical Patterns in Saudi Press Reportage

Figure 4. Linguistic variations across Saudi and British press reportage on D4

Figure 4 shows that SBR (-2.99) is slightly more non-argumentative than BBR (-2.47). Ali et al. (2021) also found that the sports category of British press reportage is less non-argumentative than other varieties of English used in South Asia. Likewise, SSR, with a mean score of -3.32, is more non-argumentative than BSR (-2.29). With a mean score of -2.65, SWR is more non-argumentative than BWR (-1.13).

SSR is the most non-argumentative among other categories. The following example has been taken from the Saudi newspaper, Arab News.

On Monday, they traded stinging shots, often with Sharapova — dressed in all black, from her visor to her dress that sparkled under the lights, to her socks and shoes — aiming to end exchanges and Halep hustling into place to extend them. It was quickly 4-1 for Sharapova in the second set and she held a breakpoint there to allow her to go up 5-1 and serve for the victory. But she could not convert it. (CSST11SPAN)

In the above-given excerpt, the bold words are examples of linguistic features that produce non-argumentative discourse. In the language of news reportage, various grammatical devices serve as essential techniques for journalists to express their viewpoints. Journalists commonly use passives which are primary markers of abstract discourse in the newspapers and politicians in their statements, speeches, and debates (Stojan & Mijic, 2017). In order to make the statements impersonal and the identity of the participants of the action vague, the journalists deliberately change the word order of the sentence(s) and, if needed, omit the agent of the action (Qassim, 2016).

Dimension five is labeled as Impersonal (Abstract) vs. Non-impersonal (Non-abstract style). Figure 5 shows that SBR (0.85) produces less abstract discourse than BBR (1.53). There is less difference in the mean score of SSR (0.85) and BSR (0.76) in their discourse production. With a mean score of 1.4, SWR is slightly more abstract than BWR (1.12).

Figure 5. Linguistic variations across Saudi and British press reportage on D5
BBR produces the most abstract discourse among all the sub-categories. Among other linguistic features, *adverbial-conjuncts* and *passive constructions* are the primary markers of abstractness in a discourse. “Discourse with frequent passive constructions is typically abstract and technical in content and formal in style” (Biber, 1992, p. 112). The following example has been taken from the British newspaper, *The Guardian*.

A trade that, by large consensus, is being called one of the worst in NBA history. For all of Divac’s many failings, a list of shortcomings which are dwarfed by those of team owner Vivek Ranadivé, we must assume he is telling the truth about a better offer because the one he accepted late Sunday night could not have been much worse: franchise centerpiece DeMarcus Cousins and Omri Casspi shipped to New Orleans in exchange for rookie guard Buddy Hield, Tyreke Evans, Langston Galloway and the Pelicans’ first- and second-round picks in the 2017 draft. (CSBRBTGT27)

In the above-given example, the bold words are the example of linguistic features that produce abstract discourse. Overall, the results indicate marked differences between the two countries concerning each sub-category.

**Conclusion**

A comparison has been drawn between Saudi and British English to explore how far the language of the press reportage genre in Saudi Arabia is similar to or different from the British press reportage across Biber’s (1992) Multidimensional analysis. The study explored that on all the five textual dimensions, the sub-categories of Saudi Press Reportage show a remarkable difference from British press reportage. On dimension one, Saudi Business Reportage is more informational than British Business Reportage. There are marked differences in the mean score of Saudi and British sports reports in producing discourse. The results of the world reportage show the same trend, i.e., Saudi World Reportage is more informational than British World Reportage. On dimension two, Saudi Business Reportage and British Business Reportage show a marked difference in their mean scores in producing non-narrative discourse. While Saudi Business Reportage produces non-narrative discourse, British Sports Reportage shows a mixed-purpose discourse. Both countries show narrative discourse while reporting world news. However, Saudi World Reportage is slightly more narrative than British World Reportage. On dimension three, Saudi Business Reportage is more explicit than British Business Reportage. In contrast, British Sports Reportage is more explicit in its discourse production than Saudi Sports Reportage. Like business reportage, Saudi reportage is more explicit than British reportage in reporting world news. Further, Saudi Business Reportage is slightly more non-argumentative than British Business Reportage on dimension four. Likewise, Saudi Sports Reportage is more non-argumentative than British Sports Reportage. Saudi World Reportage is more non-argumentative than British World Reportage. On dimension five, Saudi Business Reportage produces less abstract discourse than British Business Reportage. However, there is less difference between Saudi Sports Reportage and British Sports Reportage in their discourse production. Saudi World Reportage is slightly more abstract than British World Reportage. The results indicate a significant difference in Saudi and British discourse production, providing substantial evidence that English used in Saudi Arabia qualifies the status of a distinct variety allowing it to be labeled as Saudi English.
Future Recommendations

The corpus compiled for the present study and the results of the analysis of variance will be helpful for the researchers working on Saudi English. Further, the study allows several comparisons between press reportage and various other genres or registers from Saudi and other Englishes from the inner circle. The specialized corpus of Saudi press reportage can further be enhanced by adding more sub-categories from the press reportage.

Pedagogical Implications

This study has some pedagogical implications. The study findings can be useful for syllabus designers, textbook writers, and language instructors of media studies. Various text samples from the corpus can be used as authentic material in textbooks or language classrooms. Teachers can use the tagged data in ESP classrooms to explain grammatical intricacies and specific structures used by news media. The students can also develop an insight into how specific grammatical patterns and particular lexical choices make a text informative or involved, narrative or non-narrative, explicit or situation-dependent, overtly or covertly persuasive/argumentative, abstract or non-abstract. They can be helped in acquiring mastery over recognizing such underlying patterns and producing such texts using specific lexical and grammatical configurations. Further, the data and the present study’s findings can provide the basis for developing an application, like Grammarly, which can assess, evaluate and give feedback on the writings of news media students. This study also provides a base for developing a general-purpose corpus of Saudi English that can benefit both ESP and EGP classes.

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References


Test Control of English Grammatical and Lexical Competencies of Secondary School Pupils in Ukraine

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Abstract
The article is dedicated to the test control of English grammatical and lexical competencies of secondary school pupils (five-grade). The study examined the nature and structure of the concepts of “control,” “test” and “test control.” This scientific research aims to investigate the features of the designed exercises for monitoring the formation of the English competencies of pupils of the middle level mentioned above. The significance of the study is determined by the focus of modern linguistics and pedagogics on identifying the features of the methodological control of the formation of English grammatical and lexical evaluation of five-grade school pupils. The main question of the research is how testing control can ensure the successful implementation of the purpose and all functions of control, as well as meet the requirements for its quality. The conditions for the effective use of the mentioned methods in controlling the competence in grammar and lexicon of five-grade school pupils are determined. The Physiological features of students and their psychological readiness for tests were revealed. Methodological analysis was made for the choice of exercises or activities to check for grammar and vocabulary of pupils of the fifth grade. Experimental verification of exercises is designed to check for grammatical and lexical competence of five-grade pupils. To control and evaluate the knowledge and skills of the pupils, at the end of the pedagogical experiment, we held a kind of control competition between the experimental and control grades, for the implementation of which the test tasks were thought out.

Keywords: control, test, test control, grammatical, lexical, competence, secondary school pupils, five-grade schoolchildren

Introduction

The object of scientific research is test control. The subject is the peculiarities of the type of control to check the formation of assessment of English grammar and lexicon of school pupils of the five grade.

“Competence is the ability to successfully satisfy individual and social needs, to act and fulfill assigned objectives. It is based on knowledge, skills, and abilities. It necessarily includes a person’s attitude towards them, also as their experience, which allows this knowledge to be ‘weaved’ into what they already knew, and the ability to understand the life situation in which they can apply them” (EP, 2013, pp. 11-17).

Thus, each competence is based on a combination of knowledge, skills and abilities, as well as attitudes, values, emotions, behavioral components, that is, everything that can be mobilized for active action.

Control is an integral part of the system of teaching English. In contrast to the actual teaching of a language, the aim of which is the building of English language speaking skills, the objective of control is primarily to evaluate the level or degree of their formation (Tkachenko, 2013). The main purpose of control in the process of studying English is to manage it. Testing is an effective means of organizing control in training the English language. This kind of control can ensure the successful implementation of the purpose and all its functions, as meet the requirements for its quality. Test control as a term means in a narrow sense the use and conduct of a test. In a broad sense, it is a set of stages of planning, compiling and the very testing, processing, and interpreting the outcomes of the process (Panova, 2010).

To achieve the primary target of the research, the following research objectives must be solved: to consider the essence and structure of the concepts “control”, “test” and “test control”; to investigate the peculiarities of test exercises in English classes; to define the factors for the efficient use of these methods in the checkup of grammar and lexical competences of five-grade school pupils; to reveal the physiology of pupils and their psychological background to complete the given activities; to analyze the method of choosing test exercises for examining the grammar and lexicon of five-grade school pupils; to carry out an experimental control of the developed tasks to check the grammar and lexical competencies of pupils of the fifth grade. Main research questions include: Does control as a management tool provide constant feedback and does it have great potential to optimize the teaching process of English language learning in secondary school in general and grammar, and vocabulary teaching in particular?

Literature Review

Foreign language communicative competence in general and on the material of the English language, in particular, was studied by many linguists, both foreign and domestic (Belyaev (2009), Vasylyeva (2011), Galskova (2008), Hez (2004), Nikolayeva (2003), Pavlenko (2014), Petrova (2007), etc.). In addition, researchers such as Breygina (2012), Denisova (2006), Koroleva (2013),
Rogova (2000), and others dealt with the problem of test control of the formation of English-language communicative competence. Nevertheless, this problem includes domestic and foreign research (Metyolkina, 2004). Among the studies of domestic scholars, it is worth paying attention to the scientific works of Bohdanova (2011), Kovalenko (2015), Sklyarenko (1999), and others. Among the foreign ones – to the works of I. Artemova, I. Berman and others (Metyolkina, 2015).

A review of the didactic and methodological scientific data assigned to the investigation of the formation of lexical evaluation of five-grade school pupils allows concluding that such scientists as Osadchuk (2013), Panova (1998), Stase-Alma (2009), Skulte (2011), Terranova (2015), Ufimtseva (2000), and others paid attention to this problem (Tkachenko, 2013).

Researcher V. Kim presents more than five definitions of this concept in his monograph. At the same time, the scientist notes that, despite significant differences between them, they continue to be intensively used in scientific literature. The researcher believes that the reason for this may be the sufficient spread of tests and test technologies in various spheres of modern knowledge (Hydik, 2017).

In the middle level of secondary school (grades five to nine), the stage of systematic and consistent work with authentic educational materials, which ensures normative mastery of communication, begins. The volume of educational material, including that which contributes to the formation of sociocultural and sociolinguistic competencies, is growing noticeably. “The function of a foreign language as a means of intercultural communication in the dialogue between cultures of the modern world appears more clearly” (Yalden, 2019, pp.121). Mastering English is considered not as the acquiring of a certain of knowledge about the language, but as a level of skills formation to use it for communication orally or in writing, as a mechanism for learning about other people (Yalden, 2019).

It should be noted that “a significant number of exercises, as well as other types of activities, which were widely used in teaching English at the initial stage and connected with the age of pupils, will not always be appropriate for studying English at the fifth grade in methodological aspect” (Hymes, 2012, p. 269).

Vocabulary and grammar learning is based on the principle of anticipatory oral acquisition of speech patterns through communicative tasks, followed by analysis and further use of this material in language practice (Hymes, 2012).

Teaching oral and written communication takes place within the scope and topics provided by the Program for teaching a foreign language in the middle stage (Ur, 2016). It should be noted that a certain type of educational activity of 5th-grade pupils has a significant impact on the nature of test control. Let us say, that such type of activity as a productive one based on the level of assimilation of knowledge and skills belongs to the heuristic and characterizes abilities and skills. According to it, the type of test control contains non-typical tasks and assignments (West, 2018). Productive educational activity of students without support is marked by the creative level of assimilation of so-called knowledge transformations with the corresponding level of test control,
which is revealed in creative (research) tasks. In addition, we also used game types and forms of control to test the knowledge of 5th-grade students (West, 2018).

**Method**

In testing in a broad sense, as a rule, three main stages are distinguished: Stage I – pretest development: test planning, pretest preparation, pretest approval, pretest results interpretation; Stage II – development of the final test: pre-planning of the pre-test, compilation and design of the final version of the test, preparation of specifications and instructions; Stage III – implementation of the test: preparation for the application of the test, conducting the test, processing the test results, interpreting the test results (Petrašchuk, 2017).

Language testing deals with the development and application of language and speech tests. On the one hand, it is a domain of the methodology of teaching English. On the other, it belongs to pedagogical testing as a part of general testology. The latter also includes psychological, professional and other tests (TCK, 2011). Testology is the theory and practice of testing, and a testologist is a specialist who deals with them (Metyolkina, 2004). A tester is a person who conducts a test among the tested, or test participants (test-taker, testee). The word ‘test’ in English means trial, sample, experiment or check. There are many definitions of the term ‘test’ in the literature on linguistic didactic testing.

We, together with V. A. Kokkota, believe that the following is the most successful: “(...) a language-didactic test is understood as a complex of tasks prepared according to certain requirements, which have passed a preliminary test to determine its quality indicators and allow to identify in test participants’ level of their language (linguistic) and speech (communicative) knowledge” (As cited for Solovei, 2012, p. 5). As a result of it, certain evaluations according to pre-established criteria can be observed.

Tests with a large number of exercises (more than 40-50) are called complex and consist of parts and subtests. The latter consists, in turn, of analogous exercises and are aimed at one specific test object (activity). It refers to a certain component of the English language skills which is consistent with the aim of testing (Petrašchuk, 2017). Part of the test is based on a broader test object, for example, reading, listening, etc. A test objective or test item is the minimal constituent unit of the test that requires a certain verbal or non-verbal response from the participant (Petrašchuk, 2017). Below is a Table of tests according to testing objectives (see Table one).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Name of the test</th>
<th>Name of the test</th>
<th>Test name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>of educational achievements</td>
<td>of common mastery</td>
<td>diagnostic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The main purpose of determination for success</td>
<td>determining the degree of common mastery</td>
<td>detection of errors and shortcomings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An additional purpose is possible</td>
<td>Diagnostic</td>
<td>prognostic</td>
<td>detection of achievements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Linguistic testing is used in the teaching of English. A language-didactic test is a set of exercises formed according to certain demands, which have been pre-tested to define quality indicators and which allow to reveal the level of language and/or communicative competence of the test participants and to evaluate the test results according to long-established criteria (Panova, 2010). The main indicators of the quality of a linguistic didactic test are (Savchenko, 2010): validity; reliability; differential ability; practicality; economy. Tests, like other methods of pedagogical control, have their advantages and disadvantages. In domestic didactics, testing was considered harmful until recently, because, according to scientists, the selection of pupils and the limitation of their development opportunities takes place on its basis. Nowadays, tests also have flaws. The main disadvantage is the decrease in the experimenter’s ability to achieve mutual understanding with the subjects, to interest them. In addition, during group testing, it is difficult to control the condition of the subjects, such as anxiety, etc.

Thus, taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of tests as a method of pedagogical control, when conducting tests, attention should be paid to the specifics of this control method, and the characteristics of the subjects should also not be overlooked, and the incomplete amount of results obtained during the tests should be taken into account. Indeed, tests are an effective form of control, but to conduct a test, certain conditions are necessary (Chomsky, 2009): the teacher must meet the requirements proposed to him/her for the effectiveness of the result, the test must be carefully prepared and thought out, the shortcomings of this form of control must be taken into account. If the tests are used correctly, the teacher will get objective and true results.

The middle school (grades from five to nine), which is the object of our research, provides for foreign language learning at the continuing stage (grades one to two). At this stage, pupils master almost all the grammatical material necessary for oral speech. Work is underway on the formation of receptive skills. At the same stage, the formation of the pupils’ potential vocabulary begins, which continues even further, in senior school. Thus, significant the age characteristics of the pupils of this stage allow the teacher to determine exactly those methods, forms and means of learning that will lead to the successful solution of the above tasks. Therefore, it is possible to note the following trends in the organization of education at this stage: wider use of exercises simulating the conditions of natural foreign language communication, increasing role of independent work of pupils, greater reliance on verbal clarity and prompts, increasing the specific weight of paired and group forms of work.

Language competence includes linguistic skills in the lexicon, grammar, phonetics, orthography and related ones. While communicative competence contains listening, speaking, reading and writing (Underhill, 2017). Some of the above-mentioned competencies can be more specified. Thus, in speech, it includes competence in dialogues and monologue, and linguistic
competence consists of lexical knowledge and speech linguistic skills. Grammatical competence means grammatical knowledge and skills. At last, phonological competence is made of phonetic knowledge and listening-pronunciation skills, etc (Underhill, 2017).

Regarding the building of linguistic competence of five-grade school pupils, it is worth noting that teaching English in middle school plays a special role. During this period, the foundations are laid for the pupils’ practical acquisition of speech and reading, perception and creation of expressions, on which further learning of the English language in senior school is built.

The Pilot Study

According to the program for learning foreign languages by pupils of grades from five to nine of secondary educational institutions, the formation of grammatical competence by pupils of the mentioned grades involves the study of the verb: The Gerund, The Infinitive, Conditional I, Relative Clause. Pronouns include the following units: relative who, which, that, while conjunctions are represented by the following forms: if / in order to (EP, 2013). Concerning the level of formation of lexical competence of middle school pupils, by the end of the 9th-grade they should be well versed in the following topics and speech situations: Personal data, Natural resources, Environmental problems, Plant and animal world, Types of radio and TV programs, Internet sites, Trends of youth culture, Types of sciences, Inventions, Names of English-speaking countries and their capitals, Places of interest of English-speaking countries, Names of monuments of Culture in Ukraine, Professional qualities, Labor skills (EP, 2013).

It should be noted that the English language test exercises to check the degree of formation of lexical and grammatical competences should be developed based on the features of the English learning stage, which is characterized by different levels of complexity of the tasks performed and the corresponding capabilities of pupils (Fedorenko, 2015).

Taking into account the requirements certified in the Educational programs for secondary school (middle level), we have developed a method of test control of knowledge, abilities and skills of English grammar and lexical competences in the 5th grade. Lexicon and grammar were tested, mainly, based on a specific text from fiction or non-fiction, Internet discourse with an interesting, authentic direction capable of attracting interest. For example (See Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C).

Participants

The experiment, which was conducted by the author of the research during pedagogical practice in a comprehensive school of grades 1-3 in Kyiv in the five-grade (the 5-A, 5-B and 5-B grades of the secondary school, 2022) with a representative sampling type, covered the middle stage of learning English at school, to check the effectiveness of the use of a set of test exercises in English at this stage, had certain features regarding the use of a complex of control exercises in various classes of the middle level.
Test Control of English Grammatical and Lexical Competencies  Ponomarenko, Smuhliakova, Mochalova & Fomichova

Research Instruments

Testing can be used both for studying a separate topic and for systematization and repetition of already studied material and has some advantages. Testing is a more qualitative and objective method of evaluation, its objectivity is achieved by standardizing the procedure and checking the quality indicators of tasks and tests as a whole. Testing is a fairer method, it puts all pupils in equal conditions, both in the process of control and in the process of evaluation. Tests are a more voluminous tool of modern education, as testing can include tasks from all course topics. This allows for assessing knowledge throughout the course. With the help of testing, it is possible to establish the level of knowledge of the subject as a whole and its separate sections. The test is a more accurate tool.

In the course of the conducted pedagogical experiment, which includes observation, conversation, questionnaires and surveys, shortcomings and typical difficulties of school practice in solving the task of teaching pupils English-speaking grammatical and lexical competencies were revealed. To obtain information about the success of the application of the system of exercises in the teaching of grammatical and lexical competencies in English lessons in the five-grade to study requests, wishes, and attitudes to the educational subject, we used the questionnaire method, which had two stages, that is, the preliminary questionnaire and final. To check the formation of the English lexical and grammatical competencies of middle school pupils (5th-grade), we have selected the following test control tasks (See Appendices).

To control and evaluate the knowledge and skills of the pupils, at the end of the pedagogical experiment, we held a kind of control competition between the experimental and control grades, for the implementation of which the test tasks were thought out. When comparing the results of observations of foreign language learning in English lessons, based on the results of the questionnaire, it is possible to draw certain conclusions, namely to express general assumptions about the possible most significant reasons for the failure of learning, in particular, English grammatical and lexical competence; about the diversity and complexity of these reasons, the irrationality of reducing them to only one line (pedagogical, psychological, physiological, etc.). Thus, we have received and analyzed sufficiently voluminous and versatile information regarding the effectiveness of the application of the system of test control exercises for the formation of foreign language grammatical and lexical competence in English language classes. The comparison of data obtained from different sources made it possible to reveal the comparative objectivity of the information and the conclusions drawn on its basis.

Research Procedures

As the results of the experiment showed, in those classes where the set of test tasks proposed above was used, the pupils had much more success in producing various speech units, felt more free and relaxed in the lesson, showed considerable interest and creativity and easily, with the help of various hints, solved various grammar and vocabulary tasks. While pupils whose
classes’ activity was mainly focused on language (not on natural speech), had some problems in using grammar and lexicon.

**Results**

Survey results of pupils of the 5-A, 5-B and 5-B grades of the secondary school are given below: To the questionnaire question “*What is your attitude towards English lessons?*” the vast majority of pupils – 27 people (57%) answered – “*Rather positive than negative*”, which indicates the interest of children in learning English. To the question of *what pupils prefer and not prefer in English lessons*, the answers were distributed as follows:

Table 2. **Poll results regarding the positive and negative features of the English language lesson**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>I like it Quantity (in %)</th>
<th>I do not like it Quantity (in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>16 (29 %)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>10 (18 %)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversation, talks</td>
<td>9 (16 %)</td>
<td>2 (4 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading and translation</td>
<td>5 (9 %)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>5 (9 %)</td>
<td>15 (27 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>1 (2 %)</td>
<td>11 (20 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make up dialogues</td>
<td>9 (16 %)</td>
<td>12 (21 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15 (27 %)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data presented in Table two, it should be concluded that the majority of pupils (27% and 21%) do not like listening and composing dialogues, that is, it is precisely in these two types of speech activity – speaking and listening – pupils experience certain difficulties, which, in our opinion, stems from the unfavorable psychological atmosphere that prevails in the lesson (the majority of pupils – 27%, do not like the teacher). In addition, as mentioned earlier, the lack of pupils’ motivation to study, including due to the teacher’s fault, is the main reason for the difficulties that arise in connection with pupils’ mastery of foreign language grammatical and lexical competence. To the questionnaire question “*What would you like to change in English lessons?*” 13 pupils (22%) answered that they like everything, 15 pupils (24%) suggest changing the teacher, 25 (36%) suggest increasing the number of English lessons, studying more new and interesting topics; listen to music, sing and watch videos more often. So, as we can see, pupils like live communication, saturated with interesting topics using various teaching aids such as situational and thematic drawings, pictures, tables, slides, films and videos, which is the basis for use of interactive technologies, namely for forming English skills in vocabulary and grammar, the intensification of which takes place in the process of speech activity (listening, speaking, reading, writing).

To the question “*Does the teacher pay enough attention to the use of dialogues in the lesson?*” positive and negative answers pupils were divided (50x50). To the question “*Do you like
working in pairs?” 26 pupils (37%) gave a positive answer, 11 pupils (20%) do not have a clear answer and only 10 pupils (19%) do not like it. As we can see, pupils are most attracted to tasks that require independence, and the ability to combine material depending on the needs of the speech situation. To the question “Does the teacher use visualization in the lesson and what kind?” the majority of pupils (60%) agree that visualization is used, but not often. To the question “Do the various prompts in the form of different props help you to create your own dialogues?” the majority of pupils (64%) think so. Thus, most pupils like a dialogic form of communication using various supports that activate their mental and speech activity and contribute to better activation of grammatical and lexical material in a relaxed atmosphere. To the question “Do you like independent types of work in class?” 16 pupils (29%) gave a comprehensive answer, 11 pupils (20%) did not like it very much and 14 pupils (26%) answered negatively. Therefore, most pupils like independent work in class, which requires a creative approach and pair and group work.

As a result of surveying a group of teacher respondents, we have identified activities that cause them certain problems. Among the most significant reasons, one can single out, firstly, the lack of available programs for studying and teaching pupils; secondly, imperfect mastery of the methods of studying and teaching pupils; thirdly, lack of didactic materials; fourthly, the lack of a clear system of exercises.

Discussion
Answering the main questions of the research, we came to the conclusion that control as a management tool provides constant feedback and has great potential for optimizing the educational process of learning English in secondary school in general and teaching grammar and vocabulary in particular. Taking into account the information from the Literature Review section, we tried to offer a set of exercises for examining the grammatical and lexical competencies of the five-grade pupils according to the stage of learning on different thematic data. The effectiveness of the checking of knowledge of five-grade pupils depends on compliance with the psychological and pedagogical requirements for its application: the gradual introduction of the test control is necessary, which will make it possible to psychologically prepare the pupils for it; one should start with simple tests, and after some time introduce more complex ones; it is necessary to observe organizational clarity in conducting test control (determining the time for completing the task, explaining the test tasks by the teacher, providing each pupil with a standard form for answers); mandatory analysis of test results.

Conclusion
The research aimed to investigate the features of the formed exercises for monitoring the formation of the English competences of pupils of the middle level (five grade). As a result of data processing, we had the opportunity to study the causes of shortcomings and difficulties, which allowed us to rely on the application of the proposed system of exercises and tasks of test control for the formation of English grammatical and lexical competence in pupils of the secondary
middle-level school to improve this element of the learning process not only on its subjective opinion but also on the information of the respondents.

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**References**


Appendices
Appendix A

TEST 1. HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Grammar: Present Simple Active, Present Continuous Active, Present Perfect Active, Past Simple Active, Past Continuous Active, modal verb ‘can’, adverbs of time, question words.

Level 1
1. Add an adverb to the sentence. Task (0) is an example.
0. I get up early in the morning, (always)
I always get up early in the morning. __________________________
1. My sister eats vegetables, (seldom) ______________________
2. We can answer our teacher’s questions, (usually) __________
3. They are sitting near the window, (at the moment) _________ (Ur, 2016, p. 237).

Level 2
2. Match the expression with the question word(s). There is one extra question word.

Task (0) is an example.
0. in France A) what
1. in the morning B) when
2. in English C) where
3. since Friday D) how

E) how long (0) – C (West, 2018, p.128).

Level 3
3. Write questions to the replies of the conversation. Task (0) is an example.
0. — Did you enjoy visiting the sports club? __________________________
— Yes, I did. It was great practice!
1. — Oh, a lot of our friends were present there.
2. — No, unfortunately Mike didn’t come.
3. — Yes, we are going to go there next weekend (Willis, 2014, p.127).

TEST 2. NATURE

Grammar: Present Simple Active, can.

Level 1
1. One of the proposed forms of work in the 5th grade is an excursion. It makes it possible to conduct observations, study bodies and natural phenomena in authentic or artificially created conditions. The content of the excursions should have a direct connection with the lexical and grammatical material covered in the previous lessons or be of an anticipatory nature. At the same time, it is advisable to use the results of observations obtained on excursions in the following lessons (in the form of quizzes) (Хулик, 2015, p. 78).

Taking into account the level of development of children and their age, we can choose such quizzes.

Topic: “In the world of animals”.
**Task 1.**

1. How to determine the age of a fish?
   “— with the help of a magnifying glass. By the number of rings on the scales. Each ring corresponds to one year”.

2. Can elephants swim?
   “— elephants not only swim well, but even dive into the water, exposing their trunk above its surface”.

3. Does the jumping grasshopper have ears?
   “— yes, it does; the hearing organ of the jumping grasshopper is located on the shins of the front pair of legs”.

4. There is a fish that shocks its prey with an electric spark. What kind of fish is this?
   “— electric ray. It lives in the seas”.

5. Which migratory birds spend most of their journey on foot?
   “— ruffed grouse, swamp partridge”.

6. Which birds have wings covered not with feathers, but with scales?
   “— penguins”.

7. When they talk about blue-blooded people, they mean the elite part of society. Unlike humans, animals do have blue blood. Name them.
   “These are spiders, scorpions, octopuses, crayfish”.

8. Which kind of animals fly?
   “— bats”.

9. Why does a spider not get entangled in its web?
   “— because it always runs only on smooth radial threads, not on sticky concentric ones”.

10. This interesting bird, when it molts, sheds its cover and stands near it for almost two weeks, waiting for a new one to appear. What kind of bird is this?
    “— Penguin”.

**Topic:** “About plants” (Harris, 2017, p. 34).

**Appendix B**

**TEST 1. NATURE AROUND US**

**Vocabulary:** plant, tree, berry, leaves.

**Level 1**

**Task 2.**

1. Name the tallest tree.
   “— Australian eucalyptus. Its height reaches sometimes up to 150 m”.

2. Where is the birthplace of watermelon?
   “— South Africa. Kalahari Desert”.

3. How many years does a spruce live?
   “— 80-120”.

4. Which plant catches insects?
“- sundew. It not only catches insects, but also eats them”.
5. Berries grow in the middle lane and contain a lot of vitamins. What are they called?
“— black currant and rose hip. They contain much more vitamins than lemon”.
6. Which tree has longer roots: spruce or pine?
“— a pine tree. It grows in dry places and is therefore forced to look for moisture at a great depth”.
7. What nuts grow underground?
“— Chinese nuts”.
8. Name the longest-lived tree.
“— sequoia. It lives up to 6,000-7,000 years.”
9. Does the tree grow in winter?
“— No, it doesn’t grow. It freezes in winter”.
10. The leaves of which trees turn red in autumn?
“— leaves of maple, aspen, mountain ash” (Giang, 2015, p. 15).

**Level 2**

4. Write about the famous inventors and businessmen using the ideas.

*Name* Soiciro Honda  
*Place of birth* Japan  
*Hobbies* motorbikes and automobile racing  
*Date of company foundation* 1939  
*Invention* he doubled the horsepower of the engine (CYL, 2016, p. 19).

**Appendix C**

**TEST 1. I EXPLORE THE WORLD**

**Task 1.**

It should be noted separately that the combination of individual work with pair and group one, collective forms of work based on partner interaction in English lessons on the topic “I explore the world” will contribute to the formation of critical thinking, creativity, development the ability to reason, analyze, compare, put questions and look for answers to them, identify cause-and-effect relationships, draw conclusions.

*Exercise in anticipation* “We are waiting for your SMS”.

This exercise can be used for any topic and type of lesson and will help students find answers to interesting questions and meet expectations from the lesson (BF, 2022, p. 67).

**Task 2.** Students write on colored stickers the questions they are most interested in on this topic and what they expect to learn about (Gubarieva, 2021, p. 12).

*Objective:* to teach students to construct questions correctly, express their opinion (while using the lexical and grammatical material studied in previous lessons).

*Educational goals:* students should learn to highlight the main points, demonstrate interest in the given topic.

A prominent place in the implementation of the test control belongs to **creative tasks** involving the application of knowledge in an unfamiliar situation (includes exercises with elements of search and **research activity**). Creative tasks do not have to be difficult (Savchenko, 2010, p. 3). The main thing is to create a relaxed atmosphere, get to know each other and one’s own abilities. At the same time, this type of activity, provided it is thought out, can have sufficient cognitive value, become a source of useful information for schoolchildren. Children of different middle ages enjoy this kind of creative tasks.

**TEST 2**

**Task 3.**

“— to invent advertisements of unnecessary things”;

“— to create a map of the institution (region, Ukraine) on the topic: “They need our help here”;

“— to film the video clip “The Family of the Future”;

“— to make an ecological crossword puzzle”;

“— to develop the questionnaire “Free time of the child of the third millennium”; 

“— to depict (come up, to show a continuation of) a famous sculpture or painting (“Hunters at a halt”);”

“— come up with 10 words with one letter and compose a story in such a way that all of them start with these words. Act out the story”;

“— come up with various options for solving a conflict situation on stage (for example, a boy and a girl are friends. They are annoyed. What should they do?) It is suggested to give at least three options for solving”;

“— come up with and depict a scene from the life of a literary hero (other participants guess the name of the hero, name the book, its author)” (Giang3, 2015, p. 49).

We must emphasize that most creative tasks require a mandatory summary after completing them. This includes organizing an exhibition of creative works, conducting questionnaires, exchanging gifts, composing collective letters, messages, etc.

**TEST 3**

**Task 4.**

Life skills development exercise “*Game – read the SMS*”. This game is about learning the components of physical health monitoring (vocabulary memorization control), but it can be adapted to learn new topics about home security (Giang1, 2015).

**Task 5.**

Create groups of 3-4 students each;

Each group receives tapes with the task of reading the name of the subjective and objective physical component of health;

Give students the opportunity to guess, discuss the content of the monitoring component;
Each group presents its work.
Task tapes.
♥ GTHSTREN
♥ BEINGWELL
♥ ENCYEFFICI
♥ EEDSPE
♥ ERCHE
♥ BILITYFLEXI
♥ RANCEENDU (Giang2, 2015, p. 50).

Aim: To teach students to determine the monitoring of objective and subjective indicators of the physical component of health (with the help of new lexicon and grammatical structures).

Learning objectives: at the end of the lesson, students should be able to:
– to read SMS, determine the components of monitoring the physical component of health.
– to demonstrate the elements of monitoring the physical component of health.

Materials. Drawing of a mobile phone with a screen on which a tape is attached with letters, blank sheets, felt-tip pens (ibid).

**TEST 4**

Read the texts below. For questions (35-46) choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D).

Write your answers on the separate answer sheet.

**Kids Again**

“Do I know you?” Esther asked a man at the bar. It was the day before the weekend of our school reunion in Hague a town in north-eastern New York State. He was about Esther’s age, so she thought she (35) ______ to school with him. After discovering that the man at the bar was in fact a tourist who was in town for the first time, she asked the next candidate. “Who are you? Do I know you?” She kept asking one person after (36) ______ . Esther (37) ______ in 1965 and hadn’t seen many of her classmates in more than 40 years, so it was no surprise that she didn’t recognize most of them. The next morning, Esther, Linda, Jill and I sat at the registration desk in the town hall, built on the site where our old school (38) _______. As we sat, we talked about our (39) ______ pranks from back then, falling into the same giggling fits we (40) ______ for as children (West, 2018, p. 126).

Table 3. A School Reunion Weekend

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>A could go</td>
<td>B must have gone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>A another</td>
<td>B the second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>A graduated</td>
<td>B had graduated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>A was</td>
<td>B had been stood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>A childish</td>
<td>B child’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>A were known</td>
<td>B are being known</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

D might go
D others
D were graduated
D had stood
D childproof
D would be known
Book Review

The Literacy Approach to Teaching Foreign Languages

Author: Ana Halbach
Title of the Book: The Literacy Approach to Teaching Foreign Languages
Year of Publication: 2022
Publisher: Madrid: Palgrave Macmillan
Number of Pages: xix + 108 pp.

Foreign language teachers and researchers who specialize in content and language integrated learning (CLIL) sometimes lack a specific operational pedagogy capable of integrating both language instruction and content education. The book under review introduces a literacy approach that may assist these people in participating in this education.
A synopsis of the literacy approach can assist readers of this review in efficiently gaining a comprehensive understanding of the approach. Generally, the literacy approach is divided into two phases, which are respectively dedicated to developing two broad categories of skills: reception and production. The reception phase comprises three steps viz. understanding and enjoying, observing, and analyzing; the production phase comprises two steps viz. guided production and free production. To implement a literacy approach for teaching, the teachers will need to follow a backward design rationale (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) and considers first the expected students’ output for a social task, then evidence to prove that they have met that expectation, and finally activities and contents to scaffold their learning. A detailed explanation of how the approach works is provided below: 1) During the understanding and enjoying, instructors use pre-tasks to identify students’ potential barriers to understanding a text as well as to engage the students in the text; 2) During the observation, the students are asked to examine a text from both a textual and linguistic standpoint and to discuss how the text draws them into it; 3) During the analysis, instructors assist students in discovering the language qualities that distinguish the text as a skilled communication product; 4) During the guided production, the instructors guide the students in producing a text that is on par with the text they first enjoyed; 5) During the independent production, instructors continue to support students by guiding them to create drafts, edit drafts, and share drafts with peers, as well as guiding them to evaluate each other’s work and training them to be critical readers.

The book comprises seven chapters, which can be further divided into 3 sections. The first section (Chapters 1 and 2) introduces the theoretical underpinnings and characteristics of the literacy approach; the second section (Chapters 3 and 4) describes in detail how the approach is applied to designing a course; the third section (Chapters 5, 6 and 7) demonstrates the application of literacy approach in education reform using examples of course units, curricula, as well as how teachers overcome obstacles while implementing the approach. Readers of this book can thus choose to engage with theory or practice first. Those interested in the theoretical foundations of this approach can read the book in the normal order, paying special attention to the first section. Those interested in application can read the second section first to obtain the practical grasp of this approach, and then either return to the first section for a theoretical explanation of the approach or proceed to the third section for a more direct impression of the approach.

The literacy approach integrates the genre-based pedagogy (Rose & Martin, 2012) for literacy education and enhances this pedagogy in this application, which is a noteworthy theoretical contribution. Similar to genre-based pedagogy, the literacy approach focuses on systemic functional elemental genres that can be found in various social contexts and serve comparable purposes. For instance, “chronicles” is a type of elemental genre but can be found in both biographies and autobiographies (Martin & Rose, 2007; Halbach, 2020, p. 15). This is because literacy educators will need to guide their students through various types of texts to discover the characteristics of this genre. In addition, the literacy approach is comparable to the genre-based pedagogy in that they both begin with an explication of the text, then collaboratively construct the text with the students, and finally request the students to independently construct a text similar the model. The primary distinction between the two teaching strategies is that the genre-based pedagogy trains students to master a specific genre, whereas the literacy approach trains students to develop language-based critical thinking skills. Several characteristics of the literacy approach demonstrate this. First, in the literacy approach, text elements are selected based on the level of the students and the particular function this text can accomplish, indicating that the pedagogical focus is on literacy rather than text features. Second, in the literacy approach, the genre is not
limited to written texts, as it is in the genre-based approach. Since “enjoying” is identified as a factor in the first step of the literacy approach, the model text may be presented in audio-visual formats, which are more prevalent in modern communication and can pique students’ interest more readily. Third, according to the author, the literacy approach is not static as its teaching steps overlap in practice. For example, when beginning the first step of understanding and enjoying, students observe and analyze the features of the text. When analyzing the text, the students will observe how the text affects them. This flexibility allows teachers to better accommodate their students’ varying levels of cognitive development. The literacy approach thus demonstrates how the genre-based pedagogy can be modified to foster students’ critical thinking required for writing.

From a practical perspective, the literacy approach provides us with a viable strategy for satisfying our students’ new learning needs affected by social changes. According to Halbach (2022), modern media technology enables the students to acquire knowledge in a variety of ways, which may result in students losing interest in conventional education. Today’s students do not learn a foreign language solely from their teachers, but also from a variety of media. Teachers are thus neither input or explanation providers, nor models of good language use. In literacy education, teachers teach a foreign language as a tool for students to participate in global team and society and gain academic success, rather than an object of study. They need to develop students’ ability to acquire, create, connect and communicate in various types of contexts, as well as getting them engaged in cognitively challenging work that contributes to developing their thinking skills and learning strategies. Literacy approach is likely to provide us with an opportunity to adapt to this change by associating what we teach to what students can access outside of the classroom and by permitting more flexibility that can cater to students’ motivation. This is because the literacy approach enables us to utilize any online-accessible materials and decide on what to teach based on students’ observations and explanations of why the materials are engaging.

Despite its many admirable characteristics, this literacy approach is likely a starting point and can be developed further in subsequent studies and practice, which also prompts the following suggestions. First, further research into how literacy approaches can be implemented in tertiary contexts may be necessary. The present model is mostly focused on primary education, where school instructors may teach various subjects to the same class. However, when the gap between disciplines and language grows in tertiary education, language teachers can become confused about their responsibilities. Therefore, it will be useful to conduct research into the ways in which a literacy approach can bridge this gap. Second, in a literacy course, teachers may reinforce students’ genre awareness by reiterating various characteristics that define a genre. They can take this opportunity to scaffold their students’ cognitive development. This is especially important when the language course is integrated with disciplinary courses. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the language features of different levels of cognitive activities in order to ensure that teachers are aware of how to put these into practice. Finally, as Halbach (2022) suggests, it is necessary to investigate further what genres other disciplinary subjects can expect of students in order to know how to align literacy education with these subjects. As a result, the future may allow for the elucidation of a broader range of pathways of growth in disciplinary literacies, as there may not be an overarching framework for improving students’ literacy that can be applied to all kinds of disciplines.
published and are not under consideration for publication elsewhere.

References

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