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Contents

Towards a More Nuance Understanding of White Teachers of English Learners: Increasing Capacity and Capabilities

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Abstract—**Predicated on the idea that race, racialization, and racism are major factors that shape language teaching and learning, this paper draws on the second wave White teacher identity studies to argue for a more nuanced understandings on White monolingual teachers' racial identities by exploring their perspectives on English learners' (ELs') learning experiences by asking the following research questions: (1) From the EL teachers' perspectives, what contribute to EL's struggles in school? (2) What effects do the EL teachers' perspective have on ELs' school experiences? (3) Are there any consistencies or inconsistencies among the participants' perspectives and what do they mean? The findings report that tensions and contradictions arising from inconsistencies across the participants' perspectives as well as within each teacher's perspective reflect co-existence of race evasive and race conscious identities that in turn can serve as an important locus to transform their perspectives toward more equitable pedagogical practices for ELs.**

Index Terms—**race, race-evasive approach, race-visible approach, English learners, second wave white teacher identity**

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper draws on the second wave White teacher identity studies to argue for a more nuanced understanding on White monolingual teachers' racial identities by exploring their perspectives on English learners' (ELs') learning experiences. In the present time, the teaching force remains predominantly monolingual and White in the US as well as in other countries (Bergh, Denessen, Hornsta, Voeten, & Holland, 2010; Kang & Veitch, 2017). Research also establishes that the number of teachers in public schools who have adequate training to work with ELs are limited and teachers struggle meeting the needs of ELs (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005). Research further demonstrates that many White monolingual teachers lack disposition necessary to work productively with ELs in many countries. (Zhang & Pelttari, 2013).

Despite the fact that there is a clear and prominent racial gap between the students who are ELs and their teachers, and the field of teaching English to speakers of other language has not sufficiently addressed the idea of race and related concepts (Kubota & Lin, 2006). However, existing research studies demonstrate that racialization is inevitably salient in English language teaching (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Pennycook, 2001), and the identities of EL teachers are multilayered and cannot be examined without an eye toward race and language because the idea of race and racialization are factors that shape social and cultural dimensions of language teaching and learning (Motha, 2006; Taylor, 2006). Researchers who have explored the issues of teachers' race in English language teaching have argued that many White monolingual teachers of ELs embody Eurocentric values, unknowingly perpetuating the status quo and inequality already in place for ELs (Doorn & Schumm, 2013; Flores & Rosa, 2015; Motha; 2006; Taylor, 2006). Some have demonstrated the ways in which colorblind perspectives stemming from White privilege obscure issues of power consequently securing racial and linguistic hierarchies (Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006); thus, many also argued that there is an urgent need to support White teachers to disrupt their assumptions that can impair ELs and their academic achievement (Assaf, Garza, & Batt, 2010; Walker-Dalhouse, Sanders, & Dalhouse, 2009).

Similar research findings are also well known in the field of teacher education in regards to race. Several teacher education researchers who explored White teachers' racial identity reported the way that White teachers are color blind individuals who are in need of more self-reflexivity and intervention (Gay & Kirkland, 2003; McIntyre, 1997, 2002; Picower, 2009). One common coomitment that these research studies share is the commitment to more equitable pedagogical practices especially for students from racially diverse backgrounds. A predilection carried by these studies is that White teachers' acknowledging their racial bias and White privilege will lead to more just pedagogical practice (Lensmire et al., 2013).

Adopting and complexifying the previous critical Whiteness studies, second-wave White teacher identity scholars contend that, to move the discussion of race and racism forward in ways that leads to action that would ultimately advance more equal educational opportunities for students of color (Shim, 2018), we need more nuanced, nonessentializing, and complex understandings of White teachers' identity without reducing it solely to race-evasiveness or color-blindness (Jupp, Berry, & Lensmire, 2016; Jupp & Lensmire, 2016; Jupp & Slattery, 2010;

Lensmire, 2011, 2014). Recognizing that not all ELs are students of color and also recognizing there is a near avoidance of race in the language teaching and learning field because it is uncomfortable work (Kubota, 2002; Kubota & Lin, 2006), because majority of ELs in the US and other places in the world are from racially diverse backgrounds while their teachers are predominantly White, this study echoes the commitment of the second-wave White teacher identity research. This study is committed to the understanding that the idea of race, racialization and racism are inescapable topics that arise in teaching English worldwide and thus are necessary topics to explore in the field of English teaching (Kubota & Lin, 2006; Motha, 2006; Taylor, 2006).

To this end, closer attention is given to complexity five English as a second language (ESL) teachers' understanding of their ELs learning experience by asking the following research questions: (1) From the EL teachers' perspectives, what contribute to EL's struggles in school? (2) What are the effects these EL teachers' perspective on ELs' school experiences? (3) Are there any consistencies or inconsistencies among these teachers' perspectives and what do they mean?

One of the uniqueness of the study lies in the fact that the study focuses on a rural context in a mid- western US state. The dramatic increase in linguistic diversity is no longer pertains only to large metropolitan areas, and the growth has been much more prominent in less populated rural states. O'Neal, Ringler, and Rodriguez (2008) reported that "ELL students and their families tend to settle in geographical locations that are rural" (p. 6). Reed (2010) similarly stated that rural areas are experiencing a visible increase in linguistic and racial diversity in their student populations; therefore, schools in rural states are facing educational challenges in meeting the needs of diverse student populations, including ELs (Shim,2014).

One of the major factors that influence ELs' school experience is the beliefs of their teachers (Shim, 2014). Peregoy and Boyle (1997) showed that the beliefs and attitudes of teachers can affect what ELs learn and do not learn in their classrooms. Other researchers also noted that teachers' attitudes towards ELs shape how they interact with their ELs as well as their pedagogical decisions which ultimately impact ELs' academic achievement; and most of these studies have focused on how even well-intended teachers can hinder ELs' academic and social achievement if they have unexamined negative beliefs about ELs (Macnab & Payne, 2003; Rueda & Garcia, 1994; Pettit, 2011). Extending these arguments, this paper explores EL teachers' perspectives on the factors that contribute to ELs' academic challenges. The reason for this investigation is not to highlight the challenges. Rather, because ELs do face more linguistic limitation that can contribute to their academic challenges when compared to their native speaker of English counterparts, understanding the teachers' perspectives may provide a ground to reflect on what they can do to better support ELs' academic success. Following the commitment of the second-wave White teacher identity scholars, this study attends to the forces of historical and social racial inequality that speaks through the individual White teachers' perspectives but at the same time, the study is committed to understanding the participating teachers' perspectives as a complex, multidimensional and social-historical construction. The assumption implicit in this study is that these teachers' perspectives influence what they see as a productive pedagogy for ELs.

Drawing upon second-wave White teacher identity literature, the following section begins with a discussion of the conceptual framework that informs this study followed by a brief autobiographical sketch. Then in next section, the methodology is outlined proceeded by the findings and discussion sections. The final section offers the study conclusion and implication toward the implications of understanding White monolingual teachers' beliefs in more nuanced, complex and non-essentialized ways and what that means for more equitable educational practices for ELLs.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

Second-wave White Teacher Identity Studies

Extending the first-wave Whiteness and White privilege literature in which White teacher identity is presented as deficient and race-evasive (McIntyre, 1997, 2002; Sleeter,1993, 2002), Jupp and Slattery (2010) contended that the second-wave scholarship of White teacher identities must emphasize race-conscious identifications and "articulate identifications as process of self narrativization rather than essentializing identity state" (p. 455). According to Jupp, Berry, and Slattery (2016), existing understandings of White teacher identity focus on White teachers' insistence on erasing or evading group identities especially signifying historical oppression like race and instead emphasize individuals (race-evasive). Jupp et al. (2016) called for a shift from focusing essentialized White teacher identity solely based on race evasiveness to White teachers' identification creativity in Which White teachers' becoming is highlighted. For these authors, how White teachers are traditionally seen as deficient and color blind individuals in need of an intervention is counterproductive in moving the conversation on race and racism forward. Moreover, Jupp and Lensmire (2016) questioned and problematized the interventionist approach where researchers and teacher educators hold deficit views of White teachers as a homogeneous group who are unaware of the effects of race and racism. Relatedly, Lowenstein (2009) challenged essentialzed portrayal of White teachers and contended that, if teacher educators want teachers to view K-12 students who bring resources to their classrooms, "there is a need for a parallel conception of teacher candidates as active learners who bring resources to multicultural teacher education classrooms" (p. 163).

Relatedly, to allow the possibility of change and promote more equitable pedagogical practices, the second-wave White teacher identity scholars underscore the necessity of respecting teachers as authors of their own stories and regarding those teachers as learners who bring funds of knowledge and complex histories to the race related discussion

(Lowenstein, 2009). The second-wave White teacher identity scholars argue that the authors of previous White teacher identity studies seldom take into account the social context and relations within which White teachers are performing their racial identities. To this end, attending to social context and relations within which White teachers working with ELs are making sense of their students' learning experiences is the main purpose of this study. More specifically, the aim of this study is to honor the participating teachers as the authors of their own sense-making within their lived experiences while also pay close attention to the social context within which participants take up their racial identity while discussing their perspectives. The study also responds to Lensmire's (2014) call for researchers to "describe and theorize White identity and Whiteness in ways that avoid essentializing them, but that at the same time never lose sight of White privilege and a larger White supremacist context" (p. 3) which is consistent with the commitment in the field of English language teaching and learning to not essentialize ELs' racial identities. This study is grounded on the idea that "critical work on race does not only study its real manifestations ... it must critically understand how people imagine race in their daily lives (Leonardo, 2005, p. 404). Again, recognizing that not all ELs are racially diverse students, because the majority of ELs in the US and many other places in the world are students of color whereas the majority of teachers who teach them are White, the second-wave White teacher identity scholarship provides a useful frame of reference to investigate ways to increase capacities and capabilities of White teachers in supporting ELs' academic success.

III. METHODS

Setting

This study took its place in a small town in a mid-western US state. This English only state has population of about 9,300 residents, and it is a primarily rural ranching community. The state penitentiary is located in this town, and this town is also home of two coal mine factories which provide many employment opportunities. Hence, the town's population has become increasingly diverse which also led to the influx of ELs being doubled in public schools in this town since 1990s.

There are two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school in this town. A pull-out program for ELs whereby, during each school day, the ELs are taught English as a second language (ESL) during one to two hours designated hours and the rest of their day are the ELs are in mainstream classrooms. Currently, 26.6% of the total student population in this town is Hispanic, and Asians and Native Americans account for 4.1% (Shim & Shur, 2018). 11.8% of the total student population qualifies for ESL services, and more than 15% of the total student population lives in a home where one or both parents speak a language other than English as their first language (Wyoming Department of Education, 2017).

Participants

Two female elementary school ESL teachers, one female middle school ESL teacher, and a male and a female high school ESL teachers participated in this study. Each teacher's teaching experiences range from 3 to 8 years, and they all volunteered to participate in this study. All participants self-identified themselves as White Americans, aged 24 to 45, and they do not speak any other language other than English. All participating teaching have completed their ESL certifications. The following is a table of the participants' demographic data. All names are pseudonyms (Shim, 2014).

TABLE 1.
PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Name	School	Race	Language	Yrs. Of ESL Teaching	Age
Linda	Elementary	White	English	6	38
Mary	Elementary	White	English	3	24
Nancy	Middle	White	English	8	45
Karen	High	White	English	6	35
David	High	White	English	4	32

Data Sources

The findings reported in this study are based on 10 semi-structured individual interviews with the participating teachers. While not all interviews are directly quoted in this study, each participant engaged in two interviews with the researcher, and each interview lasted approximately 1-1.5 hours. Across the six months period all interviews were conducted, the aim of interviews was to elicit responses that would point to the main research question: From these EL teachers' perspectives, what contribute to EL's struggles in school? All interviews were recorded, and the researcher took careful and detailed notes. The recorded interviews were later transcribed by the researcher, and the notes were compared with the transcribed data in order to confirm consistency or contradictions.

Data Analysis

Throughout the data analysis, close attention to teachers' own stories was highlighted and thus, their stories were used as a main source of data. To identify and analyze the themes within individual as well as across the five participating teachers' stories and their own sense makings of the factors that contribute to ELs' struggles in their schools, ongoing open coding strategy of grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was adopted. The researcher looked for any consistency or inconsistency in the participants' stories.

Following the scholarship of the second-wave White teacher identity literature that it is crucially important to recognize the White privilege already in place in larger structures of society and schools at the same time understanding White teacher identity as multidimensional and complex, in this study, teachers' perpsectives on the contributing factors to ELs' struggles were viewed in part as a reproduction of White privilege but also as a possible site in which changes in the existing injustices for ELs can be imagined. In line with this thinking, the discussions of the findings below are organized into two broad themes—(1) teachers' perspectives that reflect race evasive perspectives, and (2) teachers' perspectives that reflect race conscious perspectives.

Inevitably, the researcher's particular perspectives and views influenced the data analysis which in turn influenced what was seen and not seen in terms of data categories. The discussion of own reaction to the participating teachers' responses are included at the end of the findings section. Also, the responses to the interviews pertain to the participating teachers' own perspectives, and therefore, the responses cannot be generalized. However, the findings from this study do illuminate the importance of attending to the complexity of White teachers' beliefs and perspectives about ELs academic challenges and what that means for more equitable educational opportunities for ELs.

IV. FINDINGS

Looking across the data, in each teacher's perspectives, there were many similar dynamics of importance for this study in each teachers' perspectives. The data showed contradictions and tensions across teachers' perspectives but also within each individual teacher's perspectives. Therefore, teachers' beliefs revealed that their perspectives about the factors that contribute to ELs' academic challenges cannot be simplified only to race-evasive and color-blind since there were many incidences where teachers' beliefs reflected race-consciousness. Thus, the findings reported here illuminate the general, yet important to acknowledge, the complexity of teachers' race identity and thus their beliefs, and how they can impact their pedagogical actions and decisions that influence ELs' academic growth especially given that this study predicated in previous research findings that English language teaching is not racially neutral and there is inseparability of Whiteness and ESL teaching and learning (Kubota & Lin; Motha, 2006).

Race Evasive Perspectives

The issues with using students' home language. All participating teachers stated that one of the main factors that contribute to ELs' struggles is the extensive use of students' home language at school and home. All five teachers believe that the frequent use of the home language delays the learning of English, the fluency in which they view as essential for ELs to succeed in their schools (Shim, 2014). All five teachers displayed the evidence of *epistemological racism* (Kubota, 2002; Kubota & Lin, 2006), practices that perpetuate the hegemony of Whiteness in which English is the only legitimate ways of knowing and learning. Linda stated:

I think that the biggest problem for ELs is their parents letting them speak Spanish at home all the time. The kids need to speak English and I focus on grammar with my ELs because that's what they need. I know it is the easy thing to do, and the nice thing to go "Oh, it's okay at home." But, how is talking to the kids in Spanish helping them? Unless your kids are having a meltdown, their parents need to at least try to speak English to them. I think that is the biggest obstacle because, without having these kids learn English, they cannot learn in school (Shim, 2014).

This teacher identifies ELs' parents and ELs' continual usage of Spanish in their homes as *the biggest problem*. In other words, this teacher does not take into a consideration the possibility that ELs' parents may not speak English, and more importantly, cannot to recognize the value of maintaining ELs' first language in their second language learning (e.g., Cummins, 2000). Such perspectives reflect the characteristics of White privilege in which these teachers are reproducing the larger structural racial and linguistic hierarchy where English is privileged and seen as academically valuable. Mary similarly noted:

The parents, teachers, and ELs must realize the importance of being competent in English and not use so much Spanish. Otherwise, the students will be missing out on all sorts of opportunities. When you go to university, they are not going to translate for you. It's not like "Oh, I am sorry you don't speak English, and here is a Spanish version of biology. We will cater for all your needs." That's just not going to happen. If you work at McDonalds, the customers are not going to speak Spanish to you. You know, if I was French, I am not going to order the La Big Mac. I am going to order the Big Mac and if you don't know what that is, that's tough. Thinking that you can speak your home language in a different country is what's stunting their growth all around (Shim & Bentahar, 2016).

Reflecting the construct of epistemological racism, this teacher argues students must speak only English to be successful in American society, thus seeing English as the only legitimate knowledge/language. Mary does not consider a multilingual society where many different languages are used and valued. Karen also stated:

I respect my students' home language, and I think it is great that their parents speak Spanish to them at home. I am all about that. However, I believe that the students who are not proficient in English should not be speaking Spanish at school. The reason is not because I don't respect students' home language but I think using Spanish delays the learning of English, and students are even more confused in learning a new language. To help my students, I usually throw a pizza party for them on Fridays if they spoke no Spanish during class on a given week.

David similarly noted:

In my teaching, I do not usually make reference to the home language of the ELs I have in class, and I also do not allow my students to speak in their home language in class. I offer practical advice to the ELs who wish to maintain

their home language, but allowing students to speak in their home language at school does not help the students learn English (Shim, 2014)

The two high school teachers quoted above expressed their agreement about the importance of respecting students' home language. However, they both expressed that the use of students' home language hinders the learning of a second language and therefore, English should be the only means for learning in schools. Both of these teachers' viewpoints reflect that their perspectives directly influence their classroom management strategies, impacting what they do or do not do in class. For example, Karen celebrates with students when they do not speak Spanish in class by having a pizza party. On the other hand, *not* having a pizza party could easily be perceived by students as punishment for speaking their home language in class (Shim, 2014).

The teachers' attitudes discussed show that the use of students' home language is considered as an onstable to students' learning and to their learning English in particular which again confirms their embodiment of epistemological racism. However, research evidences that that ELs being able to think and utilize their first language produces a positive effect on individual learning (De Angelis & Dewaele, 2009). In summary, the participating teachers view ELs' incompetency in English as the major limiting factor in their academic achievement, which aligns with the description of epistemological racism in which White privilege is inherently intertwined with what counts as academically valuable and rigorous (Kubota, 2002; Kubota & Lin, 2006). In other words, English has been and continues to be a lingua franca in the world, and these teachers believe the competency in English is the deciding factor in becoming successful in school. What must be highlighted here is that there is not a single empirical evidence showing that forcing ELs to use only English while banning their first language is conducive in any way for ELs' social, emotional, and academic success.

EL Parents' Value for Education. Teachers also commented that another factory that contributes to ELs' struggles is that their parents do not value in their children's education Linda stated:

I ask myself, "Do the parents value education or not?" I think in the back of their minds, they are thinking that they are eventually going back to their country and so they think "why waste our time?" When parents do not value education, how can you expect their children to value education?

Nancy also noted:

EL students are very bright and their parents are also very intelligent. I mean, what the parents do is a sign of intelligence—just to pick up their things and move to another country for a betterment of their lives. I don't think I can just do that. The problem is the parents don't believe in themselves and in their children that they can be successful.

David noted likewise:

Students can't learn when they are not in class, and many ELLs often miss class. I don't think parents see how crucial coming to school is. They just let their children stay home. Without parents' support and beliefs that education is important, their children cannot succeed in school (Shim, 2014).

Again, the teachers see individual parents' and students' attitudes towards education as the main factor contributing to ELs' struggles in their schools. However, the participating teachers' assumption about EL parents' inability to recognize the value of education is supported by any evidence, therefore, their assumption is a mere speculation. No teacher was actually able to state that EL parents indicated to the teachers that they do not value their children's education. Displaying the epistemological racism, these teachers are making assumption about EL parents' dedication to their children's education equating the non-native speakers of English as less invested in Education while accepting the conditions of school as neutral. Thus, the participating teachers are not questioning the structures of school as a possible reason for ELs' struggles in schools. Instead, the teachers are pointing the problems to EL parents.

Race Conscious Perspectives

Thus far as shown above, the participating teachers' perspectives and attitudes reflect their race-evasive identity that is rooted in White privilege. In this section, however, I turn to the teachers' views that are inconsistent and contradictory from the ones shown above. For second-wave scholarship of White teacher identity, White teachers' identity just like those of everyone else's is constituted in and through multiple and often intense entanglements within various social structures (Jupp et al., 2016; Jupp & Lensmire, 2016; Lensmire, 2011, 2014). Such premise explains why some inconsistencies and contradictions within and across the participating teachers arose. Put differently, while teachers' perspectives shown above stem more from the race evasive identity, those presented below seem to stem more from *race conscious* identity which demonstrate that these teachers identities are not stable and monolithic, instead they are constituted in and through different life experiences and thus their identities and attitudes are in the process of *becoming. In other words,* each individual teacher's perspectives are inevitably linked her/his socialization histories which are embodied within their identities. Hence, the fact that the teachers' comments are inconsistent and contradictory is not surprising since the social contexts and teachers' experiences that shape each teacher's racial identity may coalesce but also collide.

Misalignment between students' and school cultures. Teachers commented in their interviews that, in their view, the issue of mismatch between ELs' home cultures and the culture of schools is a factor contributing to ELs' struggles. Linda stated:

Have you even been invited to a Thanksgiving dinner to a family who's from a different culture? You know how awkward that experience is even if they are from the US and they all speak English. I experienced this when I was in

college. Even if you know how to use their utensils and stuff, being in a place where the culture you are used to isn't the same as theirs is simply very uncomfortable. I think this is how the ELLs in my school feel every day (Shim, 2014).

Here, Linda is drawing on her personal experience during her college to imagine the difficulty of cultural gap ELs must be facing. Karen commented in a similar manner:

I think the way the school here is set up is very foreign to ELs. There are White students who know what to do, but most ELs have no idea, and schools can be a horror experience for them. ELs might feel that the school here isn't meant for them. Some people say that ELs should participate in more extracurricular activities, but if I feel I am an outsider in my class and when I am barely getting by, why would I want to join a basketball team? I think schools have unreasonable expectations for them, and the goal should be to re-think about what we are doing, so that the students are more comfortable (Shim, 2014).

Karen is drawing her own schooling experience as a teacher. Recall that these are the same teachers who previously expressed they believe that ELs should not speak their home language in class and that allowing the students to speak their home language at home and school can limit ELs learning. Nevertheless, here, those same teachers stated that they perceive a misalignment or mismatch between the school and students' cultures is a difficulty for ELs. These teachers are locating the reasons for ELs struggles in their schools outside of ELs and their parents' responsibility and their lack of ability. Hence, these teachers' points of views are vastly different from their earlier race evasive stance. Rather, the focus is on school and teachers, emphasizing the necessity of reflecting on how and why school is or is not accommodating ELs which shows these teachers' race conscious stances.

Unqualified teachers. The participating teachers also felt unqualified teachers are another factor adversely affecting ELs' school experiences. Nancy commented:

We have too few teachers who know what to do with ELLs. When I was going through my ESL certificate program, I learned how a very few teacher education programs actually prepare their pre-service teachers to work with ELLs, and most, if not all, teachers I work with in this schools have no idea how to help ELs.

David also expressed:

One of the problems I see is that we don't have enough qualified teachers who can assist ELs. Most teachers have no clue about what it's like to be in a new country and not being able to speak the host language. We need more professional developments for all teachers (Shim, 2014).

Recall again that these are the teachers who believe the problems associated with ELs' struggles in their schools located mostly in their use of their first language and their parents' not valuing their children's education. However, consistent with the teachers' race conscious perspectives discussed in the section immediately above, these teachers are now locating the issue with school structure and considering teachers are a part of school structure. They are not locating the reasons for ELs' struggles in students and their parents. Recognizing what contribute to individual racial identities are not easy to trace back directly and exactly, it appears that the race conscious identities that these teachers are speaking from in this section are acquired from their social experiences such as their experiences in their college as well as their later experiences as teachers in schools and education system.

My Own Response to Teachers' Responses

Recognizing the centrality of race in conducting our ESL/EFL research (Lee & Simon-Maeda, 2006), included in this findings section is my own response to the participants' perspectives. I learned that engaging in this research project with White monolingual teachers of ELs is as much about the participants' reflecting on their perspectives and *becoming* as it is about the my own learning and *becoming*. Going into this project, my primary focus was on documenting and describing the evidences that show the participant' reinforcement of Whiteness in their everyday work of working with ELs, and my initial analyses were guided by such focus. Informed by the conceptual framework of the study, as I began paying much closer attention to the participants' experiences and stories, I also began to see how I too conceptualized my participants as deficient rather than active participants. I found myself wanting to intervene and correct the responses of participants during the interviews. However, I also realized that my attempt to change the participants' thinking was creating tension and resistance on the part of the participants and I should no longer assume that my knowledge and relationship with the participants was accurate. In other words, I needed to adopt the role of an unknowing researcher and pay closer attention to and value the participants' own accounts about their experiences and perspectives. Clearly, doing so was not without a challenge, and I believe that my struggle was due to two major reason. First, my internalized *institutionalized knowledge* restricted my focus on White teachers' race-evasive identities, whereby I saw them as subjects lacking race awareness (Jupp et al., 2016). Second, psychoanalytically speaking (Britzman, 2011), as a female teacher educator of Color, I have experienced gender and racial oppression throughout my life. Hence, I had to work against my own feelings of deficiency in order to overcome the tendency to project such feelings on the participants. Indeed, it took conscious and continuous efforts throughout the project to highlight (as oppose to undermine) participants' race conscious perspectives. I began to realize that what I initially saw as the participants' race-evasive reactions and contradictory statements are a very important part of their racial identities as they are grappling to come to grips with their own understandings of language issues that are inherently intertwined with their racial identities; therefore, they must not be dismissed solely as race evasive and color blind.

V. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The inability of most US schools and other places in the world to meet the academic needs of ELs is a major concern (Smith, Coggins, & Cardosi, 2008), and more equitable educational opportunities for ELs are indeed a necessity. Based on previous research findings, this study assumed that race, racialization, and racism are major factors that shape language teaching and learning (Kubota & Lin, 2006; Motha; 2006). For second-wave White teacher identity scholars, when a goal is to move the discuss of race and racism forward toward more equitable pedagogical practices and actions, one must understand the complexities of the identities of White teachers who make up the majority of teaching force (Jupp et al., 2016; Jupp & Lensmire, 2016). The findings revealed several incidences in which the participants enacted Whiteness while also actively constructing knowledge about race conscious perspectives.

Second-wave White teacher identity studies call for the importance of acknowledging the larger structural inequality in place, the teachers' insistence on their students using only English in class and assuming that their viewpoints benefits ELs is not surprising, given that an English-only policy has historically dominated the educational policy in the United States (Crawford, 1992). Thus, such ideology is most likely a durable part of individual teacher's *epistemological racism* (Kubota, 2002; Kubota & Lin, 2006). However, educators must remember that according to empirical evidence, the approach in which English-only is imposed contributes adversely to ELs' academic, social, and emotional growth, even when these teachers have good intention (Cummins, 2000). At the same time, these same teachers who acknowledged the misalignment between school and students' culture as a problem felt that the school and teachers should find ways to better accommodate ELs, which for many scholars in the field of education is a better way to support students' academic success and to work against inequality (Gonzales, Moll & Amanti, 2005). Considering the demonstrated inconsistencies and contradictories in the participating teachers' perspectives teachers in this study, there are a few important implications drawn with respect to better meeting the needs of ELs in their school experiences. The implications presented here are general and suggestive, rather than confirmatory.

First, confirming the existing studies and the conceptual framework of this study, the participating teachers' perspectives revealed in this study are not autonomous but a reflective of the larger social structures and conditions in which their racial identities are formed. Such finding also shows why it is very difficult to dislodge the racial beliefs that are deeply internalized by individuals. As demonstrated in the teachers' comments in this study, the dispositions within individual's race evasive identities are pervasive, and these forces spoke durably and powerfully through each individual. Though not explicitly evidenced, the teachers' judgments against ELs' English proficiency levels and the legitimization of their perspectives will almost certainly impact their teaching, which shows how a dimension reinforcement of White privilege gets reproduced in local contexts regardless of an individual teacher's otherwise intention (Shim, 2014). In other words, while these teachers are not unsupportive of ELs' learning, but because the internalized and often unrecognized dispositions within their White race evasive identities, their race evasive perspectives present themselves as social reality (Omi & Winant, 1994). Such findings also echoed the previous researching findings that English language teaching and learning are inevitably racialized and cannot be viewed as neutral (Taylor, 2006). Thus, teachers who are committed to ELs' academic success should recognize that the enduring dispositions in their racial identities may hiner what teachers do to actually support ELs' success in schools. Also, although individual change is possible, working against one's socialization histories to actually change one's perspectives and attitudes should not be viewed as a simple and one-time process.

Second, teachers' responses not only reflected their race evasive identities but also race conscious identities that are not entirely determined by the social structure under which it was initially formed. More specifically, the contradictions in the teachers' responses in this study reflect how the experiences such as in their college years or in the work environment that these teachers encountered later in life can create a space of change in their thinking. In such a potential space of change, the teachers' race evasive identities that usually incline them to unquestionably take the current school structure as natural, and thus blame ELs and their parents for their low academic achievement, may be altered. Here, Ladson-Billings' (2006) assertion that "the problem teachers confront is believing that successful teaching" is primarily about "what to do" when in actuality "the problem is rooted in how we think about the social context, about the students, about the curriculum and about instruction" (p. 30) seems to resonate powerfully in considering the necessity of recognizing then shifting teachers' perspectives that may be counterproductive to ELs' school experiences. Hence, while acknowledging that teachers are always situated within social structures such that no theory can extract individuals from those conditions of possibility and that "no theory is capable of showing all the underlying reasons for our thinking," (Shim, 2014) it is necessary to recognize teachers' race evasive identities that may alienate ELs while also attending to the teachers' race conscious identities that question the perspectives that are rooted in the larger structurings of inequality and inequity. In this regard, the incidences of contradictions within and across each teacher's beliefs must not be taken for granted but must be attended to as an extremely important locus of individual, institutional, and social change—these incidences of contradiction within and across teachers are where race evasive and race conscious identities co-exist. Hence, attending to teachers' stories imperative because doing so can reveal the complexities of their race identities as it did in this study.

What surfaced from the findings thus far is also a practical implication since that the experiences that teachers' encounter do have an impact on how they think about their EL students. Offering frequent training programs that help inform the teachers about the value of ELs' first language and why its continued use is an asset for ELs, particularly for the achievement of long-term academic and emotional benefits, may alter teachers' race-evasive perspectives (Shim,

2014). Furthermore, such initiative would encourage teachers to reflect and reevaluate their perspectives, which, in turn, may shift their pedagogical practices for ELs in more productive ways. Teachers would also benefit from various training on how to students who speak more than one language more productively. The findings reported in this study demonstrate that most teachers share the view that students' first language background should be banned in classrooms and if possible, at homes. However, if the teachers were more knowledgeable about what research shows about working with multilingual students, they would likely be less inclined to prohibit the use of ELs' first language in classes and schools.

Many research studies have been focusing on how White teachers unintentionally perpetuate the system of domination in their teaching practices (Shim, 2014). Substantial attention has also been devoted to the question of how teachers of color can contribute to more equitable educational practices in working with students from various racial and linguistic backgrounds (Foley, Levinson, and Hurtig, 2000-2001). While recognizing that no teacher can escape our social and historical backgrounds, by utilizing second wave White teacher identity scholarship, this study attempted to show how White American monolingual ESL teachers can increase their capacities and capabilities by potentially changing their beliefs that can contribute significantly in ELs academic achievement. Recalling the significant gap between the English-speaking White teacher population and the EL student population in the US as well as other nations in the world, as well as the achievement gap between ELs and non-ELLs, the findings of this study add yet another angle from which to understand the challenges ELs face in school and how teachers' assumptions may inhibit or contribute to ELs' learnings (Shim, 2014).

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English for Occupational Purposes: Transference, Expectations and Failures

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Abstract—**People live in a competitive society, searching for technical and professional expertise throughout their lifetimes. With the expansion of ICT and distance learning[1], educational approaches are no longer restricted to formal education; rather learners are urged to acquire new skills and to obtain official and professional recognition of these competences. The general framework of our proposal is the result of a project[2], aimed at designing, testing, and disseminating Online/Multimedia English for Occupational Purposes courses (EOP), to recognize linguistic competence in professional environments(commerce and tourism). Our twofold study aims: (1) to research the transference rate and the factors that make EOP courses a successful proposal, and; (2) to gain insights into the main expectations, outcomes and failures of such courses. To achieve these objectives, twelve national, non-formal teaching enterprises delivering the courses were contacted, and questionnaires and interviews were created. The results show satisfaction with the courses and point to the lack of linguistic policies and the consequent influence on professional achievements.**

Index Terms—**EOP courses, online/multimedia, level recognition, professional achievements**

I. INTRODUCTION

The history of humankind has always been marked by events that alter the status quo enabling changes. Natural phenomena, wars or economic crisis give rise to movements in the existing paradigms which consequently affect all segments of society, changing habits and minds (World Economic Forum, 2014).

One of the most striking phenomena of the last decades of the 20th Century, and still present today, has been the development and implementation of technology in all human areas. The presence of technology and the world economic crisis facilitated the appearance of new demands in the labor market, emphasizing the acquisition of new competences and the constant update of theoretical and practical knowledge[3]. Work has become something that can be looked for and offered on a global scale, making it necessary to master newer competences, such as the acquisition of foreign languages as a basic skill to get a job and be mobile in a globalized market (Castiglione D., & Longman, C. 2008). However, language policy involves a great deal of regulations and norms, being one of the main concerns the recognition of linguistic autonomy (Patten, 2001).

The EU defends the acquisition of at least two foreign languages (Commission of the European Communities, 2003) and aims to provide citizens with tools to develop linguistic skills at three levels (individual, social and cultural) for a better cognitive development, intercultural awareness and understanding of identity and roots. So, *language competences are part of the core of skills that every citizen needs for training, employment, cultural exchange and personal fulfillment; language learning is a lifelong activity* (Commission of the European Communities, 2003, p 7). However, knowing languages and doing a job well are no guarantee of success. In economically troubled times, versatility, adaptation and updating skills are necessary to thrive in a society marked by constant change. In recognition of this, the Council of Lisbon (Lisbon, 2000) set the bases to create eEurope, with the objective of developing access to Internet and the creation of a research and innovation area. A prime consequence of those actions was the eLearning Programme (Council of Lisbon, 2002) from which the so-called concept of *digital literacy* emerged. These new educational settings have proved to be a cost-effective solution because educational training can be achieved through e-learning platforms, omitting the necessity for workers to leave their jobs in order to master newer skills, a continuous

phenomenon developed throughout citizen ́s lifetime. Since a great deal of non-formal institutions are in charge of providing occupational and professional training in Spain, our proposal is based on the importance of recognizing these professional competences in the field of Languages for Occupational Purposes (EOP), and their contribution to the social change initiated in a wide range of professions.

Our study is the result of a research project supported and funded by the Regional Government of Extremadura[4], developed through the research consortium between GExCALL[5] research group and the multimedia software company FMI (Interactive Multimedia Training). The result from this partnership was the design and transferability of multimedia/online EOP courses, an innovative proposal aimed at achieving recognition in English for occupational purposes in the fields of tourism and commerce, two of the most expanding economic sectors in this region (Extremadura), Spain and in a great deal of other countries.

Through the survey of the current linguistic needs in the aforementioned professional fields and the contextualization of the whole project, the study reported in this article analyzes the transference rate of the EOP multimedia/online courses, and gains insight into the factors which may have fulfilled users' expectations and those which may have caused the initiative to fail. Implications from the lack of consensus in establishing official certification forprofessional achievements will be discussed towards the end of the article.

II. EOP AND LANGUAGE COMPETENCE AT THE WORKPLACE

A. Contextualization

Dudley-Evans & St. John (1998) describe the coexistence of two main branches within ESP: English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Occupational Purposes (EOP). The first one has to do with technical and specialized subjects taught during academic careers, whereas the second deals with courses specifically designed to help professionals evolve in their work and to facilitate learning of linguistic skills connected with their job needs. Alcaraz (2000), on the other hand, based on these categories and on Widdowson's belief (Widdowson, 1983) that all linguistic uses are specific, coins the acronym IPA (*Ingl és Profesional y Acad émico* – Professional and Academic English), which includes, beyond English for Academic and Professional Purposes, the language used in scientific research and technological development, EST (*English for Science and Technology*). Though it is not easy to categorize ESP branches, authors seem to agree that each profession demands knowledge on concrete aspects and specific language according to the area of job expertise (Bhatia, 2016).

The need for acquiring linguistic competences in professional settings has been discussed in studies devoted to teaching languages for occupational purposes. Kankaanranta & Louhiala-Salminen(2010), Evans (2010) and Hellekjær & Fairway (2015) analyzed the use of English in international business interactions and came to the conclusion that many of the users used the *lingua franca* more than their mother tongue, and that knowing the other part's context (cultural and corporate) would help communication succeed. Cutting (2012) notes that in spite of the lack of English language proficiency requirements for airport staff, there exists a growing interest in making these professionals cope with ordinary and uncommon situations that require, most of the time, the acquisition of specific terms and the development of communicative strategies. Peters & Fern ández (2013) state that workers have specific and particular lexical and linguistic needs in their daily work contexts, and that these demands can be successfully accomplished under appropriate training conditions (Smart & Brown, 2002). Lam, Cheng & Kong (2014) find that nowadays workplaces have turned mobile, demanding better communication and interaction skills from users. According to these authors, communicative inefficacy can also lead to productivity loss. In this context, and considering the need for effective proposals covering the wide area of English for Occupational Purposes, it is also important that EOP learning programs are officially recognized, which proves difficult since how or what the requisites are still remain in question for educational institutions and users (Tajuddin, 2015).

National reports on linguistic demands for each job family, covered in the following section, have come from the European level. These were the identification of professional requisites from the Lisbon (Council of Lisbon, 2000) and Barcelona (Barcelona European Council, 2002) Councils, and the establishment of the Competence and Qualifications Framework, regulations which gave rise to a growing discussion about educational and occupational learning needs. Furthermore, finding solutions to improve young adults' and unemployed workers' ability to be hired has been set as a priority in most government employability agendas. This job search demands knowledge, skill updating and official recognition for skills and it is on this last need that our proposal is based. The complexity and constraints of language learning policies (Weinstock, 2014) covers a great deal of fields, including status, corpus, acquisition, and recognition, among others. The lack of qualifications, especially felt in some technical jobs and those related to language demands, has its origin in factors such as population aging, language barriers, the shortage of ICT expertise and a straightforward policy on professional competence certification. Once formative deficiencies have been identified and partially

overcome, the need for official recognition of such competences in professional contexts emerge. Official certification is urgently needed in occupational and vocational education in order to transfer professional skills and aptitudes when applying for jobs demanding such skills. Thus, to promote mobility, a European VET area was proposed with the objective of certifying competences all over Europe(Vocational Education and Training, 2006 p. 4).The OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2007) described a set of features that should be kept in mind when trying to create an efficient qualification and certification system: *increase flexibility and responsiveness; motivate young people to learn; link education and work; facilitate open access to qualifications; diversify assessment processes; make qualifications progressive; make them more transparent; facilitate review of funding and increase efficiency, and; lead to improvements in the way the system is managed* (Qualifications Systems, 2007, p 12-13).

Based on these characteristics, the creation of NQFs (National Qualification Frameworks)helped to establish qualifications levels, and may be said to function as an intermediary between recognizing students' and workers' competences and their homologation by a more general body, the European Qualification Framework (EQF). In this context, the need to certify knowledge in foreign languages was regulated by the Council of Europe under the development of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), published by Cambridge University Press in 2001. The CEFR arose from the necessity of establishing a coherent evaluation and certification system that measured the acquisition of language skills and minimized the diversity of results used all over Europe (North, 2007).

Nowadays most official general language courses are based on these certification criteria (A1-C2 levels).Despite this fact, it is not easy to get recognition based on national CEFR standards when going abroad. The problem is due to the general framework conveyed by the CEFR, in which level descriptors and competences can be interpreted with a certain degree of flexibility. Hopefully in a near future a more fixed certification will be achieved and minor differences across countries will be minimized. However, the lack of recognized certification in ESP (except for some specific areas such as Business English or English for Tourism) and in EOP remains unsolved, a situation which justifies our research.

B. Competence Qualification and Professional Achievements in Spain

The establishment of policies leading to official recognition of professional competences, as recommended by both European guidelines (seen in the previous section) and national regulations, sets the goal of our study. The foundation of our proposal is primarily based on the analysis of national documents showing the competences in demand within a great deal of professional fields in Spain: official reports describing the professional qualification included in the general framework of INCUAL (National Qualifications Institute, 2014) and the National Training Plan – *Plan Nacional de Formación e Insercción Profesional* (Plan FIP,1993-2007),and Professional Training Plan for Employment from 2008, documents which describe the level of language competence to achieve at work and identify formative deficiencies in professional families regarding foreign languages and other specific and cross-curricular professional competences, both in formal and non-formal education (2002). In this sense, how national language agencies and services influence language practices have proved to be effective (Edwards, 2011) though key areas on linguistic policies remain uncovered.

With this in mind, the linguistic requirements of all the jobs included in the professional families of tourism and commerce were analyzed, two leading sectors at a regional (Extremadura) and national (Spain) level with an increasing number of visitors.

According to the National Training Plan, Table 1 shows the linguistic needs in commerce-related professions (shop assistant, sales management, cashier, shop manager and sales agent). The columns in blue describe the linguistic levels demanded by each profession.

TABLE 1
LINGUISTIC NEEDS IN THE COMMERCE PROFESSIONAL FAMILY (2002:184)

As seen in Table 1, a B2 level of English is advised for all jobs related to commerce (except cashier, for which a B1level is recommended). This higher language level demand could be justified by the need these professionals have to continuously interact with clients. On the other hand, we can see that only *shop assistant* and *technical sales agent* present linguistic demands in other languages different from English(German and French), indicating that English dominates communicative interactions between workers and clients.

To establish the linguistic needs in this sector, we also needed to know which language competences should be

included in the design of occupational courses intended for these professionals. Thus, professional qualifications in the field of *commerce and marketing* were analyzed from the specifications ruled by the National Qualification Institute (*INCUAL*, Royal Decree, 1999).

Professional qualifications for sales activities comprise four general units with competences related to interaction with clients in different types of commercial facilities, on their own, or in small/medium enterprises. From all the relevant jobs in commerce, we chose for our proposal shop assistant, a profession for which the occupational module *Professional English for Commercial Activities* is proposed in *INCUAL*. In terms of productive sectors, these professionals will presumably work at firms or associations, in the public or private domain, dealing with the public in sales and post-sales situations. Consequently, a module called *Professional English for Commercial Activities* is also recommended by the National Qualifications Institute.

On the other hand, the tourism industry is directly linked to economic cycles, being affected by crisis, and flourishing in times of economic prosperity. In most tourism-related jobs, mobility is evidenced in the existence of an increasing number of foreign employees in restaurants and bars, as well as Spanish professionals in other European countries. Knowing foreign languages is consequently needed in order to advance in their jobs. As a matter of fact, tourism sector professions demand mastering English (oral and written) to effectively interact with the public, and may need other foreign languages as well. Thus, and based on the National Training Plan, waiters/waitresses (table2), cover 54% of job vacancies and English is the language these professionals should know by achieving, at least, an A2 level of linguistic proficiency (Plan FIP, 2002:149). So, by analyzing Table 2, we can see that in waiter-related positions, an A2 level has the purpose of facilitating communication and interaction with clients, also being necessary the knowledge of other foreign languages.

TABLE 2
LINGUISTIC NEEDS IN THE TOURISM PROFESSIONAL FAMILY (2002:189)

English is also a demand in tourism based on INCUAL specifications. After analyzing two professional qualifications(restaurant and bar service), we see that one of the competence units is communicating in English as an independent user, in restaurant service, and one of the formative modules is Professional English for Restaurant Service. We confirm that teaching specific English, based on practical and real contexts and situations is gaining more importance nowadays.

C. Project Overview: Creation of Online/Multimedia Language Courses for Professional Qualifications and Official Recognition

Our research, developed under the auspices of a research project on teaching innovation and technological transfer to productive and educational sectors, is based on the creation of language courses for occupational purposes online (Moodle) and with multimedia support, following the aforementioned European/national guidelines. According to the general scope of the project, the EOP courses were designed in four languages (English, French, Portuguese and Italian), covering two occupational areas (commerce and tourism), due to the interest for Spain and Extremadura –the Autonomous Region where the research is conducted and funded.

Despite the levels advised by the analyzed documents, we decided to base our proposal on levels A1/A2 (according to the CEFRL), because of the low language level these professionals had in most skills and because it is a level common to both professions (shop assistants and waiters) under study, but always bearing in mind to return to language training at higher levels (B1/B2) in a near future. A context study also revealed that these professionals need foreign language education through the use of technology, where students are responsible for their time and learning process and without geographical, labor or personal barriers. Our teaching perspective is based on tasks, meaningful activities which challenge learners to interact in the target language without the need of traditional presentation of linguistic items preceding the interaction (Partridge & Starfield, 2013). The design of these target tasks, job-specific needs that aim at meeting participants' professional goals, is based on situations that learners have to cope with outside the classroom or the platform, in our case, welcoming customers, taking orders, serving food and beverages, selling products, handling payments or giving advice to potential customers, among others. Authentic material (menu types, ingredients, list of drinks, invoices, bills, shopping centers, department stores, etc.) is a key element to develop appropriate teaching proposals and an essential factor for EOP learner empowerment.

What is more, the guided content structure of the multimedia version makes this option seem appropriate to users with less digital competency, those who need more consistent support from the teacher. On the other hand, the online

version through the Moodle platform aligns with the current educational paradigms using technologies, since content management platforms allow students to be more active, autonomous and responsible for their own learning, to organize their time and eliminate geographical, physical, economical and personal barriers to access content. The online version, mainly designed for students to work autonomously (although students can communicate with tutors synchronously whenever they like), constitutes an up-to-date distance educational proposal in English for Specific/Occupational Purposes. Its future potential is limitless.

III. THE PRESENT STUDY

The main scope of our proposal covers the results obtained after gathering information on course dissemination, assessment and exploitation by final users. Gaining insights into the transference rate of the EOP courses, analyzing the profile and degree of acceptation by the target groups and obtaining preliminary data on possible linguistic certification obtained by users are key factors to assess the efficiency of our teaching initiative. However, and as it will be shown throughout the development of our study, completing a course and obtaining a passing attendance certificate do not necessarily involve getting linguistic certification according to the CEFRL.

A. Research Questions

The research questions raised to study dissemination and assessment of the EOP courses by non-formal educational entities are as follows:

(1) To analyze EOP course transference rate (% of institutions and students using the courses) and factors making the multimedia/online courses a successful proposal;

(2) To gain insights into the learning expectations outcomes and failures.

Addressing the research questions above, and combining qualitative and quantitative analysis, the present study aims to cover an important gap in the field of English for occupational purposes by analyzing the opinion of the labor force about the parameters which could make EOP language courses become a successful bet, and how official certification and level recognition could improve their chances to incorporate or be promoted in professional contexts.

B. Population under Study

The participants in this study were adults taking continuing education courses in non-formal teaching institutions around Spain. Some of the courses were sponsored by public institutions in Spain such as the National Service for Employment (*SNE- Servicio Nacional de Empleo*), while others were offered by private initiatives. The distribution of the courses and participants through twelve small and medium-sized national enterprises delivering the courses is as follows:

A1 y A2 English courses for waiters and bartenders. The total number of students enrolled in the A1 level course is 164: five institutions with a number of enrolments between 5 -15; five between 16 -30, and two between 31-50 students. The number of candidates enrolled in the A2 waiter and bartender courses shows greater participation, which may be caused by the increasing demand of English competence in this sector. The 257 students enrolled are distributed as follows: five institutions have between 5-15 students; four between16-30; two ranging from 31 and 50, and one company between 51-70 participants.

A1 y A2 English courses for shop assistants. The number of participants in the shop assistant course is lower in both levels: 135 students in the case of A1: seven institutions with a number of enrollments ranging from 5-15; three between 16-30, and two between 31-50. As for the 195 students enrolled in the A2 shop assistant course, we find the following distribution: seven institutions with a number of participants between 5-15 and five ranging between16-30 students.

To complete the database of participants, the company managers were firstly contacted by telephone, informed about the study scope and asked to provide researchers with the affiliation of the students who had taken the courses. The whole sample of students was emailed describing the survey and offering the possibility to be contacted by phone to hold in-depth interviews. From the database provided (751 candidates), only 411 (55% percent) answered the email positively and filled in the questionnaire. Additionally, an average 9% agreed to have a phone interview if necessary. In the table below the final figures of participants are shown:

TABLE 3
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

	Total Sample	**Research Sample**	Interviewees
A1 Waiter &bartenders	164	88 (54%)	8 (10%)
A2 Waiter &bartenders	257	147 (57%)	9 (6%)
A1 Shop assistant	135	68 (50%)	6 (9%)
A2 Shop assistant	195	108 (55%)	14 (14 %)
Totals	751	**411 (55%)**	**37 (9%)**

C. Participants' Demographic Data

The percentage of men and women is quite homogeneous in both courses and levels: seven institutions present an approximate 50% of men and women enrolled; two of them present one third of men against 30% of women, whereas the last two show a 40% of men against an approximate 60% of women. The distribution indicates that both professions do not show gender preferences and that both men and women are interested in and capable of developing a career in these sectors.

Where age is concerned, four institutions noted having students with ages ranging from 16-30 years old, five between 30-45, and three with ages between 45-60. A wide range of academic background and qualifications is seen regarding their academic levels. The institutions under study noted that most of their students held high school education and vocational training certificates, ordinary secondary school levels and a varied range of university degrees. With these figures, we can see that participants are interested in learning and being trained after finishing compulsory education. However, the difficulty of finding a job in the current economy leads citizens even with university degrees to look for vocational and occupational training apart from their academic expertise and qualification.

Another aspect worth mentioning is the role of professional training in young people's education, a population which, unsatisfied with compulsory syllabi, tries this formative modality to acquire technical and professional expertise which can help them enter the labor market directly.

D. Survey Tools

The instruments used in the study included: (1) a student opinion questionnaire designed with the purpose of gaining insight into the reasons for the successful transference rate of the courses and/or main failures, and;(2) a set of questions to analyze the connections between official recognition and certification of EOP competences and its influence on professional achievements.

The questionnaire, built with Survey Monkey, was designed by the authors with several areas key to student personal opinions and beliefs on the topics under study. It was first tested in a pilot group of 25 students and two company managers of the total population comprising the research. Test validity was obtained by requesting feedback and suggestions from two experts in the field of psychology and two additional specialists in ESP, both groups familiar with the constructs and the purpose of the research. Once the pilot phase had been finished, the questionnaire was tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha to test internal consistency of items, for which the standard for test reliability begins at 0.6. The calculation performed concluded with a 0.8 alpha. Given that this index ranges between 0 and 1, which is above the standard 0.6, the reliability of the questionnaire can be considered appropriate.

The opinion/belief questionnaire included items concerning: (1) the number of students enrolled in each course/level; (2) their academic level; (3) their current jobs and future perspectives; (4) the number of students who had completed the courses; (5)main strengths of the EOP courses; (6)reasons to leave the courses; (7) the kind of certification obtained on completion; (8) whether the courses helped participants improve their linguistic competence, and;(9) projection on their professional status/expectations.

Items were measured on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 5 points, with 1 being *totally disagree* and 5 *totally agree*, measuring the following items to cover our objectives: those referring to the success of the transference rate –*research question 1*: (1) course content and general motivation; (2) interactivity; (3) collaboration; (4) autonomous learning, and; (5) novelty of the course format (online/Multimedia); and the variables to measure expectations, failures and reasons to leave the courses –*research question 2*: (6) task difficulty (English level); (7) lack of digital competence; (8) lack of time competence to manage the course deadlines, and; (9) no connection with my current job or other reasons. See tables 4, 5, 6 and 7 in the result section.

Interviews were used to complement the survey data and give us deeper insight into the opinions, attitudes and beliefs of our target groups. In particular, interviewees were asked to discuss their views about the importance of their English competence being officially recognized in order to improve their work achievements.

E. Test Administration and Procedure

To achieve our goal, the first step was to contact the multimedia software company (FMI)with which our project was initially developed -FMI was the project partner in charge of dissemination, transfer and commercialization of the EOP courses-.After a preliminary analysis, we identified a reasonable number of non-formal educational institutions around Spain to which the EOP courses had been distributed. Next, we developed, tested and validated the 18-question online questionnaire to cover the objectives.

Although the main survey instrument used was the questionnaire designed to gather quantitative data about participants' opinions and to evaluate a set of factors related to the general objectives, partial interviews were used to complement the survey data and give us some deeper insight into the beliefs of our target group; in particular, interviewees who abandoned the course were asked to discuss the main reasons they did so. Thus, the perspectives shown in our findings represent the views of two groups of informants: (1) a large body of participants answering the questionnaire, and; (2) the feedback of 37 students interviewed by phone/Skype.

IV. RESULTS

A. Objective 1 - Transference Rate: Factors Making EOP Multimedia/Online Courses a Successful Proposal

From the research sample (411 candidates who filled in the questionnaire), only74% finished the courses successfully, a total of 310 students distributed as follows: 81% in the case of waiters (190candidates) and 68% (120participants) in the case of shop assistants. An overview of the total sample is shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
NUMBER OF STUDENTS FINISHING THE COURSES

	Total Research Sample	Participants Finishing the course& completing the survey	Interviewees	Participants leaving the course
Waiter &bartender (A1 & A2)	**235**	**190 (81%)**	15 (8%)	36 (19%)
Shop assistant (A1 & A2)	**176**	**120 (68%)**	12 (10%)	38 (32%)
Totals	**411**	**310 (74%)**	**27 (9%)**	74 (26%)

In general terms, all institutions and participants have a positive opinion about the course content and the design structure, which justifies the reasonable high percentage of students who finished the courses, 74% as a whole.

Focusing our attention on students' opinion on the main features which made the courses an appealing teaching/learning proposal (variables 1-5), Table 5 summarizes the mean values over a five point Likert scale.

TABLE 5
MEAN VALUES OF MAIN VARIABLES

Transference rate: course variables	**Mean**
1. Content and motivation	4.0750
2. Task interactivity	3.5719
3. Collaboration	3.3667
4. Autonomous learning	4.0625
5. Novelty of the course format (online / Multimedia)	4.3625

From the results, the novelty of the course format (online/multimedia), which enabled them to coordinate work and study without time and place restrictions, shows the highest percentage, 4.3 over a 5-point scale. The course specific content and the possibility to work autonomously present positive results as well (above 4 points). The implicit interactivity and opportunities for collaboration show an average feedback of 3.5 points as shown in Table 6.

To analyze whether these independent variables influence students' perception on the course transference rate, and consequently the success of the proposal ($p<0.005$), we used a multiple regression analysis, estimating a model whose results are presented in Table 4. In this model, some of the items were found significantly related.

TABLE 6
RESULTS OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Variables	
Independent Variables	
1. Content and motivation	
2. Taskinteractivity	0.589
3. Collaboration	0.558
4. Autonomouslearning	0.645
5. Novelty of the course format (online / multimedia)	0.811
Dependent variable	
Factors affecting the transference rate / success of the proposal	
R^2	0.675
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$	

In terms of getting insight into what extent the independent variables (1-5) affect the success of the transference rate of the EOP courses, we find that the "Novelty of the course format (online/multimedia)" and students' perception about the implicit potential to work at their own pace ("Autonomous learning") would be positively associated (0.811 and 0.645, respectively).

Secondly, it was empirically confirmed that "task interactivity" and students' perceptions regarding the 'possibility of collaboration' with the instructors and other users are also associated (0.589 and 0.558 respectively).

B. Objective 2 - Gaining Insights into Learning Expectations and Failures.

Among the reasons why participants failed to complete the courses successfully (variables 6-10), the difficulty to finish the tasks on time (lack of time management competences) reveals the most relevant factor. Showing lower percentages, a couple of variables are found below 0, 3 points from the global 5-point scale: 'the difficulty of the tasks' and 'the lack of digital competence'. The lack of connection with their current positions or interest is placed in the last position of the scale, around 1 point. Finally, under the label 'others' a heterogonous group of factors such as 'finding a new job', 'technological media available' and 'lack of official recognition of the courses' (usefulness) reveals significant factors for leaving the courses unfinished. Results are shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7
REASONS TO LEAVE THE COURSES

Reasons to leave	
1. Task difficulty (English level)	2.976
2. Lack of digital competence	2.432
3. Lack of time competence to manage course deadlines	4.345
4. No connection with my current job / Interest	1.065
5. Other	3.567 * Discussed in the interviews

To analyze whether the variables included in the category "others" influence students' decision to leave the course unfinished (p<0.005), we used a multiple regression analysis to test the four main variables (10.1-10.4), estimating a model whose results are presented in Table 8. In this model, some of the items were found to be significantly related.

TABLE 8
RESULTS OF LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Variables	
Independent Variables	
Other reasons to leave the course	
10.1. Getting a new job	0.510
10.2. Lack of digital media	0.478
10.3. Not covering learning expectations	0.321
10.4. Course recognition (usefulness) and work achievements	0.823
Dependent variable	
Leavingthecourseunfinished	
R^2	.530
* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001	

In detail, analysing the hypothesis about which of the 'other' variables could influence the decision to leave the courses, 'the lack of course recognition (usefulness)', getting by far the highest results, would be positively associated (b=0.823). All the other factors but getting a new job, with 0.510, are not directly associated with the decision to leave the courses unfinished ('lack of digital media available' and 'learning expectations', with 0.478 and 0.321 respectively).

In this sense, when analyzing the variable, 'lack of official certification' in the interviews, we see that most of the participants noted the requisites to pass the course (completing the course successfully and taking a final test to get the course certificate),did not result in achieving an official recognition according to the CEFRL. They claimed that in spite of getting a completion/attendance diploma, official recognition of proficiency level was not guaranteed, and in the case they needed to certify their language level (A2, B1) for professional purposes, they would have to take official exams run by external entities based on general English standards and not for specific /occupational purposes.

C. Expanding Reasoning through Phone Interviews

To gain insight into the perception students had between getting official recognition and improving work achievements, phone interviews were held with 27 participants (9%) of the total sample. To the question on whether students got official recognition after the course completion or not, four students admitted they did not know the existence of such a possibility while twenty-three noted the difficulty/impossibility of obtaining a foreign language official certificate following the EOP course instruction.

In this sense, for the question whether it would be professionally rewarding to have a standardized EOP certification tool, twenty-two of the interviewees answered positively, whereas one of the candidates answered that he did not know how it could affect his professional promotion. The results support the importance of giving an urgent solution to the linguistic certification gap in English for specific and professional purposes.

As for the usefulness of the courses in their job performance, promotion and professional achievements, only two participants stated that the diploma had helped them progress at work, while the remaining 25 answered negatively. The dearth of a relationship between foreign language learning and job achievement informs us on the still scarce control of success (or lack of) of this kind of specialized language courses. Nowadays, with the difficulty people have in finding a job and improving professional competences, official recognition may be decisive for this process, as well as promote advancement in an increasingly global labor market. Despite this pitfall, twenty-six interviewees answered positively that they might progress in their jobs if this specialized training was officially recognized according to European standards (e.g. B1 in English for shop assistant, A2 for English for Restaurant Services and the like).

Finally, in the last part of the interviews, participants were asked about how the achievement of official recognition could influence variables such as 'getting a new job in/outside the sectors under study', 'promotion in their current positions' and 'gaining cultural awareness and self-satisfaction'. Results are shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS - WORK ACHIEVEMENTS WITH/WITHOUT CERTIFICATION

	CATEGORY	N	Mean
Getting a new job in the tourism /commerce industry	without certification	27	2.0792
	With certification	27	3.8417
Promotion in their current jobs	without certification	27	3.0542
	With certification	27	4.7530
Getting a job in a new field	without certification	27	2.7719
	With certification	27	3.2698
Self –satisfaction and cultural awareness	without certification	27	2.6250
	With certification	27	3.7667

According to the contrast of means, there are differences between holding/not holding an official certification in English for occupational purposes, the biggest differences being observed in the variables 'getting a new job in the tourism/commerce industry' and 'promotion in their current jobs', indicators in which participants got an average score that exceeds 1.7 points over the average score. As for the variable 'self-satisfaction and cultural awareness', our statistical analysis also shows differences as higher than 1 point, while the lowest value between the mean scores is obtained in the dimensions 'getting a job in a new field'.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Europe is striving towards building a union of equality in all aspects of its existence. A crucial focus towards reaching this goal lies in matters concerning education. The cultural perspective of mutual understanding makes communicating through language one of the most obvious ingredients in the recipe for success. This paper has addressed the question of formative needs in foreign language competency for selected working collectives in equivalent professions across Europe.

The need for professional expertise increases in economic crisis periods and the difficulty in finding a job makes people apply for initiatives to learn (or update) skills in order to access the labor market or to keep their current jobs. As seen, these citizens are not only youths who finish university and are not able to find a job, but also those who leave school and need to open horizons far from their initial expectations. Whatever the circumstances, the demand for professional courses is a fact, especially when they combine linguistic acquisition and development of professional competences. From the results, it can be concluded that the courses grasp the interest of users who want to find a job, advance in their current positions and even want to pursue personal or professional development, such as going abroad. In an ever-global world, mastering foreign languages is an urgent need, and if that education comes with the practical learning of technical skills, the added value is priceless. The results are aligned with the goals promoted by the European Union when defending educational and mobility policies – to enhance the development of versatile citizens, prepared to embrace the demands of a constantly-changing society, processes in which foreign language certification is a priority. However, the lack of official recognition of the linguistic level demanded in professional fields of the labor market still remains unsolved.

Another important conclusion is that vocational training with technological support is seen as a challenge, a teaching proposal which allows users to acquire and develop competences (linguistic, in our case) not being subject to geographical or time restrictions, allowing them to be autonomous and responsible for their learning.

Yet we still have much to achieve. In our educational system, vocational instruction is often seen as the last option for students who abandon secondary education without knowing what lies ahead in terms of future job interest. We are convinced that proposals like ours could make vocational education, both in formal and informal settings, acquire the status it deserves. Getting official certification is an objective that requires effort from public administrations, educational policies, teachers and students. Few entities offer vocational courses, and recognition usually becomes a slow and painful process, sunk in bureaucracy and with no guarantee of success. Many things have to change to enable occupational-oriented teaching to be valued and recognized by regional, national and European institutions and included in their catalogues of official training.

Nowadays, along with the theoretical bases needed to develop any given job, professional competences have a decisive role for accessing the labor market – to know and know how to do something–a dimension which is present in vocational courses. The world economic crisis and the global changes suffered all over the world have created the need for being technically efficient when looking for a job. What is less valued today can be dominant in the near future. Social and work demands point in that direction.

VI. FUTURE ACTION LINES

No field of human activity achieves an unchanging proficiency and the proof is the knowledge paradigms which, despite surviving for some time, become insufficient and are replaced by others, more demanding and up-to-date. Like those paradigms, this proposal also presents limitations and demands of future action lines.

The first one has to do with course format. The mobile version of the courses in a mobile application, allowing anywhere/anytime possibilities for learning, is making progress, an app in which we have been working for several months to create both community generated content, as well as a community of new learners.

Another direction for future research lies in the creation of specific corpora for the professions considered by our proposal. We should proceed to a lexical compilation on different professions in the field under study to facilitate occupational language teachers' work when designing specific courses. It's a need considering that education is more and more based on a pragmatic aspect and the student, and his/her work and personal needs, are placed in the center of the process.

Finally, and from the results examined here, we all know that students' needs are based, in most cases, on obtaining a diploma which recognizes the effort expended and the learning outcomes achieved. However, as we have seen through the questionnaires and interviews undertaken, certification is issued but official recognition is not always achieved. We believe it is urgent to create a certifying entity with objectives, criteria and requisites so that institutions can offer this quality guarantee and students can access the recognition of their knowledge and abilities.

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Requests Made by Australian Learners of Chinese as a Foreign Language

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Abstract—This study examines how Australian learners of Chinese make requests as compared to those made by native speakers of Mandarin Chinese. Data were collected through a written production questionnaire comprising six situations. Results showed that learners and native speakers shared a preference for conventional indirectness. However, they favoured different strategy types in the realizations of requests. Moreover, native speakers tended to adjust their selection of request strategies according to social variables such as relative power, social distance, and rank of imposition, whereas learners displayed little sensitivity to social variables in the selection of request strategies. This study also provides some evidence of pragmatic development. Learners' use of directness decreased but their use of conventional indirectness increased with increased proficiency. Moreover, learners' acquisition of pragmalinguistic competence seemed to outperform their sociopragmatic competence. This study adds to the small body of research on requests by learners of Chinese as a foreign language. It highlights the importance of the inclusion of pragmatics in foreign language teaching.

Index Terms—request, speech act, (in)directness, Chinese, pragmatic development

I. INTRODUCTION

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) deals with how non-native speakers (NNSs) understand and produce speech acts in a target language (L2), and how their L2-related speech act knowledge is acquired (Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p. 216). There have been a substantial number of empirical studies which examine L2 learners' production of speech acts. Among all the speech acts studied in ILP, requests, due to their frequent use in daily communication and their highly face-threatening nature, have received the most attention. Despite the large number of studies on interlanguage requests, most of them focus on requestive behavior of learners of English (e.g. Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008, 2010; Trosborg, 1995; Wang, 2011; Woodfield & Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2010; Yu, 1999), or learners of other Western languages such as German (Faerch & Kasper, 1989), Hebrew (Blum-Kulka, 1982), and Spanish (Félix-Brasdefer, 2007). Only a few studies are concerned with requests by learners of Asian languages such as Indonesian (Hassall, 2003) and Korean (Byon, 2004). The range of target languages is relatively small (Bella, 2012; Hassall, 2003). To the best of the researchers' knowledge, little research has been done examining requests made by Australian learners of Chinese.

Previous studies on Chinese requests (Lee-Wong, 1994; Zhang, 1995) and Australian English requests (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Wierzbicka, 1985) have suggested that there are considerable differences between Mandarin Chinese and Australian English in the realizations of requests. Moreover, studies of requests by Chinese learners of English as compared with those made by Australian English speakers (Li, 2018; Wang, 2011) have shown that Chinese learners of English often diverge from the target norm in their realizations of requests. It would be interesting to look at how Australian learners of Chinese make requests in L2 Chinese.

The body of research on interlanguage pragmatic performance is large. A long-standing criticism points out that research in ILP focuses mainly on NNSs' pragmatic performance rather than on language learners' pragmatic development (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996). In the last decade, there has been a limited but growing number of studies on L2 pragmatic development (e.g. Achiba, 2003; Barron, 2003; Bella, 2012; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007; Savić, 2015; Woodfield, 2012). More research needs to be conducted to address the relative shortage of developmental studies.

To sum up, the present study attempts to fill in some of the gaps in interlanguage pragmatics. It investigates the requestive behavior of Australian learners of Chinese, a group of learners that have rarely been studied in ILP. To meet the need for developmental research in ILP, it also examines whether learners move towards the target norm in their selection of request strategies as their language proficiency increases.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Definition of Requests

According to Searle's (1969) classification of illocutionary acts, requests fall into the category of directives. Requests are illocutionary acts whereby a speaker attempts to get the hearer to perform an act which is usually for the benefit of the speaker.

Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that requests are intrinsically face-threatening and by their nature run contrary to the addressee's face want. In attempting to get the interlocutor to do something, the speaker impinges on the interlocutor's freedom of action and thus threatens the interlocutor's negative face. The speaker's positive face is also threatened to a certain extent, because if a request is refused the requester's face want to be approved of may not be satisfied (Barron, 2003; Trosborg, 1995). Therefore, a high level of pragmatic competence is required of L2 learners for the successful completion of requests (Bella, 2012; Byon, 2004).

B.   Empirical Studies on Requests

Among the large number of empirical studies on requests, the most well-known is the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) conducted by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). According to the CCSARP framework, requests consist of head acts and peripheral elements. A head act is the minimal unit to realize a request independently of other elements. It is the core request or request proper. The peripheral elements refer to alerters preceding the head act and supportive moves either preceding or following the head act. The present study only focuses on the request head acts. Head acts vary in levels of directness: directness, conventional indirectness and nonconventional indirectness, which are further divided into nine strategy types or sub-strategies. The findings of the CCSARP indicate that of the eight languages under investigation, Australian English speakers choose conventional indirectness with the highest frequency and are the least direct. Moreover, they show a preference for conventional indirectness in all situations, displaying the lowest degree of situational variation.

The coding framework of the CCSARP has been extensively used and tested and proven to be an effective and reliable coding scheme (e.g., Bella, 2012; Byon, 2004; Hassall, 2003; Rue & Zhang, 2008; Savić, 2015). It will be adapted to analyze the request data in the present study.

Empirical studies which focus on the production of L2 requests abound. Most of these studies are concerned with requests made by learners of English or other European languages. For example, Trosborg (1995) examines the requestive behavior of Danish learners of English at three proficiency levels: low, intermediate and advanced. Faerch and Kasper (1989) look at how Danish learners of English and German perform requests in different target languages. Economidou-Kogetsidis (2008) and Woodfield and Economidou-Kogetsidis (2010) compare requests by Greek learners of English with those by British English speakers. Only a few studies have been conducted to investigate requests by learners of Asian languages, among which Hassall (2003) examines how Australian learners of Indonesian make requests as compared to Indonesian native speakers, and Byon (2004) compares requests made by American learners of Korean with those of Korean speakers and American English speakers.

Findings of these studies indicate that learners often deviate from native speakers (NSs) in their realizations of requests, which can be attributed to several factors. One of the important factors is negative pragmatic transfer, which occurs where pragmatic features in L1 differ from those in L2 but learners transport these features from L1 to L2 (Kasper, 1992; Maeshiba et al., 1996). Negative transfer has great potential for pragmatic failure, which is "an important source of cross-cultural communication breakdown" (Thomas, 1983, p. 97). L2 learners' pragmatic transfer in requests has been reported in a number of studies (e.g. Blum-Kulka, 1982; Byon, 2004; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2008; Faerch & Kasper, 1989; Li, 2018).

Another important factor responsible for L2 learners' deviations relates to teaching induction. A good example of teaching-induced errors is found in Hassall's (2003) study of requests by Australian learners of Indonesian. Hassall observes that Australian learners display an overwhelming preference for *boleh* [may] over *bisa* [can] to perform Query preparatory requests, in contrast with Indonesian NSs who strongly favor *bisa*. He attributes this to the instruction that the learners had in the use of these two modal verbs. Hassall argues that in the learners' textbook *boleh* is invariably used to ask for permission, whereas *bisa* is presented and practiced only with reference to ability. Thus, the two modal verbs are implicitly contrasted in a way that seems to suggest that *bisa* is not used to ask for permission (Hassall, 2003, p.1919).

As noted above, the body of research on interlanguage pragmatic performance is large; however, the same cannot be said of studies on ILP development, although there have been a growing number of developmental studies in recent years. Longitudinal request studies by Ellis (1992) and Achiba (2003) reveal that over time learners' use of direct request strategies decreases, whereas their use of conventionally indirect strategies increases. These developmental trends are supported by the findings of cross-sectional studies (e.g. Bella, 2012; Félix-Brasdefer, 2007; Rose, 2000, 2009) which show that direct strategies decrease while conventionally indirect strategies increase with increased proficiency.

Regarding the development of pragmalinguistic vs. sociopragmatic competence, studies of L2 pragmatics have yielded inconclusive results. Some studies point to the precedence of pragmalinguistics over sociopragmatics. For example, Scarcella and Brunak (1981), one of the earliest studies on L2 pragmatic development, find that despite already possessing universal pragmatic knowledge, Arabic learners of English are unable to vary their selection of politeness strategies, such as indirectness, according to the social status of the addressee. Barron (2003), in a longitudinal study of the pragmatic development of Irish learners of German over a ten-month period in Germany,

reports that despite a relatively advanced level of pragmalinguistic competence, learners' sociopragmatic competence lags somewhat behind. Moreover, Rose (2000, 2009), in two cross-sectional studies which examine pragmatic development of young Chinese EFL learners in Hong Kong, finds evidence of pragmalinguistic development in both studies, particularly in the movement from direct to conventionally indirect strategies; however, there is little evidence of sociopragmatic development in either study given the lack of situational variation in request strategies across the groups. Additionally, Savić (2015) investigates the pragmatic development of requests by young Norwegian EFL learners. Her results show clear pragmalinguistic development but little evidence of sociopragmatic development.

By contrast, Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's (1993) longitudinal study of L2 pragmatic development indicates that L2 learners' acquisition of sociopragmatic competence outperforms that of pragmalinguistic competence. Their study shows that over time NNSs learn to choose more appropriate speech acts, which indicates their development in sociopragmatic competence. However, they change little in their ability to employ appropriate forms of the speech acts, which suggests little development in pragmalinguistic competence. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's findings were supported by Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin (2005) and Schmidt (1983).

C. Studies on Requests by Chinese Speakers

Although a large number of studies have been conducted to investigate requests in a variety of languages and cultures, only a few have been done to examine requests by Chinese native speakers, and the literature reveals discrepancies among the findings.

Lee-Wong's (1994) study is among the earliest on L1 Chinese requests. Using interviews and a 30-item written questionnaire as the data collection methods, Lee-Wong examines requests made by Chinese NSs from mainland China. The findings reveal an overwhelming preference for direct strategies, with Mood derivable in the form of imperatives as the predominant strategy type. Conventionally indirect requests come far behind as the second main strategy, followed by nonconventionally indirect strategies. However, Zhang's (1995) study of Chinese request strategies via a 12-situation questionnaire conflicts with Lee-Wong's. Zhang finds that Chinese requests share a preference for conventional indirectness with the languages investigated by the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). Conventional indirectness is the most preferred main strategy with Query preparatory being the most common sub-strategy, followed by directness and nonconventional indirectness.

Moreover, a number of studies examine requests by Chinese learners of English. For example, Yu (1999) compares requests made by Taiwanese ESL learners with those by American English speakers and Taiwanese Chinese speakers. Wang (2011) examines requestive behavior of Chinese EFL learners in Macau, as compared with Australian English speakers. A recent study by Li (2018), which focuses on pragmatic transfer, compares email requests made by Chinese EFL learners in mainland China with those made by NSs of Mandarin Chinese and Australian English. The findings of these studies indicate that Chinese learners of English select direct strategies more often but conventionally indirect strategies less often than English NSs. Moreover, in both Yu and Li's studies, Chinese NSs used direct strategies significantly more often but conventionally indirect strategies significantly less often than English NSs.

D. Studies on Requests by Learners of Chinese

Studies on requests by learners of Chinese as a foreign language (CFL) remain under-researched (Taguchi, 2015). To the researchers' best knowledge, only a few studies have been undertaken to examine requests made by learners of Chinese, among which Hong (1997) compares request strategies by heritage and non-heritage learners of Chinese, Li (2012) investigates the effects of input-based practice on the pragmatic development of requests in L2 Chinese, and Zhang and Yu (2008) and Li (2014) examine the pragmatic development of learners of Chinese in requests in a study abroad context.

A study conducted by Wen (2014) is more relevant to the present study. Using a four-scenario written questionnaire, Wen investigates the pragmatic development by American learners of Chinese in requests. Two groups of learners at lower and higher proficiency levels and one group of Chinese NSs participated in the study. Her findings reveal consistent evidence of pragmalinguistic development. For example, learners' use of conventional indirectness increases and their use of directness decreases as their language proficiency improves. Also, like NSs, both learner groups predominantly rely on the conventionally indirect strategy type Query preparatory. Further evidence of pragmalinguistic development is found in the learners' increased use of Hedged performative with increased proficiency. Moreover, Wen's study also reveals evidence of sociopragmatic development, which is seen in the higher proficiency learners' sensitivity to situational variation in their selection of downgraders and supportive moves.

In summary, the literature has indicated that although requests are the most often studied speech act in interlanguage pragmatics, the range of target languages is rather small. Studies on requests by learners of Chinese have lagged far behind those by learners of English. Moreover, despite the growing number of developmental studies, more work needs to be conducted.

The present study attempts to answer the following questions:

(1) To what extent do Australian learners of Chinese differ from Chinese native speakers in directness levels and strategy types in making requests?

(2) To what extent do Australian learners of Chinese differ from Chinese native speakers in situational variation in the selection of directness levels and strategy types.

(3) Is there any evidence of pragmatic development in Australian learners' performance of requests in L2 Chinese?

III. METHOD

A. Instruments

The main data elicitation method for the present study was a discourse completion test (DCT). Informal interviews were used to aid the interpretation of the data.

DCTs were first used by Blum-Kulka (1982) to examine the requestive behavior of English learners of Hebrew and then adopted by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) for the well-known cross-cultural speech act project. Since then they have been extensively used as the data collection method in ILP. Despite being the most commonly used method in ILP, DCTs have evidenced drawbacks, which have been widely discussed. For example, DCTs have been criticized for eliciting oral data using a written mode (e.g. Hinkel, 1997; Sasaki, 1998). The DCT data do not have the number of turns, the length of responses, the emotional depth, or other features of natural conversation (Bardovi-Harlig, 2013; Beebe & Cummings, 1996). However, DCTs have incomparable advantages. Apart from gathering a large amount of data quickly and allowing full control of contextual variables, DCTs "provide useful information about speakers' pragmalinguistic knowledge of the strategies and linguistic forms by which communicative acts can be implemented, and about their sociopragmatic knowledge of the context factors under which particular strategies and linguistic choices are appropriate" (Kasper & Rose, 2002, p.96).

The DCT was selected as the data elicitation method for the present study because it fits well the purpose of this study. The present DCT was part of a placement test to screen second-year students learning Chinese as a foreign language in Australia. It was developed to assess students' grammatical and pragmatic knowledge of the linguistic means and forms covered in the textbook.

The original DCT comprised ten situations. Six of them are requests, which are the focus of the present study. For the sake of realism, all the situations were designed to resemble those that take place in an academic setting with which the participants were familiar. The request situations vary according to social distance (D), relative power (P), and rank of imposition (R), the three social variables which commonly influence people's selection of linguistic strategies and forms in requests (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

The DCT questionnaire used to elicit the data from the Chinese baseline group was written in Chinese. The DCT used to elicit the Australian CFL data was originally in Chinese. However, the findings of a pilot study showed that most CFL learners had difficulty understanding what the situations in the DCT were about. Given the low proficiency level of the Australian CFL learners in this study, the questionnaire used to elicit the Australian data was translated into English, with potentially unfamiliar vocabulary and expressions given in Chinese in the brackets. Situational descriptions for the CFL group are provided in the Appendix.

Furthermore, a perception questionnaire was developed to investigate the politeness and appropriateness of the Australian CFL learners' requests. The questionnaire consists of three direct strategies and three indirect strategies selected from the learner data in the reference situation. Native speaker participants were asked to rate the (in)appropriateness of the requests on a 5-point Likert scale and provide explanations.

B. Participants

Twenty Australian learners of Chinese and 20 Mandarin Chinese speakers took part in this study. The Australian participants were second-year students majoring in Chinese as a foreign language at a university in Brisbane, Australia. They were all from an Anglo-European cultural background. They had learned Chinese for an average of 1.5 years. Twelve of them were female and eight were male. Their average age was 20. The CFL learners were further divided into two groups based on their end-of-semester academic results. The low proficiency group was made up of nine students whose results were Grade 5 or below. The high proficiency group included 11 students whose results were Grades 6 and 7 (with 7 being the highest grade and 4 being the lowest pass grade at the university).

The participants in the Chinese baseline group were undergraduate and postgraduate students who majored in economics and finance at a university in Jinan, China. They were all NSs of Mandarin Chinese (MCs). Eleven of them were female and nine were male. Their average age was around 23.

Moreover, ten NSs of Mandarin Chinese who were university lecturers, researchers and journalists in Australia and China were asked to rate the (in)appropriateness of the selected requests on a 5-point Likert scale and provide reasons for their choice. Four of them were female and six were male. Their ages ranged between 35 and 52.

C. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection with the Australian CFL group took place in July, 2017. One of the instructors distributed the paper questionnaires to the students in class. Students were asked to write down in either pinyin or characters what they would really say if they had come across such situations in real life. The whole data collection took about 30 minutes.

The Chinese baseline data were collected via WeChat, the most popular social media app in China, in October, 2017. An electronic version of the questionnaire was sent to a colleague at a university in China, who assisted in recruiting Chinese participants, and distributing and collecting the questionnaires. The colleague sent completed questionnaires to the first researcher via WeChat.

The perception data were collected via WeChat in November, 2017. An electronic version of the questionnaire was sent to the participants, who were asked to complete the survey either on a computer or a smart phone and then sent the completed questionnaire back to the researchers through WeChat.

D. Data Analysis

The present study focuses on directness levels and strategy types used in the request head act. The data classification method was adapted from the coding schemes developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), Hassall (2003) and Zhang (1995). Directness levels and strategy types within each level of directness that occurred in this study are outlined and exemplified below.

1. Directness

(1) Mood derivable. The grammatical mood of the locution marks its illocutionary force as a request. The prototypical form is imperative, e.g. 请帮我！[Please help me!]

(2) Explicit performative. The illocutionary force of the utterance is named explicitly with a relevant performative verb, such as 请 [please], 请求 [please ask], and 麻烦 [trouble] in Chinese, e.g. 恳请老师帮我写一封推荐信 [I earnestly ask the teacher to do me the favor of writing me a reference].

(3) Hedged performative. The illocutionary verb denoting the requestive intent is modified by modal verbs such as *can, must,* and *have to*, e.g. 可以请老师帮我写吗？ [May I please ask the teacher to write me (a reference)?]

(4) Want/need statement. The speaker states desire, wish or need that the event denoted in the proposition come about, e.g. 希望得到老师的批准 [Hope that I can have the teacher's approval.]

2. Conventional indirectness

(5) Query preparatory: ability. The speaker asks about the hearer's ability to perform the act, or the possibility of the act to be performed, e.g. 能不能借你的笔记看一下？ [Can I borrow your notes?]

(6) Query Preparatory: permission. The speaker asks the hearer for permission to perform the act, e.g. 我可不可以采访你？ [May I interview you?]

(7) Query Preparatory: availability. The speaker asks about the availability or convenience of the hearer performing the act, e.g. 不知您是否方便帮我写一下？ [Just wondering if it is convenient for you to write me (a reference)?]

3. Nonconventional indirectness (hints). The illocutionary intent is not immediately derivable from the utterance. Unlike conventionally indirect strategies, hints are not conventionalized and require more inference on the part of the requestee, e.g. 我还有机会选这门课吗？[Have I got any chance to select this course?]

The data were coded by the two authors. As a narrow range of strategies was employed by the participants, the inter-rater reliability was approximately 95%. All discrepancies were discussed and a consensus was reached. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the data. The chi-square test was employed to determine the statistical significance of the differences between the Australian group and the Chinese group in the overall frequencies of directness levels and strategy types.

IV. RESULTS

A. Levels of Directness

TABLE 1.
OVERALL FREQUENCY OF DIRECTNESS LEVELS AND STRATEGY TYPES BY CFLS AND MCS

Directness levels and strategy types	CFL		MC	
	n.	%	n.	%
Directness	**21**	**17.5**	**29**	**24.2**
Mood derivable	15	12.5	4	3.3
Explicit performative	5	4.2	2	1.7
Hedged performative	0	0.0	13	10.8
Want statement	1	0.8	10	8.3
Conventional indirectness	**90**	**75**	**88**	**73.3**
Preparatory: ability	17	14.2	50	41.7
Preparatory: permission	73	60.8	25	20.8
Preparatory: availability	0	0.0	13	10.8
Non-conventional indirectness (hint)	**9**	**7.5**	**3**	**2.5**

Table 1 presents the frequency of directness levels and strategy types within each level of directness by the Australian CFL learners and Mandarin Chinese speakers. The CEL group shared a preference for conventional indirectness with the MCs. Both groups used conventional indirectness the most frequently, followed by directness and non-conventional indirectness. While the two groups employed conventional indirectness with a similar frequency, learners chose directness less often but nonconventional indirectness more often than native speakers. Nonetheless, Chi-square test results revealed no statistically significant differences between the two groups in the frequency of directness ($\chi^2 = 1.617$, $df = 1$, $p = .204$) and nonconventional indirectness ($\chi^2 = 3.158$, $df = 1$, $p = .076$).

TABLE 2.
FREQUENCY OF DIRECTNESS LEVELS AND STRATEGY TYPES BY LOW AND HIGH GROUPS

Directness levels and strategy types	Low		High	
	n.	%	n.	%
Directness	**17**	**31.5**	**4**	**6.1**
Mood derivable	14	25.9	1	1.5
Explicit performative	3	5.6	2	3.0
Hedged performative	0	0.0	0	0.0
Want statement	0	0.0	1	1.5
Conventional indirectness	**30**	**55.6**	**60**	**90.9**
Preparatory: ability	7	13.0	10	15.2
Preparatory: permission	23	42.6	50	75.8
Preparatory: availability	0	0.0	0	0.0
Nonconventional indirectness(hint)	**6**	**11.1**	**3**	**4.5**

A closer examination of the directness levels used by the two learner groups in Table 2 indicated that the low group used directness (31.5%) more often but conventional indirectness (55.6%) considerably less often than the MCs (24.2% and 73.3% respectively). The high group, on the other hand, underused directness (6.1%) but overused conventional indirectness (90.9%). With regard to nonconventional indirectness, while the high group (4.5%) used it with a similar frequency to the MCs (2.5%), the low group overused it and included it in 11.1% of their requests.

B. Strategy Types

1. Direct Strategies

The strategy types within the level of directness include Mood derivable, Explicit performative, Hedged performative, and Want statements. Chi-square test results revealed statistically significant differences between the CFL group and the Chinese group in Mood derivable (χ^2= 6.916, *df* = 1, *p* = .009), Hedged performative (χ^2= 13.744, *df* = 1, *p* = .000) and Want statements (χ^2= 7.717, *df* = 1, *p* = .005).

Table 1 shows that Mood derivable was used significantly more often by the CFL group (12.5%) than the Chinese group (3.3%). A closer inspection of the learner data in Table 2 indicated that it was actually the low group (25.9%) that overused this direct strategy. The high group (1.5%) chose it with a frequency similar to that of the MCs. Below are examples of Mood derivable used by the low proficiency learners:

(1) 请　给 我 笔。 (Pen)
　　qǐng　gěi wǒ bǐ
　　[please give me a pen]

Furthermore, it was found that Mood derivable was included in the learners' requests in every situation, whereas it was only employed by the MCs in the notes and pen situations. Also, the MCs always put a tag question after this direct strategy, which was observed in none of the learners' requests. Below is an example of Mood derivable used by a Mandarin speaker when asking a peer to lend notes:

(2) 把 你 的 笔记 借 我 看 一下, 好 吗? (Notes)
　　bǎ　nǐ de bǐ jì　jiè　wǒ kàn　yí xià , hǎo ma？
　　[Lend me your notes for a look, is it OK?]

While learners favored Mood derivable, NSs preferred Hedged performatives (Example 3 below), which were absent in the learners' requests, and Want statements (Example 4), which were only used by one high proficiency learner. Below are examples of these two strategy types by the MCs.

(3) 能 麻烦 老师 下 次 来 上课 的 时候 把 练习 带 给 我 吗? (Handout)
　　néng máfan lǎoshī　xiàcì　lái shàngkè de　shíhòu bǎ liànxí dài gěi wǒ ma？
　　[Can I trouble the teacher to bring the handout to the next lecture for me?]

(4) 希望 得到 您 的 批准。(Course)
　　xīwàng dédào nín de pīzhǔn
　　[I hope I can have your approval.]

2. Conventionally Indirect Strategies

Despite a preference for conventional indirectness by both learners and native speakers, there were marked differences between the two groups in the strategy types used. Learners strongly favored Query preparatory: permission, which is usually in the form of *kěyǐ* [may]. Chi-square test results revealed a statistically significant difference between the CFL group (60.8%) and the MCs (20.8%) in the use of this sub-strategy, χ^2= 38.221, *df* = 1, *p* = .000.

Examination of the learner data in Table 2 indicates that both low proficiency learners (42.6%) and high proficiency learners (75.8%) overused the permission strategy; the latter employed it significantly more often than the former. Below are examples of this strategy type by the high group:

(5) 我 可以 借 你 的 笔 吗? (Pen)
　　wǒ kěyǐ　jiè nǐ　de bǐ　ma？
　　[May I borrow your pen?]

(6) 我 可 不 可以 采访 你? (Interview)

wǒ kě bu kěyǐ cǎifǎng nǐ?
[May I interview you?]

While learners favored the permission expression *kěyǐ* [may], NSs (41.7%) preferred to ask the hearer's ability or the possibility of performing the requested act, using the modal verb *néng* [can]. They chose this strategy type significantly more often than the CFL group (14.2%), $\chi^2 = 19.547$, $df = 1$, $p = .000$. Below are typical examples of Query preparatory used by the MCs:

(7) 能 借 支 笔 用 一下 吗? (Pen)

néng jiè zhī bǐ yòng yíxià ma?

[Can I use your pen for a second?]

(8) 我 能 不 能 采访 你 一下? (Interview)

wǒ néng bu néng cǎifǎng nǐ yíxià?

[Can I interview you for a little while?]

An inspection of the learner data indicated that both the low group (13%) and the high group (15.2%) underused the ability strategy.

Apart from asking the hearer about his/her ability or permission, the MCs also checked the availability of the hearer. In contrast, none of the CFL learners employed this strategy type to mitigate the impositive force of their requests. Below is an example from the MCs in the reference situation.

(9) 不知 老师 是否 有 时 间 在 百 忙 之 中 给 我 写 封 推荐信。

bù zhī lǎoshī shìfǒu yǒu shíjiān zài bǎimáng zhī zhōng gěi wǒ xiě fēng tuījiànxìn

[I wonder if the teacher can find time in your busy schedule to write me a reference letter.]

3. Nonconventionally Indirect Strategies

Hints were used the least frequently by either learners or native speakers. However, the data revealed that low proficiency learners (11.1%) employed hints more often than either NSs (2.5%) or high proficiency learners (4.5%). The following are examples of hints used by the low proficiency group.

(10) 您 有 没有 别的 练习? (Handout)

nín yǒu méiyǒu biéde liànxí?

[Do you have more handouts?]

(11) 我 要 学 CHIN2600。 (Course)

wǒ yào xué CHIN2600

[I want to study CHIN2600.]

C. Social Variables

The findings indicated that social variables did not seem to affect Australian learners at low or high proficiency levels in the selection of directness levels and strategy types as much as they did native speakers. Table 3 presents the frequency of directness levels and strategy types used by learners and native speakers in each situation.

TABLE 3.
FREQUENCY OF DIRECTNESS LEVELS AND STRATEGY TYPES BY CFLS AND MCS IN EACH SITUATION

Directness levels and strategy types	Reference		Notes		Handout		Interview		Course		Pen	
	CFL	MC	CFL	MC	CFL	MC	CFL	MC	CFL	MC	CFL	MC
Directness	**40.0**	**40.0**	**15.0**	**15.0**	**10.0**	**30.0**	**10.0**	**5.0**	**10.0**	**45.0**	**15.0**	**10.0**
Mood derivable	20.0	0.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	10.0	0.0	15.0	10.0
Explicit performative	20.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Hedged performative	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.0	0.0	0.0
Want statement	0.0	10.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	5.0	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0
Conventional indirectness	**60.0**	**60.0**	**85.0**	**85.0**	**85.0**	**70.0**	**90.0**	**90.0**	**50.0**	**45.0**	**85.0**	**90.0**
Preparatory: ability	20.0	20.0	15.0	65.0	15.0	40.0	15.0	50.0	15.0	5.0	15.0	70.0
Preparatory: permission	40.0	10.0	70.0	20.0	70.0	25.0	75.0	15.0	35.0	40.0	70.0	15.0
Preparatory: availability	0.0	30.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.0
Nonconventional indirectness	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**5.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**5.0**	**40.0**	**10.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**

Mandarin speakers tended to adjust their selection of request strategies according to the relative power of the speaker with respect to the hearer, social distance between them, and rank of imposition involved in a request. They chose directness ($\chi^2 = 13.141$, $df = 1$, $p = .000$) and the strategy types: Hedged performative ($\chi^2 = 14.579$, $df = 1$, $p = .000$) and Want statements ($\chi^2 = 3.927$, $df = 1$, $p = .048$) significantly more often in hearer-dominant situations (reference, handout and course) than in equal situations (notes, interview and pen). Similarly, they used Want statements significantly more often when making big requests (reference, interview and course) than small requests (notes, handout, and pen), $\chi^2 = 6.982$, $df = 1$, $p = .008$. They also selected Want Statements considerably more often when making a request in the +distance situations (course and pen) than in the -distance situations (reference, notes, handout and interview), although the difference was only marginally significant, $\chi^2 = 3.491$, $df = 1$, $p = .062$. In contrast, learners chose directness with a similar frequency in all the situations except the reference situation, in which they used directness with a frequency (40%) higher than in the other situations. Further examination of the strategy types within directness in the reference situation revealed that learners differed markedly from the MCs in that they only used Mood derivable and Explicit

performative, which were rarely selected by the MCs, who strongly favoured Hedged performative and Want statements.

No striking differences were observed between the two groups in the frequency of conventional indirectness with respect to situational variation. However, an examination of the strategy types indicated that the two groups differed in the selection of Query preparatory: permission, the most preferred strategy type for learners. The MCs chose the permission strategy most frequently in the +P, +D and +R situation (i.e. course), where the overall threat to face is perceived as the highest. In contrast, learners chose this strategy the least frequently in this situation. In general, learners chose permission expressions considerably more often in =P than +P situations, -R than +R situations, and -D than +D situations, whereas the MCs displayed an opposite tendency.

With regard to nonconventional indirectness, there was little difference between Australian learners and Mandarin speakers in terms of situational variation. Both chose hints mainly in the course situation where P, D, and R are high.

D. Appropriateness of Learners' Requests

A perception questionnaire was used to examine the politeness and appropriateness of requests selected from the learner data. Ten Mandarin speakers were asked to rate the (in)appropriateness of the requests on a 5-point Likert scale and provide an explanation for their choice. Results indicated that all participants rated the use of imperatives such as 请给我推荐信 [Please give me a reference letter] and 你写一个推荐信 [You write a reference letter] as either inappropriate or very inappropriate and rude. The following comments on learners' use of imperatives were taken from the perception data.

- '请给我推荐信' 很不得体。忽视了双方是师生的关系。有命令的口吻……

['Please give me a reference letter' is very inappropriate. It ignores the hierarchical teacher-student relationship. It sounds like an order.]

- '你写一个推荐信'-- 这是命令，不是请求。这个像是将军对士兵下命令，既然是命令，'谢谢' 就显得多余和虚伪了。

['You write a reference letter' – this is a command, not a request. It sounds like a command from a general to a soldier. Since it is an order, the expression 'Thanks' after it sounds redundant and hypocritical.]

Moreover, most of the participants perceived 你写不写推荐信? [Do you write a reference letter or not?] which omits modal verbs such as 可以 [may] and 能 [can] as either inappropriate or very inappropriate.

- 太突兀，这是威胁，根本不是请求……

[Too abrupt. This is a threat, not a request at all…]

- 很不得体。'你写不写' 然后问号结尾的语句汉语中有威胁的意味。

[Very inappropriate. 'You write or not' followed by a question mark at the end of the sentence has the implication of a threat in Chinese.]

V. DISCUSSION

A. Direct Strategies

With regard to direct strategies, the findings of the study indicated that learners used Mood derivable, the prototypical form of which is the imperative, significantly more often than Chinese NSs. Apparently L1 pragmatic transfer cannot account for the overuse of this direct sub-strategy. Previous studies (Blum-Kulka et al, 1989; Hassall, 2003; Li, 2018; Wierzbicka, 1985) have provided ample evidence that Australian English speakers strongly disfavour direct strategies such as imperatives. A closer inspection of the data reveals that Mood derivable was mainly employed by low proficiency learners. While one fourth of the low group chose Mood derivable as the request head act, only one high proficiency learner did so. This finding corroborates the observations of developmental studies (Achiba, 2003; Ellis, 1992; Felix-Brasdefer, 2007; Rose, 2000), according to which learners rely heavily on imperatives, which are formally simple, in the early stages of pragmatic development. As learners' language proficiency increases, their selection of directness decreases.

Moreover, this study revealed that learners underused Hedged performative and Want statements, which were the predominant direct strategies for the MCs but were only observed in one learner's request. Chinese NSs' preference for these two strategy types has been reported by Yu (1999), Wen (2014) and Li (2018). These strategies sound soft and polite in Chinese, particularly when used with syntactic and lexical downgraders, but are direct and inappropriate in English. Australian learners' underuse of these two direct strategies, therefore, could be attributed to negative pragmatic transfer.

B. Conventionally Indirect Strategies

The present findings indicated that conventional indirectness was the most preferred strategy for both CFL learners and MCs. However, the data showed that there were marked differences between the two groups in the preferences for strategy types. Learners, particularly the high proficiency learners, strongly favoured the permission strategy and used the modal verb *kěyǐ* [may] in most of their requests. While both *kěyǐ* [may]and *n ǽng* [can] can be employed to make requests, the MCs were inclined to use the ability strategy *n ǽng* [can]. Wen (2014) also observes that American learners

of Chinese in her study tended to use the modal verb *kěyǐ* instead of *néng*. Interestingly, the literature has shown that *Can I/you* is conventionally used to make requests in English (Blum-Kulka et al, 1989; Hassall, 2003) and Australian English NSs seldom use permission expressions *May I/you* (Li, 2018). Therefore, pragmatic transfer was not a relevant factor for Australian learners' overuse of permission expressions. An important cause may be the influence of instruction. Hassall (2003), in his study of requests made by Australian learners of Indonesian, finds a strong preference by learners for *boleh* [may] instead of *bisa* [can] in query preparatory requests. He explains that learners' overuse of *boleh* may be attributed to teaching induction, that is, the way that these two modal verbs are presented and practiced may have caused learners of Indonesian to form the deviant rule that *bisa* is not used to make requests (Hassall, 2003:1919). This may also be the case for the present Australian learners of Chinese. In the textbook that the CFL learners used (*Contemporary Chinese* edited by Wu, 2015), both *kěyǐ* (four times) and *néng* (three times), which are used to make requests, have occurred in the lessons covered before the conduction of the survey. However, while *kěyǐ* is always used to give or ask for permission, *néng* is often presented and practiced with reference to ability, e.g. 你能不能吃辣的？[Can you eat hot food?] in Lesson 5. Moreover, a distinction is also made between *néng* and *huì* which means the ability acquired through learning. Thus, the importance of *néng* used to indicate ability rather than asking for permission in a request is highlighted. Learners may ignore the fact that *néng* can also be used to make requests, or they may feel it safer to choose *kěyǐ* given the complexity of the usage of *néng*. Furthermore, while no explicit explanation is provided of the differences between *néng* and *kěyǐ* in requests in the textbook, an interview among the instructors revealed that none of them had explicitly explained the differences between the two modal verbs in making requests either.

Another relevant explanation concerns classroom teaching. As teaching in a classroom is a relatively formal activity, instructors may unconsciously choose the formal expression *kěyǐ* more often than the informal and common expression *néng* in the classroom. This has been confirmed in an interview among the instructors of the CFL learners. Instructors' more frequent use of *kěyǐ* in the classroom may, therefore, have had an impact on learners' overuse of this modal verb when making requests.

Another possible factor, as suggested by Faerch and Kasper (1989) and Hassall (2003), may relate to the inherently asymmetric role relationship between native and nonnative speakers, in which learners as nonnative speakers often feel that they hold the inferior position. Learners' perception of their status may have prompted them to select the more deferential and formal modal verb *kěyǐ* instead of the more commonly used ability expression *néng*.

C. Hints

The present study showed that low proficiency learners chose hints considerably more often than either high proficiency learners or native speakers. This finding is consistent with previous studies. Trosborg (1995) reports that Danish learners of English at the lowest level choose hints the most often. Hassall (2003) also finds that low proficiency Australian learners of Indonesian employ hints more frequently than native speakers. Trosborg explains that the hints used by low proficiency learners are often pseudo-hints, which are qualitatively different from the hints produced by native speakers. While NSs use hints intentionally as a face-saving device, learners choose hints mainly because they are uncertain of the appropriate means and forms of realizing the impositive intent. This was confirmed in the present study. A closer inspection of the data indicates that hints mainly occurred in the +P, +D and +R situation, where a student asks a course coordinator to approve late addition of courses. Most of the low proficiency learners seemed to have difficulty in phrasing their request because of the Chinese word for 'approve/approval', although they had learned it. Due to pragmalinguistic shortcoming, learners tended to simply state their needs. The following is an example of hints by a low proficiency learner:

(12)　你好，　我　是 xxx, 我　需要　学 CHIN2600。
　　　　nǐhǎo，wǒ shì xxx, wǒ xūyào xué CHIN2600
　　　　[Hello, my name is xxx. I need to study CHIN2600.]

D. Pragmalinguistic vs. Sociopragmatic Development

The findings of the present study showed that as learners' language proficiency increased, their use of directness decreased, but their use of conventional indirectness increased. Moreover, high proficiency learners closely approximated native speakers in the underuse of the direct strategy Mood derivable and nonconventional indirectness. These may represent a development towards the target norm in learners' L2 pragmalinguistic competence. However, the findings revealed that while native speakers tended to vary their selection of request strategies according to social variables such as relative power, social distance and size of imposition, neither of the learner groups adjusted their selection of request strategies in accordance with the involved social variables. This may indicate that learners achieved little sociopragmatic development in making requests. Therefore, the present study suggests that Australian learners' acquisition of pragmalinguistic competence outperformed their sociopragmatic competence, lending support to the view of the precedence of pragmalinguistic development over sociopragmatic development (Barron, 2003; Li, 2018; Rose, 2000, 2009; Savić, 2015; Scarcella & Brunak, 1981; Trosborg, 1995).

VI.　CONCLUSION

The present study compared requests made by Australian learners of Chinese with those by Chinese native speakers through a 6-situation DCT. Findings indicated that while both groups strongly favoured conventional indirectness, they preferred different strategy types. Moreover, this study provided some evidence of pragmalinguistic development but no evidence of sociopragmatic development, indicating that learners' pragmalinguistic development precedes their sociopragmatic development.

This study has several implications. Firstly, it contributes to studies of speech acts by learners of Chinese as a second/foreign language, which have been under-researched. Secondly, it sheds more light on research in interlanguage pragmatics and contributes to the current understanding of how L2 pragmatic competence develops. Moreover, this study has pedagogical implications for the learning and teaching of Chinese as a second/foreign language. The perception data in the present study show that learners' deviations from the target norm in the realizations of requests had a negative effect on native speakers' evaluations of their requests, which indicates that the deviations may cause pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983) and communication breakdown. The present study points to a strong reason for the inclusion of pragmatics in teaching Chinese as a second/foreign language.

This study is subject to a few limitations. Firstly, the data were elicited through a DCT since the purpose of the present study was to assess learners' pragmatic knowledge of the linguistic means and forms learned. However, as discussed previously, the DCT data lack pragmatic features that are specific to oral interactive discourse. Secondly, this study is a cross-sectional study, which only provides indirect observation of L2 learners' pragmatic development. Thirdly, the sample size is relatively small. Only twenty participants were included in the native group and twenty in the CFL group which was further divided into low and high proficiency groups. This might influence the results of the study. Moreover, the fact that the number of male and female participants are not the same might also affect the results in some way. Therefore, the findings of the study should be interpreted only when all these limitations are taken into consideration.

The limitations of the present study highlight a number of research areas for consideration in future studies. Firstly, there is an obvious need for future research to investigate more speech acts in L2 Chinese given the paucity of existing studies in this area. Secondly, future studies could look at naturally occurring data or role-play data which allow examination of pragmatic features in natural and interactive conversation. Moreover, it would be desirable to adopt a multiple-method approach including retrospective interviews, which can help researchers have a better understanding of learners' pragmatic behaviour. Lastly, a longitudinal study, which provides more direct observation of learners' pragmatic development, could be conducted to meet the need for developmental research in L2 pragmatics.

APPENDIX

Imagine you have come across the following situations in your real life. Please write down what you would really say in such situations. You can write either in Chinese characters or pinyin or a mixture of characters and pinyin.

1. Reference

Suppose you are applying（申请 shēn qǐng）for a scholarship（奖学金，jiǎng xué jīn）to study in China. You need a reference letter (推荐信, tuī jiàn xìn). Dr Wendy Jiang has taught you Chinese for a year. You decide to ask her to write it for you. Now your Chinese class is over. What would you say to her?

2. Notes

Suppose you and Chris are both doing CHIN 3010/3020. You have learned Chinese in the same class for a year and often sit next to each other. You missed the Chinese class last week for some reason. Now you want to borrow Chris' lecture notes (笔记 bǐjì). What would you say to her/him?

3. Pen

Suppose you are attending a seminar. But you forgot to bring a pen. A Chinese student who sits next to you has some extra pens. You want to borrow it from him/her. What would you say?

4. Handout

Suppose you didn't attend Dr Wendy Jiang's lecture last week. Dr Jiang gives students handouts（练习 liànxí）each week. Now the class is over. You want to ask her to bring the handout you missed out to you next week. What would you say?

5. Interview

Suppose you have a Chinese assignment (作业 zuòyè) due next week. Each student is asked to interview (采访 cǎifang) a Chinese native speaker and ask 20 questions. Ling Zhang is your language partner. You want to ask him/her for help. Now you are calling him/her. What would you say?

6. Course

Suppose this semester you have to study four courses in order to graduate. You want to take CHIN 2600. But it's already Week 5. You have to ask the coordinator Dr Lucy Li for permission. You have never met her. Now you are knocking on her office door. What would you say to her?

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Exploring the Relationship between Stay-abroad Experiences, Frequency Effects, and Context Use in L2 Idiom Comprehension

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Abstract—This article explores to what extent a stay-abroad experience of L2 learners leads to more productive use of contextual clues and better benefits from frequency effects in L2 idiom comprehension. To this end, seventy-two learners of German (L1 French) were presented with a test on idiom comprehension that contained items both with and without a context and differing degrees of frequency. Furthermore, the participants completed a questionnaire on their stay-abroad experience (length of stay, country, etc.) as well as providing other data from their linguistic biography (language proficiency level, other languages, etc.). The results show that participants with a stay-abroad experience neither outperformed those without such an experience nor benefited from frequency effects and the presence of context. However, frequency was found to positively affect performance for items presented in context.

Index Terms—idioms, stay abroad, L2 learners, context, frequency effects

I. INTRODUCTION

The impact of a stay-abroad experience for language learning has been amply described in the literature, in some cases shaping the perception that spending time abroad will automatically contribute to qualitatively greater improvement (Kinginger, 2009; Lafford, 2006). In other cases, however, the very limited impact of stay-abroad experiences has contributed to debunking some of the myths surrounding their effectiveness, suggesting that many other factors, such as proficiency level, length of stay and out-of-class exposure to the target language, are at play (Lafford, 2006). To date, research has mainly focused on aspects of linguistic competence such as oral fluency and pronunciation (Lord, 2010; Mora & Valls-Ferrer, 2012; Trenchs-Parera, 2009; Wood, 2007), and vocabulary acquisition (Collentine, 2004; Freed, 1998; Lafford, 2004), but has neglected other aspects such as conceptual fluency (Danesi, 2008). In fact, conceptual fluency, which allows learners to deal with figurative language in a culturally appropriate way (Littlemore et al., 2014), has been found to be highly beneficial for many areas of language learning, such as idiom comprehension, and vocabulary and grammar acquisition (Azuma, 2009; Cameron & Low, 1999; Littlemore & Low, 2006). Consequently, this article aims to shed some light on the impact of stay-abroad experiences on the acquisition of conceptual fluency among L2 learners. Within the category of figurative language, we will focus on metaphorical idiomatic expressions, which will be referred to as those expressions "whose meaning cannot always be readily derived from the usual meaning of its constituent elements" (Cooper, 1999, p. 233). We also argue that idioms are at least partially analyzable, conceptually motivated and reflect metaphoric thinking, which is in line with the cognitive linguistic view of idioms (Gibbs, 2007). Although idiomatic expressions are often described as very infrequent vocabulary items, they are omnipresent in a wide range of registers (Liu, 2008) and should therefore be an essential part of vocabulary teaching in the foreign language classroom (Karlsson, 2013).

Previous research has consistently shown that L2 idiom comprehension is fairly well modulated by variables such as the presence or absence of a context and the frequency effects (De Cock & Suñer, 2018; Suñer, 2018; Türker, 2016). This is especially relevant for L2 learners with a stay-abroad experience, who are supposed to benefit even more from these factors due to their massive exposure to authentic L2 input (Freed, 1998; Lafford, 2004; Lafford, 2006; Montero, Serrano, & Llanes, 2017; Wray, 2002, p. 186). Although highly relevant, the relationship between these variables has not yet been investigated. This study therefore aims to fill this gap by looking at whether the presence or absence of a context and the frequency of target idiomatic expressions modulate the effect of L2 learners' stay-abroad experiences on L2 idiom comprehension.

We will first briefly discuss the benefits of stay-abroad experiences for language learning and present studies that looked into the effects of the presence or absence of contextual information and the L2 frequency on L2 idiom comprehension. We will then present our study, which investigates the effect of contextual information and L2 frequency by French-speaking learners of German with and without stay-abroad experiences when processing L2 idioms. Finally, we will discuss the results of this study in the light of previous literature and draw consequences for further research and formulate pedagogical implications.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. The Impact of Stay-abroad Experiences on Linguistic Competence

Over the past few decades, research on the impact of stays abroad has addressed aspects of the learners' linguistic competence (grammar, vocabulary, writing, oral fluency, etc.), individual learners' differences, cultural sensitivity, and external factors (length of stay, living conditions, etc.) (cf. Pinar, 2016). In this section, we will mainly focus on research in the first category (linguistic competence) that looks at aspects directly related to the variables under investigation in this study, such as vocabulary acquisition and communicative strategies.

Previous research has found L2 vocabulary size to be one of the most powerful predictors of L2 idiom proficiency (cf. Chuang, 2013), together with frequency of exposure to L2 figurative language and intra-lingual transfer (lexical ability) (see Boers, 2003; Charteris-Black, 2002). However, as far as the impact of stay-abroad experiences on vocabulary acquisition is concerned, only moderate benefits have been reported (Pinar, 2016). On the one hand, some studies found that L2 learners who had spent time abroad had an overall advantage over their counterparts who had not, in terms of a greater lexical ability (De Keyser, 1991) and a greater variety of vocabulary (Segalowitz et al., 2004; Sunderman & Kroll, 2009). On the other hand, Collentine (2004) did not find any significant difference in the acquisition of more semantically dense words between students in the at-home learning context and those in the stay-abroad learning context. In this vein, Ife et al. (2000) suggest that the improvement in vocabulary abilities might depend on the length of stay abroad, since they found that, in a vocabulary test, learners with more time abroad outperformed those with less, even if both groups improved compared with their performance in their respective pretests. Taguchi (2011) also reports on the limited impact of stay-abroad experiences on vocabulary acquisition in that the L2 learners in the study improved their lexical access speed but not their accuracy. Dewey (2008) looked into the differences between the immersion learning context, the stay-abroad context and the learning context at home in terms of lexical learning. The results show that students in immersion programs significantly improved their lexical learning in comparison with those in the at-home and stay-abroad learning contexts (cf. also Freed, Segalowitz & Dewey, 2004). The author points to the importance of the time spent using the target language out of class as the most critical factor affecting vocabulary acquisition across the different learning contexts. Other studies found that the benefits of stay-abroad experiences for L2 learners were more noticeable with children than with adults, indicating that age is another factor at play (Llanes & Muñoz, 2013). Specially relevant is the study by Wood (2007), which investigated the use of formulaic sequences in relation to spontaneous speech of learners in the stay-abroad context. The author analyzed the students' narrative retells over a period of six months and found that the students did significantly improve their level of fluency, the use of formulaic sequences being one of the most important indicators. Accordingly, stay-abroad experiences seem to be associated with increased use of formulaic language, which also includes the use of idioms (Gibbs, 2007).

The importance of communicative strategies for dealing with comprehension difficulties in L2 idiom comprehension has been stressed in many studies (Cooper, 1999), the use of contextual information being the most effective strategy to infer the meaning in L2 idiom comprehension (De Cock & Suñer, 2018; Littlemore, 2008; Liu, 2008; Türker, 2016). In this vein, Saleh and Zakaria (2013) investigated the strategies used by L2 learners when they encountered low-frequency and unknown idioms and found that lexical inferencing in the context was the most successful strategy, followed by looking for potential L1 equivalents (see also Rohani, Ketabi, & Tavakoli, 2012; Taki & Namy, 2013). Consequently, we assume that a large amount of exposure to authentic and rich L2 input during a stay abroad might provide L2 learners with a greater ability to successfully use communicative strategies such as the use of contextual information (Freed, 1998; Lafford, 2004; Lafford, 2006; Montero et al., 2017). Overall, the reported findings regarding the gains in vocabulary size and the communicative strategies during a stay abroad suggest that L2 learners with stay-abroad experience might use the contextual information more effectively than their counterparts without this experience.

B. Context and Frequency as Variables Affecting L2 Idiom Comprehension

In this section, we will present the few studies on L2 idiom comprehension that include the presence or absence of contextual information and frequency effects as variables, with special emphasis on stay-abroad experiences.

The effect of context in L2 idiom comprehension has been widely investigated (Cooper, 1999; De Cock & Suñer, 2018; Ferreira, 2008; Irujo, 1986; Liontas, 2002; Suñer, 2018). However, to the best of our knowledge, only two studies have taken the stay-abroad experience of learners under investigation as a variable affecting L2 idiom comprehension. In both cases, the focus was not on the stay-abroad experience, so neither the study design nor the sample size allows strong claims. De Cock and Suñer (2018) looked into how L2 learners of Spanish processed metaphorical expressions concerning taboo topics with different degrees of conceptual distance to their respective L1 equivalents. The authors found that stay-abroad experience was a good predictor for L2 metaphor comprehension and explain this finding by the fact that taboo topics are much more frequent in informal registers, which tend to be avoided in the formal language learning context. Furthermore, Suñer (2018) investigated whether the presence or absence of a context and the conceptual and formal distance to the L1 equivalents affect L2 idiom comprehension. In addition, he checked for other variables such as stay-abroad experience and proficiency level of the participants. The results show that L2 idiom comprehension is positively correlated with the general proficiency level of learners, rather than with stay-abroad experience. Although very promising, these findings are limited in that they do not allow further explanation about how factors such as length of stay and language proficiency level modulate the impact of stay-abroad experiences on L2 idiom comprehension.

With regard to the frequency effects, it can be argued, in very broad terms, that high-frequency idioms are associated with easier comprehension due to their salience (Giora, 2003). For example, Arnon and Snider (2010) found that comprehension of four-word compositional phrases by L1 speakers was positively correlated with high frequency. Such effects are very unlikely to be found among L2 learners, since the relatively limited L2 input prevents them encountering the target expressions often enough to achieve native-like idiomaticity (Ellis, 2012; Granger, 2001). However, this might not be the case for L2 learners with stay-abroad experiences, who might develop a greater sensitivity to idiomaticity than their counterparts, as well as storing and processing such collocations in a more native-like way (Kim & Kim, 2012). Finally, it is worth noting that, to date, only the study by Türker (2016) has examined the extent to which L1 frequency affects L2 idiom comprehension, showing that highly frequent L1 equivalents are associated with better L2 idiom comprehension. This study, however, does not include stay-abroad experiences as a variable, so no consequences can be drawn from the results in this regard. Accordingly, our own study will focus on L2 frequency instead of L1 frequency, since L2 frequency is more likely to affect L2 idiom comprehension in the case of learners with a stay-abroad experience. Thus, we expect that L2 learners with stay-abroad experiences will benefit from high-frequency idiomatic expressions more than those without stay-abroad experiences.

III. THE PRESENT STUDY

Against this backdrop, this study aims to substantially contribute to a deeper understanding of the factors modulating the effect of stay-abroad experiences on L2 idiom comprehension by addressing the following research questions:

• To what extent do learners with a stay-abroad experience make more efficient use of contextual information in L2 idiom comprehension than their counterparts without a stay-abroad experience?

• To what extent do learners with a stay-abroad experience benefit from frequency effects in L2 idiom comprehension?

• What is the relationship between proficiency level, length of stay and frequency with regard to the use of contextual information in L2 idiom comprehension?

A. Participants

The study was conducted with seventy-two learners of German as a foreign language with French as L1 (female n= 55; male n=17). The participants were enrolled in the Master's degree programs in multilingual communication or translation & interpreting at the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL) and the University of Mons (Belgium). Based on the tests carried out within the programs and the self-assessment of the participants, their language proficiency level averaged B2-C1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). However, as we asked for the proficiency level for each aspect of competence to be specified, there might be some cases with a level above C1 or below B2. Thirty-four students (47.2%) had a language proficiency level of C1 or higher, while thirty-eight (52.8%) were B2 or lower. Forty-three students indicated that they had spent at least three months abroad, while twenty-nine did not have any stay-abroad experience in a German-speaking country. In order to consider the effect of length of stay on L2 idiom comprehension, we differentiated between two sub-groups within those with a stay abroad: Students with a short stay (≥3 and <6, n=22) and students with a longer stay (≥6 months, n=21). The main purpose of their stay abroad was a student exchange within the Erasmus mobility program (93.02%, n=40); other reasons indicated were internships, language courses or another type of exchange (e.g. school exchange).

B. Instruments

In order to test the research questions, an idiom comprehension test was created covering the presence or absence of contextual information and the frequency as variables under investigation. Twelve idiomatic expressions were chosen according to the different dimensions represented in Table I and assigned to the respective cells. Accordingly, each cell was covered by at least two or more different items.

TABLE I
VARIABLES OF THE METAPHOR COMPREHENSION TEST

Context	Frequency
Items without context	Low frequency
	High frequency
Items with context	Low frequency
	High frequency

For those items requiring the presence of a context, we extracted examples from the DWDS corpus (*Digitales Wörterbuch der Deutschen Sprache*) as well as from journalistic texts, the purpose being to present participants with real usage events rather than explanatory contexts from which the meaning can be easily inferred. This aligns well with the claims made in previous research, to the effect that pedagogically manipulated contexts do not represent authentic usage of idioms (Boers, 2003). The following extract shows an example of an item that was presented with a context:

(1) "Der Mensch jagt ständig nach Höchstleistungen. Das Guinness-Buch schreibt sie seit 60 Jahren auf. Die Grenze zwischen Weltrekord und Wahnsinn ist oft fließend. Was treibt Menschen an, teilweise Kopf und Kragen zu riskieren?." (Klemm, 2014, para. 1) [Engl. *Humans constantly strive for top performance. The Guinness Book of*

Records has been documenting their achievements for 60 years. The dividing line between a world record and insanity is often blurred. What makes people risk their neck?]

As far as the frequency of the items is concerned, we categorized the items either as high frequency or low frequency. The threshold for the frequency was set on the basis of the frequency values in the corpus German Web 2013 (*deTenTen13*). Assuming that metaphorical idiomatic expressions are relatively infrequent vocabulary items compared with single vocabulary units (Liu, 2008), we set the threshold at 0.30 tokens per million words, which is the frequency value of very common metaphorical idiomatic expressions in the corpus used for this study. By doing so, we assigned six of the chosen items to the less frequently occurring, and six to the more frequently occurring. The normalized frequency value for frequently occurring items was 1.05 tokens per million words, compared with 0.10 tokens per million words for the less frequently occurring.

Furthermore, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire concerning their linguistic biography (e.g. proficiency level in German, knowledge of other foreign languages, etc.), which included several questions about their stays abroad (length, purpose, country, etc.).

C. Data Analysis

For each item in the idiom comprehension test, participants were asked to indicate the meaning and/or suggest an equivalent idiomatic expression in their L1. For example, for the target expression *auf den Kopf stellen* (Engl. "to turn something upside down"), we accepted both the equivalent idiomatic expression (Fr. *mettre qc. sens dessus dessous*) and the concrete meaning (Fr. *bouleverser* = "to mess up"). Correct answers were credited with 1 point, irrespective of whether participants indicated both the meaning and the L1 equivalent or only one of the two. In order to examine the accuracy of the answers, two independent raters were brought in, both French native speakers with a high-proficient level of German. They had been trained beforehand with a subset of the data in order to ensure consistency in their assessments. They agreed on 95.2% of the answers, which according to Cohen's Kappa refers to a substantial agreement ($k = 0.741$, $p < 0.000$). Disagreements were discussed until consensus on final coding of the answers was reached. After analysis of the final coding, two items were discarded because of low reliability and/or poor item distribution characteristics.

D. Procedure

After having signed a letter of consent, which stated the main purpose of the study and informed the participants about the procedure for data collection and the data protection policy, the participants completed the questionnaire and were then presented with the idiom comprehension test. The test was carried out in class, in order to ensure that no external resources were used during the study. The paper forms were collected after the study. Conducting the study took approximately 25 minutes.

IV. RESULTS

A. Quantitative Analysis of Learners' Answers

Table II shows the descriptive statistics of the idiom comprehension test (by-item analysis). In order to analyze the extent to which the variables under investigation (context, L2 frequency and stay-abroad experience) predict performance in the idiom comprehension test, a binary logistic regression with random effects (generalized linear mixed model) was conducted. In addition to the fixed effects (frequency and context), we included the items and the subjects as random effects in the model, since they contributed to many data points in our sample. In the following, we will first analyze the main effects of the variables and then report on the two-way interaction effects.

TABLE II
RESULTS ON METAPHOR COMPREHENSION TEST (BY ITEM)

Variables	Mean	SD	N
Participants with stay-abroad experience	0.248	0.289	72
Participants without stay-abroad experience	0.235	0.284	72
High language proficiency	0.201	0.288	72
Low language proficiency	0.251	0.319	72
Items with context	0.230	0.308	72
Items without context	0.254	0.306	72
Items with high frequency	0.598	0.399	72
Items with low frequency	0.064	0.101	72

Regarding the effect of stay-abroad experiences of L2 learners, both groups of participants achieved similar results. As expected, no significant fixed effect of this variable on L2 idiom comprehension was found ($F(1, 696) = 2.272$, $p = 0.132$). We also looked at whether the language level affected L2 idiom comprehension. Surprisingly, the mean scores show that participants with lower language proficiency achieved slightly better results than their counterparts with higher language proficiency. However, the difference between both categories was found to be not significant ($F(1, 696) = 3.739$, $p = 0.054$).

As for the presence or absence of a context, the mean scores reveal no marked differences in the proportion of correct answers across the categories (with and without context). The fixed effect was not significant ($F(1, 696) = 0.032$, $p = 0.858$). In contrast, the participants performed considerably better when the items were high frequency. The results of the binary logistic regression revealed that high-frequency items were associated with a significantly higher likelihood that the participants answered correctly ($F(1, 696) = 6.206$, $p = 0.013$).

With regard to the influence of a stay-abroad experience on the use of contextual information to infer the meaning of idioms (research question 1), analysis of the mean scores reveals that there are no noticeable differences between the different categories. Items presented with context were found to be slightly easier to comprehend by participants without stay-abroad experience than by their counterparts with stay-abroad experience (*stay abroad M = 0.221, SD = 0.298; no stay abroad M = 0.238, SD = 0.326*). The opposite tendency was true for the items presented without context, since participants with stay-abroad experience outperformed those without stay-abroad experience (*stay abroad M = 0.277, SD = 0.323; no stay abroad M = 0.232, SD = 0.292*). The binary logistic regression reveals that the two-way interaction effect *context * stay abroad* was not significant ($F(1, 696) = 0.035$, $p = 0.851$), which means that a stay abroad is not associated with a higher proportion of correct answers for items with context.

Regarding the effect of language level on participants with and without a stay-abroad experience, we found in both cases that those with lower language proficiency outperformed those with higher language proficiency by around 0.1 points (*stay abroad * high level M = 0.205, SD = 0.106; stay abroad * low level M = 0.302, SD = 0.135; no stay abroad * high level M = 0.135, SD = 0.083; no stay abroad * low level M = 0.239, SD = 0.126*). However, the fixed effect of the two-way interaction *stay abroad * language level* indicates that the proportion of correct answers does not vary significantly across these categories ($F(1, 696) = 0.160$, $p = 0.689$).

As far as the relationship between stay-abroad experiences and frequency effects is concerned (research question 2), analysis of the mean scores reveals that there are no substantial differences across the categories: Participants with and without stay-abroad experiences both achieved substantially better results for the high-frequency items than for the low-frequency items (*stay abroad * high-frequency M = 0.593, SD = 0.205; stay abroad * low-frequency M = 0.072, SD = 0.061; no stay abroad * high-frequency M = 0.524, SD = 0.220; no stay abroad * low-frequency M = 0.040, SD = 0.037*) (see Figure 1). The between-group comparison of the mean scores also shows that participants with stay-abroad experience slightly outperformed those without stay-abroad experience. As expected, the interaction effect *stay abroad * frequency* was found to be not significant ($F(1, 696) = 0.473$, $p = 0.492$).
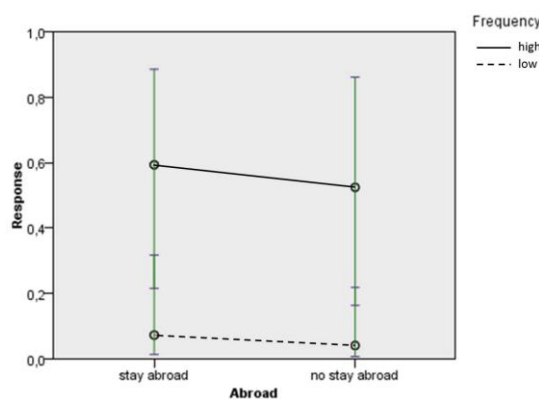
Figure 1. Results of the idiom comprehension test by L2 frequency and stay-abroad experience (by-item analysis).

Our next step was to look at whether the use of contextual information can be predicted by factors such as language proficiency, length of stay and frequency (research question 3). Regarding the influence of the language level on the use of the context when dealing with L2 idioms, analysis of the mean scores reveals a different picture between participants with higher and lower proficiency levels. Participants with a lower proficiency level show an improvement for the items presented with context when compared with those without context (*with context M = 0.311, SD = 0.375; without context M = 0.265, SD = 0.315*). The opposite tendency was found for participants with a higher proficiency level, whose performance in idiom comprehension declined by just over 0.1 points when the items were presented without context (*with context M = 0.164, SD = 0.242; without context M = 0.243, SD = 0.299*). However, these differences between the categories were not found to be significant ($F(1, 696) = 2.367$, $p = 0.124$).

As far as the interaction between the context and the frequency is concerned, we found a marked difference between the mean scores for high-frequency and low-frequency items when they were presented with a context (see Figure 2). Participants scored an average of $M = 0.837$ ($SD = 0.266$) for the high-frequency items with context and only $M = 0.017$ ($SD = 0.034$) for their low-frequency counterparts. In contrast, the difference between the mean scores for the high-frequency and low-frequency items considerably diminished when they were presented without context (high-frequency $M = 0.301$, $SD = 0.376$; low-frequency $M = 0.212$, $SD = 0.298$). As expected, the results of the binary logistic regression revealed that the two-way interaction effect *context * frequency* was significant ($F(1, 696) = 4.257$, $p =$

0.039), which means that presenting high-frequency idioms with context is associated with an increased likelihood for correct answers when compared with their low-frequency counterparts.
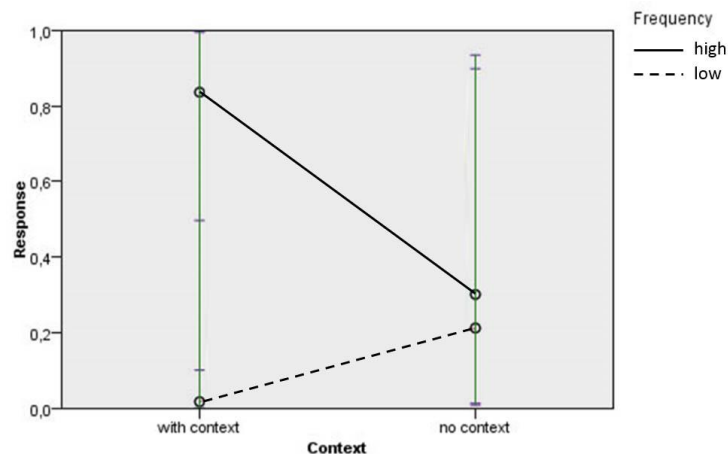
Figure 2. Results of the idiom comprehension test by L2 frequency and context (by-item analysis).

Finally, we looked at whether the use of context is modulated by the length of stay abroad. Analysis of the mean scores shows that an increasing length of stay is associated with poorer performance in the idiom comprehension test (see Table III). The binary logistic regression revealed a significant main fixed effect of the two-way interaction *context * length of stay* ($F(4, 696) = 3.604$, $p = 0.006$).

TABLE III.
RESULTS ON METAPHOR COMPREHENSION TEST (BY ITEM)

Context	stay abroad	Mean	SD	N
with context	*stay <3 months*	0.421	0.427	29
	stay ≥3 and <6 months	0.175	0.252	22
	stay ≥6 months	0.089	0.144	21
without context	*stay <3 months*	0.299	0.340	29
	stay ≥3 and <6 months	0.280	0.327	22
	stay ≥6 months	0.143	0.202	21
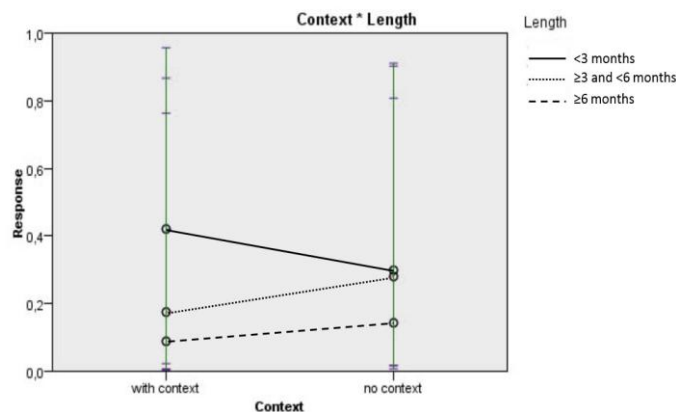
Figure 3. Results of the idiom comprehension test by length of stay abroad and context (by-item analysis).

Regarding the different categories of length of stay, the fixed coefficients showed significant negative effects for the participants with a *short stay abroad* (≥3 and <6 months; $\beta = -1.225$, $z = -2.208$, $p = 0.028$) and with a *longer stay abroad* (≥6 months; $\beta = -2.013$, $z = -3.120$, $p = 0.002$) for the items with context when compared with the participants that had spent <3 months abroad. As for the items without context, only for participants with a *longer stay abroad* (≥6 months) was a significant negative effect found ($\beta = -0.941$, $z = -2.248$, $p = 0.025$), whereas participants with a *short stay abroad* (≥3 and <6 months) were not associated with a significantly worse performance in the test when compared with those with a stay of <3 months ($\beta = -0.079$, $z = -0.238$, $p = 0.812$).

B. Qualitative Analysis of Learners' Answers

The analysis in this section aims to provide deeper insight into how L2 learners coped with unknown L2 idioms and which sources of knowledge they used to infer the meaning. With regard to the use of contextual information, we observed that learners made several attempts to guess the meaning, which also led to false interpretations. For example,

for the metaphorical expression *auf den Kopf stellen* [Engl. *to turn something upside down*] some participants suggested that it refers to planning something.

(2) "Häusliche Pflege, gerade wenn sie so lange währt, <u>stellt</u> das bisherige Leben vollkommen <u>auf den Kopf</u>. Man muss sich meist von allem verabschieden, was einem einst lieb und teuer war. Von Lebensentwürfen, von Träumen." (Prosinger, 2016, para. 7) [Engl. *In-home nursing care that lasts for an extended period turns your life totally upside down. You must bow out of all those things that were so precious and beloved to you. Life plans, dreams.*]

Response: Avoir en tête, à l'esprit [Engl. *to have something in mind*].

Furthermore, other responses seem to reflect the perceptions that a number of the participants had about the economic and political situation in Greece, to some extent biased by the overemphasis that press coverage in some countries has placed on the government's fraudulent economic practices. As (3) shows, some participants interpreted the metaphorical expression *die Hände in den Schoß legen* (Engl. *to sit back and take it easy*) as referring to corrupt and illegal activities of the Greek government, i.e. using funds from the EU earmarked for strengthening the economy. However, the expression is actually used to convey the idea that Greece is simply reluctant to put any effort into strengthening the economy.

(3) "Athen kann nicht erwarten, dauerhaft von den anderen EU-Staaten alimentiert zu werden, während es selbst mehr oder weniger <u>die Hände in den Schoß legt</u>." ("Griechen legen Hände in den Schoß und wir zahlen", 2011, para. 4) [Engl. *Athens cannot expect to be permanently maintained by the other EU states, while it sits back and takes it easy*].

Response: Être impliqué dans des affaires obscures [Engl. *to be involved in dirty deals*], avoir du sang sur les mains [Engl. *to have blood on one's hands* = to be guilty of something*].

A closer examination of some individual answers reveals that the participants also strongly relied on their knowledge about general embodied experiences (e.g. motion, force, space, etc.) to infer the literal meaning from the idioms and then guess the figurative meaning, which is generally consistent with the assumptions made in Cieślicka's (2006) model. For example, many participants suggested that the metaphorical expression *unter die Arme greifen* (Engl. to *grab someone under his arms* = to help someone*) refers to frightening someone (Fr. *prendre quelqu'un par surprise*). Indeed, the image evoked by the lexical meaning of the metaphorical expression fits well with a situation in which someone unexpectedly comes up from behind and grabs someone else under the arms to frighten him. However, the metaphorical expression in German conveys the physical situation where someone helps someone else by grabbing him under his arms and placing him upright, so that he can keep moving. Such plausible, but false interpretations were given by some participants who relied on the physical action evoked by the German metaphorical expression *sich die Schulter klopfen* (*to tap yourself on the shoulder* = to shower with compliments*). Some of the answers included *to encourage yourself* (Fr. *s'encourager*) and *to be close to one another* (Fr. *être très près l'un de l'autre*). The first attempt accounts for the negative cross-cultural transfer from L1 to L2. In fact, the gesture of tapping on someone's shoulder is not used to congratulate someone, but to encourage him, which shows that the same concrete action is interpreted differently in both sociocultural contexts and can thus lead to misinterpretations. Consequently, we argue that to be successful, participants need to combine their knowledge about general embodied experiences with their knowledge about culturally embedded gestures. This supports fairly well the idea that culture-specific grounding directly affects the semantic transparency of idioms (Boers & Demecheeler, 2001). In contrast, the second attempt shows that the lexical meaning of the individual constituents of the idiom can potentially evoke a different image, leading to a different overall interpretation. In fact, the action of tapping (*klopfen*) can be understood as the result of two individuals being very close to one another, which makes their shoulders (*Schulter*) come into contact. However, as the participants did not suggest any equivalent expressions for the item, no further conclusions can be drawn about the interpretation of the metaphorical meaning of the target expression.

Thus, the answers provide evidence of the general ability of learners to figure out the physical situation by using their general embodied experiences, select the relevant aspects and map them onto the target domain. However, as the selection of the relevant aspects from the source domain is often triggered by cultural beliefs, the mere activation of general embodied experiences (e.g. in the form of image schemes, cf. Oakley, 2007) does not automatically lead to the expected results. In other words, where cultural knowledge is needed to infer the meaning of the metaphorical expression, metaphor comprehension is seriously impaired. This finding is in solid agreement with the observations made by De Cock and Suñer (2018), who found that participants only attempted to guess the meaning of metaphorical expressions on the basis of their general embodied experiences, but did not provide any answer when metaphorical expressions used more specific knowledge about traditions or historical facts that were not accessible to them. The theoretical implications of this finding are discussed in the next section.

V. DISCUSSION

This study addressed three research questions. The first was concerned with the facilitative effect of stay-abroad experience on the use of contextual information in L2 idiom comprehension. First, we looked into the general impact of stay-abroad experience on L2 idiom comprehension and found no marked differences between participants across the groups (*with* and *without stay-abroad experience*). This is consistent with the findings of Suñer (2018), but contrasts with those of the study by De Cock and Suñer (2018). This contradictory result might be explained by the fact that the topic domain tested in the latter study (linguistic taboo) was much more related to informal registers, which L2 learners

are more likely to be exposed to during a stay abroad. Furthermore, analysis of performance in the idiom comprehension test revealed that a stay-abroad experience was not associated with more efficient use of contextual information to infer the meaning of idioms. These results do not appear to support the idea that L2 learners with a stay-abroad experience might use the context more effectively to infer the meaning of L2 idioms because of their increased lexical abilities (De Keyser, 1991; Segalowitz et al., 2004; Wood, 2007) and well-developed communicative strategies (Freed, 1998; Lafford, 2004; Lafford, 2006; Montero et al., 2017). However, the results align well with the observation made in some previous studies suggesting a limited impact of stay-abroad experiences on vocabulary size (Collentine, 2004; Dewey, 2008; Ife et al., 2000; Segalowitz & Dewey, 2004; Taguchi, 2011). Thus, we can conclude that the gains made by L2 learners during a stay abroad in terms of vocabulary size and communicative strategies do not seem to be directly relevant for developing a greater sensitivity to metaphorical idiomatic expressions in the L2. In addition, analysis of the participants' individual answers suggests that participants relied on both the context and their general embodied experiences, but that these factors were not enough to ensure successful interpretation. Rather, it seems that, to some extent, knowledge about the culturally embedded meaning of some physical actions and gestures could have contributed to a more accurate interpretation of conceptually different metaphorical expressions.

The second question asked to what extent learners with a stay-abroad experience are subject to L2 frequency effects in L2 idiom comprehension. It has been argued that only L2 learners with a stay-abroad experience would take advantage of high-frequency idioms in the same way as L1 speakers do (e.g. Aarnon & Snider, 2010) because of their exposure to L2 authentic input and their greater sensitivity to idiomaticity (Ellis, 2012; Granger, 2001). Although high-frequency items were, in general, easier to comprehend than low-frequency items for all participants, a stay-abroad experience did not significantly increase this positive correlation, which is in disagreement with the predictions made by Kim and Kim (2012). Rather, the overall picture of the results supports the idea that participants at levels B2-C1 have already acquired a native-like sensitivity to idiomaticity in the sense that they already benefit from L2 frequency effects. However, in order to make such strong claims regarding the influence of L2 frequency on L2 idiom comprehension, a control group consisting of L1 speakers should have been included in the study. Such a baseline would have allowed us to investigate the extent to which the differences between high frequency and low frequency are comparable between L2 learner groups and L1 speaker groups.

As for the third research question on the relationship between proficiency level, length of stay and frequency regarding the use of contextual information in L2 idiom comprehension, the results are very heterogeneous. We found that presenting high-frequency idioms with context is associated with significantly better performance among all participants compared with their low-frequency counterparts. These findings seem to be in disagreement with the *Literal Salience Model* by Cieślicka (2006), which predicts a tendency for L2 learners to first access the most salient literal meaning of the idiomatic expression for the purpose of lexical inferencing, without making use of contextual clues (see also Giora, 1999, 2003). However, it can be argued that the presence of contextual information might have enhanced the quality of lexical inferencing for those idiomatic expressions whose meaning can be more easily accessed because of their high frequency. In contrast, the absence of a context considerably diminished the quality of lexical inferencing for low-frequency idiomatic expressions, since their literal meaning could not be easily inferred. In other words, the context only provides additional clues when the meaning of the idiomatic expression is already strongly activated due to its high frequency. Further research is therefore needed to look at learners' strategies during L2 idiom comprehension regarding the use of the context by using think-aloud protocols. Furthermore, length of stay has been found to have a negative impact on L2 idiom comprehension. One plausible reason for this striking result could be that, although it is important to be massively exposed to L2 authentic input during a stay abroad for the purpose of learning vocabulary, the distribution of the input over time seems to be much more crucial (Dewey, 2008). This means that massive exposure to L2 texts containing idiomatic expressions in the at-home learning context could be more beneficial in terms of L2 idiom comprehension than having the same exposure over a longer period of time during a stay abroad.

Although this study substantially contributes to a deeper understanding of the factors modulating the impact of stay-abroad experiences on L2 idiom comprehension, it does have some methodological limitations. Whereas the sample size was relatively large in terms of numbers of participants, more idiomatic expressions for each category should have been included in order to balance against within-cluster similarity. Furthermore, participants' language proficiency was determined on the basis of self-assessment judgements as well as the language learning progression in the respective degree programs. Therefore, in order to increase the accuracy of the observations regarding the influence of language proficiency on L2 idiom comprehension, more reliable testing instruments (e.g. standardized placement tests) should be used. Finally, it is worth noting that not all participants were enrolled in the same degree program, so that they were not fully comparable regarding their academic background. In fact, participants enrolled in the translation and interpreting program could have taken advantage of their well-developed translation skills, in contrast to those participants studying modern languages from a linguistic and literary point of view.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to examine whether a stay-abroad experience is associated with increased conceptual fluency with regard to L2 idiom comprehension. Taken together, the results suggest that the benefits of a stay-abroad experience do not translate into better performance in L2 idiom comprehension. More specifically, the analysis found

no evidence of either better use of contextual information by L2 learners with stay-abroad experience or a facilitative effect of frequency effects. Rather, it seems that the use of context is much more affected by frequency effects than by the stay-abroad experience, which indicates that the L2 input offered in more formal learning contexts might also play an important role in L2 idiom comprehension. Thus, in order to increase their proficiency in areas such as L2 conceptual fluency, L2 learners in the stay-abroad learning context would also need to have enhanced L2 input that offers multiple occurrences and prompts them to notice target idiomatic expressions.

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Arabic-speakers Learning Finnish Vowels: Short-term Phonetic Training Supports Second Language Vowel Production

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Abstract—Considering all the many challenges of forced migration to the immigrants themselves, learning the local language is of extreme importance when attempting to integrate into a new society. Earlier research shows that the mother tongue phonology disturbs the perception of those redundant contrasts that are crucial to the target language, which then affects the production of the second language. The main purpose of this study was to see whether Arabic speakers learn to produce universally difficult non-native vowel sounds with only a short and simple articulatory training protocol. Thirteen Arabic speaking asylum seekers were tested and trained with natural stimuli produced by four speakers. The vowels /y/ and /ø/ were embedded in pseudowords /ty:ti/ and /tøti/. The first three formants of both pre- and post-test productions were analyzed, and the results of both acoustic and statistical analyses showed that there was a significant change in the production of both vowels. This implies that even a short-term phonetic training improves the production of the target language, which is worth noting as an enabler of the language learning process that immigrants undergo during their journey towards cultural integration.

Index Terms—immigrants, vowel production training, second language learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Oral communication between humans relies on speech perception and production. Speech perception starts to develop already during pregnancy (Kuhl, 2000) and approximately six months after birth the infant develops a language-specific perception for vowels (Kuhl, 2004). The perceptual learning process is based on detecting patterns and exploiting statistical properties, which perceptually changes the infant's language capacity (Kuhl, 2000). The memory traces of native speech sounds (Näätänen et al., 1997) function as patterns that help to establish phonological categories of native speech sounds within the first year of life (Kuhl, Williams, Lacerda, Stevens & Lindblom, 1992). As the native speech sound categories have been formed in the process of acquisition, non-native sounds become redundant. The perception process enables the learning of speech production, starting with the infant developing production patterns with the help of native language acoustic model and articulatory gestures: the auditory feedback mechanism helps to evaluate whether the produced speech is consistent with the acoustic-auditory intention (Perkell, 1997).

Traditional second language acquisition (SLA) theories support the idea that one must remodel the native language sound system in order to learn the sounds of a foreign language. According to Lado (1957), phonemes are transferred from the native language system into the second language system, emphasis being on the phonemic and non-phonemic differences. Weinreich's theory classifies the learning problems according to the level of difficulty, under-differentiation being the most challenging learning situation (Weinreich, 1968). Following the traditional theories to some extent, the more recent SLA model, the Speech Learning Model (SLM), divides sound differentiation into three types: identical, new and similar. On the level of difficulty, the *identical* phone is the most undemanding situation for a second language learner. A completely *new* sound that does not have any similar qualities to other sounds in the native system takes more time and effort to learn, yet it will be correctly pronounced over time. Reflecting on both perception and production the highest learning difficulty arises when the foreign sound is *similar* to a native sound and is therefore too easily perceived and pronounced incorrectly (Flege, 1987). The Perceptional Assimilation Model (PAM) divides the relations of first and second languages into four assimilation patterns: (1) two second language (L2) categories assimilate into two native language (L1) categories, which is the same situation as the *identical* sounds of SLM. (2) L2 phones differ from L1 categories too notably to be assimilated, like the *new* sound in SLM. The remaining two types of assimilation describe the same problem as the *similar* sound in SLM: (3) the two L2 phonemes assimilate into one L1 category equally well or equally poorly or (4) two L2 phonemes assimilate into one L1 category unequally (Best &

Strange, 1992). The most problematic assimilation pattern is the one in which two L2 categories assimilate into one L1 category equally well or equally poorly. The second most difficult assimilation pattern is the one listed above as the last one – two L2 phonemes assimilate into one L1 category unequally. L2 phones differing from L1 categories too substantially to be assimilated is considered the third most problematic assimilation pattern, and the most undemanding pattern is the first one listed above – two L2 categories assimilating into two L1 categories.

Despite the effect of the native language on second language learning, previous research has shown that training helps different types of language learners to defeat the occurring learning difficulties. Child learners have improved their production patterns when tested with a listen-and-repeat training (Taimi, Alku, Jähi & Peltola, M.S., 2014), as have senior learners, too (Jähi, Alku & Peltola, M. S., 2015). Adult learners benefit from training whether they are learning a second language in a classroom setting (Peltola, M. S., Lintunen & Tamminen, 2014) or as immigrants (Flege, Bohn, & Jang, 1997). MMN studies have also revealed that immigrants are able to develop cortical memory representations for the foreign phoneme system and categorize language-specific phonemes preattentively (Winkler et al., 1999). Earlier studies have shown that phonetic listen-and-repeat production training not only improves non-native language perception and makes significant changes in the MMN responses (Tamminen & Peltola, 2015, Tamminen, Peltola, M. S., Kujala & Näätänen, 2015), but also improves non-native vowel production (Taimi, Alku, Jähi & Peltola, M.S., 2014). As for the different levels of training, one of the most significant of early studies in second language training showed that phonetic training improves perception on the same type of stimuli but does not generalize to natural stimuli, for example (Strange & Dittman, 1984).

This study examines the Finnish vowel production training of Arabic speaking asylum seekers residing in Finland. There are only three short vowels and their long counterparts (/i/, /u/ and /a/) in the Arabic system (IPA, 1999), while there are eight vowels (/i/, /e/, /æ/, /y/, /ø/, /u/, /o/ and /ɑ/) in the Finnish sound system. Considering the Arabic and Finnish sound systems, especially the universally difficult Finnish vowels /y/ and /ø/ are difficult for Arabic speakers to identify and pronounce. In this study the focus is on the production of the above-mentioned universally difficult vowels /y/ and /ø/. For Arabic speakers the Finnish /y/ is closest to their native /i/ and differs in pronunciation by the lip posture: lips are vastly spread in /i/ but heavily rounded when pronouncing /y/. The Finnish /ø/ is rather in the middle of /i/ and /a/ in Arabic – it is a complicated sound, since learners need to find a tongue position in the middle of their two familiar phonemes /i/ and /a/ that are at the very opposite ends in height. In addition to that, lips need to be rounded, which is not a familiar characteristic for Arabic front vowels. Considering the foregoing second language learning theories, these two Finnish vowels are difficult to produce and therefore make logical targets for a listen-and-repeat training.

Over the recent years, forced migration has been a major subject of discussion especially in Europe, often referred to as the "migration crisis." Due to the devastating events (coups, war, terrorism) in their home countries, many habitants of the Middle East have left and sought for asylum in Europe. Looking at this issue from a linguistic point of view, new challenges naturally arise as a growing amount of people from different language and cultural backgrounds start a new life in an alien culture. More second language teachers will be needed, and additional education needs to be provided to teachers who are in charge of teaching the target language. Arabic is the native language to a large part of asylum seekers in Finland (Finnish Immigration Service, 2018), which is why it is important to study the relationship between Arabic and Finnish more closely. Considering this relationship, especially some of the Finnish vowels are easily mispronounced by Arabic speakers if not practiced with the help of a native speaker. Therefore, the aim of this study is to confirm the need of vowel pronunciation training from the very start of second language learning by proving that even short-term phonetic training improves second language vowel production.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

Thirteen 17-54-year-old (mean 32.4 years) Arabic speaking male subjects participated in the study. The participants had resided in Finland from one to six months (length of residence, LOR, 4.1 months in average). They had participated in Finnish lessons for up to three months (1.9 months in average), but were not able to communicate in Finnish at the time of the testing. Most participants had learned English at some point in their lives, varying from a few months to over 20 years of exposure. None of the subjects had learned languages in which the sounds /y/ or /ø/ are included in the vowel system. All participants reported to have a normal hearing.

B. Design of the Study and Data Collection

All subjects were tested and trained according to the same procedure that lasted for approximately 30 minutes. The procedure was conducted in three different reception centers in Turku using LAB-lab portable laboratory containing Sanako Study Student 7.20 (7.20.030508.00) software on a laptop (Dell Latitude E7240) and Beyerdynamic MMX 300 headset. The aim at the reception center was to find a quiet place without any disruption, yet it was not always possible. However, the high-quality headset blocked the possible external noises and the data was obtained successfully.

After collecting background information (age, LOR, education, foreign language skills) and getting a written consent from each participant, the subjects were asked to listen and repeat pseudo-words /ty:ti/ and /tøti/ (each word 12 times) for the baseline (pre-test) measurement. The inter stimulus interval (ISI) was 2.5 seconds, during which the subjects

were asked to imitate the word they heard. This measurement was followed by the training block that included the baseline measurement block repeated four times, resulting in 48 stimuli per pseudo word. After the first training session, the participants were asked to have a 5–10-minute break. The same training block was repeated after the break. The final (post-test) recording was identical to the baseline measurement. The participants repeated altogether 240 stimuli out of which 48 were recorded and then analyzed.

C. Stimuli

Four speakers (two females and two males) were selected to produce natural stimuli for this study. The same Beyerdynamic headset was used both when recording the stimuli and when testing and training participants. We recorded the speech of these four speakers on Praat software: both of the pseudo words /ty:ti/ and /tøti/ ten times. Three words out of ten were chosen to be used as stimuli according to their proportion of vowel duration to word duration in order to avoid any problems that might appear in case the target vowel is too long or too short compared to other stimuli. In addition to being universally difficult, the target vowels /y/ and /ø/ were chosen because these phonemes are unfamiliar and, according to SLA theories, difficult to pronounce for Arabic speakers. The target sounds were long because longer duration gives more time for the subject to process what he heard and repeat it after. Of all consonants, the alveolar plosive /t/ causes least changes to neighboring sounds, which is why it was chosen to be a suitable environment for the target vowel. /i/ is a suitable vowel in the end of the pseudo word because the subjects are familiar with it in their native language and, therefore, they will be less likely to pay attention to the final vowel. Thus, the participants can focus on pronouncing the target vowels.

D. Data Analysis

The production data of all participants was acoustically analyzed using Praat software (version 5.3.01). Altogether 624 productions (24 words x 13 participants x 2 measurements) were analyzed by obtaining the following measures in each production: word duration, vowel duration, F0, F1 and F2 values of the target vowel. In addition to acoustic analyses, statistical analyses were conducted, and the data was subjected to a Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

III. RESULTS

The statistical analysis was carried out using a Word (2) x Session (2) x Measure (2) repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA). The main effect of Word ($f(1,16)=8.677$, $p=0,009$) describes the existing difference between vowels ($f(1,16)=246,819$, $p<0,001$). We found a main effect of Session ($f(1,16)=12.248$, $p=0,003$) which indicates that the production changed as a function of training. In addition, there was a Session x Word interaction ($f(1,16)=12.951$, $p=0,002$) showing that the training had an impact on the target vowels. The Session x Measure interaction ($f(1,16)=9.397$, $p=0,007$) confirms that the formants change differently.

As for the target vowel /y/, the inspection of the acoustic difference suggests that the largest mean formant change between pretest and post-test is found in F_2 values. The mean F_2 value in pretest was 1416 Hz but it increased after training by 187 Hz. The greatest dispersion lies in the pretest F_2 values (minimum 938 Hz – maximum 1799 Hz, range 861 Hz and Standard Deviation (STD) 331 Hz): this indicates that there were vast differences between the participants' pretest F_2 values. The mean F_1 values of /y/ increased by 11 Hz after training. There was a typical pattern occurring in many productions: the subjects tried to produce the target vowel by combining the familiar vowels /i/ and /u/, which resulted in the diphthong /iu/. While many participants clearly struggled in the pretest, some already appeared to have started from a rather decent level. Furthermore, in some cases the productions varied immensely within-subject; a few subjects had the tendency to pronounce approximately every other word as a different word (eg. "tuuti" - "tööti" - "tyyti" - "tuuti", etc.) which would explain why within a single participant's test block acoustic measurements some words seem to have very successful formant values and some are remarkably far from the target values.

The most extensive mean difference among the formant values for /ø/ was found between pretest and post-test F_2 values (63 Hz). The most substantial dispersion in the measured values of /ø/ was found in the pretest F_2 values (minimum 938 Hz – maximum 1778 Hz, range 840 Hz and STD 254 Hz). Despite /ø/ being a mid-height and falling in between the Arabic /a/ and /i/ categories, the participants succeeded to raise the mean F_1 values by 21 Hz. Moreover, the F_1 minimum value between pretest and post-test increased by 71 Hz. The subjects' F_1 values of /ø/ were already fairly native-like in the pretest but the mean F_2 values were approximately 200 Hz short from the target. This indicates that their tongue is too retracted possibly due to excess lip rounding, which will not necessarily be corrected by training. Nevertheless, some subjects' individual mean F_2 values were over 1700 Hz already in the pretest. Remarkably, the maximum F_2 values also decreased after training. Similarly to the way the subjects often pronounced /ty:ti/ as /tiuti/, /tøti/ also had a regular mispronunciation pattern /tojoti/. The palatal approximant /j/ functions as an aid for reaching the target sound.

TABLE 1.

/y/	Mean Pre	Mean Post	Min Pre	Min Post	Max Pre	Max Post	Std. Deviation Pre	Std. Deviation Post
F_1	368	379	275	324	435	433	42.89	29.16
F_2	1416	1604	938	1003	1799	1723	344.79	271.59
/ø/	Mean Pre	Mean Post	Min Pre	Min Post	Max Pre	Max Post	Std. Deviation Pre	Std. Deviation Post
F_1	481	501	356	426	543	542	52.24	34.34
F_2	1464	1526	938	1103	1778	1720	264.58	220.61

Mean, minimum and maximum formant values (Hz) and standard deviations are shown for both vowels in both pretest and post-test settings.

IV. DISCUSSION

The main purpose of the present study was to see whether Arabic speakers learn to produce universally difficult non-native vowel sounds with only a short and simple articulatory training protocol. The hypothesis was that the conducted short-term phonetic training will result in improvement of production performance on both target vowels, and the results support this hypothesis. /y/ and /ø/ are both secondary cardinal vowels and less commonly found in the vowel systems of the world's languages (Ladefoged & Maddieson, 1996), and from the perspective of the native language these sounds are extremely difficult to produce. Within the framework of SLM (Flege, 1987), it can be argued that /y/ is a Similar sound to Arabic speakers, because the results suggest that the participants attempt to accomplish the correct pronunciation through the native /u/, yet the F_2 values do not still reach a fully native-like level. The assimilation pattern of Category Goodness Difference (Best & Strange, 1992) is suitable to describe the relationship between /y/ and /u/: they both assimilate into the native category /u/, only /y/ is a poorer representative of the category. Another option is that the sound is learned as New and is Non-Assimilable, but the first option ought to be more plausible. The Finnish vowel /ø/ is placed between the native Arabic vowel phoneme categories /i/ and /a/, but it seems to be positioned too far to be assimilated into either of those native categories. Especially lip-rounding seems to affect pronunciation rather deeply: interestingly, according to the acoustic measurements, some subjects seek for the correct pronunciation through /o/ (which is also not a native sound to Arabic speakers). From the perspective of Arabic as the native language, it is reasonable to consider /ø/ a New (SLM, Flege, 1987) and a Non-Assimilable sound (PAM, Best & Strange, 1992).

The study was operated using a listen-and-repeat phonetic training protocol featuring two non-native vowels embedded in pseudo-words, which is the type of phonetic training that has been productively utilized in previous studies (Jähi, Alku & Peltola, M. S., 2015, Peltola, K. U., Tamminen, Alku & Peltola M.S., 2015, Taimi, Alku, Jähi & Peltola, M.S., 2014). While the afore-mentioned studies were based on a two-day production training, the current study investigated the possible effects of a shorter training period. Also, instead of a native–non-native contrast the subjects learn to improve their production of two non-native target vowels. Interestingly, another short-term training study tested the ability of Finnish and American English speakers to produce a non-native vowel contrast (/ty:ti/ - /tɯ:ti/), yet according to their results both groups failed to improve their productions and continued to produce the pseudo-words according to the mother tongue model (Peltola, K. U., Rautaoja, Alku & Peltola, M. S., 2017). How is it possible that the Arabic speakers improved their production even though the target vowels are universally difficult and the training period was relatively short? What exactly makes this training so efficient? The difference between the compositions of the above-mentioned training studies (Jähi, Alku & Peltola, M. S., 2015, Peltola, K.U., Rautaoja, Alku & Peltola, M. S., 2017, Peltola K. U., Tamminen, Alku & Peltola M. S., 2015, Taimi, Alku, Jähi & Peltola, M.S., 2014) and the current study is immense – more training and only one target sound – hence it could have been possible that the Arabic speaking participants would have needed more training in order to improve the production of these two non-native target vowels. The stimuli are also different: while previous studies have been conducted utilizing semi-synthetic stimuli, the stimuli in the current study were naturally produced by four different speakers. Considering the short-period training study on Finnish and American English speakers (Peltola, K.U., Rautaoja, Alku & Peltola, M. S., 2017), there are a few differences between that and the current study that may explain the contradictory results: firstly, the study conducted by Peltola, K. U., Rautaoja, Alku & Peltola, M. S. (2017) entailed two different language groups, and secondly, the current study focused on two non-native target vowels whereas Peltola, K. U., Rautaoja, Alku & Peltola, M. S. (2017) designed their study for a non-native vowel contrast (/y/ not being a target vowel for the Finnish speakers). Thirdly, the native Arabic vowel system is less complex than the American English one, which may facilitate the non-native target vowel production. However, the question of whether a more complex L1 vowel inventory supports second language acquisition and production because of more successful assimilation or hinders it due to the difficulty of learning new categories, remains fully unanswered as the research results remain contradictory. A vowel identification study conducted by Iverson and Evans (2007) contradicts with the results of the current study – their results suggest that a larger vowel inventory facilitates learning instead of hindering it. This contradiction increases the significance of the current result and it must be further investigated whether it is particularly the native language Arabic and its vowel system that generated such rapid improvement in production.

V. CONCLUSION

The most remarkable finding of this study is that the improvement in production happens so fast with such a short training. The result is promising from the perspective of teaching Finnish as a second language to asylum seekers and immigrants, and it can be assumed that further training will continue to strengthen the improvement of production. The ability to speak the language of the society one is integrating into is crucial and it stands to reason that being understood by native speakers improves one's confidence, which creates better prospects for one's future in a new society. Therefore, pronunciation training should gain more status in the curriculum of second language learning.

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Using Karaoke Videos to Teach Japanese Vocabulary to Taiwanese University Students

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Abstract—**This paper reports the usage of Japanese karaoke films in order to enhance learning Japanese vocabulary among students in a university in Taiwan. A pretest-posttest control-group design was implemented in which the treatment students (55 girls and 48 boys) were given Japanese vocabulary lessons via listening to and watching two karaoke films, while the control group (62 girls and 47 boys) received their Japanese vocabulary lessons through only listening to the same songs (N=212, *P* ≤ 0.05). The treatment lasted for six consecutive regular general Japanese classes in which the last 20 minutes of the session was allocated to this experiment. The statistical independent samples T-tests used for each of the three comparisons in this study revealed a significant higher gain scores for the girls treatment group, while the boys treatment and control, as well as the general (all) students treatment and control groups did not show any significant difference. Given the ever-growing usage of karaoke in many countries such as Taiwan, the authors believe that addressing the possible and potential capabilities of such a favorable activity, particularly among the youth, can prove effective and helpful in teaching/learning Japanese and other languages.**

Index Terms—**karaoke, Japanese, music, vocabulary**

I. INTRODUCTION

There have been numerous studies concerning the effects of various types of music on language learning. Whether music is used as a means of relaxation in language learning atmospheres, or else, as a means for introducing different features of a particular language such as its vocabulary, there are controversial debates as to its usefulness or even disadvantage (for example, as a distraction from the main focus of the language learners). In Taiwan, there are two obvious phenomena which made this study worth conducting: 1) Japanese is the second most popular foreign language to be learnt; and 2) people love karaoke. As Shanley (1998) postulates, outside Japan, the largest number of karaoke clubs, more commonly referred to as KTVs, can be found in Taiwan. Karaoke combines two Japanese words: *kara*, short for karappo, which means empty; and *oke*, part of okestura, meaning orchestra. To the best knowledge of the authors, there has not been any study done to investigate the probable effects usage of karaoke in a class can have on learning a language, in this case the Japanese language. Thus, the current study tries to address this issue in case of university students in Taiwan.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The use of music in the life of mankind dates back to prehistory. As Langer (1957) describes, "Man discovered how to a change a pitch to make some notes stand out. Being more valuable than the drum, voices soon made patterns, and the long wandering melodies of primitive song became an integral part of communal celebration" (p. 130). By the passage of time, these vocalizations started to symbolize representations of things outside of the context of the ritual itself. Likewise, Yule (1985) has a similar stand when he talks about "bow-wow" and "yo-heave-ho" theories of language origins. Similarly, Gombrich (1972), remarks that there are astronomical numbers of stimuli that we encounter every moment. He further states, "Whatever can be coded in symbols can also be retrieved and recalled with relative ease" (p.15). In tandem with these notions, we can observe that music has an unquestionable role in our daily life. According to Wallace (1994), using songs with a repeated and simple pattern can facilitate precise text recall in the native language. In some cases, music has been an integrated part of the language teaching method as well. For instance, according to Larsen-Freeman and Anderson (2011), there are two concerts used as the components of the receptive phase of the lessons in Desuggestopedia. In the first part, the teacher starts reading a slow, dramatic piece which is synchronized in intonation with the music (preferably a Classical); then, in the second part, the language learners are asked to put their scripts aside, and just listen to the teacher who reads the dialogs at a normal speed while the music (a pre-Classical or Baroque) is played as the background.

The reason karaoke might help language learners learn more efficiently, the authors hypothesize, may be due to effects explained in dual coding theory by Paivio (1971). Several neurobiological evidence support the notions in this theory that the human brain maintains functionally independent verbal and nonverbal representational and processing

systems. In other words, different areas in the brain are specialized for processing information verbally and nonverbally. According to Paivio (1971), affective and emotional reactions would be expected to accompany other nonverbal cognitive reactions such as imagery. In more technical terms, dual coding theory states that mental representation is organized into two separate coding systems—one specialized for language and the other for nonverbal objects and events. The basic units for verbal representations are called 'logogens' and the basic units for nonverbal representations are called 'imagens' (Paivio & Begg, 1981, p.247). The verbal system is ordered sequentially whereas the nonverbal system is ordered non-sequentially. For example, morphemes occur in sequential patterns that adhere to associative constraints; whereas, nonverbal representations often appear in compound images and represent episodes holistically. Thus, verbally and pictorially presented material should be easier to recall than information presented in only one modality because the two representations provide redundant retrieval routes. It has also been suggested that pictures increase motivation and attention to the material, make the material more concrete and comprehensible, and serve to organize verbal data. Likewise, advocates of visual-literacy education claim that a more visually oriented instruction would also lead to broader cognitive settlement; because this provides the students with more mental tools with which to perceive the world around them (Arnheim, 1974, 1997; Dondis, 1973; Dwyer, 1978; Gombrich, 1982; Messaris, 1994).

Music can have a positive influence on both verbal and non-verbal performance in providing a boost in psycho-physiological incitement and mood (Cassidy & MacDonald, 2007; Jones, West, & Estell, 2006; Schellenberg, 2006). Music is frequently considered to be a good help to enhance memory. For instance, Legg's (2009) study divided early teenager French learning students into music and non-music groups. The non-music group used traditional teaching strategies which involved listening and repeating French words and phrases, and the learning materials for the music group were prepared in sung novel melodies. Consequently, students in the music group had significantly higher post-test memory for the L2 materials compared to the non-music group. Similarly, Thiessen and Saffran (2009), observed that infants learned lyrics better when they were paired with a melody compared to when they were just uttered. Also, Brett (2001) reported a study in which language learners were required not only to attend to language in various audio-visual presentations, but also to simultaneously perform an interactive task. He found that students exposed to video and subtitles performed best on written summaries. There are also other cognitive neurological studies which suggest that music has significant impact on linguistic memory and consequently, improvement of language tasks (Jentschke, Koelsch, & Friederici, 2005; Patel, 2008; Sammler et al., 2010). Nonetheless, on the other end of the continuum, there are claims that disruptive music makes excess demands on the limited processing capability of cognitive systems, and thus, reducing available resources for other parallel tasks to perform adequately (Kämpfe, Sedlmeier, & Renkewitz, 2010; Schellenberg, 2012). In other words, music might as well have negative effects on language learning.

III. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Introduction

The purpose of the data collected in this pre-test post-test control-group study was to explore the effects of using Japanese karaoke in order to enhance teaching Japanese vocabulary to Taiwanese university students who are learning Japanese as a second foreign language.

Design of the Study

The pre-test post-test control-group design of the current study has the following characteristic as stated by Creswell (2003, p170):
  • The experimental group A and the control group B were randomly assigned.
  • Both groups took a pre-test and post-test.
  • The experimental group received the main treatment (Japanese karaoke).
  • The control group received a different treatment (Japanese songs).

Participants and procedure

Six classes of undergraduate students in TransWorld University, Taiwan participated in this study. These students were mostly from College of Design, and College of Hospitality and Tourism. They took "General Japanese" as the second foreign language. Most of the students were Taiwanese except for eight Malaysian Chinese students. These six classes were randomly assigned to two groups of three classes each. The treatment students (55 girls and 48 boys) were given Japanese vocabulary lessons through listening to and watching two karaoke films (Song-1: Secret Base; Song-2: Snowpack; Appendix A), while the control group (62 girls and 47 boys) received their Japanese vocabulary lessons through only listening to the same songs. Prior to the experiment, all the participants were given a handout of the full texts of each song in Japanese with Chinese translation. The time allocated to each activity for both groups was about 20 minutes at the end of each regular class. The study was conducted in six consecutive weeks (two for the tests, and four for the lessons). Only the students who were present in both pre-test and post-test have been accounted for in this experiment.

Data Collection

A 40-item multiple-choice Japanese vocabulary test was designed by the authors. In this test, for each Japanese word, three choices were given in Chinese (Appendix B). Although all the words were introduced and taught during the sessions of karaoke and the audio songs for both treatment and control groups, precautions were taken so that the words

be as difficult as possible in order to maintain the discriminating power of the test items. This test was administered to both control and treatment groups exactly one week prior and one week after the experiment. The Only correct answers were counted, so unanswered test items or wrong answers were disregarded.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the main objective of this study which was to examine any probable effects of the usage of Japanese karaoke in enhancing learning Japanese vocabulary, the following research questions, and null hypotheses were made. (For the sake of brevity, the three comparisons are shown together).

1- Is there any significant difference in Japanese vocabulary gain score between the students who were taught the vocabulary through Japanese karaoke, and those who were taught the vocabulary with audio music alone (in boys, girls, and all students)?

$H_0$1- There is no significant difference in Japanese vocabulary gain score between the students who were taught the vocabulary through the Japanese karaoke, and those who were taught the vocabulary with audio music alone (in boys, girls, and all students).

IV. RESULTS

Because the statistical test used in this research was an independent samples t-test, the three assumptions of independence of observations, scores distribution normality, and homogeneity of the variances had to be met. As mentioned before, the treatment and the control groups were randomly assigned. Moreover, the two groups had no idea as to what teaching material was used for the other one. Therefore, the independence of observations has been maintained in this study.

Then as for the normality of the distribution of the scores in the population, we must see the descriptive statistics results including the K-S test for each of the three comparisons done in this study as summarized in TABLE 1.

TABLE 1:
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR THE THREE COMPARISONS

Boys			Statistic	Std. Error
Gain scores	Treatment	Mean	5.7708	1.99606
		Median	5.0000	
		Skewness	.204	.343
		Kurtosis	.182	.674
	Control	Mean	6.1489	1.86946
		Median	7.0000	
		Skewness	-.063	.347
		Kurtosis	-.603	.681
Girls			Statistic	Std. Error
Gain scores	Treatment	Mean	9.3091	1.60741
		Median	10.0000	
		Skewness	-.403	.322
		Kurtosis	-.352	.634
	Control	Mean	5.0806	1.31003
		Median	5.0000	
		Skewness	-.183	.304
		Kurtosis	-.397	.599
All Students			Statistic	Std. Error
Gain scores	Treatment	Mean	7.6602	1.27142
		Median	7.0000	
		Skewness	-.113	.238
		Kurtosis	-.175	.472
	Control	Mean	5.5413	1.09353
		Median	6.0000	
		Skewness	-.082	.231
		Kurtosis	-.439	.459

TABLE 1 shows that in each comparison, the mean is very close to the median in both treatment and control groups. We can also look at the skewness and kurtosis statistics. Here, we can see that all the skewness and kurtosis values are small relative to the standard errors. Thus, the skewness and kurtosis of the distributions are not problematic here. Furthermore, the K-S test of normality for each comparison gives us a significant p value of .200 suggesting that the distributions of the gain scores are normal.

Then in order to determine whether the assumption of the homogeneity of the variances has been met, we should investigate the results of the independent samples t-test for each comparison as shown in TABLE 2.

TABLE 2:
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST FOR THE GAIN SCORES (THREE COMPARISONS)

Independent Samples Test for the gain scores (Boys)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Scores	Equal variances assumed	.077	.781	-.138	93	.890	-.37810	2.73701	-5.81327	5.05706
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.38	92.723	.890	-.37810	2.73480	-5.80909	5.05289

Independent Samples Test for the gain scores (Girls)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Scores	Equal variances assumed	.952	.331	2.057	115	.042	4.22845	2.05573	.15645	8.30044
	Equal variances not assumed			2.039	107.554	.044	4.22845	2.07363	.11796	8.33893

Independent Samples Test for the gain scores (All Students)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Scores	Equal variances assumed	1.308	.254	1.268	210	.206	2.11891	1.67120	-1.17557	5.41339
	Equal variances not assumed			1.264	203.534	.208	2.11891	1.67700	-1.18761	5.42543

In TABLE 2, the significance value of the Levene's Test for boys, girls, and all students are .781, .331, and .254 respectively, which are larger than .05. This means that the assumption of homogeneity of the variances of the scores for the population in case of each of these three comparisons has been met. Thus, we should use the first line in the table, which refers to "equal variances assumed". Therefore, in the current tests we are dealing with the following results for each of the compared groups as follows:

Boys: t (95) = -.138, *p*= .890

As the *p*= .890 is larger than the required cut-off value of .05, the null hypothesis is not rejected and, thus, we can conclude that there is not a statistically significant difference in the Japanese vocabulary gain score between the control and treatment groups.

All students: t (212) = 1.268, *p*= .206

As the *p*= .206 is larger than the required cut-off value of .05, the null hypothesis is not rejected and, thus, we can conclude that there is not a statistically significant difference in the Japanese vocabulary gain score between the control and treatment groups of all students together.

Girls: t (117) = 2.057, *p*= .042

As the *p*= .042 is less than the required cut-off value of .05, the null hypothesis is rejected and we can conclude that there is a statistically significant difference in the Japanese vocabulary gain score between the control and treatment groups. Also, as for the direction of the difference, we can see in TABLE 3 that the mean Japanese vocabulary gain score of 9.30 for the treatment group is larger than the mean Japanese vocabulary gain score of 5.08 for the control group. Thus, we can conclude that, as the alternative directional hypothesis conveys, those students who were taught the Japanese words through karaoke have higher Japanese vocabulary gain score than those who did not use the Japanese karaoke.

TABLE 3:
GROUP STATISTICS. (GIRLS)

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Gain scores	Treat.	55	9.3091	11.92084	1.60741
	Control	62	5.0806	10.31519	1.31003

As the hypothesis has been explored, we need to measure the effect size statistics which provides us with an indication of the magnitude of the differences between the two groups. A common way to do this is to calculate the eta

squared. Since SPSS does not provide eta squared values for t-tests, we should do the calculations on our own using the information provided in the output. The procedure for calculating and interpreting eta squared is by using the following formula as stated by Pallant (2005):

$$Eta\ Squared = \frac{t^2}{t^2 + (N-1)}$$

Eta Squared $= \frac{(2.057) \times (2.057)}{(2.057) \times (2.057) + 115} = 0.035$

According to Cohen (1988), the guidelines for interpreting this value are: .01=small effect, .06=moderate effect, .14=large effect. Thus, we would claim that the effect size of .035 for this test is rather a small effect. Subsequently, if we multiply this value by 100, we can have the percentage, meaning that approximately 3.5 percent of the variance in Japanese vocabulary gain score is explained by the two different teaching treatments.

V. DISCUSSION

In this article, the authors have experimented whether or not using karaoke videos can enhance learning Japanese vocabulary. The results showed that among the students, only girls seemed to have benefited from these videos, as the other two groups; that is, boys and all students together did not show a significant difference. If we merely consider girls, then these current findings support the claims and findings of Cassidy & MacDonald (2007), Jentschke, Koelsch, & Friederici (2005), Jones, West, & Estell (2006), Patel (2008), Sammler et al. (2010), and Schellenberg (2006). Moreover, this improvement of learning, the authors postulate, may well be due to dual coding theory posed by Paivio (1971) and the other advocates of this theory in stating that verbally and pictorially presented material must be easier to recall than information presented in only one modality. Nonetheless, the authors acknowledge that the results of this study are not conclusive because of limitations such as the small sample size, short duration of the project, and the types of karaoke movies selected for this experiment. For instance, there was no way in this study to consider students' personal preferences as to what type of karaoke is preferred by the participants. In this view, perhaps cartoons are more favored by the girls, and that is why they scored higher because one of the two karaoke videos (the longer one) was a Japanese cartoon. On the other hand, it might be the case that despite all arguments in favor of positive effects of music (and perhaps, karaoke in our case), inappropriate music may impede language students from learning, as assumed by Kämpfe, Sedlmeier, & Renkewitz (2010), and Schellenberg (2012).

VI. CONCLUSION

The current study focused on the effects of using karaoke videos on learning Japanese vocabulary by the Taiwanese university students. The results revealed a slightly significant difference between girls and boys. That is, watching and listening to Japanese karaoke would help girls learn Japanese vocabulary better than those who only listened to the songs. Moreover, no significant difference was observed in boys, or among all students together. Considering the procedure adopted, and the results obtained in this study, the authors recommend the following for further investigation in future:
  - Studying the effects of using karaoke in learning/teaching languages other than Japanese;
  - Conducting similar research with longer durations of treatment;
  - Performing similar research with different types of participants, and bigger sample size;
  - Using various genres of karaoke videos and critically investigating their effects on learning a particular language;
  - Studying how trying to actively singing in the target language in karaoke sessions may possibly help language learners.

APPENDIX A. JAPANESE LYRICS

Secret Base ～君がくれたもの～

君と夏の終わり　将来の夢　大きな希望　忘れない
10年後の8月　また出会えるのを　信じて
最高の思い出を…
出会いは　ふっとした　瞬間　帰り道の交差点で
声をかけてくれたね　「一緒に帰ろう」
僕は　照れくさそうに　カバンで顔を隠しながら

本当は　とても　とても　嬉しかったよ

あぁ　花火が夜空　きれいに咲いて　ちょっとセツナク

あぁ　風が時間とともに　流れる

嬉しくって　楽しくって　冒険も　いろいろしたね

二人の　秘密の　基地の中

君と夏の終わり　将来の夢　大きな希望　忘れない

10 年後の 8 月　また出会えるのを　信じて

君が最後まで　心から　「ありがとう」　叫んでたこと　知ってたよ

涙をこらえて　笑顔でさようなら　せつないよね

最高の思い出を...

あぁ　夏休みも　あと少しで　終わっちゃうから

あぁ　太陽と月　仲良くして

悲しくって　寂しくって　喧嘩も　いろいろしたね

二人の　秘密の　基地の中

君が最後まで　心から　「ありがとう」　叫んでたこと　知ってたよ

涙をこらえて　笑顔でさようなら　せつないよね

最高の思い出を...

突然の　転校で　どうしようもなく

手紙　書くよ　電話もするよ　忘れないでね　僕のことを

いつまでも　二人の　基地の中

君と夏の終わり　ずっと話して　夕日を見てから星を眺め

君の頬を　流れた涙は　ずっと忘れない

君が最後まで　大きく手を振ってくれたこと　きっと忘れない

だから　こうして　夢の中で　ずっと永遠に...

君と夏の終わり　将来の夢　大きな希望　忘れない

10 年後の 8 月　また出会えるのを　信じて

君が最後まで　心から　「ありがとう」　叫んでたこと　知ってたよ

涙をこらえて　笑顔でさようなら　せつないよね

最高の思い出を...

最高の思い出を...

****

なごり雪　(Nagoriyuki/ Snowpack)

汽車を待つ君の横で僕は

時計を気にしてる

季節はずれの雪が降ってる

「東京で見る雪はこれが最後ね」と

さみしそうに君はつぶやく

なごり雪も降るときを知り

ふざけすぎた季節のあとで

今 春が来て 君はきれいになった

去年よりずっときれいになった

動き始めた汽車の窓に

顔をつけて

君は何か言おうとしている

君の口びるが「さようなら」と動くことが

こわくて 下をむいてた

時が行けば 幼ない君も

大人になると気づかないまま

今 春が来て 君はきれいになった

去年よりずっときれいになった

君が去った ホームにのこり

落ちてはとける雪を見ていた

今 春が来て 君はきれいになった

去年よりずっときれいになった

去年よりずっときれいになった

去年よりずっときれいになった

APPENDIX B. THE JAPANESE VOCABULARY TEST

學制：■日四技 □日二技 □日二專 □夜四技 □夜二技 □夜二專(請勾選)			
學年/學期	106 學年/第二學期	學生學號	
學生姓名		性別	男 ・ 女

1. きみ   a. 我們   b. 你   c. 他
2. なつ   a. 春天   b. 夏天   c. 秋天
3. おわり   a. 開始   b. 中途   c. 結束
4. しょうらい   a. 過去   b. 現在   c. 未来
5. ゆめ   a. 夢想   b. 現實   c. 理想
6. きぼう   a. 希望   b. 想像   c. 美麗
7. わすれない   a. 不會害怕   b. 不會注意   c. 不會忘記
8. しんじて   a. 知道   b. 懷疑   c. 相信
7. さいこう   a. 最新的   b. 最好美的   c. 最近的
10. おもいで   a. 回億   b. 降落   c. 飛逝
11. いっしょに   a. 各自   b. 你們   c. 一起
12. とても   a. 一點點   b. 非常   c. 害怕地
13. うれしくって   a. 開心   b. 傷感   c. 寂寞
14. たのしくって   a. 害怕   b. 悲痛   c. 歡樂
15. いろいろ   a. 年幼的   b. 一種   c. 各式各樣
16. ふたり   a. 一個人   b. 倆個人   c. 大家
17. ひみつ   a. 故事   b. 秘密   c. 俗語
18. しってたよ   a. 我知道   b. 他走了   c. 你看到了
19. かなしくって   a. 殘雪   b. 悲痛   c. 美麗
20. さびしくって   a. 熱鬧   b. 開心   c. 寂寞
21. きしゃ   a. 計程車   b. 火車   c. 飛機
22. まつ   a. 看到   b. 說   c. 等
23. よこ   a. 旁邊   b. 上面   c. 裡面
24. さいご   a. 最初   b. 途中   c. 最後

25. さみしそう   a. 開心   b. 歡樂   c. 傷感
26. つぶやく   a. 喃喃説   b. 緩緩開走   c. 徐徐吹來
27. なごりゆき   a. 残雪   b. 季節   c. 嘴唇
28. ふざけ   a. 擾嚷   b. 害怕的   c. 年幼的
29. きせつ   a. 火車   b. 季節   c. 時間
30. いま   a. 昨天   b. 而今   c. 今晚
31. はる   a. 春天   b. 夏天   c. 冬天
32. きれい   a. 冷   b. 窗戶   c. 美麗
33. きょねん   a. 去年   b. 今年   c. 明年
34. くちびる   a. 頭   b. 嘴唇   c. 臉頰
35. こわくて   a. 高興   b. 舞動   c. 害怕
36. おさない   a. 年幼   b. 年老   c. 壯年
37. おとな   a. 變得   b. 發覺   c. 長大
38. ホーム   a. 舞台   b. 月台   c. 大地
39. のこり   a. 留在   b. 降落   c. 離去
40. とける   a. 結冰   b. 融化   c. 貼著

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Perceptions about Self-recording Videos to Develop EFL Speaking Skills in Two Ecuadorian Universities

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Abstract—The present study explores the perceptions of EFL students from two Ecuadorian universities on the use of Self-Recording Videos (SRV) to develop speaking skills. As students do not have the opportunity to talk in the target language outside their classes, the authors of the present study analyzed the participants' viewpoints regarding SRV to improve their conversational abilities. There is still limited research on the use of SRV for English speaking practice in a foreign country, so the researchers' purpose is to fill this gap in the literature to contribute to further studies on the topic. The authors consider essential to acknowledge the positive aspects of using this technique from the learners' perspectives. For this purpose, participants were required to self-record a video related to the content of the class during the week and submit it to the Moodle platform.

Index Terms—self-recorded videos, perceptions, speaking skills, video-based learning, mobile devices, digital story telling

I. INTRODUCTION

We live in the age of moving images. The internet, the various practices to capture images, the emergence of distribution channels like YouTube are changing the way students learn and the way teachers teach, specifically a foreign language. This paper focuses on the learners' perceptions about the use of SRV to enhance speaking abilities in two Ecuadorian universities.

Currently, there is not enough research on the use of SRV to develop this skill in a non-English speaking country. Therefore, the authors consider essential to recognize the participants' opinions to contribute to the scientific community for future research on this topic.

The present study was conducted in two Ecuadorian universities. One was public, and the other one was private, located on the coast and highland regions of Ecuador. There were 81 participants (17 males and 64 females) from the two universities who volunteered to be part of this research.

To collect the data, the researchers applied an Electronic Survey to identify the students' perspectives on the use of SRV to develop speaking skills. The survey consisted of 5 Multiple Choice questions, Closed-ended questions, and two open-ended questions. The survey was applied through a Google Apps Form.

The purpose of this study was to identify the opinion students had when they self-recorded videos as a way to enhance their verbal skill. The researchers aimed at investigating how participants felt and what recommendations they would give to improve the application of this technique in future classes or in the worst case to stop using this strategy.

The paper is structured in 5 sections. The first section, the literature review evokes the most prominent studies related to video-based learning. The second section is related to the methodology of the research. In this section, the researchers explain the participants ´background, the instrument used and how it was structured. The third section shows the results participants gave to the questionnaire. The fourth section presents the conclusions reached with the investigation and offers space for other possible research in the same field. Finally, the last section indicates the bibliography used in the present study.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Underpinning Theories

Constructivist learning emphasizes the importance of learners in taking active roles when dealing with and understanding new information to construct their knowledge by linking prior knowledge and experiences (Nidzam, Ahmad, Chiao, Yahaya, Nizam, & Abdullah, 2015). Similarly, Vygotsky (1978) stressed the importance of powerful experiences with people like classmates and teachers. He proposed that learning happens in three stages: the activities

that the learner can carry out independently, the learning processes that cannot happen even with the help of others, and finally the learning that happens with the help of others. According to Vygotsky (1986), this zone, known as the zone of proximal development is enhanced through social interaction. Social interaction constitutes a fundamental role in the development of cognition. According to Chaiklin (2003), this social interaction or collaboration is used to assess the student's zone of proximal development to give the learner an opportunity to imitate and later on to help him in the maturation of his learning process for the future developments. Thus, the role of a teacher in a constructivist environment is of a guide and facilitator who provide students with opportunities of situations to construct knowledge in individual contexts and through social negotiation, collaboration, and experience (Murphy, 1997).

B. Video-based Learning

A research work conducted by Shih (2010) regarding video-based blogs aimed to create a blended teaching and learning model that combined online and face to face instructional blogging for an ESP course called English Public Speaking. The results of that study demonstrated that this technique would contribute to active learning and satisfied students if it is applied appropriately. The most remarkable aspects of this intervention were the peer and instructor's feedback and the blog features such as free access, revision simplicity, and motivating material for learning were main causes that boosted students' learning satisfaction.

Another study conducted by Yousef, Chatti & Schroeder (2014) critically explores the contemporary investigation of Video-Based Learning (VBL) to comprehend the educational advantages and effectiveness of VBL for teaching-learning process profoundly. The results of the study demonstrated effective teaching methods, design, and reflection.

A different study related to VBL was conducted by Yu-Chih Sun & Fang-Ying Yang (2013) in which the participants created two YouTube videos with informative presentations about the university campus in English to international students. The study combined service learning into an EFL speaking class using Web 2.0 tools as platforms and analyzed participants' viewpoints about the achievements in public speaking and language learning, their learning processes and strategies, the collaborative dialogs, and their perceptions regarding the Web 2.0 service learning involvements.

C. Video Recording

A similar study to the present one was conducted in an Ecuadorian public university by Soto, Espinosa, Vargas, Illescas, Fontaine-Ruiz, and Carrera (2017) who examined the perception of ESP students regarding the recording of videos to explain class content. Students were required to record one video per week for ten weeks of classes. The results demonstrated "that the technique improved participants' motivation and academic achievement. Furthermore, participants developed personal self-regulated strategies, self-awareness of their learning progress, and self-regulated environmental strategies, reporting a positive influence of the strategy for their language learning progress" (p. 385).

In this regard, students were encouraged to learn the language because of the linguistic enhancement. Similarly, they experience academic improvement since participants were required to be more committed to their learning process. As a consequence, students applied self-regulatory strategies to develop their cognitive abilities. Socially, students develop communicational skills with their peers when seeking the help of more knowledgeable classmates (Soto et al., 2017). For this reason, "explaining content through videos has a positive impact on language learning in a variety of aspects, becoming a powerful tool for EFL/ESP classes. It encourages learners to take ownership of their learning process and induces them to become autonomous" (p. 390).

Another study related to video recording to develop speaking skills and conducted by Kirkgoz (2011), investigated the outcomes of a Task-Based Learning blended course. The results demonstrated that participants made significant development in their speaking skills, and were motivated by the use of technology in the classes. Additionally, the outcomes revealed that the use of video camera had a positive influence on students' self-assessment of the speaking tasks.

D. Mobile Devices

According to Ahn & Lee (2016), speaking is the most complicated language ability for English as foreign language (EFL) learners, and the EFL classroom is incapable of offering sufficient opportunities for speaking practice. Therefore, mobile devices provide new opportunities for language learning, but they have some limitations, mainly concerning learning to speak. Automatic speech recognition (ASR) boosts student speaking and pronunciation. Mobile-assisted language learning (MALL) has been investigated, and the learning results of speaking through the use of mobile technologies have not frequently been reported.

Another study showed how learners' speaking and listening skills practices using mobile devices had different connections depending on their levels of proficiency. The study pointed out that in the future students would continue using mobile devices to explore and interact with surrounding authentic contexts. In other words, students will be able to practice listening and speaking skills with content connected to their daily life (Hwang, Huang, Shadiev, Wu & Chen, 2014).

Likewise, a study related to learning through mobile devices was conducted by Hwang, Huang, Shadiev, Wu & Chen (2014) that aimed to investigate learners' insights and purposes concerning learning activities reinforced by mobile

technology. It also examines the relationship between different kinds of EFL speaking and listening practice using mobile technology and learning achievement, which was not reported in previous studies.

E. Digital Storytelling

Various researchers such as Razmi, Pouralib & Nozad (2014); Hwang, Shadiev., Hsu, Huang, Hsu, & Lin (2014); and Pardo (2014) have conducted studies on the use of Digital Storytelling (DST) to develop speaking skills through innovative materials. In this respect, these authors' findings point out that DST increases students' motivation to learn by organizing ideas and expressing thoughts meaningfully using technological tools that include computer-based tools, web-based multimedia system, and animations. However, in Pardo's study, respondents mentioned oral components to be the biggest challenge, specifically pronunciation.

III. METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUMENTS

A. Sample

The participants in our research were students from a public and a private university. One of the groups of participants was majoring in Hotel and Tourism Management. Their age ranged between 18 and 22. The students in the private university were majoring in Clinic Psychology and Basic Education. Their ages varied from 18 to 22. They take English as a Foreign Language classes as part of their curriculum.

Students participating in this research were asked to use presentations aids such as PowerPoint, wall chart papers or just role play to record a video. They were not allowed to read from the presentation aids. Therefore, they needed to rehearse their scripts before self-recording the videos and to redo it as many times as necessary, as long as they submit it in the due date.

The present study is action research that applies qualitative methods of research and a literature review to determine the following two aspects:

1. The participants' viewpoints about the use of SRV to develop their speaking skills
2. The different ways of SRV to develop speaking skills.

The sample consisted of 81 participants who volunteered to take part in this research work (17 males and 64 females). To participate in the study learners had to be officially registered as a student in each of the participants' universities during the period 2017-2018, to be present regularly in class, and to be willing to participate in the research.

TABLE 1
PARTICIPANTS

Universities	Male	Female	Total
Public	12	25	37
Private	5	39	44
Total	17	64	81

Source: Project Registration (2017-2018)

B. Instruments

Electronic Survey was used to identify learners' perceptions of the use of SRV to develop speaking skills. The researchers designed this instrument ad hoc. The survey included 5 Multiple Choice, Closed-ended questions, and two open-ended questions. The questions were formulated to learn about the students' perceptions of the use of SRV. Professors from both the public and private university examined the instruments. Therefore, both universities used the Expert-Review Triangulation Method and piloted the survey with a group of students different from the intervention group. The survey was applied through a Google Apps Form.

To analyze the results, the researchers used both: a descriptive statistical analysis of the Likert scale questions, and the discourse analysis to interpret the responses participants gave in the open-ended questions of the questionnaire.

IV. RESULTS

The survey in the two universities was carried out during the second semester of the year 2017, in February. The following tables show the results:

TABLE 2
PERCEPTION OF THE STUDENTS FROM THE TWO UNIVERSITIES ABOUT THE USE OF SRV TO DEVELOP SPEAKING SKILLS (MULTIPLE CHOICE CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONS)

	Strongly Agree		Agree		I do not know		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
ITEMS	n	%	N	%	n	%	N	%	n	%
SRVs have helped me to develop my speaking abilities.	39	48.1	35	43.2	2	2.5	1	1.2	4	5
I consider difficult to speak in the SRV.	12	14.8	28	34.6	11	13.6	23	28.4	7	8.6
I feel motivated when speaking in the SRV.	27	33.3	35	43.2	8	9.9	8	9.9	3	3.7
Speaking in the SRV helps me to function well when I become a professional.	41	50.61	25	30.9	10	12.3	2	2.5	3	3.7
The SRVs are an excellent option to practice English speaking skills	46	56.8	24	29.6	5	6.2	2	2.5	4	5

• The questions were carried out in Spanish to avoid misunderstandings. They were translated for this paper.

The analysis of the data obtained from the students' answers resulted in three categories: positive aspects with five codes, aspects that need to be improved with five codes as well and no need for improvement with one code.

TABLE 3
PERCEPTION OF THE STUDENTS FROM THE TWO UNIVERSITIES ABOUT THE USE OF SRV TO DEVELOP SPEAKING SKILLS (OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS)

Categories	1. Positive aspects	2. Aspects that need to be improved	3. No need for improvement
Codes	Pronunciation development	Teach more vocabulary	No suggestions
	Real practice	Teach more pronunciation	
	Improvisation	Editing videos	
	Learning improvement	Allow more time to prepare the videos.	
	Fear decrease	Immediate teacher correction	

After analyzing the open-ended questions in the survey, the opinion of the students reveals that the uses of SRVs in the class have a very positive effect on English learning. Figure 1 shows the number of times students mentioned the positive and need to be improved aspects.

TABLE 4

Positive aspects	Number of times it was mentioned	Aspects that need to be improved	Number of times it was mentioned	No need for improvement	Number of times it was mentioned
Pronunciation development	20	Teach more vocabulary	3	No suggestions	14
Real practice	6	Teach more pronunciation	7		
Improvisation	3	Editing videos	3		
Learning improvement	8	Allow more time to prepare the videos	9		
Fear decrease	3	Immediate teacher correction	3		
TOTAL	40		25		16

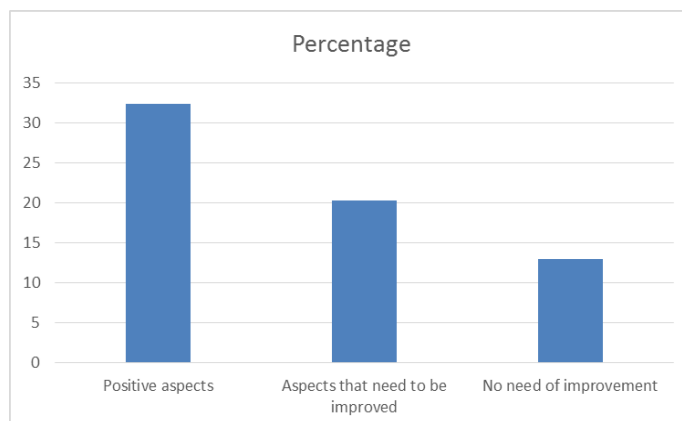| Positive Aspects	Aspects that need to be improved	No need for improvement
32.4%	20.25%	13%

Figure 1

V. Discussion and Conclusion

According to the results obtained from the multiple choices close-ended questions (Table 2) applied to 81 participants from the two Ecuadorian universities, we observe the following outcomes:

For the first item which corresponds to the statement "SRVs have helped me to develop my speaking abilities," we find out that the majority of students, 48, 1% of them, very agreed and that 43, 2% of them agreed. In this respect, Yousef., Chatti & Schroeder (2014) maintain that students consider VBL much more gratifying than classes that use traditional methods of teaching. Whereas, 1,2% disagreed, 2,5% do not know, and 5% disagreed which implies that only a small percentage of students are not satisfied with this technique. It could be concluded, then, that this generation of students prefer working with current digital tools and all the instruments that they offer. Accordingly, Kirkgoz (2011), demonstrated that through the use of video recording participants improved their speaking skills significantly, and were encouraged by the use of technology in the classes.

About the second item, "I consider difficult to speak in the SRVs," most of the participants, 34,6% of them, agreed and only 14, 8% very agreed with the statement. A study conducted by Ahn & Lee (2016), associated with this result, maintain that speaking is the most challenging language skill for EFL learners and EFL instructors do not offer plentiful opportunities for speaking practice, consequently, speaking practice through technological resources become a problematic activity for learners. On the other hand, 28.4 % disagreed and 8,6% very disagree. Considering this, the study conducted by Yu-Chih Sun & Fang-Ying Yang (2013) on VBL in which the participants created YouTube informative presentations videos, indicate that the benefits of practicing speaking through SRV increase their confidence in English speaking, It is also observed that 13,6 of respondents do not know.

According to the third item, "I am motivated when I am speaking in the SRVs," 43,2% of participants agreed with this statement. In this respect, several studies, such as Pardo (2014), Yousef, Chatti & Schroeder (2014), Razmi, Pourali & Nozad (2014), Hwang, Shadie, Hsu, Huang, Hsu, & Lin (2014) supported activities with technological assistance to boost students' motivation to speak in English. While on the contrary, 33, 3 % disagreed, 3, 7 % very disagree, 9, 9 % disagree and 9 % do not know. Several students are not well motivated when participating in this activity because some classes do not offer enough activities with technological assistance to practice English speaking. In this regard, the study conducted by Shih (2010) that mixed online and face to face instructional blogging, indicated that this technique contributed to having satisfied students.

The fourth item, "speaking in the videos help me for my professional future," 50, 61% very agreed and 30, 9 % agreed. The practice of speaking skills through the use of SRV is a significant pedagogical technique in ESP courses since the teacher, in this constructivist environment, becomes a facilitator who provides students with real situations in which they are allowed to socialize and collaborate with each other to build new knowledge (Murphy, 1997). This practice through recording their speaking in the videos will enable them to develop their speaking skills and function appropriately in their future professions. Furthermore, another study conducted by Hwuang, Huang, Shadiev, Wu & Chen (2014) about the use of mobile phones to develop speaking skills maintain that learners will be enabled to practice speaking skills in contexts that resemble real-life situations. In this regard, technologically assisted classes, such as the ones that use SRVs or mobile phones, have proved to be very useful to enable students to speak in real-life situations. On the contrary, only 2.5 % of respondents disagree, 3.7% very disagree, and 12.3 % do not know which demonstrate that a small portion of participants does not support the use of SRV as a technique to function appropriately in their professional future.

Finally, the fifth item that corresponds to the statement "SRVs are a good option to practice the English speaking ability," 56, 8 of the participant very agreed and 29, 6 % agreed. In this respect studies conducted by various authors such as Shih (2010), Yousef, Chatti & Schroeder (2014), Yu-Chih Sun & Fang-Ying Yang (2013) consider VBL environments useful for the development of learners' speaking skills. On the contrary, 2.5 % disagree, 5% very disagree and 6.2% do not know which demonstrate that only the minority of participants do not acknowledge SRVs as an excellent option to improve their speaking.

Table 3 shows that, when referring to the use of SRV, students mentioned more positive aspects than aspects requiring improvement. A high percentage of answers demonstrated that students have no suggestions regarding the use of this type of videos. These results support the findings in the Likert scale part of the questionnaire. Among their answers, some students mention, "no suggestions; everything is perfect." Some other students wrote as their answers "It is very appropriate, so I would not change anything," which shows that students were glad to use the videos as part of their learning process.

Among the positive aspects, students mentioned that they had improved their vocabulary and pronunciation development. Typical responses were: "I learn new words," "I improve pronunciation." A high number of participants considered that SRVs provide opportunities to practice what they have learned in class because they can express themselves naturally. The common responses were: "I learn to express myself effectively" or "I apply what I have learned in class." In this regard, Soto et al. (2017) mention that students are encouraged to learn the target language through video recording because of the linguistic improvement.

Additionally, a significant number of answers mentioned feeling motivated when preparing the SRVs since they are allowed to improvise. Some of the answers coincide in saying "I can improvise and I like it." Respectively, Soto et al. (2017) consider that the technique increases participants' motivation and educational success. Another positive aspect mentioned is the fact that they feel less fear to speak English. An example of this type of response is: "I can speak with other people feeling no fear." In this respect, some studies such as Yu-Chih Sun & Fang-Ying Yang (2013) and Ahn & Lee (2016) mentioned that creating videos in YouTube increase students' self-confidence when speaking English.

Learners mentioned teachers' help to improve vocabulary and pronunciation. Among the aspects that need to be improved, some participants expressed that instructors need to teach more vocabulary so that they can express more efficiently in the videos. For instance, "the teacher should give us an extra class to explain those words that are difficult to pronounce." Two participants mentioned that instructors need to teach not only vocabulary but also the pronunciation of new words. Their answers, in general, suggested "more help with the pronunciation." In this regard, Ahn and Lee (2016) support the use of ASR to enhance student speaking and pronunciation.

Edition and time to improve their performance in the videos were other factors mentioned by participants in the study. Some students mentioned that the use of SRV could be improved by allowing them to edit their videos. Additionally, other students asked for more time when working on them to edit the videos.

Teacher's assistance was another aspect noticed by students to improve their speaking skills. Some participants expressed the need for faster feedback from the teacher to correct pronunciation mistakes. A typical answer says the following: "To show the videos in class so that the teacher corrects pronunciation mistakes." Correspondingly, Murphy (1997) maintain that the teacher in a constructivist environment function as a guide and facilitator who provides students opportunities to construct knowledge socially, collaboratively, and experientially.

It is essential to emphasize that a significant number of students do not give suggestions to improve the use of SRV. Instead, they encourage the use of such videos not only in class but as homework: "More homework with videos."

The findings of the study reveal that students have a robust and decisive point of view about the use of SRV, which coincides with Shih's research in 2010 in the fact that blended teaching contributes to productive learning and satisfaction of students. Table 2 shows that students find SRV motivating to learn English. Yousef., Chatti & Schroeder (2014) claim that the rate of interaction and learner satisfaction is higher than in the traditional classroom. This fact concurs with the findings of the present study. A high percentage of participants do not recommend changes in the features of the SRVs.

One of the most positive aspects of using SRV, according to the participants' responses, is the feeling they have about improving pronunciation and how it has helped them to become less fearful when speaking in English. As Yu-Chih Sun & Fang-Ying Yang (2013) and Ahn & Lee (2016) mentioned, creating videos in YouTube does improve pronunciation; thus, students increase their confidence in speaking English.

Additionally, while participants expressed that they had learned vocabulary and pronunciation, they still needed the help of the teacher to improve pronunciation. This fact is manifested in Pardo (2014), who expressed that although the results of his research were very confident in developing speaking skills, participants still had some pronunciation problems.

Although the research reached its objectives in trying to find out the participants' perceptions, some limitations and shortcomings have to be explained. One of them is about the instrumentation. Since the survey was online, the lack of a trained interviewer to clarify questions could have possibly led to less reliable information.

Second, although the purpose of the study was to identify the students' perceptions about using SRVs as a tool to improve speaking skills, the results cannot be very generalizable as the sample is small. Nevertheless, the researchers considered this tool the best way to interview due to the number of students.

Even though the questionnaire measured the students` attitude towards the use of SRV, it did not intend to provide evidence of the students ´actual behavior about communication skills in the vocal performance.

Also, the results from the public and private universities are similar. However, as one is public and the other private, this opens space for further investigation that could reveal perceptions of differences between private and public universities.

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The Influence of Classroom Environments on English Language Writing Instruction and Learning

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Abstract—**Writing is one of the four language skills. Writing plays a big role in helping individuals clarify their thoughts, to the nation for storing information and in the academic world for taking notes and expressing logical arguments. Unfortunately, society still complains that school leavers do not know how to write indicating that either they were not taught writing or that the classroom environments where they were taught were not adequate enough to prepare them for the kind of writing they would need after school. This paper explores the influence of classroom environments on the teaching and learning of writing in secondary schools. Using a qualitative multiple case study design, we collected data from three schools through lesson observation and interviewing teachers and learners. Data were analyzed according to the emerging themes which were; classroom displays, lighting, and air. Findings portrayed that there were different teaching and learning environments but the success of writing instruction depended on how teachers modified the classroom environments to suit the different topics they were teaching. Therefore, there is a need to maximize the classroom environments to enhance writing instruction and learning**.

Index Terms—**classroom environments, writing instruction, writing learning**

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is the presentation of clear coherent well- organized work on paper that suits one's intended audience and purpose. This means that people write because of different reasons and audiences. In terms of the intended audience, the reader determines the style, the organization, the topic and the choice of words that the writer feels will best convey their message. Writing serves a variety of purposes. It helps one articulate their thoughts feelings and plans, is good for clarifying, organizing thought and plans and conveying one's ideas in a logical and credible way among others. In school, writing is an integral part of all subjects and many of the exams done in secondary schools require learners to answer questions in writing implying that the success of the student in school is determined by how well they express themselves.

Good writing skills involve the use of clear and concise language that conveys information in a way that is easily understood by the intended audience. Good writing enables learners to express themselves accurately and confidently. It also enables learners to have a sense of readers' expectations, and an awareness of conventions for a particular piece of writing. This is the reason why there is a need to study how learners develop good writing skills through writing instruction.

Globally, writing instruction has undergone different changes. According to the online Education encyclopedia, written composition became a concern for American High Schools in the late 19th century as high schools focused on preparing an elite group of males for universities, a task that would increase demand attention to writing. The year 1873 marked a turning point as Harvard University started demanding that each candidate applying to study writes a composition about a literary work. The focus was on enabling each pupil to give expression to his/her own thoughts which led to the teaching of composition. Throughout the 20th century, learners were commonly assigned essays in form of description and narration following the rhetorical traditions of the 19th century. Teachers taught lessons based on the ideal written work which focused on words and learners were graded on how close they met the ideal. The next development was the 1966 Dartmouth conference which brought together leading American and British specialists in the teaching of English and suggested that assigning and grading writing was not enough. The 1966 Dartmouth conference also suggested that learners should be supported through the writing process of generating ideas, reflection, planning and composing. This led to the 1981 Flower and Hayes cognitive process model which studied how expert writers compose their texts with a view of using this method to teach learners the composing process. Later, new trends emerged which led to the recognition that writing is judged according to how much it reflects consideration of audience, purpose, and occasion. As a result, researchers started studying classrooms and rhetorical contexts where writing instruction takes place. Other trends focused on the composting process and how teachers at different levels support

diverse writers and how writing supports learning across the curriculum. The 21st century has portrayed increasingly lower writing achievements among learners without American and European descent. It has also led to the technological revolution as computers provide support for writers.

According to Ssebbunga-Masembe (2001), writing instruction in Uganda began with the missionaries who came to Uganda between 1877 and 1879. As their focus was on teaching literacy in order to train good Christians, the missionaries only taught basic reading and writing. Ojijo (2012) explains that the colonialists who took over education from the missionaries aimed at training low and mid-level manpower for administration. Thus writing instruction during the colonialists' time focused on training basic skills of spelling, grammar, and punctuation which would not require much thought or attention. Most of the commissions that came after independence did not change much in writing instruction. Writing instruction focused on teaching learners how to write essays but not skills required in writing for different purposes or audiences. However, according to the Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) 2004-2015, learners were taught how to write but they were not equipped to write in ways that would enable them to write for different audiences. The history of writing and writing instruction shows that the reasons, emphasis, and content of writing and writing instruction have been evolving according to different societal needs. It is only towards the end of the 20th century that the need to look at the process of writing while paying attention to audience, purpose, and intention was recognized. Even then, in Uganda, these elements have not yet been considered when teaching secondary school writing.

Scholars like Kyalikunda (2005) and Karooro Okurut (2000) noted the deteriorating standards of English in Uganda. This is evident in the poor expressions used by speakers in interviews, directing visitors and writing application letters. They argue that learners' lack of communication competence is evident in school leavers' poor reading/comprehension skills, poor oral communication skills, and poor writing skills. Learners come through years of schooling being taught writing but they are being unable to write to suit the employer's needs suggests that they either have not been taught effectively or the content, methods and writing environment are not appropriate. If we do not improve the teaching of writing, we will continue to invest in educational resources like time; money, classrooms, and teachers without enabling learners to demonstrate mastery writing. The available literature documents that the teacher's knowledge of writing content and how to teach writing, the physical and emotional state of both learners and the teacher, as well as the ability of both learners and teacher to interact appropriately with each other and with their physical classroom environments all, contribute to mastery of writing. It suggests that the place of young adolescents in this classroom and their writing needs have not been addressed when teaching writing. The physical writing environment should not be neglected if we are to improve writing instruction. This paper considered how the physical classroom environments in secondary schools influenced the teaching and learning of writing among young adolescents.

To better understand the value of physical classroom environments on teaching writing, this research was informed by Vygotsky's 1978 Constructivist theory. According to Vygotsky, learning is a social process whose origins are in human cognition. Children develop a language with the need to communicate and only later do they use it to organize thought. Therefore, the social needs of language precede personal needs. According to Turuk (2008), social-cultural settings act as primary and determining factors for higher forms of human activity like voluntary attention, logical thought and problem-solving (P.245). The social level, as far as the learning of writing is concerned, involves the learner's interaction with their teacher, fellow learners, and the environment. This interaction takes place when the class is comfortable, the teacher is knowledgeable about their content and encourages learners to discuss the writing task with the teacher and fellow learners. The level of comfort in classes all forms part of the classroom environment we were concerned about in order to find out whether teachers of writing endeavor to make their physical classes as conducive to writing learning as possible. Vygotsky's constructivist theory was chosen as it deals with how the physical environment influences writing instruction.

This paper focused on the understanding value of the physical classroom environments in which writing instruction and learning take place. The physical classroom environments studied in this paper were: the nature of classroom displays, lighting and aeration while writing instruction encompassed the teacher's attitude and all the means by which the teacher teaches writing.

II. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to describe the worth of physical classroom environments on English language writing instruction and learning among young adolescents. The following question guided this research "What is the value of physical classroom environments on English language writing and learning among young adolescents?"

III. METHODOLOGY

This study followed a qualitative multiple case study design. According to Creswell (2014), case study designs involve an in-depth analysis of a case or cases. Yin (2009) explains that case studies are used to answer how or why questions where we have little control of events and to investigate the contemporary phenomenon. Yin further explains that there are two types of case studies: single and multiple case studies. Multiple case studies are where one studies different units of analysis or different cases. We chose a multiple case study design in order to make a comparative

analysis on how the different physical classroom environments influenced English language writing instruction and learning.

Three schools in Uganda were selected. The schools were chosen basing on the following categories. School one was chosen because it was a private school following whose learners were the being prepared to sit for the national exams. Because it was private, it attracted few learners of relatively low-income status and could not afford to pay teachers well. We chose it because we wanted to find out the influence of physical classroom environments on writing instruction in an underfunded school. The second school was a government aided Universal Secondary Education School in which learners were not paying any fees and the government catered for all the school's expenditure. As learners were not paying any fees, we wanted to study how the available physical environment facilities in the classrooms influenced writing instruction. The third school was an international school which attracted learners of high social economic status. It was categorized as international because it attracts learners from all over the world and because learners are free to choose whether to study the Uganda Syllabus or Cambridge one. Due to time and financial constraints, only three schools were selected. The teachers were purposively selected. That is, all the teachers selected were teaching Senior One to Senior Three English writing and had at least three years of teaching writing at secondary school. Since writing instruction is done by teachers, these were chosen as part of the classes to provide information on their teaching methodology and how their physical classroom environments influenced writing instruction and learning. All learners in the selected classes were observed as writing instruction was going on. The teachers helped us choose a group of six learners in from the relevant classes in each school to participate in focus group discussions. The focus group discussions centered on issues about how their interaction with their physical classroom environments during writing instruction and learning improved students' writing quality.

The instruments used were lesson observation guides, interview guides, and documentary analysis. Observation guides generated first-hand information on the influence of the classroom displays, air movement, and light on writing instruction and learning. Lessons were observed to follow up on any information provided in the interviews. A total of forty writing instruction lessons were observed. Interview guides were used to gather information regarding teachers' perceptions of the influence of displays, light, and aeration on the teaching and learning of writing. Six learners from each school were interviewed. They were interviewed during a group interview on their views on the right environments to learn writing and to write. The documentary analysis enabled us to triangulate data from interviews, group interviews, and lesson observations. Teachers' Schemes of Work, lesson notes and Records of Work were studied to see if the planned for displays and writing content and methodology in their documents matched with those they had talked about in the interviews.

This research ensured the validity of instruments by a clear description of the physical classroom environments and writing instruction, by citing other researches which studied classroom environments and writing instruction and by going to different schools, classes and conditions in order to triangulate the data and check for its accuracy. Reliability was ensured through a clear demonstration of all the steps in data collection, from schools with different classroom environments.

During data collection, we first sought permission from the relevant authorities like head teachers and teachers who were teaching senior one to senior three and who were willing to participate in the study. After this, they then proceeded to interview the teachers, analyze their records and observe their lessons. Most of the teachers were interviewed on school compounds and the interviews were tape recorded with teachers' permission. Then we interviewed learners using group interviews and studied their notebooks. At the end of each data collection day, we would transcribe the data obtained. Data was assembled, coded, analyzed and interpreted, first, according to the different research instruments, secondly, according to emerging themes and thirdly, according to the objective. It was categorized according to the influence of classroom displays, lighting and air on writing instruction.

Ethical issues were maintained through seeking permission from head teachers before carrying out research in their schools. Teachers were informed of the purpose of the research and why they were chosen to participate in it (Punch 2012). They were given the option to either participate in the study or not. They were assured of the confidentiality of information and that the research would use pseudo names. All lesson observations took place with the teachers' consent. In order to protect learners, their identities during focus group discussions were only known by the researchers and all participants were assured that the data would only be used for this study.

IV. RESULTS

In this study, we researched the value of physical classroom environments on writing instruction and learning. Data portrayed that many classrooms in Uganda have four walls, a roof, a chalkboard hanging at the front, display boards, windows, and a door. We took notes on the nature of lighting, the air in the classrooms, the nature of displays, and how all these influenced writing instruction. We did this because the writing process involves so many tasks that a writer requires a well lit, conducive physical environment that fosters concentration on the writing tasks. As we analyzed data using the interpretive approach, the following themes emerged; "classroom displays", "Influence of light on writing learning", and "Influence of well-aerated classrooms on writing instruction".

A. Classroom Displays

This is where teachers displayed key information on writing instruction, content, and styles for learners to constantly study until it was fixed in their long-term memories for later retrieval. Of the three schools, we collected data from; two barely had writing displays to support writing much as some of the teachers in these schools said displays helped a lot. For example, in talking about his ideal classroom environment ET01 from Everest High School said:

I would like to see a classroom which has materials in the class, a number of sample materials. I don't know how we can do it because every subject would be competing for their materials hanging in class. (Teacher's Interview 2 School 1)

ET01 professed that displaying writing materials could help in teaching writing though he did not think he could have them in his classrooms as this would generate competition for space from other subjects. However, the bare walls in his classroom showed that no other subject teacher wanted to display any content. The bare walls in his classroom portrayed that ET01's fear for competition from other subject areas was unfounded. This implied a theoretical view of the importance of displays basing on the fact that we did not see any display he had prepared for his classes. Therefore, though some teachers professed to see the value of having displays on writing instruction in the classroom, the fact that they did not have any in their classes implies that displays had no influence on writing instruction.

In contrast to School 1 and School 2, all the classrooms in School 3 that we entered had displayed. This was part of the school culture as KT03 told me in the interview. She said the nature of displays in a classroom depended on the subject the room teacher was teaching. For example, in KT01's room also known as the English room, the displays included a chart showing some examples of American and British English and how to write a formal letter. KT02's room had a notice board with lists of idioms and the structure of English exams. During writing lessons, at no point did we see any teacher refer to the different displays yet when we interviewed them they were full of praises for displays, for example, KT01 enthusiastically said;

Displays. Display phrases, idioms, and proverbs. Even display sample stories, learners work or even general proverbs, similes, figurative expressions, and their meanings. Then we display their work. Margaret writes an interesting story, using all the descriptive words, the figurative expressions, the right adjectives, we shall display it. Somebody comes and look, I can write this like this. I write this simile like this. They relate easily to their work. (Teacher's Interview 5 School 3)

KT01's comment above showed that she values displays. She also seemed to believe that a well-written story should have descriptive language, use of figurative language and idioms, proverbs and similes. However the fact that she says 'we shall display it' shows that she had not yet displayed the work evidently because she does not practice what she claims to believe. Indeed when we entered her class, we did not see any display of learners' work, a sign that her belief in the value of learners work was theoretical. Even the sentence, 'Somebody comes and look, we can write like this.' Shows that as a teacher, KT01 does not go out of their way to draw attention to the displays but imagines that learners will just be attracted to anything on the walls. In observing her writing lessons, at no point did we observe her drawing her learners' attention to the lists of American and British English displayed on the walls. Therefore, in her case, the presence of displays in the classroom environment did not directly influence writing learning

In this section, we have analyzed the findings on the influence of classroom displays on writing instruction. The analyzed findings also show that while many teachers saw the value of having displays in class; these were rarely used in the practical teaching of writing a sign that the presence of displays had little influence on writing instruction.

B. Influence of Light on Writing Learning

In order to write well, and clearly, one needs to work in a well lit. All schools ensured that their classrooms supported writing learning and instruction with varying levels of success. In collecting data under this, we considered how the general appearance of the room that is, the color of the walls, and the windows provided lighting that either enhanced or hindered effective writing instruction. Data in this sub-section was obtained from lesson observations and focus group interviews.

Classes which were well lit supported writing learning for instance, in School 1, the class had big windows at one side, unpainted grey walls and a small bulb whose light was on all the time. All these created a well-lit classroom which fostered easy reading and transfer of the content ST01 was writing on the board. ST01's method of teaching involved writing formats of formal documents on the board which her students were supposed to read as they transferred them to their books. The presence of lighting in the rooms enabled learners to see and read what ST01 had written on the board before transferring it to their books. All these processes required and lit rooms which enabled learners to focus when or taking down dictated notes. Thus, in School 1, the fact that the classroom was well lit supported note taking but it did not develop any writing learning.

All classes in School 2 had electric bulbs which were on for most of the day and big windows which covered most of the walls on one side of the room and dark green walls. The big windows on one side of the room provided light which, in conjunction with the electricity in the room enabled learners to focus clearly on the teacher and the key points some of the teachers in this school would write on the board as well as see what they were writing during the translation process. However, in some lessons, these big windows easily provided distractions to learners. For example, one of the senior two classrooms had big windows opening up to a playground. During the time ET03 was teaching formal letter writing, we noticed that some learners' attention was taken by the activities a physical education activity some learners from a neighboring school were having on the playground. Thus, though the presence of big windows provided good

lighting, the fact that they opened up to a playground which had constant activity, interfered with learners' concentration on the writing topics thus preventing effective learning of writing.

Though the senior three classrooms in the same school had similar features like the senior two classrooms, their windows had purple curtains and, learners would hang their school bags on hooks attached to the windows. The combination of these two aspects made the classes too dark and stuffy for learners to focus on the writing content generated on the chalkboard and on their writing. This made learners sitting at the back to strain their eyes to follow the writing lessons thus rendering learning these writing lessons less effective. For example, when ET02 was teaching minute writing, she introduced the lesson by writing the title 'Writing Minutes of a Meeting' on the chalkboard. We noted that some learners at the back were not writing while other learners were trying to strain their eyes to read the topic and copy it down thus preventing them from following the other aspects of the writing lesson. Writing the title of a lesson is supposed to focus learners' attention to the various areas of writing which range from the format of the document being learned, its content as well as the spellings, grammar, and punctuation of all words written on the board. Thus a student who strains to read the title will focus on the lower order writing aspects of orthography at the expense of learning the higher order writing skills of form, content, and purpose of writing. Curtains were left in windows to remove any distractions in form of activities taking place outside the classrooms. Learners' bags were hanging on windows because these being classes with large numbers of learners, the learners had nowhere to keep their bags. However, their combination created made the class dark to the extent that some students at the back could not see what the teacher was teaching. This was also echoed by some learners for example when asked about his ideal writing environment, Robert said, 'One which is not too dark' implying that dark places prevented him from seeing what he was writing thus affecting his written work. Kate described a well-lit environment as a place 'where there is no too much sunshine' implying that too much light affected her visibility thus preventing her from seeing what she was writing. Therefore, adequate light supported writing learning as it enabled learners to see the writing content and concentrate on the writing tasks.

The classroom design of School 3 was made in such a way that the classes had enough light while taking away any possible distractions to writing instruction. All their classrooms had light green walls, white ceilings and white tiled floors- colors all which reflected light thus creating a well-lit atmosphere which motivated learners to concentrate on the writing lessons at hand. Though the classes had big low windows which allowed in sunlight, the windows faced places which had no activity during class time. The teachers in our study on most occasions made their learners sit facing the center of the room and the whiteboard thus reducing the chances of their being distracted by any activity out of the room. For example, for all the lessons we observed in this school, only once did I see learners being distracted by an activity out of the room. This was the time when KT03 was teaching Senior One's how to use idioms, at the time she had told the class to generate sentences using specific idioms she had written on the board, I saw some learners looking out of the window where some people were setting up a phone booth. This prevented them from writing the idioms the teacher had told them until she saw them and drew their attention to the task at hand. Thus though KT03 tried to influence writing learning by making her learners sit with their backs to the windows, in cases where classrooms had big windows and there were activities going on out of class, effective writing learning was hindered.

In a nutshell, data collected portrayed that lighting was provided through windows, the color of the walls and electric bulbs. Adequate lighting influenced writing instruction and learning by enabling learners to see both the writing content shown on the blackboard and what they were transcribing. But where the windows faced a busy noisy place, were shut or had curtains, they provided distractions or made the classroom too stuffy and dark for writing instruction and learning to be effective.

C. The Influence of Well-aerated Classrooms on Writing Instruction

Well, aerated classrooms are rooms that provide free movement of air. This can be done through air conditioning or by providing enough open windows and ventilation. These have the potential of making learners and teachers feel comfortable thus concentrating on writing learning and instruction. Different classrooms achieved this with varying degrees. Data from this section was obtained from lesson observation and interviews with both teachers and students.

In all classrooms, aeration was provided by big windows which occupied either one whole wall or two sides of the classroom. The senior three classrooms of School 2 had similar features like the senior two classrooms but their windows had purple curtains and learners would hang their school bags on hooks attached to the windows. However, the combination of purple curtains and windows covered with school bags created stuffy, hot environments in the classrooms that affected students' morale in writing. ET02 noted the stuffiness in the classroom when she said students were not motivated to write. And KT01 said:

If a child is not comfortable, they are not going to be encouraged to write. Maybe they will write half way and stop; because they are not comfortable anyway. (Teacher's Interview 4 School 3)

KT01 said students' level of comfort affected their writing motivation. Part of this comfort could be influenced by the level of aeration. The need for comfort and well-aerated environments was echoed by most of the students I interviewed for example; when asked about their ideal writing environment some students said:

Davis: I can write in circumstances when I feel cool like even the atmosphere must be somehow cool.

Daniel: When I am in the balcony, I am writing about the future and the present. When I am in the garden, I am writing about feelings. I am writing about things that make me emotional.

Janet: There are some environments you want to write in but can't access. So you feel like you want to imagine them. You feel inspired and like when you are in the flower garden alone. (Interview 3 S.2 FGD)

The students above used a variety of images to describe well-aerated environments for example, 'cool' 'a balcony' and 'a garden'. What all these have in common is the free movement of air. For Daniel and Davies well-aerated environments' supported writing learning enhanced the process of providing conducive atmospheres for translating already generated ideas on paper while for Janet, it is in the inspiration when generating ideas. Thus well-aerated environments supported writing learning and writing itself by making the learners comfortable.

In summary, well-aerated classrooms enhanced writing and writing instruction where there are no distractions. The presence of big windows in some classes which provided and fresh air made the environment cool and conducive to concentrate on generating ideas and writing. But where the windows were shut or had curtains, they provided distractions or made the classroom too stuffy for writing instruction and learning to be effective.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study analyzed the influence of physical classroom environments on writing learning. Specifically, we studied the influence of displays, adequate light and well-aerated classrooms on writing learning. The analyzed findings show that while many teachers saw the value of having displays in class; these were rarely used in the practical teaching of writing a sign that the presence of displays had little influence on writing instruction. These findings are in line with those of Fisher (2008) who studied how 3rd-grade teachers use the physical classroom environment as they implement a balanced literacy program in order to improve their learners' literacy outcomes. Through interviewing teachers and learners and studying the displays in the classroom, Fisher found out that the classes were also full of displays and teachers believed that displays provided materials which learners can refer to (p.57) through the use of the word 'can' implied that these teachers did not actually see learners refer to them. This study supports our findings that teacher's belief in the influence of displays in writing learning. However, as Fisher didn't study ongoing literacy lessons, it is possible that learners referred to them in her absence.

Our findings are also supported by the Suleman Q and Hussain. I (2014)'s research. In their study of the effects of physical classroom environments on academic scores of secondary school learners, Suleman and Hussain found out that classrooms full of displays and whiteboards enhanced teacher's instruction efficiency and learners' attentiveness, interest and motivation. However, Suleman and Hussain did not study if displays were used and how. Our findings portray that their presence had the potential to influence writing instruction if they were used during the teaching and learning of writing.

Billen (2010) used a mixed methods approach to study the nature of elementary writing instruction and physical classroom environments in eight Utah districts. Her findings indicated that writing environments were generally not rich implying that there were few displays which supported writing learning. This is in line with our findings in the majority of classes in where there were no displays much as teachers seemed to support their use.

Hannah (2013) wrote about the effect of the classroom environment on student learning. She said hanging learners work supports writing learning by building rapport between learners and teacher and showing learners what the acceptable writing standards are basing on what is hung. This goes on to show that displays influence writing learning. Most of these studies talk about the presence of displays but not their usage. Our findings portray that even when classrooms were full of displays on good writing, they did little to support writing learning as we did not see teachers use them or learners refer to them in their writing.

Vygotsky 1978 said that some of the tools which support learning include writing. This would imply that the presence of displays of learners' written work would motivate the learners to study good writing skills and use them as samples to motivate them to practice writing. The fact that most classrooms do not have displays and even where they existed, we did not see how they influenced writing instruction and learning means two things: that teachers displayed work on topics they had already taught and hence they saw no need to refer to them. Secondly, that though teachers knew the importance of displays, they did not know how to utilize them to support writing instruction and learning. They took it for granted that their presence would indirectly support the skills.

On the influence of classroom design on writing instruction and learning, findings portrayed that most classes relied on natural light from the windows and electricity to provide light. Findings also portrayed that a well aerated and cool and well-lit classroom could enhance writing and writing instruction where there are no distractions. The presence of big windows in some classes which provide light and fresh air made the environment cool and conducive to concentrate on generating ideas and writing. But where the windows faced a busy noisy place, were shut or had curtains, they provided distractions or made the classroom too stuffy and dark for writing instruction and learning to be effective. Since Vygotsky (1978) says that meaningful language learning takes place in the environment, this implies that the environment should have enough light and air while removing all distracters to learning.

The influence of light on instruction was one of the variables studied by Hill and Kathryn (2010) in their survey on the impact of environmental factors on individual student satisfaction in a university environment. Their study found out that the physical characteristics most related to student satisfaction were sitting and lighting. Though none of these variables significantly affected learners performance, learners in classes where there was adequate light highly rated the instruction methods highly much as there was no difference in the kind of instruction and content between the upgraded

classes and the other ones. Their study confirms that good lighting makes learners comfortable and more willing to learn which is in line with the findings of our study.

Hannah (2013) in her paper on the effect of classroom environments on student learning wrote that light and sound can either enhance or distract learners' concentration. Though she did not give details on how each of these elements affects writing, her study is in line with our study on the elements of classroom design that promote learning and that teachers should do their best to control them. Her study is also in agreement with our study that classes which are too warm, too cold or with poor circulation of air make learners sluggish and inattentive thus hindering learning.

Our study is also in line with that of Suleman and Hussain (2010) who used an experimental pre-test post-test design to study the effects of physical classroom environments on academic achievement scores of secondary school learners. Though they did not study each of the physical environment variables independently, they found out that proper lighting and ventilation influenced learners' learning and achievement.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, we set out to understand the influence of physical classroom environments on writing instruction and learning. The elements of the physical classroom environments we studied were: classroom displays, the nature of lighting and aeration. We discovered that each of these had varying influences on writing instruction and learning. However, we found out that the influence largely depended on how teachers adapted to their environments when teaching thus concluding that though the physical classroom environment plays an important role in writing instruction and learning, its usage is more important. Therefore, there is a need to train teachers on how to maximize the use of their given classroom environments. School principals should be encouraged in providing good classroom environments for learning, for example, reducing the number of learners in each class.

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The Effects of Explicit/Implicit Instructions on the Development of Advanced EFL Learners' Pragmatic Knowledge of English: Apology Speech Act

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Abstract—The current study explored the effects of explicit and implicit instructions on the development of advanced EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge in terms of apology speech act. A total of 10 English native speakers and 40 advanced EFL students participated in this study. The Iraqi Kurdish EFL learners were selected from grade 12 in British International School in Erbil/ Iraq and their level was determined by Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) proficiency test. These 40 participants were divided randomly into two; explicit group (EG) and implicit group (IG) Later, they were provided a Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Test (MDCT) as a pre-test, which consisted of 10 different situations of apology and were based on the participants' real-life situation, each situation included 3 options and only one answer could be selected which considered to be the most appropriate answer to them. The aim was to show if there were any significant differences between EG and IG. The English native speakers were given the same (MDCT) and were asked to choose the most appropriate answers. After the treatment, (EG) and (IG) were provided the same MDCT as a post-test. The findings revealed that the results of EG and IG were significant and they showed improvements after the treatment, and the EG outperformed the IG in post-test and delayed-test.

Index Terms—pragmatic knowledge, speech acts, apology speech act, explicit/implicit teaching of pragmatic knowledge

I. INTRODUCTION

Pragmatic competence is an important element of communicative competence, so as EFL use their target language properly, they need to be familiarized with pragmatics. It assists the speakers know the conditions that make the utterances acceptable in some situations. Pragmatics is about the speaker's language, how the language is uttered by the speaker through communication and how the meaning (which is related to the speaker's point of view) is understood by the listener.

Moreover, apology speech act is different from any other speech act, since it is not easy to be performed and EFL learners need to recognize the strategies of apology speech act so as to develop their pragmatic knowledge and perform an appropriate expression of apology according to the situation. For example, according to Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper (1989) apology is the most difficult speech act, therefore it has the most complex classifiable speech act because it may perform other various speech acts such as (offer, request, command... etc.) while using it. The apologizer needs to be polite, express feelings and admit of the mistake he/she has done so as to make things right. Furthermore, apology expressions are a part of expressive speech act where utterers try to point out their state or attitude, and as an apology expression needs to be effective, it should reflect real emotions (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006).

For the last decade studies have been conducted regarding the role of instruction in pragmatic development, the findings have indicated that using only textbook does not provide enough pragmatic knowledge also time to the learners to practice, but the students who acknowledged different aspects of pragmatic instructions were distinctive (Rose and Ng Kwai-Fun, 2001; Dastjerdi & Rezvani, 2010; Malaz, Rabiee & Ketabi, 2011; & Sadeghi & Foutooh, 2012).

Recently, various studies have been conducted regarding L2 and EFL learners' speech acts and different techniques have been used to teach them. One of the effective techniques is 'explicit and implicit' instruction to investigate or compare the effectiveness of explicit and implicit instructions on ESL/EFL learners (Chen, 2009; Maeda, 2011; Aufa, 2012). According to Kasper (1997), "Explicit teaching involved description, explanation, and discussion of the pragmatic feature in addition to input and practice, whereas implicit teaching included input and practice without the metapragmatic component." In other words, explicit instruction should be direct and conscious learning while implicit instruction is indirect and unconscious learning.

Moreover, even advanced EFL learners need to be taught pragmatic speech acts, because they might be in advanced level but still are not able to use the target language properly. Numerous studies concerning the learners' high level of grammatical proficiency have been conducted and indicated that the high grammatical proficiency students will not necessarily have a similar pragmatic competence (Bouton, 1996; Kasper 1997). In another word, even when the levels

of students are high such as advanced learners, they still may use the speech acts of pragmatics inappropriately that differ from foreign language of pragmatic norms. For this reason, they should be taught pragmatics and assist them improve their pragmatic competence.

Most of the previous studies of Iraqi Kurdish language have concentrated on linguistic fields like, morphology, phonology, phonetics, semantics and syntax. Some other fresh studies, such as Hasan (2014) who focused on Iraqi Kurdish apology strategies. Tahir and Pandian (2016) in a comparison study showed the differences and similarities between Iraqi Kurdish and English Native in using apology strategies in both languages. Unfortunately, researchers have not drawn attention on Iraqi Kurdish EFL learners' pragmatic development through explicit and implicit instructions and it has been largely neglected in foreign language classrooms. The current study is considered as a fresh study that can determine what has been missing in the field of teaching explicit and implicit instructions of pragmatic knowledge.

II. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of explicit and implicit instructions of pragmatic knowledge on the development of advanced EFL learners' apology speech act, to find if there are any significant difference between explicit and implicit groups in terms of apology speech act of pragmatic knowledge after the treatment in post-test and delayed-test, and to see if explicit and implicit instructions of apology speech act facilitate EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge development. In addition, to find the similarities and differences in making the most appropriate apology speech act of pragmatic knowledge between explicit group and implicit group before and after the study. 10 native speakers of English participated in this study and 40 advance students of grade 12 (male and female) were selected from (British International School) in Erbil/Iraq. The participants were provided an Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) proficiency test. The aim was to make sure they were homogeneous in terms of language proficiency and only "Advanced" students were required for this study. 40 students were advance learners who were selected for this study and were randomly divided into two groups; explicit group (EG) and implicit group (IG). Later, the participants of both groups were provided a Background Information Questionnaire to collect necessary information about the students such as; their name and surname, gender, age ...etc. before the treatment.

Then, (IG) and (IG) were both provided a pre-test called Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Test (MDCT) which was taken from Birjandi and Rezaei (2010). The (MDCT) is a written questionnaire which consists of 10 apology situations, each question has 3 different options that are related to the question and it took approximately 40 minutes. The participants were asked to choose a response to each situation that they believed was appropriate in the provided context. The aim of this test was to test the participants' pragmatic knowledge in terms of apology speech act before they start receiving explicit and implicit instructions of apology strategies. For two weeks, (IG) received implicit instruction and (EG) received explicit instruction through teaching them different apology strategies which was adapted from Olshtain and Cohen (1983) classification. In addition, they were both provided different materials such as; computer. speakers, date show, apology exercises, pictures, short videos and short parts of movies were used for both groups but with different instructions of explicit and implicit depending on the groups.

At the beginning of each lesson, (EG) received warm-up activities at the beginning on each lesson regarding the apology strategies they were taught on that lesson by the tutor to drag their attention.

At the end of the sixth session, both groups of (IG) and (EG) were provided the same (MDCT) that was given in pre-test as post-test. The aim was to show the learners' development of pragmatic knowledge after receiving pragmatic instructions of explicit and implicit in terms of apology speech act. Then, for two weeks both groups of (IG) and (EG) did not receive any further information on apology speech act, but after these two weeks they were provided the same (MDCT) as a delayed-test to measure their retained knowledge and to see if they still could remember those different strategies they have been taught implicitly and explicitly.

In addition, 10 English native speakers participated in this study who were English teachers and had experience in Teaching. They were given a Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Test (MDCT) and were asked to choose one appropriate answer that they believed is the best as a native speaker for each situation they read. The aim was to collect their data and later compare the answers of the (IG) and (EG) with the answers of the native speakers of English to investigate the participants' appropriateness in terms of apology speech act before and after the study.

Regarding the data analysis, a quantitative discourse analysis approach was adopted to compare the participants' answers of explicit group and implicit group in the pre-test, post-test and delayed-test by teaching them pragmatic knowledge of apology speech act explicitly/ implicitly so as to develop EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge. For this reason, first a t-test was conducted to assure that both groups were homogenous in the knowledge they have concerning pragmatics of apology speech act. Later, a repeated measure ANOVA was conducted to compare advanced EFL learners' Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Tasks (MDCT) in pre-test, post-test and delayed-test.

III. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

To test the research questions of this study, first an independent samples t-test was implemented to assure the homogeneity of pragmatic knowledge in terms of apology speech act before the study. An independent-samples t-test

was conducted to compare (MDCT) in pre- test between explicit group and implicit group in terms of apology speech act. The results showed that there was not any significant difference (t (38) = -0.224, p=.824) between explicit group (M=5.75, SD=0.716) and implicit group (M=5.8, SD=0.696). This approves that the pragmatic proficiency of both EG and IG before the treatment was at the same level.

Next, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to compare advanced EFL learners' MDCT. A total of 40 EFL students were randomized to receive either explicit instruction or implicit instruction. The explicit group received explicit instruction of apology speech act and implicit group received implicit instruction of apology speech act. The MDCT was measured at pre-test, post-test and delayed-test. Complete data was available at all time points for 20 students who received explicit instruction and 20 students who received implicit instruction. Table 1 shows Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of Sphericity had been met (Mauchly's W test statistic = .920, df = 2; p > .05).

TABLE 1:
MAUCHLY'S TEST OF SPHERICITY

Within Subjects Effect	Mauchly's W	Approx. Chi-Square	df	Sig.
Time (or Tests)	0.920	3.078	2	0.215

While Sphericity assumption was met then Sphericity assumed tests are reported on Tests of Within-Subjects Effects as shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2:
TESTS OF WITHIN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS WHEN SPHERICITY ASSUMED

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Time	317.217	2	158.608	377.876	.000
Time * Groups	5.550	2	2.775	6.611	.002
Error (Time)	31.900	76	.420		

* Significant P< 0.05

There was a significant main effect time (F (2, 76) =377.88, P<0.001) which mean there is a significant difference at least between two of the MDCT measurement tests (pre-test, post-test and delayed-test). There was a significant interaction between time and group (F (2, 76) =6.61, P<0.01). Since the interaction is significant, interpreting the main effects will not lead to an accurate understanding of the results, therefor just focusing on the interaction part is more accurate. Meanwhile, it is necessary to breakdown comparisons between groups for the test levels as it is shown in Table 3. Post hoc comparisons indicated that that there was no difference between the two groups at pre-test (P=0.824). But significant differences could be found between the EG and IG at post-test and delayed-test, with Explicit group having higher MDCT levels (or Scores) than the Implicit group (P=0.004 and P=0.001 respectively).

TABLE 3:
PAIRWISE COMPARISONS

Time Point	Implicit Group MDCT Mean(SE) n=20	Explicit Group MDCT Mean(SE) n=20	Mean Difference (95% CI)	P Value
Pre-test	5.80 (0.158)	5.75 (0.157)	-0.50 (-0.50, 0.40)	0.824
Post-test	9.10 (0.127)	9.65 (0.127)	0.55 (0.19, 0.92)	0.004
Delayed-test	8.55 (0.177)	9.55 (0.177)	1.00 (0.49, 1.51)	0.001

Figure 1 shows clearly the mean of MDCT between explicit group and implicit group in pre-test, post-test and delayed-test. This result is in line with finding of Maeda (2011) where the effectiveness of explicit and implicit teaching was examined by using "Please" request strategies, the aim was to see how far these two teaching approaches impact the understanding of learners' pragmatic. The findings proved that explicit teaching group was significant over implicit teaching group.
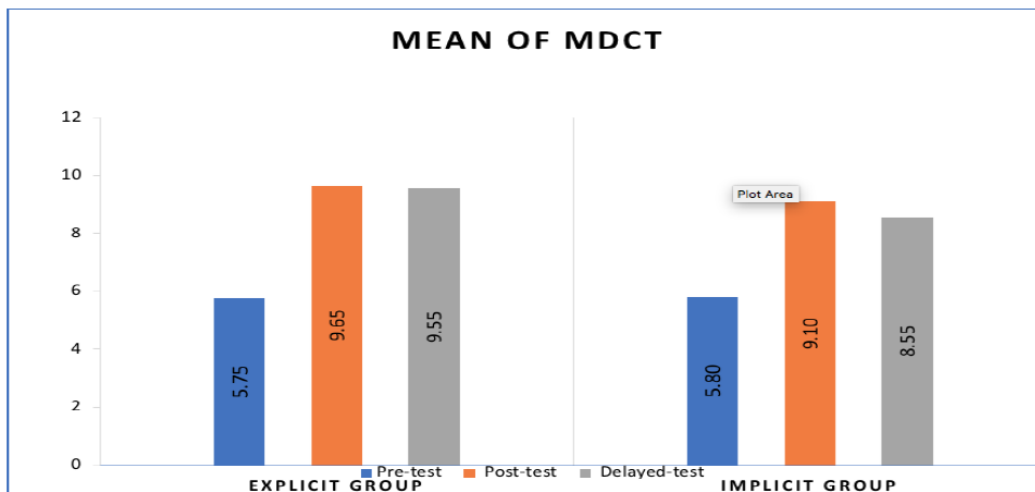
Figure 1: Mean of MDCT

In conclusion, by comparing the 95% confidence intervals, it can clearly be seen that there is no significant difference between EG and IG in pre-test but the mean values are significantly different for the two groups at both post-test and delayed-test with explicit group having greater progress than implicit group in post-test and delayed-test. This result is similar to the finding of Ghaedrahmat, Nia and Biria (2016) who explored explicit and implicit pragmatic instructions of "Thanking" speech act on EFL learners' pragmatic awareness. The result of their study proved that the participants who were taught thanking speech act explicitly outperformed those ones who were taught implicitly.. Figure 2 shows the Estimated Marginal Means of MDCT.
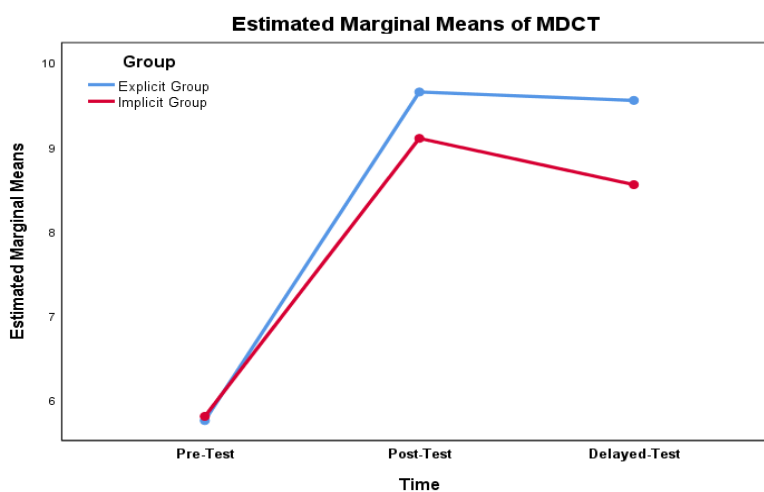

Figure 2: Estimated Marginal Means of MDCT

The result of this study does not hold true with that of Fukuya and Clark (2001), who used a method of input enhancement to draw EFL learners' attention on speech act's target form. The participants of explicit group were provided explicit instruction on sociopragmatic features of request "mitigators" and the participants of the implicit group received the request "mitigator" enhancements. The results showed that there were not any significant differences between both groups of EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge. The findings of the current study indicated that, the results of explicit group and implicit group were significant and they showed improvements in the post-test of MDCT after the treatment, however the explicit group showed greater progress in using appropriate apology strategies than implicit group. While in delayed-test the findings showed that, the results of both groups were significant but an important point could be noticed that explicit group stayed at the same level as they did in the post-test meanwhile implicit group decreased comparing to how their results were in post-test. Therefore, the results indicated that, although the participants were advanced EFL learners but still did not have enough information on giving the best appropriate apology answer before the treatment. But when they were provided pragmatic instructions either explicitly or implicitly, learners became more accurate in terms of apologizing appropriately in different situations. Especially, explicit group which showed a greater progress in post-test and delayed-test. As a result, explicit and implicit instructions of apology speech act facilitative to develop advanced EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge of apology speech act. However,

explicit instruction of pragmatic knowledge is more facilitative than implicit instruction to develop advanced EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge.

Furthermore, similarities and differences could be found between IG and EG before and after the study. Both groups, for each appropriate answer as native speakers did, the participants received 1 point and if the whole answers were correct, they received 10 points (%100). The number of the participants were 20 students in each group, and for example when the participants of explicit or implicit groups answered one of the given situations of the MDCT correctly, they got (20 = 100%) as an appropriate answer, that means each student has got one point in that group and in that specific given situation as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4:
TOTAL OF MDCT FOR BOTH GROUPS

Groups	Explicit						Implicit					
Situations	Pre-test		Post-test		Delay-test		Pre-test		Post-test		Delay-test	
S1	12	60%	20	100%	19	95%	12	60%	18	90%	17	85%
S2	13	65%	19	95%	19	95%	12	60%	20	100%	18	90%
S3	9	45%	18	90%	18	90%	10	50%	15	75%	16	80%
S4	12	60%	19	95%	19	95%	12	60%	19	95%	17	85%
S5	13	65%	20	100%	20	100%	13	65%	19	95%	19	95%
S6	12	60%	19	95%	20	100%	12	60%	18	90%	17	85%
S7	12	60%	19	95%	20	100%	11	55%	18	90%	16	80%
S8	11	55%	19	95%	18	90%	11	55%	17	85%	17	85%
S9	10	50%	20	100%	18	90%	11	55%	19	95%	16	80%
S10	11	55%	20	100%	20	100%	12	60%	19	95%	18	90%

In addition, the answers of both groups were compared to how English native speakers chose the most appropriate answers in the given situations. In pre-test both groups of IG and EG had problem in situation 3. Later, they were both improved in post-test, implicit group moved from (50%) to (75%) meanwhile explicit group moved from (45%) to (90%). In terms of choosing the most appropriate apology exactly as how English native speakers use them in post-test, implicit groups' highest level was in situation 2 which was (100%). Meanwhile, in explicit group was in situation 1,5,9 and 10 which was (100%). Moreover, the results of delayed-test showed that, implicit group's highest progress of choosing the best appropriate answer was in situation 5 where they had (100%). Whereas, explicit group's highest progress was in situation 5, 6,7,9 and 10 which was (100%) as shown is Table 4. This indicates that, both groups' pragmatic knowledge was developed with explicit group outperforming implicit group as shown in Figure 2.

IV. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

For the last decade a lot of studies have been conducted in various countries and languages regarding the role of instructions in the development of pragmatic knowledge. In spite of that, very few studies have shed light on the use of pragmatic speech acts so as to develop Iraqi Kurdish EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge. For example, Tahir and Pandian (2016) used a DCT to find differences and similarities between EFL Kurdish learners and American native speaker. Furthermore, Hasan (2014) focused on Iraqi Kurdish apology strategies to illustrate the politeness of Kurdish culture from a socio-pragmatic situation with regard to obligation to apologies. Moreover, Tahir and Pandian (2016) compared Iraqi Kurdish learners and English Native speakers' apology strategies to find the differences and similarities between these two languages. Hence, this study is considered as a fresh study which has shed light on the use of explicit and implicit instructions on the development of pragmatic knowledge of advanced Kurdish EFL learners' apology speech act. The finding of this research can be used as a starting point information for further studies.

The main finding of the current study is that explicit instruction is better than implicit instruction for teaching English apology speech act. The finding is strongly agreed upon other scholars' works such as Xiao-le (2011) who explored the effectiveness of explicit and implicit Instructions of "Request Strategies" on gaining pragmatic knowledge of Chinese EFL learners. The results indicated that explicit group had greater progress in the appropriate level of being polite, using formal and direct situations than implicit group. Similar finding is reported in, Kia and Salehi (2013) who showed the instructional strategies of explicit and implicit teaching on the development EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge by selecting "Thanking and Compliment" speech acts. The results revealed that explicit teaching outperformed the implicit teaching. It can be suggested that, explicit instruction is a very clear teaching method, more way of saying effective, direct, stress-free technique that helps learners understand and learn without making them tired or feel bored.

However, we also should not ignore the fact that implicit instruction is also helpful in developing advanced EFL learners' pragmatic knowledge but, implicit instruction is not as effective as explicit instruction because explicit instruction of pragmatic knowledge is more helpful to understand apology speech act comparing to implicit instruction as EFL learners be aware of pragmatics as well as to develop the advanced learners' pragmatics in choosing the most appropriate apology strategies and form that can be similar to native English speakers in different situations.

Regarding explicit and implicit instructions of teaching pragmatic, the results of this study indicated that pragmatic can be taught in EFL classroom and with the grammatical knowledge pragmatics should be taught. In addition, advanced EFL learners were preferred to participate in this study because they have a high level of grammatical proficiency and have information about apologizing as was shown in the pre-test, but this is not enough and still they

could not use apology speech act appropriately. This shows the fact that, even advanced learners needed to be exposed to the various strategies, categories and sub-categories of apology speech act to use appropriate pragmatic as well as to assist them in developing their knowledge of pragmatics. This comes in line with (Bouton, 1996; Kasper 1997) who believed that the high grammatical proficiency students will not necessarily have a similar pragmatic knowledge.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT)
Appendix 2: Background Information
Appendix 3: Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Test (MDCT) for pre-test, post-test & delayed test
Appendix 4: Exercises on apology strategies in different sessions
Appendix 5: Pictures on apology strategies in different sessions
Appendix 6: Ethical Approval Form

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Toward an Intercultural Rhetoric: Improving Chinese EFL Students' Essay Writing through Outline Writing

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Abstract—This study explores the effects of teaching EFL students to use an outline in their English essays. The researchers maintain that using outlines can raise students' awareness of different audience expectations embedded in the rhetoric of the target language (English) and culture and can improve their English academic writing. The study was based on a four-week long case study at a university in Xi'an, China, in which 24 Chinese EFL students at the College of Translation Studies participated. A discourse analysis was conducted by comparing the Chinese EFL students' English essays produced at the beginning of the study with those produced at the end of the study after learning and practicing outlining for writing the English essays. Email inquiries were used for understanding the participants' viewpoints on learning how to write English essay outlines. The findings reveal that teaching EFL students to use outlining in their English essays is an effective way to help them improve their essay writing. Not only can it enhance the students' understanding about using the English thesis statements, but it can also help improve the use of related, logical, and specific detailed examples to support the main ideas in their essays. The email inquiries also revealed that the students believe that outline learning helped them to understand the differences between Chinese and English essay writing. The implications of the study for intercultural rhetoric are also discussed.

Index Terms—outline writing, EFL students, intercultural rhetoric, Chinese and Western rhetoric

I. INTRODUCTION

Contrastive rhetoric (Kaplan, 1966) originally posits that language and writing are cultural phenomena, that different cultures may have different rhetorical tendencies, and that linguistic patterns and rhetorical conventions of the first language (L1) may cause interference with students' second language (L2) writing (Connor, 1996). As more research in second language writing develops, new interpretations have been added to contrastive rhetoric, leading to a new theory of intercultural rhetoric. This theory advocates that we should contextualize rhetoric culturally and emphasize that writing as communication is influenced by culturally specific rhetorical conventions and that persuasion is affected by audience's culturally defined expectations (Connor & Traversa, 2014, p.19).

In fact, recent research in intercultural rhetoric-oriented writing instruction has reported promising results for teaching international students. These studies showed improved writing effectiveness when students are taught audience expectations and shown ways to avoid negative transfer from L1 to L2. Xing, Wang, & Spencer (2008) compared two sets of student writing. The first comparison was between Chinese writing by native Chinese students and English writing by native English speakers and with English writing by the Chinese students in the context of taking an e-course. Then, they compared Chinese writing with English writing accomplished by Chinese students who did not take an e-course. The results showed that the group using the e-course was successful in learning about defined aspects of English rhetoric in academic writing, ... because the e-course seemed to enhance their understanding of the writing conventions in their L1 and L2 (Xing, Wang, & Spencer, 2008, p. 71). In addition, Yoshimura's study (2002) showed the effectiveness of using the students' L1 in an EFL writing class in Japan while Walker (2011) recommended using teacher conferencing and peer-response activities to help his Southeast Asian college students engage in more writing to become more familiar with the writing conventions of the target language (English). Thus, all these studies seem to demonstrate the important roles that both L1 and L2 writing conventions could play in improving EFL students' English writing.

Likewise, drawing insight from intercultural rhetoric, the current study explores how EFL writing teachers may use a comparative writing approach to teach EFL students English academic writing. Indeed, this approach aims to make the Chinese EFL students aware of both similarities and differences in the rhetorical organizational patterns of their native language (L1) and English (L2). Specifically, this study used English essay outline instruction to meet this goal.

An outline is a "blueprint" or "plan" for an essay and is a short, organized description of what will be contained in that essay. Taylor (2012) claims, "I believe there are two special advantages to using an outline. First, as you construct

the organizational scheme for your paper, the use of an outline will quickly reveal where more research is needed. Second, the outline also exposes items that are unnecessary and allows you to jettison them early, before they become unneeded distractions diluting the coherence of your presentation" (p. 205). The authors of the present study also maintain that a well-constructed outline can literally display the "picture" of the development of the whole essay and that using an outline may help the EFL students "see" the connections between their L1 rhetorical patterns and discourse styles with those of the L2 (English) rhetoric. It may also provide a step- by- step learning experience for the EFL students to identify and organize their ideas according to English rhetorical conventions. So, we established two hypotheses for this study:

(1). Teaching English essay outlining can help EFL college students understand English rhetorical/writing convention better and improve their English essay writing.

(2). Teaching English essay outline learning can help EFL college students to understand the different rhetorical preferences in essay writing between Chinese and English rhetoric.

II. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. Intercultural rhetoric

Studies of cross-cultural writing in ESL, namely contrastive rhetoric, began with Robert Kaplan's (1966) research into differences in organization of essays written in English by international students with a variety of backgrounds. Connor & Traversa (2014) stated that the two cornerstones of contrastive rhetoric are the transfer of first language patterns to a second language, as well as the notion that patterns of language and writing are culture-specific. However, contrastive rhetoric was criticized by researchers and educators in L2 language writing for its reductive view of the L1 influences on L2 discourse and for its methodological problems created by small size samples. To respond to the criticism, scholars such as Connor and Traversa (2014) introduced some concepts from theories of rhetoric and redefined meanings of culture for contrastive rhetoric, renaming the endeavor "intercultural rhetoric." Connor (2008) proposed a multilayered model of intercultural rhetoric. This model includes "three major tenets of intercultural rhetoric: (1) texts need to be seen in their contexts with meaningful contextual and purposeful descriptions, (2) culture needs to be complexified to include disciplinary cultures in addition to national/ethnic cultures, and (3) dynamic, interactive patterns of communication are important to consider, which leads to convergences among cultural differences" (as cited in Connor & Traversa, 2014, p. 20). Thus, the redefined contrastive or intercultural rhetoric emphasizes the roles of rhetorical purposes for different genres and audience's expectations within a specific cultural writing convention.

Drawing insights from intercultural rhetoric, Casanave (2004) claims that some of the differences that impact writing across cultures include rhetorical patterns of organization, composing conventions, cohesion and coherence patterns, and audience expectations. Further, he recommends that L2 teachers use three approaches in their classrooms to improve EFL students' English writing. These include encouraging their students to carefully analyze the purposes of and audience for their writing to avoid stereotypes of their L1 and L2, asking students to compare paragraph and essay organization between L1 and L2 texts, and engaging students in examining audience expectations in different cultures (Casanave, 2004). To illustrate, he further explained that, for "good writing" in narrative essays, U.S.-based teachers valued logic and strong openings due to English rhetoric, whereas the Chinese teachers valued sentiments and moral messages because of Chinese rhetorical tradition (Li, 1996).

2. Chinese rhetoric vs Western/English rhetoric

Since the introduction of Contrastive rhetoric by Kaplan (1966), there has been constant and often heated discussion of Chinese rhetoric vs Western rhetoric. The researchers here will focus on the views that suggest Chinese rhetoric prefers inductive and indirect organization which often results in native English-speaking teachers' confusion with EFL and ESL students' English essays. This is because English rhetoric takes a more straightforward and deductive approach (Fox, 1994). The representative scholars in this view were Kaplan (1996) and Matelene (1985). They held the view that Chinese writing is indirect because they observed that Chinese ESL students used indirect or circular organization in their English writing. Kaplan (1966) argued that Chinese as well as "Oriental" writing in general is indirect (p. 9). He explained that "The paragraph development may be said to be turning and turning in a widening gyre. The circles or gyres turn around the subject and show it from a variety of tangential views, but the subject is never looked at directly" (Kaplan, 1966, p. 10). Matalene (1985) supported Kaplan's assumption and stated that Chinese students did not argue from premises to conclusion, but instead presented assertions in an accumulative fashion. Matalene (1985) then claimed that "to be indirect and to expect the audience to infer meaning rather than to have it spelled out was a defining characteristic of Chinese rhetoric" (p. 801).

In contrast, the Western rhetorical tradition that is based on Aristotelian classical rhetoric favors using a deductive approach over an inductive one. Vries (2000) describes the typical structure of an English language academic essay as: "The expected thought sequence is linear in its development. In written communication in English, for example, the paragraph begins with a topic statement and then proceeds to develop that statement by example and illustrations. The central idea is related to all other ideas in the whole essay, and therefore, a good piece of writing is considered to be unified with no superfluous information" (p. 3). Fox (1994) also states that the expectation of a typical Western academic audience of United States is that, in addition to its structure of a clear and direct thesis statement followed by

convincing reasons that support it, the argument should be assertive, confident, logical, and "to the point" without irrelevant digressions.

Drawing the insights from the above theories, we concur with the perspective that we should contextualize rhetoric culturally and emphasize that writing as communication is influenced by culturally specific rhetorical conventions (Connor & Traversa, 2014, p.19). Xing et. al (2008) point out that, since L2 writers bring with them various cultural experiences that can influence their writing, EFL teachers need to teach students to be aware of L1 and L2 writing conventions that focus on essay structure and readers' expectations. Thus, EFL students can learn not only the forms of language but also the cultural constraints associated with the forms and the effects of choosing a particular form. Understanding those contrastive aspects of two types of cultural rhetoric constitutes an important step for ESL and EFL students to attain awareness on some L2 essay distractions related to their L1 writing convention and culture. We maintain that teaching EFL students L2 outline writing is a useful way to help students understand the similarity and differences between their L1 and L2 writing conventions. This should lead to greater success in their English academic writing.

III. METHOD

1. Participants and setting

This paper presents a case study of research that lasted 4 weeks at one university in Xi'an, China during the spring semester of 2017. Twenty-four EFL sophomores (four male students and twenty female students) who were enrolled in the required *English Writing* course participated in the study. The English Writing class met twice a week and lasted for 45 minutes for each class period. The participants all majored in Translation Studies at the university.

2. Procedures

Stage 1: During the spring semester in 2017, the student participants were given an after-class essay assignment by their writing instructor (one of the researchers) on the topic of the use of smartphones. Here is the writing prompt (the researchers created):

Instruction: Smartphone use has been very popular in our society. What will happen to people's lives if, one day, they have to live without the smartphones? Please fully respond to this question in a complete formal English essay. You have two weeks' time to finish this after-class English essay.

Stage 2: At the end of the given two weeks' time, the instructor collected the essays. Then, the instructor provided the participants with a series of English essay outline teaching activities, which were carried out in two 45- minute-writing classes in the third week. The teaching contents included the following topics in a chronological order:

A. Teaching and practicing the key concepts of English essay writing

a. Providing a PowerPoint lecture on English essay structure

b. Providing a PowerPoint lecture on topic sentences in English paragraphs

c. Providing a PowerPoint lecture on thesis statements in English essays

d. Providing the students with exercises on writing thesis statements and on English essay structure.

B. Teaching an English essay outline

a. Lecturing about what an outline is

b. Lecturing about why an outline should be used

c. Explaining the relationship between an essay outline and an essay structure

d. Providing the students with exercises on using outline on a sample English essay

e. Explaining how to create the two types of outlines

• Creating a topic outline

• Creating a sentence outline

Stage 3: When the two class periods from Stage 2 were completed, the instructor reassigned the same essay topic as the first one to the student participants but required them to create an outline this time before they started to write this version. Additionally, the students were given one week's time to finish this second essay. During this fourth week of the study, none of the student participants had the first essay available to them because the first essays were all handwritten and turned in to the instructor before they wrote the second essays. At the end of the fourth week, the student participants submitted their typed essay outlines and essays. Meanwhile, the instructor also recruited five volunteers from the participants for a follow-up email inquiry about the student participants' reflections on the outline learning.

3. Data collection and instruments

Two types of research data were collected and analyzed by the researchers.

A. The English essays, themselves: the 24 essays written before the students' learned how to use essay outline in their English essays and the 24 essays written after they learned about outlines for their English essays. These two kinds of essays were compared and the emerging themes were described and analyzed.

B. Feedback from the email inquiries: Selected participants discussed their viewpoints on the outline instruction, which was analyzed for the emerging themes.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of and a discussion of the study in response to the two hypotheses introduced earlier and will discuss the significance of the findings.

Hypothesis: (1). Teaching English essay outlining can help EFL college students understand English rhetorical/writing convention better and improve their English essay writing.

The findings from the discourse analysis comparing the participants' essays written before and after learning English essay outlining provide a positive answer to the first hypothesis. The findings reveal two remarkable improvements in the participants' English essays, in the areas of establishing a thesis statement and using detailed specific supporting evidence.

First, the findings from the comparison show that learning to use outlines for their English essays helped the participants better understand the meanings of their thesis statements. According to Lunsford (2016),

Academic and professional writing in the United States contains an explicit thesis statement. The thesis functions as a promise to readers, letting them know what the writer will discuss. Your readers may expect you to craft the thesis as a single sentence near the beginning of the text… A thesis should have two parts: a topic, which indicates the subject matter the writing is about, and a comment, which makes an important point about the topic. (p. 40-41)

The findings reveal that, after learning English outlines, more participants not only established the thesis statements in their essays but also placed them in the right location: the end of the introduction.

TABLE 1 shows the number of essays that included the proper thesis statement in the introduction increased from 5 to 18 after the outline learning.

TABLE 1
(WRITING A THESIS STATEMENT)

Improvement 1	Before Learning English Essay Outlining (N= 24)	After Learning English Essay Outlining (N= 24)
Including a Thesis Statement at the End of the Introduction	6	18
Sample 1 Introduction	"With technology development, smart phone became an incredibly important part in every people's life. People are saw playing smart phone everywhere around subway, restaurant, classroom and so on" (Student 2).	"Smartphone gets more and more popular and indispensable in everyone's daily life. You can go out without money, credit cards or maps while without smartphone, you would not be willing to go anywhere. Moreover, smartphone undertakes most of your social networking functions. Every time you use WeChat or Facebook to connect with your friends you use smartphone. Since smartphone takes such an important role in our life, we may wonder how it would be without smartphone" (student 2).
Sample 2 Introduction	"Can you imagine a world where there has not smart phone? How do people live a life? What the life will be" (Student 17)	"We're living an era where capturing moments and sharing them using our smartphones is more important than actually living these moments with whoever is beside us. Smartphone is such a necessary part of our daily life. Have you wondered how life would be without a smartphone? In fact, many people cannot imagine a life without smartphones, and they couldn't live without smartphones. The importance of smartphones in today's world cannot be overemphasized，from carrying out real time businesses to fun activities to security checks, not to mention thousands of phone applications being developed on daily bases to cater for almost all our needs in all walks of our life. However, personally speaking, we can live a better life without smartphones. Let us talk about the good of the life without smartphones from two aspects" (Student 17).

The two samples before learning the outline here reveal that none of the early introductions include a thesis statement. The introduction (before learning outlines) of sample 1 simply gives some background information on the topic of smartphones while that of the sample 2 only asks some rhetoric questions to get the reader's attention to the topic. However, after learning about outlines, both samples established the thesis statement at the end of the introduction. In sample 1, although the thesis statement, "Since smartphone takes such an important role in our life, we may wonder how it would be without smartphone," still needs to be polished, it at least shows the direction of the essay's development in the coming discussion. That is to say, the thesis statement indicates that the essay will discuss the positive impact of the smartphone on people's lives. In the case of sample 2, the thesis statement, "However, personally speaking, we can live a better life without smartphones. Let us talk about the good of the life without smartphones from two aspects," clearly shows that the essay's main idea will deal with the benefits of not having smartphones in people's lives.

This increase in using English thesis statements in the participants' essays demonstrates that making outlines has helped make the EFL students think about the main point they plan to discuss at the beginning of an essay. Thus, the established main idea would point them in the right direction of the sequential development of the essays. That is to say, it would direct them to further find out the reasons why they think so or believe that idea. This approach of organizing the essay actually reflects what Vries (2000) describes as the typical structure of an English language academic essay. The expected thought sequence is linear in its development, and the central idea is related to all other ideas in the whole essay. So, based on the findings here, we think that it is safe to state that outline writing can help Chinese EFL students understand English writing conventions better (such as establishing a thesis statement in the introduction).

The second finding that can support the first hypothesis involves the increased use of specific evidence to support their thesis statements. In English, it is well-known that a clear essay structure has three basic parts: introduction, body (discussion) and conclusion. But an effective English essay contains more than just a clear structure. As Lunsford (2016) points out, writers need "to make sure that each paragraph relates to or supports the thesis and that each paragraph has sufficient detail to support the point it is making" (p.77). The findings actually reveal that, after learning to use outline, the number of essays including the related detailed specific evidence to support the thesis statements has risen from 10 to 18 among a total of 24 essays. The following comparative analysis on two participant student essay samples written before and after the outline learning demonstrates this second finding.

We will first examine the Student Sample Essay 1 displayed in TABLE 2.

TABLE 2
(STUDENT SAMPLE ESSAY 1 BEFORE & AFTER)

Before Outline Learning (Student Sample Essay 1)

Life without Cellphone
    "With technology development, smart phone became an incredibly important part in every people's life. People are saw playing smart phone everywhere around subway, restaurant, classroom and so on.
    However, if we take their smart phone away all of a sudden, what would happen? Perhaps, at the first moment, they would feel boring and have no [idea] what to do now or next. Then they would become anxious like ants in a hot pot and start to walk around trying to find something interesting but without smart phone, nothing is good enough to attract them. At last, they would go mad in the extremely vacuous world. Because without smart phone, their life became boring and anxious and people can't get away with that.
    All in all, without smart phone, human beings would become incredibly horrible" (Student 2).

After Outline Learning (Student Sample Essay 1)

Outline
1. Introduction
Smartphone gets more and more popular and indispensable.
2. Life would become less convenient without smartphone
a) Smartphone increased the efficiency of social functioning
i. Amazon and Taobao
ii. Cashless economy
b) Life would become less convenient without smartphone
3. Life would be less interesting without smartphone
a) Smartphone changed the way people connecting each other
i) Facebook and WeChat
b) Smartphone brings more fun to daily life.
i) Games and entertainment apps
4. Conclusion
Life would become very inconvenient and tedious without smartphone.
 	
Life without Smartphone
    "Smartphone gets more and more popular and indispensable in everyone's daily life. You can go out without money, credit cards or maps while without smartphone, you would not be willing to go anywhere. Moreover, smartphone undertakes most of your social networking functions. Every time you use WeChat or Facebook to connect with your friends you use smartphone. Since smartphone takes such an important role in our life, we may wonder how it would be without smartphone.
    Above all, life would become less convenient without smartphone. Smartphone increased the efficiency of social functioning. From Amazon to Taobao, we use them buying fancy shoes or delicious foods by our smartphone and we can do it on bus or waiting in line. When we have no money, but need to pay for something, now we can do it with our smartphone, which is called cashless economy. All of those brought convenience to every aspect of our daily life, without smartphone, it would become less convenient. Also, life would be less interesting without smartphone. Smartphone changed the way people connecting each other. With smartphone apps as Facebook and WeChat, we make new friends or chat with old fellows no matter how far away we really are. What's more, smartphone brings more fun to daily life. We play games on it from day to night, twitter, YouTube and so on. However, without smartphone, all [the fun] would be lost.
    Life would become very inconvenient and tedious without smartphone." (Student 2)

In the following TABLE 2-a, we exhibit our comparative discourse analysis on the essay improvements for the Student Sample Essay 1 before and after outline learning.

TABLE 2-A
(AN ANALYSIS ON THE STUDENT SAMPLE ESSAY 1 BEFORE &AFTER)

Essay Structure and Support	Analysis on before Outline Learning (Student Sample Essay 1)	Analysis on after Outline Learning (Student Sample Essay 1)
Introduction	The introduction is too brief in introducing the topic and doesn't have a thesis statement.	The introduction has adequate background information on the topic and contains a thesis statement at the end of the introduction.
Body paragraphs with specific evidence	The discussion presents some random general ideas on the negative effects of without smartphones in people's lives. It does not provide any specific examples to explain these general ideas.	The discussion to explain and support the thesis statement is coherently and specifically organized due to the use of related topic sentences with specific related details and examples. For instance, the meaning of the topic sentence, "life would become less convenient without smartphone," becomes very clear when the use of the related specific details such as "Amazon and Taobao and cashless economy…" are introduced and explained.
Conclusion	The conclusion is short and confusing due to the wrong diction, " horrible."	The conclusion is short but restates the thesis statement and can be further expanded.

Next, we will look at the Student Sample Essay 2 displayed in TABLE 3.

TABLE 3
(STUDENT SAMPLE ESSAY 2 BEFORE & AFTER)

Before Outline Learning (Student Sample Essay 2)
Life without Smart Phone
"Can you imagine a world where there has not smart phone? How do people live a life? What the life will be.
People will live a happier life. They are not bound by their smart phone and surf the internet all the time, influenced by all kinds of [information]. They will spend more time communicating with their family, friends and strangers. They will not stay alone with their smart phone. By contrast, they will stay with books and participate in a variety of activities. They can do whatever they like.
Of course, the life will be less convenient. Smart phones can assist us in many daily affairs. It also can make our life more effective, connecting us with the world. We can know what happened in other countries instantly
Let's risk off with our life without smart phone." (Student 17)

After Outline Learning (Student Sample Essay 2)

Life Without Smartphone

Outline

Life Without Smartphones ---- The Good

I. Introduction
Have you wondered how life would be without a smartphone? In fact, many people cannot imagine a life without smartphones, and they couldn't live without smartphones. The importance of smartphones in today's world cannot be overemphasized, from carrying out real time businesses to fun activities to security checks, not to mention thousands of phone applications being developed on daily bases to cater for almost all our needs in all walks of our life. However, personally speaking, we can live a better life without smartphones. Let us talk about the good of the life without smartphones from two aspects.
II. Body
A. The life without smartphones benefits our family.
1. Set a good example for our kids
a) Be devoted to reading
b) Listen to their story and play with them
2. Spend more time with our family
a) Take part in family's activities
b) Communicating with our family members
B. The life without smartphones makes our work better.
1. Promote our efficiency
a) Not be distracted
b) Be mindful
2. Devoting more time to our work
a) Not be addicted social media
b) Communicating with colleagues
III. Conclusion
People who quite living their lives on their smartphones and begin to live them in real time and space will experience and enjoy the better life.

Life Without Smartphone

We're living an era where capturing moments and sharing them using our smartphones is more important than actually living these moments with whoever is beside us. Smartphone is such a necessary part of our daily life. Have you wondered how life would be without a smartphone? In fact, many people cannot imagine a life without smartphones, and they couldn't live without smartphones. The importance of smartphones in today's world cannot be overemphasized，from carrying out real time businesses to fun activities to security checks, not to mention thousands of phone applications being developed on daily bases to cater for almost all our needs in all walks of our life. However, personally speaking, we can live a better life without smartphones. Let us talk about the good of the life without smartphones from two aspects.

The life without smartphones benefits our family. We must be familiar with the situation where the family members are sitting together and they nearly don't talk to each other, just burying themselves in their smartphones. The communication is becoming less and less. What's the worse is that more and more children are also addicted to the smartphone and using their parents' smartphones to play games in their spare time. Contrary to the situation, people will spend more time with family members. Parents can read books with their children and help them form a good habit. Children learn to read in their spare time and would like to share their stories with parents. These things are good for the development of children. Communicate with our family members rather than spend time with smartphones will make the relationship stronger. Furthermore, we can have time to organize all sorts of activities for our family. We are getting together to enjoy the joys and the moments. Family's life will be full of happiness.

The life without smartphones makes our work better. We've felt such peace in our every day. We don't feel rushed or too distracted. We are paying attention to whatever we are doing at work. We can hear the birds and notice the plants. We are nicer to ourselves as I'm not wasting time scrolling down on social media. We might think it is weird. It's weird because we live such a rushed life for so long that we forget to feel what it feels not to be in a rush or distracted. Not having a smartphone taught us that we are already there and we aren't distracted by external and internal noise. The mindfulness makes us devoted to our work, promoting our efficiency greatly. We spend more time with our colleagues and communicate the work with them, believing that we all complement each other, and thus help each other learn and grow. If we are addicted to the social media, we would be more pressured and cannot enjoy our work and balance the work and life.

Life without smartphones has helped with achieving some peace and being present. It not only promotes ourselves but also benefits our family and work. People who quite living their lives on their smartphones and begin to live them in real time and space will experience and enjoy the better life.

In the following TABLE 3-a, we present our comparative discourse analysis on the essay improvements for the Student Sample Essay 2 before and after outline learning.

TABLE 3-A
(AN ANALYSIS ON THE STUDENT SAMPLE ESSAY 2 BEFORE & AFTER)

Essay Structure and Support	Analysis on before Outline Learning (Student Sample Essay 2)	Analysis on after Outline Learning (Student Sample Essay 2)
Introduction	The introduction only asks the short rhetorical questions on the topic, and it doesn't have a thesis statement.	The introduction has adequate background information on the topic focusing on the benefits. It established a clear thesis statement at the end of introduction.
Body paragraphs with specific evidence	The discussion basically answers the questions raised in the introduction. It lists both positive and negative effects of without smartphone in life. But it does not provide any specific examples or details to explain these general ideas.	The discussion is logically organized and the thesis statement is clearly supported from two focused specific benefits of without smartphones in life, which is expressed in two topic sentences: "The life without smartphones benefits our family," and "The life without smartphones makes our work better." The specific related details such as spending time with kids through reading books, talking with family instead of looking at smartphones, less distraction in work, and not addicted to social media all help to make the discussion convincing and interesting.
Conclusion	The conclusion is short and a bit contradict to the discussion.	The conclusion summarizes the whole discussion: the benefits of living without smartphones. It also gives some final thoughts on the topic.

We ascribe the above observable improvement (i.e., the participants' using more specific details and examples to support their thesis statements) to the use of outlines in the essays. We can see that the outlines in the students' essays have functioned in three ways, as Lunsford (2016) suggests, "… it can help you see exactly how the parts of your writing will fit together- how your ideas relate, where you need examples, and what the overall structure of your work will be" (p.48). The participants themselves also noted these advantages of outlines. In the email inquiry, when responding to the question on the functions of using an outline in their English essays, one participant wrote, " …It can help me know what I am going to write about. Sometimes even if I have decided which topic should I choose to write about, I am still quite confused about the arguments or detained information that I should write about in my essay. With the help of English essay outlining learning, I have learned how to draw a mind map before writing, which can help me know how to write each paragraph clearly and also speed up my writing" (Participant 12, personal communication, June12, 2017). Another student observed that "… it can help me to organize my thinking and make my writing more logical and contain a clear structure. It also helps me to avoid the influence of my Chinese essay writing, which often gives too much far- attached information and turns around in repeating some similar ideas" (Participant 5, personal communication, June12, 2017). The responses here demonstrate that the EFL participants have become more aware of the possible differences between their English essay writing and their Chinese essay writing. Finally, another participant stated that " … I believe that outline is like a thinking road -map for me, for it makes me avoid distractive information but choose logical details in a clear order. So, using outline can make my essay more complete, logical and clearer in meaning" (Participant 20, personal communication, June12, 2017). Thus, we can state that the findings show that through learning and using English outlines, the EFL students not only can graphically layout the structure of an essay but also can work through prewriting process for choosing related detailed specific support to the thesis.

Now, we will present and discuss the findings for the second hypothesis.

Hypothesis (2): Teaching English essay outline learning can help EFL college students to understand the different rhetorical preferences in essay writing between Chinese and English rhetoric.

The findings from the email inquiry data have provided some interesting and positive answers to this second hypothesis. Specifically, the students' answers from the email inquiry question 2 (see Appendix 1) reveal that the students all were aware of that there existed some different writing approaches between the English and Chinese essay writing and using an outline helped keep them in track with their English essays. Among the five email inquiry responses, four participants pointed out that in their first essays before learning English outline, they actually wrote based on the ways they wrote their Chinese essays. For example, one participant stated,

Yes, in many situations, my English writing is affected by my Chinese writing. In writing Chinese expository essay, we are taught to use examples and background information to persuade the readers for our main idea first and then introduced the main idea at the end of essay, so I followed this approach in my first essay. However, using outline helped me notice that English essay introduces the main idea more directly at the beginning like what we call 'Open the door and see the mountain'. (Participant 9, personal communication, June12, 2017)

Another participant further described her perception on Chinese and English essay writing as follows,

Writing a Chinese essay is very [different] from writing an English essay. The English essay usually [is] based on the structure of "introduction-body-conclusion," but Chinese essay structure [is] more characterized as "beginning-following-turning-concluding."

Due to cultural differences, it is difficult for me to get rid of the influence of my mother tongue, thinking in the actual writing process before learning the outline writing. I also use gorgeous language, with celebrity quotes and various rhetorical means. Actually, when we [write] an English essay, we should [be] more direct to express our opinions, [and] the most important thing is [that] any argument needs specific supports. (Participant 12, personal communication, June12, 2017)

This participant made a very good point when describing about the differences in what people would consider as effective supporting evidence between Chinese and English writing. Still, one participant showed his perception in terms of differences between Chinese and English writing, as the participant stated,

Definitely, I was influenced greatly by Chinese [ways of writing]… I have no need to consider the logic between sentences and paragraphs when writing Chinese because it is a parataxis language that the meaning can be easily known from words, so seldom attention is allocated to logic. By contrast, rigorous logic is significant in English essay just as mentioned before. The different thinking ways cause barriers in writing English, I have to admit. (Participant 5, personal communication, June12, 2017)

To sum up, the findings from the email inquiry support the second hypothesis, and they also agree with Xing et. al (2008)'s research result that L2 writers bring with them various cultural experiences that can influence their L2 writing, but teaching them to compare L1 and L2 writing conventions focusing on essay structure and readers' expectations can help EFL students understand L2 (English) writing convention better. In our study, using English outline for the participant students' L2 English essay writing seems to be productive in helping them do better in their English essays and to make them more aware of the different preferences in Chinese and English writing conventions.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

The current study shows that using English outlines can help provide a step- by- step writing experience for the EFL students to identify and organize their ideas according to English rhetorical conventions because a well-constructed outline can literally display the "picture" of the linear or hierarchical development of the whole essay. The study also demonstrates that using outline can help the EFL students "see" the connections between their L1 rhetorical patterns and discourse styles with those of the L2 (English) rhetoric. Thus, using English outlines can help enhance the EFL students' awareness of audience's different expectations in a culturally defined rhetorical situation. Hyland (2003) argues that ESL/ EFL writing instructors in an intercultural communication context need to be aware that cultural factors need to be understood as a potential source of explanation for writing differences and used to recognize that there are numerous ways of "making meanings." In concurring with this assumption, from a perspective of intercultural rhetoric, we also maintain that the outline learning can provide a useful means for both the EFL instructors and students to build a bridge between the L1 and L2 writing conventions through constructing a logical mind map for EFL student writers. Thus, outlining learning would help scaffold the EFL students to understand L2 (English) writing convention better and improve their English essay writing.

APPENDIX. QUESTIONS FOR EMAIL INQUIRIES

1. How did you like the English essay outlining learning and writing practice? In what ways, did you feel it was helpful for your English essay writing?

2. Do you think your first essay before learning the outline writing was influenced by the ways you write Chinese essays? Or do you think the ways you write a Chinese essay are the same as these of writing an English essay? Why or why not?

3. What were things you liked most about the English essay outlining? What were the things you disliked about this learning experience?

4. What would be the suggestions you like to give for the possible future outline learning and writing in your English essay class?

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Exploring UAE Teachers' Attitude towards the Successful Implementation of the General Rules in the "School for All" Initiative

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Abstract—The UAE federal law no. 29 of 2006 was a major step towards the recognition of the right of people with disabilities to receive the same educational, healthcare and recreational services among other services as received by their non-disabled ones. This new trend was later emphasized by the UAE Ministry of Education through some initiatives including the "School for All" initiative which was launched in 2010. This initiative set the general rules for the successful implementation of inclusion in the UAE context. The present study aimed at investigating the implementation of these rules from teachers' perspectives as a precursor of the successful inclusion in the UAE context. To do so, a questionnaire in the form of open-ended and close-ended questions was given out to all teachers of the investigated research site, totaling 194 teachers. However, only 77 teachers responded to the questionnaire, and then formed the main sample of the current study. The results revealed teachers' different attitudes towards the implementation of the general rules in the "School for All" initiative. Some recommendations towards the best teaching strategies that can be adopted to enhance effective teaching and learning in inclusive classes were also provided.

Index Terms—teachers' attitude, "School for all" initiative, people with disabilities, inclusive education

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature in the history of inclusion in the UAE showed two main reasons why inclusive education was ignored until 1971 and ineffective until 2006. Firstly, Gaad (2004) referred to the lack of educational services provided for disabled students coupled with the absence of laws that defended the right of students with disabilities to receive good quality education until the first draft of the UAE constitution, which stated the right of education for all students regardless of their abilities or disabilities, was issued in 1971 then amended in 1996 (Alahbabi, 2009). Secondly, the inclusive classes in the UAE were dually supervised and managed by the UAE Ministry of Education and the UAE Ministry of Social Affairs, for a long period of time until the new federal law no. 29 of 2006 was issued (Gaad & Almotairi, 2013). According to them, this dual supervision and management contributed to raising questions about the efficiency of inclusive education in the UAE.

The issuance of the UAE federal law no. 29 of 2006 , as amended later by the law no. 14 of 2009 was considered a shift towards inclusive education in the UAE as it emphasized the right of disabled students to obtain the same high quality education among other services as obtained by their non-disabled peers (Gaad, 2011). Accordingly, the UAE ministry of education (MOE) launched in May 2010 the general rules that govern the integration of disabled students into mainstream classrooms under the "School for All" initiative (MOE, 2010). Since then, these general rules, which revolve mainly around the removal of obstacles that prevent full participation and involvement of disabled students with the aim of providing equal educational opportunities for all students (MOE 2010), have been constituting the main reference for any successful implementation of inclusion in the UAE (Gaad & Almotairi, 2013). These general rules were divided by the researcher into the following five categories and then investigated throughout this study based on their implementation in the UAE inclusive classes from teachers' perspective: (1) teachers' capabilities in terms of training, experience and qualifications, (2) teachers' responsibilities, (3) rights of parents of disabled students, (4) organizational structure of schools, (5) curricular and assessment systems.

II. PURPOSE, SCOPE AND RESEARCH QUESTION

A considerable number of studies were conducted to explore teachers' attitude and perception towards integrating students with disabilities into general education classes in the UAE to check the possibility of successful inclusion in the UAE (Alahbabi, 2009; Anati, 2012; Gaad & Khan, 2007). According to the results of these studies, UAE teachers believed in the right of students with disabilities to receive equal educational services as provided for their non-disabled ones with some worries regarding the impact of inclusion on both disabled and non-disabled students' academic and social development as a result of the lack of teachers' necessary training and experience that enable them to deal with different academic and disciplinary issues (Alahbabi, 2009), the lack of methods and strategies that enhance the successful implementation of integration of disabled students into mainstream classrooms (Anati, 2012) and the lack of

appropriate contents and other necessary resources that bridge the gap between typically achieving and disabled students (Gaad & Khan, 2007).

However, and to the best of the researcher knowledge, no attempts were made to explore the perception of stakeholders of the educational process towards the successful application of the general rules of several inclusive education initiatives launched by the UAE Ministry of Education in coordination with the UAE government. Here came the significance of this study as being the first of its kind in the UAE to make a contribution to the literature in this crucial area of research. To make the current research more specific and more focused, the researcher has decided to explore teachers' perception towards the successful application of the general rules of a pioneering initiative launched in May 2010 by the UAE Ministry of Education and called the "School for All" initiative.

The researcher, on his way to find an answer to the research question below, hypothesizes that UAE teachers have a positive attitude against the five main categories in the "School for All" initiative as a result of the ever-continuing effort and encouragement by the UAE Ministry of Education towards the application of inclusive education at all governmental and private schools:

What are UAE teachers' attitudes towards the successful implementation of the five categories in the "School for All" initiative?

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework

The term "attitude" is well-defined by Ajzen (2011) as the tendency of individuals to evaluate a thing in terms of having a positive or negative impact. This term is also defined by Albarracin, Zanna, Johnson and Kumkale (2005) as the individual's response to a matter and this response is governed by his/her inner desire. To explain this in other words, the attitude of an individual towards a thing affects, to a certain degree, on his/her behavior or response towards it. Based on that, literature shows some attempts by theorists and researchers to understand the nature of the relationship between attitude and human behavior, leading to the emergence of some leading theories including the attitude-behavior theories which are considered by Sutton (1998) the most popular theories to explain the relationship between attitude and human behavior. According to him, these theories are the most popular because they are simple to understand, easy to operate and accurate in predicting human behavior, however; the three main theories of which are identified by Zint (2002) as: (1) the theory of reasoned action, (2) the theory of planned behavior, (3) the theory of trying. The following lines provide a critical review of these three main theories.

According to Ajzen and Fishbein (2002), the theory of reasoned action posits that individuals' response to a thing is totally directed by their desire or tendency to perform that thing. For example, if educators have the desire or tendency towards inclusive education, this means that they are bound to have a more positive attitude towards inclusive education and vice versa. Nevertheless, this theory is put into question by Cooper, Crano and Forgas (2010) and Ajzen (2011) for being limited to predicting only the behavior that can volitionally and voluntarily be controlled by individuals. The theory of reasoned action is followed by the theory of planned behavior in which individuals' attitude or response towards an act is partially, but not totally, dependent on individuals' desire or tendency to perform that act (Ajzen, 2011). He goes on to say that individuals' response to an act is closely connected with their beliefs towards that act. For example, if educators believe in the effectiveness of inclusive education in enhancing learning outcome, it is an indicator that they tend to have a more positive attitude towards inclusive education and vice versa.

Lastly, and as argued by Zint (2002) and Carsrud, Brannback, Elfving and Brandt (2009), the theory of trying is an expansion of the theory of planned behavior, in which individuals' response to a behavior depends heavily on individuals' evaluation of the outcome in terms of advantages and disadvantages (benefits and risks) of the outcome. For example, if educators think that the inclusion policy is useful to achieve the intended objectives and desired outcomes, this means that they tend to have a more positive attitude towards the inclusion policy and vice versa.

B. Different Models of Disability

According to French and Swain (2004), it was until early 1970s that disability was defined as a deficiency in the human body that renders it unable to do an activity and also requires providing special health care in segregated places. This definition was later faced by massive criticism by a number of civil society organizations and other grassroots organizations run by disabled individuals for being incorrect or inaccurate, asking for other meanings centered on social exclusion rather than physical deficiency (Finkelstein, 2004). According to Albert (2006), the new definition of disability, based on social exclusion, started to gain worldwide recognition, making a shift in the way people see disabled individuals from being bodily impaired to being socially and environmentally hindered to get access to equal opportunities.

Notwithstanding, many scholars and researchers (e.g., Shakespeare & Watson, 2009; Albert, 2006; Oliver, 2004) put this social model of disability into question for focusing only on social exclusions and neglecting any bodily impairments, seeking for a new model that takes into account both issues of disability (social exclusions and bodily impairments). The result was the development of other models based on the criticism to the above two models, such as; the social relational model and the affirmation model. The social relational model proposed that the inability of individuals to do an activity does not necessarily mean that they are disabled individuals unless such inability is socially

recognized as a restriction (Thomas, 2004). On the other hand, the affirmation model rejected the medical view of disability and affirmed the positive identity of disabled people (French & Swain, 2004). They continued to say that disabled individuals can live a normal life full of positive and negative experiences, and they are required to show or affirm their positive identity through other activities.

However, and despite the criticism to the social model of disability, it is still effective in the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UN, 2006). According to this convention, disabled individuals are untapped potential, and these untapped potential should be developed through high-quality education and full involvement in all facets of life for the benefit of the whole society. It also emphasizes the importance of overcoming the barriers that may impede their contribution to the society, such as; transport and communication systems, inaccessible buildings, inflexible practices and procedures, improper training and uneven educational opportunities among other barriers.

C. Disability and Inclusion-related Issues in the UAE

Disabled people in the UAE are still looked at from the medical perspective of disability which emphasizes their need to therapeutic intervention, segregated settings and special rehabilitation (Arif & Gaad, 2008). This cultural belief among people in the UAE explains why some improper words such as "disadvantaged" and "suffering" are still used in the media language and in the official statements and formal announcements across the country (Bladd, 2010), or even written and kept in students' achievement records such as "Mongols" and "retarded" as demonstrated in the study conducted by Arif and Gaad (2008). Adding to this, Gaad (2011) contends that, although it is regulated in the UAE constitution that disabled individuals have the same rights as received by non-disabled ones, these rights are still given to them in the form of a charity by the society.

It is then concluded that the previous laws and initiatives calling for equal opportunities for people regardless of their abilities or disabilities are insufficient to introduce or explain the accurate meaning of disability, leading to obvious confusion on how disabled individuals' rights are practiced or supported. Therefore, the UAE government and its establishments still have lots of work to do to raise the awareness of people regarding the accurate meaning of disability. For example, the UAE Ministry of Education needs to launch more initiatives or hold further conferences to raise the awareness among stakeholders of the educational process, including teachers, principals, administrators and parents of disabled students, of the social and academic rights of students with disabilities, as being the first step on the right way to achieve effective and successful inclusion in the UAE context (Anati, 2012).

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

As mentioned earlier in the first section of this research, the researcher has decided to explore the application of the five categories in the "School for All" initiative; teachers' capabilities, teachers' responsibilities, rights of parents of disabled students, organizational structure of schools and curricular and assessment systems, from teachers' perspective. For the purpose of conducting the implementation stage and collecting the current research data, the questionnaire, which is a type of surveys that provides accurate numerical data on an educational phenomenon as contended by Gall, Gall and Borg (2007), was fully developed then used by the researcher of the current study.

The current research tool, the questionnaire, was divided by the researcher into three parts as shown in the appendix (A) to this research; the first part of which was developed to get some demographic information about the participants, and the second part was designed to answer the present research question, while the third part was mainly designed to obtain some detailed information that cannot be obtained from the quantitative data in the second part of the questionnaire. Therefore, it was believed by the researcher that the current tool is the best to gather the necessary information required to accurately and elaborately answer the current research question.

B. Participants and Research Sites

After getting the necessary approvals from the official representatives of the investigated research site, a well-reputed private K-12 school in Dubai, the questionnaire was sent to the administration department which took its part in delivering the questionnaire to all teachers of the investigated school, a total of 194 teachers. According to the demographic information from the questionnaire, only 77 out of 194 teachers (44 males and 33 females) from different educational levels responded to the questionnaire and then formed the main sample of the study. Two different curricular; one follows the MOE curriculum and the other follows a US curriculum, have been applied in our research site, allowing for various academic subjects to be taught by different specialized teachers. The current research site was particularly chosen because it accepts students of different disability categories to study in its classes. More detailed information about the participants was provided in the "data analysis and results" section below.

C. Materials and Procedures

The general rules of the "School for All" initiative as introduced by the UAE Ministry of Education and attached as a separate file to this research, were used to be the current research material to explore teachers' attitude towards their successful application in the UAE context. The main data of the research was collected using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree =5 points, agree =4 points, neutral =3 points, disagree =2 points, to strongly disagree =1

point. The reliability test was administered to each category after the data was collected to ensure the reliability of the collected data on Cronbach's alpha as a pre-requisite to make accurate analysis and obtain reliable results. The total attitude was then utilized to measure teachers' attitude towards the successful implementation of the general rules in the initiative; namely, each score mean above 3 points indicates a positive attitude and each score mean below 3 points implies a negative attitude.

D. Ethical, Entry, Validity and Reliability Issues

The researcher of this study was fully aware of the importance of the following: (1) getting the necessary approvals from the research site's principal and other official representatives, (2) arranging a date with the administration department to send the questionnaire and receive the participants' responses, (3) reassuring the avoidance of disseminating any information that would cause any harm to the research site and/ or the academic staff, (4) keeping the name of the research site anonymous as requested by the school principal, (5) explaining the purpose of the research whenever asked to do so. Therefore, all these issues were taken into account by the researcher and assured in a meeting with the principal of the investigated school before starting the implementation stage of the research.

Moreover, Creswell (2014) suggested many techniques and strategies to enhance the accuracy of the results of the questionnaire, and one of which was to assign an external judge to check all questions in the questionnaire. Therefore, all comments as made and provided by the external judge were inserted in the final version of the questionnaire. Similarly, many strategies and techniques were suggested by Creswell (2014) to ensure the reliability of the research results, and one of which was to confirm the repetition of answers to the same or similar questions in the questionnaire. To do so, some questions were repeated using the negative form of the question or synonyms for the central words in the questions, and those repeated questions were then measured using the correlation coefficient test. The result of the test on each repeated question was high, showing high reliability ($p<0.01$, $rs=1$).

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The research data is entered, scored, screened and analyzed using the Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS) software package, version 23. The data from the first and second parts of the questionnaire is analyzed using the descriptive statistical analysis and data frequencies analysis to get more information about the participants and answer the research question respectively. Before conducting the data frequencies analysis, the data reliability test is administered to each category in the general rules of the investigated initiative to ensure the reliability of the collected data on Cronbach's alpha scale leading to more accurate analysis and more reliable results.

A. Demographic Information of the Participants

TABLE I.
PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Characteristics	Participants	
Sex	Male	44
	Female	33
Age	55 - Above	4
	46-54	20
	36-45	26
	26-35	24
	25-Below	3
Qualifications	P.h.D	2
	Master	14
	Post-Graduate	23
	Bachelor	38
Total Teaching Experience	10-More	35
	6-9	28
	3-5	14
	2-Less	0
Total Teaching Experience in Inclusive Classes	5-More	7
	2-4	67
	1-Less	3
Educational School Level	KG	14
	Primary	20
	Preparatory	22
	Secondary	21
Number of Inclusive Courses Attended	5 - More	5
	3-4	12
	1-2	60
	No courses	0

The table (1) above describes all demographic information about the participants including their gender, age, educational level, total teaching experience, total teaching experience in inclusive classes, educational school level and finally number of courses or programs attended by the participants. It is quite apparent from the table above that all participants know about inclusive education by attending at least one to two courses or programs (77.9%) and have teaching experience in inclusive classes no less than two years (87%). The table also shows that the percentage of participation among male (57.1%) is higher than the percentage of participation among female (42.9%), and those who have an academic degree beyond the bachelor degree constitute almost half the sample with only two and half percent to those who have the PhD degree. Finally, the table shows no big fluctuation in the distribution of teachers among different educational school levels in comparison to the great fluctuation among age groups and qualification levels.

B. Teachers' Attitude

Before conducting the data frequencies analysis to measure the frequencies of teachers' responses, each of the following five categories is tested separately to check the reliability of data on Cronbach's alpha: teachers' capabilities, teachers' responsibilities, parents' rights, organizational structure and curricular and assessment systems. The actual value for each category on Cronbach's alpha is registered as follows: (0.864), (0.740), (0.847), (0.860) and (0.887) respectively. Since these values are greater than (0.7) on Cronbach's alpha, this means that the data is reliable, and then, the data frequencies test can be employed.

Furthermore, and to make the data collected from the Likert scale more organized, all responses towards each question are calculated then ranked from the highest to the lowest value based on the score mean of each question as presented in table (2) below. The total attitude is used; namely, the score means above three points indicate positive attitudes while the score means below three points imply negative attitudes towards the successful implementation of the general rules in the "School for All" initiative.

TABLE II.
TEACHERS' RESPONSES

No. of the question as per the questionnaire	No. of the question after being ranked based on the score mean	M	SD
Ques. 8	20	2.14	9.56
Ques. 9	18	2.66	1.263
Ques. 10	17	2.84	1.040
Ques. 11	19	2.15	0.986
Ques. 12	1	4.30	0.844
Ques. 13	3	4.00	0.585
Ques. 14	15	3.02	0.727
Ques. 15	5	3.94	0.800
Ques. 16	2	4.06	0.833
Ques. 17	8	3.79	0.817
Ques. 18	10	3.58	0.894
Ques. 19	11	3.44	1.032
Ques. 20	6	3.83	1.031
Ques. 21	4	3.98	0.844
Ques. 22	13	3.17	0.992
Ques. 23	16	3.01	0.917
Ques. 24	7	3.81	0.744
Ques. 25	9	3.65	0.870
Ques. 26	12	3.34	1.008
Ques. 27	14	3.13	0.937

The table above describes teachers' attitude towards the five main categories in the "School for All" initiative; teachers' capabilities, teachers' responsibilities, rights of parents of students with disabilities, organizational structure of schools and curricular and assessment systems. It can be noticed from the table above that teachers tend to have a negative attitude towards teachers' capabilities in comparison to the positive attitude towards the other four categories. More specifically, no positive attitudes are indicated from all questions in the first category (score means = 2.14, 2.66, 2.84 & 2.15 respectively), unveiling the strong tendency against teachers' capabilities in terms of training, experience and qualifications.

On contrary to the first category, the results obtained from the questions 12 through 27 reveal a positive attitude towards the other four categories, but in varying degrees. In addition, the highest score mean is noticed in the question no. 12 (m= 4.30) uncovering teachers' fully understanding of their responsibilities towards their job as inclusive education teachers, while the lowest score mean is seen in the question no. 8 (m= 2.14) unveiling the strong belief among teachers that they are not qualified enough to teach in inclusive classes.

Moreover, the data gathered from the question no. 28 reveals that most teachers (74.6%) believe in the successful policy of inclusion in the UAE as a result of the ever-continuing effort by the UAE Ministry of Education towards the transition to the inclusive education providing the same high quality education for disabled students as provided for

their non-disabled peers. However, the majority of teachers (88.7%) express their worries of the negative impact of their poor qualifications on students' social and academic development.

In addition, teachers' responses towards the question no. 29 revolve mainly around two issues; the time constraint (36.8%) and the lack of suitable materials (43.6%), claiming that these two issues are easier handled in some classes than others based on the percentage of disparity in students' achievements and disabilities, and there are no such materials that can cover the huge disparity in students' achievements and disabilities in inclusive classes. The only solution as provided by the vast majority of teachers (95%) is to adopt the cooperative learning strategies as effective teaching methods to enhance students' high participation and full involvement in classroom activities, as the perfect way, according to them, to handle or overcome the two issues above.

VI. DISCUSSION

The results of the present study show that teachers have previous knowledge about inclusive education by attending at least one to two courses or programs (77.9%) and have teaching experience in inclusive classes no less than two years (87%). However, this knowledge is not sufficient to qualify teachers, from their standpoint, to teach or deal with disciplinary issues encountered by them in inclusive classes (m = 2.14). This result is very disappointing in the way that teachers' capabilities in terms of training, experience and qualifications are considered crucial by the UAE Ministry of Education as confirmed in the "School for All" initiative to achieve successful inclusion in the UAE context (MOE, 2010). The importance of teachers' training, experience and qualifications in achieving effective inclusion is also asserted by other studies (Engelbrecht, Oswald & Forlin, 2006; Thorpe & Azam, 2010; Forlin & Chambers, 2011).

Adding to this, other studies conducted in the UAE (Gaad & Khan, 2007; Gaad, 2011; Anati, 2012) agree with the results of this study in which UAE teachers need more specialized training or programs to be able to deal with different disability categories, such as; special learning disabilities (inability to speak, listen, write, read, think or perform mathematical calculations among other learning disabilities), visual and hearing impairment (partially sighted, partially deaf, blindness, deafness), autism and other emotional and behavioral disorders, as explained in details in the "School for All" initiative.

However, the results show that teachers tend to have a positive attitude towards the other four categories of the initiative; teachers' responsibilities, rights of parents of disabled students, organizational structure of schools and curricular and assessment systems. In this regard, Meijer (2003) corroborates that the negative attitude of teachers towards accepting disabled students as an integral part of their responsibilities and jobs, recognizing the rights of parents of disabled students in expressing their concerns and receiving regular feedback about the social and academic development of their children and/ or believing in the rights of disabled students to have adequate services, suitable facilities, modified curricular and proper evaluation systems that best suit them, enhances the tendency towards assigning special education teachers rather than mainstream teachers to teach students with disabilities.

Moreover, teachers' constraints are identified as the lack of ample teaching time and suitable instructional materials for those who are eligible to be admitted to mainstream schools as per the educational provisions of the "School for All" initiative. The results of this study agree with the one carried out by Gaad (2011) in which the time allocated for instruction and the materials used in teaching need to be adjusted if we search for effective teaching and learning in inclusive classes. According to her, the huge disparity in students' abilities should be accompanied with (1) an increase in the instructional time to promote low achievers' learning, (2) adjustments in the instructional materials to suit students' different disability categories.

The result of the insufficient time and unsuitable instructional materials, as argued by Gaad (2011), is ineffective learning in inclusive classes. Kauffman, Landrum, Mock, Sayeski and Sayesk (2005) add the social dimension to the impact of the insufficient time and unsuitable instructional materials on students with disabilities by saying that, the lack of due attention to these two issues increases the chances of segregating students with disabilities inside inclusive classes, especially if teachers deal with students with multi disabilities.

Ultimately, the idea of adopting cooperative learning strategies to promote teaching and learning in inclusive classes as suggested by the investigated teachers is supported by Pavri and Monda-Amaya (2001) who argue that these strategies improve students' social and academic skills through the scaffolding technique during students' interaction. These strategies are also considered a solution by Daniel and King (1997) to remove teachers' concerns regarding the insufficient time and unsuitable material by assigning students to work in pairs or groups. They contend that, if the cooperative learning strategies are used in inclusive classes, the time used by teachers to deal with non-academic issues will be reduced to minimum, and the assistance received by low achieving students from their high achieving peers will reach its maximum.

VII. CONCLUSION, LIMITATION, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

According to Wolcott (2008), two issues always come to surface with questionnaires; the attitude and behavior issues. He explains this by saying that through questionnaires, (1) it is difficult to understand some certain forms of information such as the change of feelings and emotions, (2) it is difficult to know how much thought the participants have put in, (3) it is impossible to know how truthful the participants are being, (4) people read differently and this may lead to different

understanding of the questions and then different responses. According to Fetterman (2010), the above two issues can be covered if the interview is used as an auxiliary research tool. However, and because of the limited time allocated to conduct the study, the researcher is unable to use the two tools together to cover the above limitations.

It is concluded from the present study that the current cultural view of people in the UAE towards the meaning of disability needs to be changed. Educationally, further special education training or programs are suggested to be conducted under the supervision of the UAE Ministry of Education and other educational institutions to raise the awareness of stakeholders of the educational process of the correct meaning of disability in addition to the social and academic rights of disabled students. It is also concluded from the results of this study that teachers need more specialized training or courses to reach the level of confidence and certainty that qualify them to teach or deal with different students in inclusive classes.

Unlike the above results, teachers tend to have a positive attitude towards the other four categories in the "School for All" initiative but in varying degrees. Some constraints are identified as the lack of adequate time and suitable instructional materials which, in turn, may result in poor academic development and poor social skills by disabled students. Finally, the current study recommends using cooperative learning strategies as effective teaching methods to achieve effective teaching and learning and to overcome the above constraints.

Notwithstanding, and although the research question is evidently answered, the present study should be interpreted with some caution for the following reasons:

1- The limited number of participants in the questionnaire is a weakness as it raises the issue of the well-representation of the sample for the whole society. Indeed, employing a large number of participants increases the chance of obtaining more invaluable information which may lead to more significant results as a consequence.

2- The limited time allocated for the study refrains the researcher from using the interview as an auxiliary research tool to overcome the questionnaire research tool's limitations explained earlier in the methodology section of the current study.

Therefore, it is recommended by the researcher of the current study to duplicate this study taking into account the limitations above to reach a clear-cut conclusion as well as a generalization regarding the possibility of successful implementation of inclusion in the UAE context. The researcher also recommends more research to be conducted to explore other stakeholders' views, such as; school administrators, school principals and/ or parents of children with disabilities, towards inclusion or towards the successful implementation of inclusion in the UAE. By conducting these studies, the researcher is certain that more significant information can be obtained leading to more constructive recommendations regarding this critical area of research.

APPENDIX. THE QUESTIONNAIRE

FIRST PART

Please circle only one answer that is the most suitable for you from each question below.
1. What is your gender?
(a) Male   (b) Female
2. What is your age range?
(a) 55 – above   (b) 46 -54   (c) 36 - 45   (d) 26 - 35   (e) 25- below
3. What is your educational qualification level?
(a) PhD degree   (b) Master degree   (c) Post-graduate diploma   (d) Bachelor degree
4. How much is your total teaching experience in the UAE?
(a) 10 years or more   (b) 6-9 years   (c) 3-5 years   (d) 2 or less
5. What much is your total teaching experience in inclusive classes?
(a) 5 or more   (b) 2-4   (c) 1 or less
6. What is the educational school level you teach?
(a) Kindergarten   (b) Primary   (c) Preparatory   (d) Secondary
7. How many special education programs or courses have you attended?
(a) 5 or more   (b) 3-4   (c) 1-2   (d) Non

SECOND PART

Please use the following keys to determine the most suitable answers for the questions 8 through 27.
(SA= Strongly Agree = 5 points / A=Agree = 4 points / N= Neutral = 3 points / D= Disagree = 2 points / SD= Strongly Disagree = 1 point)

QUESTION 8-11
TEACHERS' CAPABILITIES

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
(8)	I believe that I am qualified enough to teach inclusive classes.	5	4	3	2	1
(9)	I think more training or courses should not be provided to sharpen my skills both academically and socially.	5	4	3	2	1
(10)	The school assigns me to teach inclusive classes based on my knowledge and experience.	5	4	3	2	1
(11)	My experience enables me to handle all academic, behavioral and disciplinary issues in inclusive classes.	5	4	3	2	1

QUESTIONS 12-15
TEACHERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
(12)	I totally understand my duties and responsibilities as a teacher teaching inclusive classes' students.	5	4	3	2	1
(13)	I strictly adhere to these duties and responsibilities.	5	4	3	2	1
(14)	In my school, teachers' responsibilities differ from one teacher to another based on their qualifications and experience.	5	4	3	2	1
(15)	The general rules as set by your school regarding teachers' responsibilities are effective and clear.	5	4	3	2	1

QUESTIONS 16-19
RIGHTS OF PARENTS OF DISABLED STUDENTS

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
(16)	The school fully interacts with the parents of disabled students.	5	4	3	2	1
(17)	Parents of disabled students are invited to make special educational plans.	5	4	3	2	1
(18)	The school provides a mechanism for parents of disabled students to express their concerns.	5	4	3	2	1
(19)	Parents of disabled students receive regular notes, feedback and other advices about their children's social and academic development.	5	4	3	2	1

QUESTIONS 20-23
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF SCHOOLS

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
(20)	Various disability categories; special learning disabilities, visual and hearing impairment, autism and other emotional and behavioral disorders, are accepted by your school.	5	4	3	2	1
(21)	The number of students with disabilities who are included in mainstream classes is suitable to enhance effective teaching and learning.	5	4	3	2	1
(22)	The accommodations and modifications made for students with disabilities, such as; providing sign language interpreters for deaf students, providing large-print books for those having visual impairment and extending time for those with learning disabilities, are adequate and sufficient to facilitate teaching and learning.	5	4	3	2	1
(23)	Other special services and facilities as provided by your school in coordination with the Ministry of Education, such as; speech and language services, physical therapy, occupational therapy…..etc are enough to enhance equal opportunities.	5	4	3	2	1

QUESTIONS 24-27
CURRICULAR AND ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

S/N	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD
(24)	Curricular are designed in away allowing for full interaction of students in inclusive classrooms regardless of their abilities or disabilities.	5	4	3	2	1
(25)	Curricular and assessments are properly modified to suit disabled students.	5	4	3	2	1
(26)	There are clear guidelines governing the process of designing, implementing and evaluating curricular and assessments.	5	4	3	2	1
(27)	Teachers are effectively involved in making flexible learning and assessment plans for their students as per their capabilities.	5	4	3	2	1

THIRD PART

Please use your own views to provide rich answers to the following questions. You can use the back side of the paper to provide further details on each question below.

28. Do you think that inclusion of students with disabilities into regular education classrooms in the UAE is successful? Why?

29. What are the constraints you encounter when teaching in inclusive classes?

30. How can inclusive education best be applied to achieve successful and effective teaching and learning for both disabled and non-disabled students?

31. Any further suggestions or recommendations regarding inclusive education in the UAE?

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Research on the Strategy-based Instruction of News Broadcast Listening for English Minors in China

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Abstract—News broadcast, as a kind of authentic input, are invaluable materials to improve listening proficiency for both ESL and EFL learners. However, the particular characteristics of news broadcast present a number of challenges to achieving comprehension: unfamiliar patterns of discourse, vocabulary, speech rates, syntactic structures, and a high density of factual contents, etc. in this paper, based on the Constructivism views on education, the author chooses 86 English learners in China who take English as their second major as the research subjects, carries out a strategy-based instruction to the experimental group. After the 15-week instruction, the author collects and analyses the data to examine whether the strategy-based instruction would help students improve their news listening performance.

Index Terms—constructivism, news broadcast listening, authentic input, strategies, strategy-based instructions

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, due to the increasing demands for quality education and the deepening of foreign language research in China, great changes have taken place in language education. As for the practice of English learning and instruction at college level, greater emphasis has been given to the training of skills of language use in the real world. Correspondingly, the aim of English education at college level has also transformed from the pure language input and acquisition to the development of learning and skills of application that will facilitate students to acquire knowledge automatically and use their language skillfully.

Among the four skills of foreign language learning, listening skill is considered to be a fundamental component of human communication behavior and has taken an even greater role. For many learners of English, the ability to understand news broadcast is perhaps the top criteria and object of second language or foreign language listening comprehension. In almost all universities and colleges in China, News Broadcast Listening has been a core course in the curriculum of English majors as well as a selective language course for intermediate-level English minors.

Many instructors in China (Yang, 2000; Dun, 2002; Xia, 2002; Cui, 2006; Han & Zhou, 2006; Wang, 2011; Cheng, 2009; Chen, 2014) have been exploring effective methods in teaching News Broadcast listening based on various theoretical frameworks, but the plausibility and efficiency of their research for most listeners still need to be seen. The particular characteristics of news broadcast present a number of challenges to achieving comprehension.

In the teaching of News Broadcast listening, the author finds that most students recognize the value of news broadcast for their improvements of listening skills. But they are always discouraged by their slow improvements in understanding news broadcast. Of course, the proficiency of listening performance is decided by various elements, such as their motivation to listen, their scopes of knowledge, and their performance of other language skills, etc. But a clear and effective instruction and guidance from teachers can really give them the encouragement and stimulus to work harder to further their skills in news English listening.

Therefore, by using several research instruments, and with a sound Constructivism views on education in mind, the author aims to explore an effective way to help students understand news broadcast and ultimately develop students' independent thinking.

The major research question explored in the study will be: Will the strategy-based instruction on news listening facilitate their listening comprehension performance?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

News broadcast listening is an important course for English majors to improve their listening comprehension skills in the authentic settings. The course aims not just to practice students' listening skills but also to broaden their horizons and develop their critical thinking abilities.

A. Teaching of News Broadcast Listening in China

News broadcast, as a kind of authentic input, are invaluable materials to improve listening proficiency for both ESL and EFL learners. In China, the opportunities for most ordinary English learners to have a face-to-face communication

with the native speakers are really scarce. English News broadcast offers learners the real contexts language and abundant cultural knowledge, creating opportunities for learners to broaden their horizons as well as learn the foreign language.

Firstly, English news broadcast is a preferred and important means for students at various levels to learn English for different skills and develop their critical thinking abilities by broadening their horizons (Xia, 2002). English news plays an important part in cultural exchange, with a wide range of covering from the history of countries around the world, the hot issues of international community, the global politics and economy, to life and fashion of certain communities and the traditions of local places in every corner around. English in news is authentic, up-to-date and living language with abundant contents to be explored. What else, the pronunciation with various accents in the news broadcast around the world can help students deal with the situations where standard and naturally pronounced English are not always uttered. Its brief and concise writing styles with the typical characteristics of English language can help students to better understand and apply the writing approaches in their English writing.

Secondly, the syllabus for English or English minors all explicitly lay down the requirements for English news listening. The college English curriculum requirements released by the Department of Higher Education of National Ministry of Education has clearly stated that the listening ability of college English are set at three different levels: basic, intermediate and higher requirements. And the criterion chosen to make these distinctions of levels is the news broadcast from VOA with the special and standard edition. As for English majors, a distinctive and comparatively higher requirement of understanding VOA standard, BBC and CNN has been clearly specified in the latest version of syllabus of TEM-4 and TEM-8. However, the fact is that a majority of the tertiary English learners fail to meet the requirement, even the excellent English achievers.

Thirdly, a constant and persevering practice does not necessarily guarantee students' improvement in understanding the English news. Researchers have carried out the investigation among English majors. And the survey shows that nearly 80% of the subjects keep practicing and listening to English news programs (Han & Zhou, 2006). Nevertheless, they could not achieve a distinct and satisfying progress in news listening.

Finally, as a course with a relatively short history, many problems still need to be solved and studied in the teaching and learning practice, which definitely has caused difficulties for many teachers.

B. Challenges of News Broadcast Listening

For many learners of English, the ability to understand news broadcast is perhaps the reflection of their foreign language proficiency. However, the particular characteristics of news broadcast present a number of challenges to achieving comprehension: unfamiliar patterns of discourse, vocabulary, speech rates, syntactic structures, and a high density of factual contents (Xia, 2004; Han, 2012). Furthermore, problems may arise due to insufficient background knowledge, familiar vocabulary that becomes unfamiliar in connected speech or is not expected in the given context, no opportunity to negotiate meaning and unfamiliar contexts and culture, etc. More specifically:

The first challenging obstacle is the insufficient background knowledge for the learners of news broadcast. The saying that "to know something about everything" has always been the requirement for all English majors. But most students get quite puzzled when listening to some reports about the current international affairs. Obviously, the lack of background knowledge has posed a great challenge for their listening comprehension. Some researchers (Teng, 2003; Cross, 2009; Han & Zhou, 2006) have already illustrated that the background knowledge and familiar topics of the materials could greatly facilitate students' understanding of the news broadcast.

For most listeners of news broadcast listening, the second obstacle is the unfamiliar patterns of discourse. There are some highly regulated discourse patterns in the news broadcast. These patterns of discourse which originally could have served as the assistance of understanding news broadcast turns out to be one of the obstacles in understanding. This may result in the different thinking patterns and expression ways between the east and west.

The third important challenge for learners is the vocabulary or terminology. A good command of vocabulary in news listening is very important for news listening comprehension. Generally speaking, the news broadcast has a very wide range of coverage, from politics, economics, to military and cultural reports, etc. Therefore, the terminology employed in the news broadcast will be abundant and less commonly used compared with the other learning materials.

Fourthly, the rate of the speech is another difficult point in news listening comprehension. Most beginners of news listening tend to use the VOA special English, which is broadcast with the speed of 90 words per minute. But it is greatly agreed that a greater improvement in news listening can be made only when learners with intermediate levels practice with the news broadcast with the speed of 150 words per minute (Dun, 2002).

The last but not the least great challenge is that a piece of news report tries to convey the information to listeners within limited time, there is also a high density of factual content besides its speed in report. For many English learners, it is a great challenge to catch what they want to hear among a large amount of information in such a short time.

Above all, there may be different challenges for each individual besides the challenges referred above. If properly dealt with, challenges can become the opportunities for learners to make greater progress in listening proficiency. Therefore, it is teacher's task to help students seek out the challenges and solve them with the proper instruction in classroom teaching.

III. STRATEGY-BASED INSTRUCTION

In this part, the author would like to introduce the instruction model based on the conception of Constructivism. Then, the author would propose the design of the research on the strategy-based instruction in the classroom of News Broadcast Listening which has lasted for 15 weeks. After that, the author would collect the data and analyse them. Finally a conclusion was drawn.

A. The Model of Constructivism Strategy-based Instruction

Constructivism views on education believe that learning process is the harmonious combination of four elements, which are the learner, teacher, task, and the context where learning takes place. They exist as a dynamic and balanced model, which moves forward smoothly with the conception that education aims to empower learners to think independently and to perpetuate in the next generation ways of acting and thinking that are judged the best by present generation (Von Glazerfield, qtd.from Williams & Burden 2000). Therefore, based on the Constructivism views on education (Williams & Burden, 2000), a dynamic Constructivism strategy-based instruction is shown in table 1 below.

TABLE 1:
THE DYNAMIC CONSTRUCTIVISM SBI
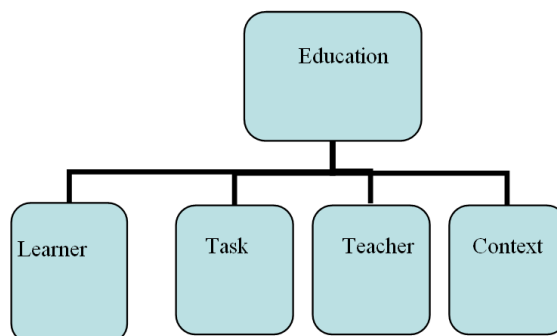
In this dynamic circle, Learner is considered as an independent person and thinker, an experiencer of learning and cultural difference, and an active participant in the learning process and class activities. Teacher in this model is taking his or her role as an assessor; planner; decision-maker; supporter of students' learning and a model of showing how to use the strategies. Tasks in this Constructivism model are the real-life English authentic news broadcast and the strategies instructed to facilitate students' autonomous learning and develop independent and critical thinking. The contexts where the learning and the strategy training take place should be harmonious and cooperative, where the teacher shows friendly and understanding behaviors, because the ultimate goal of education is to empower learners to think independently and develop autonomous learning.

B. Research Design

An experimental design was chosen since one of the goals of the research was to assess the effect of instruction in listening strategies. The present research, which aimed at training students to use some strategies, was designed firstly to investigate whether a significant difference in strategy use existed individually. And then whether improvements of news comprehension could be made through including the strategy training into the normal news broadcast teaching practice.

1. Subjects

Eighty-eight English minors at TJPU were selected as the subjects for the study. Most of them had got the scores above 425 points in CET Band-4 or Band-6.

They are the students taking English as their second major. They were also enrolled through a scientific and systematic written and oral examination. These English minors are from the majors of International Trade, Economics, Financing Management, Accounting, Journalism, Software Engineering, Telecommunications, Compound Materials and other science and engineering.

They are also highly motivated in studying English. Because it is a big and serious decision that they have to make before taking the English as their minors during the weekends for totally 3 years. Many of them have their future professional and academic goals through learning English and achieving a relatively higher degree of communicative competence. To some extent, the conception that English serving as a tool of future career tends to be more realistic than that of English majors.

The subjects involved in the research were divided into experimental group (EG) and the control group (CG). Class one was randomly chosen as the EG. Class two was randomly set as the CG. There were 43 students in EG and 45 students in CG. Then a before-test was carried out to see whether the students in both groups had a relatively same level of listening proficiency.

2. Instruments

The instruments of the research consist of a before-test and a post-test, interviews and a before-questionnaire and a post-questionnaire.

Prior to the research, a researcher-designed audio-based test, which was adapted from the standardized tests of CET-4 (Internet-based) and TEM-4, was used to measure students listening comprehension proficiency.

The CET-4 (Internet-based), which relies on the person-to-computer dialogue, is a reform presently being conducted on College English teaching and testing. From the year of 2008, it has been in a pilot stage in some key universities around China. A dramatic change of the exam is the inclusion of news brief listening, which makes the exam more challenging. And its validity and reliability on testing has been confirmed by researchers and teachers. TEM-4 (Test of English Majors) is another standardized examination for English majors nationwide, which has been held for about 20 years. Now it is one of two national examinations in which news listening broadcast is tested (another one is TEM-8). All the news broadcast and interviews which were used in the test were carefully chosen to include topics where background knowledge was modified to a degree that will not cause the partiality in comprehension. And the tests were composed of a series of clips ranging from 15 seconds (news briefings) to 3 minutes (interviews and features).

Another instrument used in the research was the interview. At the beginning of the research, the author randomly chose 5 students in each class for personal interviews. The 30-minute interviews were carried out in Chinese in order to enhance the efficiency of the interviews.

The questions for before-interview were as follows:

1. How do you think about your present listening proficiency?
2. Do you think news listening is difficult? If so, what are the difficult points?
3. Have you ever received listening strategy training before?
4. Do you think it is necessary to receive listening strategy training?
5. What kind of listening strategies do you know?

The textbook edited by Guo Qingzhu in 2010 was also used in the research. The textbook chosen for the intensive listening course is the English Broadcast Listening (Elementary). A very important reason for the choice of this book as the course book is its timeliness in its topics, which attract students' interest and offer background knowledge for the students. The whole book covers 18 topics, ranging from the natural disasters, political chaos to presidential elections and regional conflicts, etc. The news items are all carefully selected concerning length, difficulties, and topics. The exercises are compiled in the forms of true or false questions, blank-filling, multiple choices and questions and answers, discussion.

Meanwhile, the author used the latest news broadcast of VOA special English or BBC Learning English and CRI English programs as the materials for extensive listening. BBC Learning English is a special English learning program for EFL or ESL learners from BBC, which is slower in speed and rich in contents. CRI English program is an English news program aiming for English learners and English natives in China, whose main concern is the news events in China. So it is easier for students to understand. They were required to retell the news briefly. Finally the author evaluated students' performance and supplemented the main points.

C. Course Design

At the beginning of the research, all subjects were informed that the purpose of the research was to improve listening comprehension of news broadcast. All subjects attended one of the two 15-week news listening courses for 2 hours each week.

Each lesson was composed of extensive listening and intensive listening. The extensive listening materials were downloaded from the BBC and VOA news websites and the intensive listening materials were from the textbook of English Broadcast Listening, which covers various topics.

The subjects in CG completed a 90-minute listening task with the same news broadcast, which similarly included 20-minute before-listening and post-listening tasks without receiving explicit extra strategy instruction as subjects in EG did.

Following a 20-minute before-listening stage using website material as the background knowledge, the EG completed 50 minutes of strategy instruction (a total of 13 weeks' instruction across the study) including the presentation, practice and review of strategies appropriate to the given listening task, which was then followed by a 30-minute post-listening task.

Table 2 summarizes the course for each group (due to the space limits of the table, the non-listening activities unrelated to this study are not shown).

TABLE 2:
COURSE OVERVIEW FOR EG AND CG

Groups schedules	Experimental group (EG)	Control group (CG)
Week 1	30-m before-listening task 40-m before-test 20-m post-listening task and before-questionnaires	30-m before-listening task 40-m before-test 20-m post-listening tasks
Week 2-14	20-m before-listening task 50-m listening tasks with strategies instruction 20-m post-listening task	20-m before-listening tasks 50-m listening tasks 20-minute post-listening tasks
Week 15	30-m before-listening task (a summary of the strategies) 40-m post-test 20-m post-listening tasks and post-questionnaires	30-m before-listening task 40-m post-test 20-m post-listening task

D. The Constructivism SBI in News Broadcast Listening

Knowles once reminds us that "education is helping individuals to develop the attitudes that a lifelong process and to acquire the skills of self-directed learning" (Williams& Burden, 2000). As a teacher, one of the most important functions is to enable the learners to become self-directed in learning activities (Wenden &Rubin, qtd. in Williams & Burden 2000: 147). And the strategy training of the learners can be a very important aspect to enable learners to become self-directed. Anne Brown argues that skills and strategies are best taught in relation to specific curriculum subject areas (Anne Brown, qtd. in Williams & Burden, 2000). And the aim of this thesis is to improve students' ability in the course of news broadcast listening by implementing strategy-based instruction.

1. Strategies to Be Instructed

Altogether 5 kinds of sub-strategies were instructed in the research. Three meta-cognitive strategy (planning); one cognitive (prediction) and three social-affective (self-motivation, cooperation, writing news listening diary) strategies for instruction were determined, and appropriate activities were developed.

2. The Design of Strategy Training

In the design of this training class, 5 kinds of strategies were chosen to be instructed, which belonged to three kinds. The experimental class received the explicit strategies instruction referred above in each lesson. The treatments were divided into three periods based on the categories of the strategies instructed (as explained).

The research lasted for 15 weeks with two 45-minute classes each week. Approximately 20-30 minutes each time were devoted to the explicit news listening strategy training. Each unit was designed to include exercises and activities recommended by Vandergrift (1997a) for listening comprehension strategy training programs.

Three tasks were included in each unit. The first before-listening tasks aimed to activate students' background knowledge, and carry out the class discussion which informed the subjects about which strategy or strategies were being applied and why a strategy might be helpful with a certain kind of input. Additionally, the while-listening was focused so that a before-established goal for listening was made explicit. Besides, a great deal of exposure to the news broadcast was provided and activities which required students to speak or discuss about the topics which they had already heard. Finally a summary and feedback would be given on students' strategy use during post-listening period.

During the 15th week, the post-tests were administered to evaluate the effects of the strategy-based instruction on news broadcast listening. Post-questionnaires were also conducted after the post-tests.

A detailed training program of these 8 strategies was listed below.

1) Self-motivation Strategy

It was the first social-affective strategy to help the students to grasp in the research. The training objective of the self-motivation strategy was to encourage a positive mentality towards news broadcast and strategy use. Motivation is one of the most important elements which make the learners eager to learn. Therefore, in the views of Constructivism, the motivation which encourages one person to learn a foreign language until he has achieved a level of proficiency will differ from individual to individual, and it is also subjected to social and contextual influences (Williams &Burden, 2000). Besides, a three-stage model of motivation was proposed. That is: Reasons for doing something→Deciding to do something→Sustaining the effort, or persisting (Williams & Burden, 2000).

From years' teaching of English minors, it is found that English minors enrolled at the author's school were with various reasons to attend the courses. Some chose just because of the pure interests of English studies. Some others chose English minor because they disliked their majors. Still some others were aware of the importance of English proficiency in future job hunting and their future plans of overseas studies. But some were only eager to get the credits of English which could be the scores of their public optional courses.

Due to the various motivations they had held in the studies, their views on the course of News Broadcast Listening were also different. From the interviews and chatting after class, it was also known that there were different things that they had cared for. Some were only concerned whether the exams would be difficult or not. Some cared whether their

practical listening skills could be improved. Some were concerned whether it would help them prepare for the exams like TOEFL or other various examinations that they were preparing for.

To be frank, it was quite difficult to motivate students with so many different views in mind in a fixed and single effort. In teaching, the author firstly offered handouts with a clear comprehensive description for the course (Appendix V).

Then the author described the benefits of the achieving news broadcast in the following aspects:① authentic; ② informative; ③ cultural resource readily available outside of the classroom; ④ the reform of the exams of CET Band 4 and 6; ⑤ prospective job hunting and undertakings; ⑥ broadening horizons and knowledge scope; ⑦ developing global views and independent critical thinking skills.

The classroom discussions were mainly organized among students and direct presentation of the benefits of achieving news broadcast comprehension were also made as the supplements. Students discussed the way forward by improving their news broadcast comprehension through following the subsequent lessons and supports offered in the sheets, and they offered their expectations and suggestions for the course lastly. And the author summarized their views and offered the feedback for students' suggestions.

But for the students in the control group, the author gave them the handouts and explained to them one by one, but there was no discussion among students and direct explicit self-motivation training.

2) Cooperation Strategy

Along with the training of the self-motivation strategy for the students in EG, another social-affective strategy to be trained for them was the cooperation strategy. Constructivism education believes that language learning never happens in isolation, but in a certain social contexts. In the author' view, the ultimate purpose for most English learners in China is to communicate freely in their future daily life and work. Cooperation is highly valued and extremely important in interpersonal communication and working settings. Besides, the results of the questionnaires indicated that students used the least cooperation strategy in their news listening. Therefore, the objective of the cooperation strategy training was to encourage students' sharing and checking understanding, and pooling information.

Several classroom-based activities were devised to train the students' cooperation strategy. The students were divided into several groups, primarily based on their majors and genders. Some activities were carried out in groups, such as guessing games similar to some TV programs, group works to discuss a topic related to the materials to be heard. And they were expected to prepare for the PowerPoint after class, and members in the groups took different roles in the presentation, and then they were invited to present their work to others. The performance would be graded based on groups. Some groups were really well-prepared for their group works, and they did excellent and creative presentation in class.

The specific training of their cooperation strategy in while-listening was done in the class. And this was also based on their group works and the news listening tasks. A comparatively successful practice was to let students as groups prepare for the latest news reports as the extensive listening materials and then they elected the representative to present them in class teaching. One advantage of the practice was their choices of the topics and materials were the ones that they were interested in, such as the entertainment news broadcast, especially with girl members in some groups. Meanwhile, due to their language proficiency and lack of teaching practice, some of their instructions were not fully attended to by some others.

In line with the concept of whole person education in foreign language teaching, what deserves to be emphasized here was that the repeated training of the cooperation strategy with several different forms was implemented every week until the end of the course for the students in the EG.

3) Strategy of Writing News Listening Diary

Writing the listening diary, an important item of social-affective strategy, is a self-reflection of what the students have achieved in news broadcast listening. Unfortunately, from the before-questionnaires, it is clearly know that most students do not develop and apply this strategy in their listening practice as well as other skill training. Writing news listening diaries was not only a kind of strategy which students need to develop in news broadcast listening course, but a useful skill that will help them in other language learning courses. So the training of this sub-strategy was carried out through the whole term along with other strategy training. In teaching, students were required to write a brief listening diary (Appendix V) after class. For the experimental group, students were supposed to write reflective diaries, which were mainly composed of four parts:

① Summary of the listening practice for what they have achieved and what they have not achieved;
② the instructed listening strategies in class;
③ Reflection on the learned strategies;
④ Some suggestions to improvement in future learning and instructions.

The purpose of doing so was to make students reflect what kind of strategies they had learned in class; what kind of strategies they had applied in listening; which strategies they found most effective in solving the problems they had found in their listening process; and their attitudes, feelings and suggestions towards that class. Consequently, the students themselves can see the relationship between strategies used and how well they had completed the listening task. In this way, the diary can encourage them to reflect and evaluate their own strategy use in order to further improve their

consciousness of the listening strategies. As far as the control group was concerned, they were also required to keep a diary after each class. But unlike the experimental group, they were asked to write down:

① What they had practiced;
② The news items that they had learned;
③ How they managed to finish the news listening tasks in classes;
④ What they had achieved;
⑤ Plans for future listening practice.

Besides, some students were invited to share and discuss their listening diaries with classmates. In order to motivate students, their listening diaries would be considered in the final scores.

4) Planning Strategy

Planning strategy was another important item of meta-cognitive strategies that foreign language learners frequently develop and apply in learning. Although it was important for listening comprehension, it was found that the subjects in the research use this strategy infrequently from the questionnaires and the interviews.

The objective of the training planning strategy was to raise students' awareness of typical content and regularity of the discourse pattern of news broadcast in order to be clear in mind about:

① The knowledge that they have grasped and that can be used to facilitate news listening;
② What they want to comprehend: the gist, the important details, or the opinions from the guests in the broadcast, or the news terminology in the items.
③ What they should pay special attention to or what should be noted down.

In training the planning strategy, Students in EG were required to:

① have discussions on how to make the plans and implement the plans in news listening, which include the purpose, the procedures and the important parts in news broadcast listening, was carried out before listening practice;
② to present their opinions about the strategy use.

In teaching practice, the training of every strategy was combined with certain news listening tasks. So was the planning strategy. The steps next introduce how to deal with a specific news listening tasks.

① Listen to several pieces of 2–3 minute VOA special English news broadcast once in full;
② Indicate on a worksheet if they hear the following components: News reporter overview, interviews or important details, and reporter summary;
③ The students were invited to report whether they had caught all the components listed above and meet the plans they had made.
④ Then some students were invited to retell the news items based on the following questions, that is: When did the incident take place? What had happened? Where did the incident happen? Who were involved? How was the incident going? Why did this happen?
⑤ Then the feedback and remarks were given to the students' presentation and more listening materials were offered.

Meta-cognitive strategy is considered to be the strategy of the strategy by Oxford (Oxford 1990: 260). Planning strategy, as a kind of meat-cognitive strategy, is rather general and abstract in form, but its significance can never be ignored in helping students improve their news broadcast listening skill as well as other language skills. Hence, similar to the other strategy training, the training procedures of planning strategy were also combined with other strategies in specific tasks.

5) Prediction Strategy

According to Richards (2000), the ability to generate plausible expectations of the discourse based on the genre enhances comprehension. Yet many foreign language or second language learners neglect this strategy, perhaps due to a tendency to rely on some bottom –up strategies to comprehend the discourse.

Constructivism views on education emphasize learning through experiencing in the process. And in this learning process, the teacher is taking the role of mediator. Williams and Burden (2000: 38) propose several questions for teachers to teach learners to ask themselves the fundamental questions involved in mediation: What do you want to achieve? Do I know exactly what am I doing or what I will do next? Why am I doing it? These questions will stimulate the learners' self-motivation and lead them to make predictions.

In the author's view, a clear aim on what the learner wants to hear is the first important task before undertaking the listening practice. That is just what a learner wants to achieve before listening. In listening practice, the only thing that a learner can do before coming to the materials is to make a prediction for the aim of the listening, the key points that his selective attention should be paid to, and the contents that will be offered next in the materials.

Therefore, the training of the prediction strategy becomes especially important in facilitating students learning before and in the process. In the course of news broadcast, the authors' objective of training prediction strategy was to help students make predictions on the main ideas and important details of the news items based on all possible clues that they can grasp, and then to encourage relating of contextual knowledge to new information. The training of prediction strategy was a key part in the author's strategy training class, which was also based on the tasks of the news broadcast that the students had undertaken, or the topics that the author provided to students.

In the before-listening activities, the author encouraged students to generate predictions on world knowledge, and to teach students the recognition of signals which were identified with certain genres. What is more, students were instructed by using the following items:
- Getting the mind ready to hear new material and link it to what we already know;
- Predicting from title, picture, and short audio clip;
- Making use of visual cues;
- The new words and news items offered ahead;

As for a specific item of news listening, the author would repeat the materials three times. After the prediction based on any possible clues, listening for the first time served to testify and relate new information to their predictions. Then the author invited some students to share what they had heard. For the twice listening, students complemented and modified their predictions through listening, and then students reported their listening and attempted to identify links between the new information and contextual knowledge to achieve partial understanding and create a more complete comprehension.

E. Data Analysis and Discussion

In this part, based on the qualitative research, the author analyzed the results of the before-interviews and the post-interviews. The author found that the students' views on news broadcast listening and strategy use in listening practice had improved positively.

1. Results of the Interview after SBI (Strategy-based Instruction)

In the interviews after the strategy training, another 5 students in EG were randomly selected to attend another 30-minute interviews about their listening and strategy training in class. The questions were as follows:
① What kinds of strategies have you learned so far?
② Talk about your attitudes to the listening strategies, for example, whether they are useful or not.
③ Apart from the strategies taught, do you think it necessary to learn other listening related strategies, why?
④ Can listening strategy training help to improve your listening performance, if so, in what area?
⑤ Do you have any suggestions about the teacher's strategy training?

From the interview, almost all the students agree that news report is the excellent listening materials which could greatly challenge and stimulate them to improve their listening skills after passing the examination of CET-4 & 6.

Besides, the interviewees talked about their views about the news listening strategy and strategy training.

Student A: Before listening to the news broadcast, I could make a conscious prediction for the main idea for the news item to be heard based on every possible clue I could catch; and I have also learned to use much more listening strategies consciously. Additionally, I will keep on writing my listening diaries, which has helped me to summarize the achievements that I have made and the problems that I need to solve.

Student B: Now I can always make an evaluation for my listening strategies to find out the existing problems and solutions. I have developed the consciousness of using listening strategies while I am doing listening practice on my own. And the training of motivation strategy has helped me to better understand my English studies, and I will use news broadcast to improve my listening skills and broaden my horizons.

Student C: I always have a clear purpose in my mind while listening, and always try to listen selectively. And I also reflect on my listening process to recall the strategies used, and to evaluate whether they are helpful or not. When I am listening, I try to associate the news with the background knowledge that I have ever read, and then I try to modify my predictions through listening.

Student D: When I finish the listening task each time, I always summarize the main idea of the news listening material and then group the words and expressions. And I have also learned to compile a word-list of news listening by myself.

Student E: I would cooperate and discuss with my friends and share my opinions with them when I met with problems and difficulties in my listening process. And now I am trying to do this in almost every course that I take.

Through the feedback received from the students, the following conclusions can be reached:

Foremost, students' consciousness of listening strategy use, especially the meta-cognitive strategies, is greatly strengthened. They can make the conscious advanced preparation and evaluation. The students have learned how to plan, monitor and evaluate their learning process better.

Then, students have already learned to cooperate with their classmates in solving the problems they encounter in news listening practice. This phenomenon demonstrates the effectiveness of the social strategy training.

Lastly, students' confidence and motivation in news listening has been increased dramatically. More students take a positive attitude toward the listening strategy training in the news listening curriculum.

Although those 5 students randomly chosen from the EG could not fully represent all the 45 students in the EG, but what they had expressed could limitedly support that the strategy-based instruction of listening to news broadcast had really improved their self-confidence and participation in news listening class. In SBI class, they had made much progress in news listening skills and developed an active and effective way of learning other skills more than listening.

2. Comparisons and Analysis of the Data after SBI

Similar to the before-test, the post-test were also composed of four items, such as the multiple choices, true or false, compound dictation and questions and answers. Compared with the before-test, the post-test would be a little more

difficult in terms of topics and speed of the news broadcast, because the subjects in both groups had been practicing listening to the more diverse and challenging news broadcast for half a year. The audio materials were chosen from VOA special English, BBC Learning English and CRI reports about China.

The author carried out the comparison of independent samples t-test of the scores in post-test after SBI on news broadcast listening for subjects in EG. The independent-samples t-test indicated that the students' news listening proficiency had improved greatly. And students in EG had made a greater progress in the post-tests of news listening.

3. t-test on the before-test and Post-test of Both Groups

In order to compare the scores of the two groups in the before-test and post-test, the author conducted independent-samples T-test on the before-test and post-test of both the control group and the experimental group. As what is shown in the table 3:

TABLE 3:
INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T-TEST ON THE BEFORE-TEST AND POST-TEST OF THE CONTROL GROUP

Group	Items	N	Mean	SD	SEM	t	Sig(two-tailed)
CG	before-test	43	71.9302	9.13235	1.39267	-2.725	0.008
	Post-test	43	76.9535	7.91910	1.20765		

As reflected in the table of the independent-samples t-test on the scores of the CG, for the students in CG, the mean of the post-test had also increased from 71.93 to 76.95. It was found that there was also a significant change on the mean in the control group after comparing the scores of the before-test with that of the post-test. P=0.008, which indicates that the significance for the scores of CG was within the limit of 0.05, and there was also a great significance between the scores of before-test and post-test for the students in CG. Although the students in CG did not receive explicit strategy training, they had also made progress in their news listening.

However, as reflected in the data analysis, the general improvements that students in CG had made were not as great as that of the students in EG. Table 4 shows the statistical results of the EG.

TABLE 4:
INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T-TEST ON THE BEFORE-TEST & POST-TEST OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Group	Items	N	Mean	SD	SEM	T	Sig(two-tailed)
EG	before-test	45	71.29	9.21368	1.37349	-4.924	0.000
	Post-test	45	79.38	6.04637	0.90134		

As is shown in the table, T=-4.92, P=0.000<0.05.

For students in EG, the mean in the post-test has increased from 71.29 to 79.38. And the Standard Deviation has decreased from 9.21to 6.05, which indicated that a general improvement among all students in EG had been achieved. And the P=0.00, which had demonstrated that a significant difference did exist between the scores of before-tests and post-tests for students in EG.

4. t-test on the Post-test of the Two Groups

In order to check the effects of the strategy-based instruction, another t-test was also used to make the comparison of the scores between the two groups after the 15-week strategy-based instruction of the news listening. The results are listed in the following table.

TABLE 5:
INDEPENDENT-SAMPLES T-TEST ON THE POST-TEST

Item	Group	N	Mean	SD	SEM	t	Sig(two-tailed)
Post-test	CG	43	76.9535	7.91910	1.20765	-1.619	0.109
	EG	45	79.3778	6.04637	0.90134		

As is shown in the table, T=-1.619, P=0.109>0.05. From the analysis, the following aspects were found:

At first, in the post-listening test, the mean of the scores of EG was almost 3 points higher than that of the scores of CG. The average score of students in EG has improved more than their counterparts in CG. But the increase of the mean of their post-test indicated that students in both groups had made improvements in their scores of the post-test.

On the other hand, P=0.109>0.05, which indicated that there was some significant difference for the scores of both groups to some extent. But the results of the post-test were not convincing enough to draw the conclusion that the strategy-based instruction of news listening that the author had used in teaching were superior to the traditional one and had a positive effect on the listening proficiency of the experimental group.

However, educators believe that learning is a complicated process which could be influenced by many factors, such as their motivation, instruction, and the context where learning takes place, the learning styles and teachers' teaching styles, the efforts and time that students have ever invested. And correspondingly, the results of a certain examination

would also be affected by many factors, such as their original language proficiency, their psychological anxiety and stress, and the familiarity of the items, etc.

Another possible factor which may influence the results of the test was the use of the paper in the exams. Although previously, as the pilot test, the paper had been used for 25 sophomores of English majors, its validity and reliability had been demonstrated in their scores and their response to the papers, there was no pilot test for students of English minors. And these 25 sophomores of English majors could not represent all the other 88 English minors.

Besides, it was partly reasonable that students in CG had made progress in the post-test. In teaching, it was found that many students in CG were interested in the tasks and materials that the author had provided. They tried hard to understand more. And because there was no explicit strategy training, the time that they would use in practice was abundant, and they were also asked to listen more by themselves.

But from the other data, the author could conservatively draw the conclusion that improvement has already been made for the subjects in the experimental group.

Students in CG had also made improvements without receiving any explicit strategy training, while there was a more comparatively significant improvement in the experimental group. Thus it was conservatively concluded that the strategy-based instruction of news listening may have a positive effect on the students' listening comprehension ability.

The results had also demonstrated the doubts of some researchers as well as teachers and students on the effectiveness of strategy training in listening instruction. Yet, the results of the post-questionnaires on the other hand had proved the effectiveness of the author's 15-week strategy-based instruction of news broadcast English. More details would be given in the section next.

5. Results of the Post-questionnaire

After a 15-week strategy-based instruction of news broadcast listening, a comparison of the mean between EG and CG had indicated the effectiveness of incorporating strategies into the regular curricular syllabus.

From the interviews and communication with students, it was found that an introduction and some effective training of certain listening strategies in teaching were what many students had expected besides the repeated listening practice. And a method that would guide them to practice autonomously was also what they had expected. Therefore, similar to the training of students' pronunciation practice, listening strategy training could be another part for listening instruction, and possibly a new trend to develop the listening course and satisfy students' needs for skills and methods to learn autonomously after class.

And in order to further prove whether the strategy training incorporated into the news listening class can have a positive effect on the students' listening performance. The same questionnaires with different sequences were given to the students of both groups to see whether they had developed their views on the strategy use. And the results of the post-questionnaires were also collected and analyzed statistically. Besides, the sub-strategies that students in EG had employed in listening were also collected and compared with the ten least often used sub-strategies in the before-questionnaires for all subjects.

Another two independent-samples T-test were conducted to compare the results of the questionnaires before and after strategy-based instruction of both groups. The results are listed in the following table:

TABLE 6:
COMPARISON BETWEEN THE BEFORE-QUESTIONNAIRE AND POST-QUESTIONNAIRE OF CG

		Strategy	before-questionnaire		Post-questionnaire	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
CG	N=43	Memory	2.58	0.71	2.56	0.59
		Compensation	3.45	0.66	3.34	0.53
		Cognitive	3.04	0.48	3.12	0.43
		Meta-cognitive	3.01	0.40	2.97	0.46
		Social-Affective	2.42	0.63	2.38	0.56

TABLE 7:
COMPARISON BETWEEN THE BEFORE-QUESTIONNAIRE AND POST-QUESTIONNAIRE OF EG

		Strategy	before-questionnaire		Post-questionnaire	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD
EG	N=45	Memory	2.67	0.81	2.79	0.48
		Compensation	3.36	0.59	3.42	0.40
		Cognitive	2.99	0.59	3.25	0.28
		Meta-cognitive	2.94	0.57	3.28	0.33
		Social-Affective	2.50	0.63	3.12	0.46

From the table, it is clearly stated that through the strategy-based instruction, the students in the experimental class do make some progress in their strategy use and their strategy consciousness compared with the control class. Because students in EG did not receive the explicit training of some listening strategies, correspondingly, their strategy use in listening to news changed slightly compared with the previous results. But their scores in the post-tests were also increased with a comparatively smaller degree. The difference in the degrees of their improvements could not necessarily be explained as their failures of strategy use. There could be other elements which may affect the results of the post-tests.

IV. CONCLUSION

Through the systematic introduction and practice of 9 listening strategies in detail, students in EG got better insight into the news comprehension process and how it had worked. Results of the study have partly confirmed that a systematic explicit instruction in language learning strategies could be another way-out to develop students' news broadcast listening skills. In the research, although students in both groups had made progress in their scores of news listening tests, the minors in the experimental group had performed better than their counterparts in the control group. Besides, the model of instruction provided for teaching and applying each one of the 5 listening strategies included in the suggested training program have helped students to know why, when, and how to use the strategies they had mastered.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A Case Study of Communication Difficulties between a Chinese Advanced Learner and Native Speakers

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Abstract—**The paper focuses on the communication difficulties between a Chinese advanced learner and native speakers. The research is carried out through a case study approach and is grounded on the data collected from recording conversations between a Chinese participant and two native speakers. The recorded conversations are spontaneous, covering general topics encountered in real life. Three linguistic findings are: first, grammar does not usually affect advanced learners in speaking whereas the lack of appropriate vocabulary may be a bigger challenge; second, advanced learners could learn contents words and expressions without instruction but through a rich target language input; third, incorrect pronunciation can be corrected through consistent physical practice and corrective feedback. Also, the research shows that foreign language anxiety, cultural differences and L1 influence play important roles in communication with native speakers. As to the study strategy, this research emphasizes the importance of continuous language exposure for advanced learners. This case study could be applied by students and teachers in EFL classrooms and will also contribute to the study of Chinese English.**

Index Terms—**case study, immersion environment, Chinese L2 learners, Chinese English, communication difficulties**

I. INTRODUCTION

Motivation of the study

Molly, a Chinese student, whose English is at advanced level, is studying for an MA in TESOL at a university in the U.K. She is having a home-stay experience with a native British family. She had a great opportunity to get closer to the English language as well as British culture with this target language immersion environment. Researchers have been studying the importance of immersion-styled teaching and engagement strategies in the U.S. since the late 1960s (Kim, Hutchison & Winsler, 2015) but little research has focused on individual learner factors relating to learners' effectiveness in language learning abroad (Kang & Ghanem, 2016). This research will certainly contribute the understanding of immersion in the respect of individual language development abroad. During Molly's stay, she gradually noticed herself having some difficulties in communication with the native speakers and she was anxious to assimilate into the foreign community. In order to have a clearer picture of her own weakness, she determined to conduct a thorough research on her own communicative performance, aiming at discovering both linguistic difficulties and also understanding underlying psychological difficulties.

The research questions

1. What linguistic and psychological difficulties will Chinese advanced learners have when speaking with a native speaker?

2. Why do these difficulties occur in speaking between Chinese advanced learners and native speakers?

3. What study strategies can be adopted to reduce the difficulties in speaking?

This research focuses vertically on the communication difficulties Molly encountered rather than spreading horizontally across the difficulties that may confront an L2 learner. Molly, as a Chinese advanced learner, surrounded by native speakers, is going to confront her linguistic difficulties in respect of lexis, grammar and pronunciation, as well as revealed any psychological difficulties that may occur. It should also be borne in mind that the research has been unfolded in the communication between the participants so that the real life situations will have impact on the actual outcome of the data. Hopefully, this research can make contributions to the field of teaching English as a second language and enrich the understanding of Chinese English.

II. METHODOLOGY

Participants

Maley (2009) discovers that advanced English language learners are those who have come a long way in the language and, although having a degree of self-sufficiency, they are typically acutely aware of a margin for further improvement. Similarly, if an advanced learner is strongly motivated to reach a higher-level of English proficiency, s/he

might persist in making the effort to aim for native-like linguistic competence, especially those whose occupation requires a professional command of English. However, with respect to communication and interaction with others in every-day life, one's original identity will appear spontaneously in the language as well as being revealed through other forms of intercourse. In the light of the efficiency of advanced learners' communication in real life, they should be proud of their linguistic achievement, whilst respecting the uniqueness of their own origins.

Sykes (2015) carried out a case study by interviewing a successful language learner to understand the study approaches this learner adopted effectively. Sykes focused on a particular participant and it has provided concrete details to show key characteristics of what a good language learner could be. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison (2007) point out the uniqueness of case study which provides vivid examples of real people in real life which is far more interesting than listing abstract theories or principles. This research has carried out also using a case study approach, involving a Chinese advanced learner and two British native speakers. The researcher, referring to as Molly, is the Chinese advanced learner, actively participating in the study throughout. Molly is 26 years old, with a BA in business English and currently pursuing her MA in TESOL for a year in the UK. Her English language is at advanced level and she is capable of using English flexibly and effectively for social and academic purposes. Molly met Max and Pauline over Christmas, 2014 and she has had a home-stay experience with them for almost a year. During her stay, she has experienced a rich English language and cultural exposure in most aspects of family and social life from interactions with native speakers.

The native British couple, Max and Pauline, are the L1 informants and keen to contribute to the study. They are originally from Liverpool, UK, however, they do not have a scouse accent, the lack of which Molly found more intelligible. Max graduated in architecture at Liverpool College of Building in 1962. He has been working as a church and conservation architect since 1961 to the present. Max's interests include antique clocks and reading. Pauline completed her English language and English literature O levels in 1965. She was a director of a shipping agent in the UK for 42 years and her life-long interests include English history and literature.

Methods and procedures

In this research, Molly represents the Chinese advanced learner and she remains in this English immersion environment for the duration of the study. From June 23rd 2015 to June 27th 2015, some of her general conversations with Max and Pauline have been recorded as the first group of data for the research. After about four weeks, further conversations have been recorded from July 26th to July 30th as the second group of data. During the four weeks between recording, Molly has made efforts, such as listening to BBC radio, watching English language films on TV, conversing widely with native speakers, and writing essays, all with the object of improving her level of competence in the use of the second language. Therefore, there should be some differences between the two sets of data with the second group expecting to give some indication of improved capability.

All the conversations recorded are authentically derived from normal discourse, covering a relatively wide range of topics encountered in everyday life. All the voice data collected has been transcribed into written notes verbatim and then sampled for specific analysis. All transcriptions of this research have been completed by Molly and she endeavored to identify as many linguistic mistakes as possible in her own language performance. Then Max and Pauline, as the native speakers, reviewed the voice data and the transcripts for confirmation and double-checking for errors and difficulties. In the process of recording, Molly kept a close track of the psychological difficulties she had during the communication and wrote them down promptly for a record, and these data would support the study from another perspective other than language.

The actual linguistic difficulties in speaking during the research have been identified with evidence from the voice data and written transcripts, while the psychological difficulties were recorded by Molly according to her immediate gut feeling at that time. Obviously, the psychological data would be subjective, but it was as perceived directly by the participant herself. Molly's speaking performance has been centered throughout the study, in all aspects of grammar, lexis and pronunciation. Possible reasons for any communication difficulties were analyzed in specific detail in the subsequent discussion section and relevant study strategies have been suggested accordingly. Although there is a potential risk of compromising the study from having the researcher as a participant, Max and Pauline have been asked to verify the authenticity of all difficulties encountered in the communication. However, to improve the validity of future study, a procedure of peer examination of the data could be undertaken, perhaps involving a second L2 participant.

III. DISCUSSION WITH RELEVANT STUDIES

All the representative samples of the recorded conversation cove most of Molly's weakness in speaking. Molly has first read through the transcriptions, and has identified as many errors and difficulties as she could in her own language performance. Subsequently, Max and Pauline have double-checked the transcriptions to identify any further matters that they feel Molly should address. From mistakes collected from the data, it seems that Molly's biggest challenges in her communication with native speakers are lexis and grammar, as well as several pronunciation difficulties. It is worth noting that the process of finding these challenges is based on a standard accuracy of native speaker norms. However, it appears that their communication normally went smoothly and misunderstanding only occurred few times during the whole recording time. See Chart 1 below:

Chart 1:
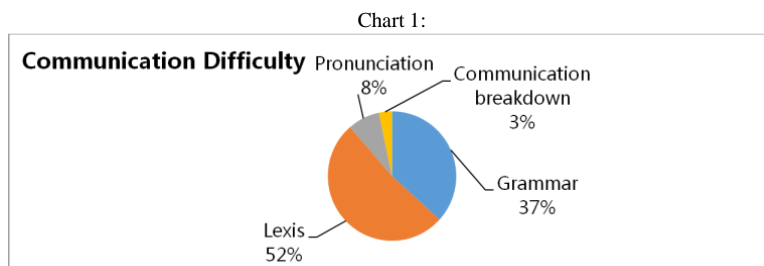
It is worth noticing that Molly could find herself almost all of the pronunciation mistakes she has made but she could only distinguish about one fifth of her lexical errors and one third of her grammatical mistakes. This process could certainly help Molly to notice the gap between herself and a native speaker; as a consequence she could be more aware of her spoken weakness. See Chart 2 below:

Chart 2:
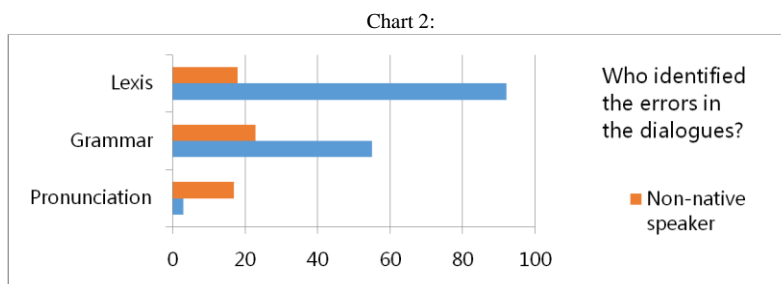
Harley (2010) says there is little room for errors in speaking. In order to ensure successful communication, speakers not only need to make themselves clear but also must respond quickly without much time to think. Despite the linguistic difficulties in speaking that this research mainly focus on, the nature of communication could not be overlooked and the features of Molly's communication strategies have been analyzed. Cook (2008, p112) pays considerable attention to communication strategies and regards them as "a natural part of conversational interaction" that people fall back on to make themselves understood. Bygate (1987) divides communication strategies into two categories: Achievement strategies and Reduction strategies. Achievement strategies contain guessing, paraphrase and cooperation with the others. Reduction strategy could also be labeled Avoidance strategy so as to avoid some tricky structures or difficulties in expressing an idea through lack of vocabulary.

It is apparent that Molly is inclined to make use of different communication strategies in her communication. When she is not sure whether it is correct to use a word, she always paraphrases it or employs an alternative word. For example, not knowing the word "commission", she said if a salesperson sells something, he can have a share. Sometimes it might contribute to her learning process if she would take the risk and use the word that first came to mind. Besides, she makes considerable use of guessing and gesture to help her communication with native speakers. It may be effective but the disadvantage is that she might be losing some good opportunities of negotiating for meaning which would otherwise facilitate her linguistic competence. Also, she frequently applies repetition in her speech, although appropriate repetition could emphasize the key point in the conversation and promote understanding. In addition to the achievement strategies in communication, Molly relies on the strategy of avoidance to keep herself out of trouble. For example, when Max wanted to talk to Molly about the differences between the Chinese and British educational systems, Molly narrowed the topic down to the differences of teaching English, with which she was more familiar.

Lexical difficulties in communication
Data presentation and analysis

With regards to lexical difficulty, Molly's biggest challenge is her application of noun, collocation and determiner. In everyday conversation, new vocabulary seems to occur only occasionally implying that Molly has a good command of English vocabulary. See details in Chart 3 below:

Chart 3:

Lexical Difficulty
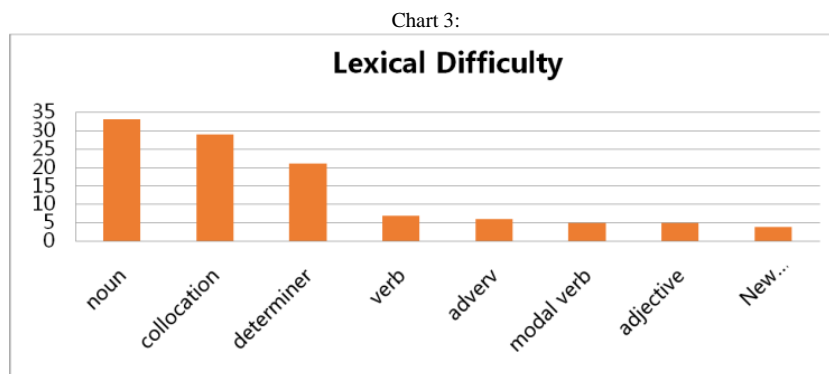
*Note: The numbers refer to the amount of lexical mistakes collected from Molly's recorded conversation.

• Nouns

According to the data, Molly sometimes struggled to find the appropriate lexical noun in a certain context. For example, she wanted to tell Pauline that her friend Ny has got a full-time job in a pub, but she was hesitant to use the word "pub" and said "*Ny's got this full-time job in that **bar, pub**.*" It sounded like she expected Pauline to think about it and pick up the correct noun. The same thing happened when she wanted to explain to Max about a pair of trousers, she said "*but the **texture**, the **material** is very old…*" She was not sure which noun she should use and was hoping that her interlocuter would understand her by adding an alternative, perhaps more accurate, word. However, finding the appropriate word is sometimes controversial because it is very much dependent on the context.

However, sometimes Molly did use an inappropriate word without offering an alternative. Take one of her conversation with Max for example:

Max: Nowadays upper classes address their servants with "please" and "thank you", but it was not always so.

*Molly: Of course. I mean that is not just to respect the others, it is also a **showing** of your own good manners.*

Molly used the noun "showing" in this context where the word "display" or "demonstration" might be better. As another example, when Molly was explaining the educational system to Pauline, she said "*Actually our **study plans**, I think, is a bit too heavy for the students*." What does she mean by "study plans"? Actually she wanted to say the Chinese curriculum is a bit too heavy for school children. As a matter of fact, she knew the word "curriculum" but she was either afraid to use it or temporarily could not bring it to mind, so that sometimes she had to invent expressions for herself.

• Determiners

Relating to nouns, Molly also has difficulties with determiners. Carter and McCarthy (2006, p335) define determiners as "the type of reference a noun phrase has", which could be definite or indefinite (the, a), possessive (my, her), and demonstrative (this, those). One third of Molly's errors with determiners are her mixing up of the indefinite determiner and demonstrative determiner. For example, she said "*the night when Ny made me **this** roast dinner…*" when she should have said "***a** roast dinner*" and she said "*or take them to **those** local farms*" while ought to have been "***some** local farms*", because she was not actually meaning a particular dinner or specific farms. She thought that using these demonstrative determiners could help associate her listener with the situation she was referring to and smooth the conversation by establishing such a connection.

• Collocations

Gairns & Redman (1986) concluded that the most common types of collocation are: "subject noun + verb", "verb + object noun", "adjective + noun" and "adverb + past participle used adjectivally". It seems Molly tends to have trouble with "verb + object noun". For example, she said "She met friends here" where she actually meant "made friends", "You have to do the examination" instead of "take/sit the examination", "…parents change the ages of their child" rather than "falsify the age". Perhaps a native interlocutor could understand what Molly meant within the context, but they would soon notice the difference in how L2 learners describe things and where their weaknesses lie. As to the other three types of collocation, they do not often appear in Molly's spoken English, and it certainly leads to baldness in her spoken language. For example, she could get by with "A man walked by in the dark." but fail to use other verbs such as totter, stroll and trot. It does not mean that L2 learners have to speak using complicated collocations, but it seems that they tend to be satisfied with words like "walk and run", "happy and sad" and they perhaps do not bother at all to use adverbs to add any vivid flavour to their speech.

• Adjectives and adverbs

Concerning adjective and adverb, as mentioned above, it seems that Molly does not often make use of these two types of word in her spoken English. Her most frequently used adjective is "nice" and "good", and perhaps the only adverbs she uses are those about frequency, such as sometimes, often and never. She is capable of understanding a lot of adjectives and adverbs when she hears them in conversation but, unfortunately, she does not take the opportunity of using them herself. Perhaps she is reserved in this respect and adopting the avoidance strategy, being afraid to make a mistake.

• Verbs

Molly is having problem with verbs and their –*ing* form. For example, she said "*They won't **be** just **want** to stay in Wales.*" instead of "wanting", and she said "*But people in the city, they just **trying** to get to high school, and then university or, maybe, college.*" when she should have said "try". Carter and McCarthy (2006, p423) say that "The –*ing* form is used with auxiliary *be* to form progressive aspect." Molly sometimes forgets to add an –*ing* to the verb or omits the auxiliary *be*. This is almost certainly the result of L1 influence because the verb will not be modified whether it is a progressive action or not. Moreover, Carter and McCarthy (2006, p423) mention that "The –*ing* form also occurs in non-finite clauses". For example, Molly once said "*Like you might say "fingers crossed" **means that** you pray for the situation*" when it should be "meaning that". On the other hand, Molly tends to confuse the verb and noun forms of a word. For example, she used to say "sale something" instead of "sell something".

• Modal verbs

Molly is sometimes unable to choose the correct modal verb. For example, she said "*I **will** be stupid but I will never lose my sense of humour*" where she could have used "may", and "*They really **need to** pay me something*" producing an entirely different meaning from what she was attempting to say, "They really should pay me something". Also, examples such as "*I would have finished all those things and I **can start** a job*" where it should be "**could have started** a job". However, it is easier for Molly to grasp the function of modal verbs because they are frequently used in every-day life and the number of modal verbs is limited. Also, modal verbs are used within certain contexts and the general rules for their use are very similar.

Subsection discoveries

Carter (1998, p5) regards grammatical words as "functional words" or "empty words", such as pronoun (you, they, me), prepositions (in, on, by) and conjunctions (and, but). On the other hand, he indicates that lexical words are known as "full words" or "content words", such as noun (man, rabbit), adjectives (beautiful, handsome), verbs (sleep, eat) and adverbs (quickly, luckily). From Molly's English immersion experience, it seems that she could obtain more content words, such as content noun, adjective, adverb and collocations, through "subconscious mechanism" (Scheffler, 2015). For instance, she has been trying to memorize these kinds of lexis from vocabulary books, with Max and Pauline helping with explanations but she found this process both inefficient and ineffectual, only rarely would a newly-acquired term or phrase slip out in conversation whereas, she could quickly learn new vocabulary from, for example, shopping with Pauline. She can receive abundant content information from her conversation with Pauline and with other people, and even from item names and descriptions in shops. In this respect, she tends to separate the information she gains through reading from that obtained from real life. As to functional words, however, Molly achieved better acquisition from "conscious study" (Scheffler, 2015) of such groups as determiners, prepositions, pronouns and auxiliary verbs. As long as she understands the rules, she could make use of them in her own spoken English and she could also identify them when listening to a native speaker.

Jones (2018) conducted a research to examine the effectiveness of immersion versus engagements in the classrooms and she found that interactions with native speakers in real living situations can enhance students' retention of English. There is evidence from the two groups of data that Molly's capacity of content words and expressions has increased from her home-stay experience. For example, she has gained new words for different dishes, such as "toad in the hole" and "Welsh rarebit"; and she learnt new words, such as "curriculum" and "commission". Also she has discovered expressions, such as "out of the blue", "draw the line", "my cup of tea". She acquired this kind of knowledge from her interaction with Max and Pauline, not from the books. However, her learning and application of functional words is taking time and there seems to be little, if any, obvious improvement. These functional words in lexis have a strong connection with grammar and even, with explicit and systematic instruction, Molly still makes mistakes from time to time.

Grammatical difficulties in communication
Data presentation and analysis

Among all the grammatical difficulties Molly has encountered, her inaccuracy of tense seemed far to exceed the others. In order to draw a clearer line between grammar and lexis, the grammar difficulties in this paper are focused on the 5 categories shown in Chart 4 below:

Chart 4:
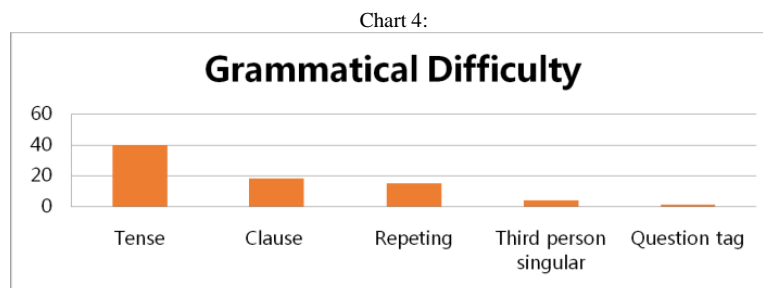
*Note: The numbers refer to the amount of grammatical mistakes collected from Molly's recorded conversation.

• Tense

For example, Molly said "*I wear, I wore earplugs, and I **fall fell** asleep.*" "*Have you ever **swim, swam** in the sea?*" "*I*

didn't worked, I have never worked in that training school" She was correcting herself while she was speaking. It seemed that her brain was a little slower than her mouth when it came to dealing with tense. From the data, past simple was the biggest challenge for Molly. For example, she said "*...this morning as well when I woke up it is so quiet.*" She knew that she should use the past simple "woke up" instead of "wake up" but she ignored the "is" where she should have said "was". From an academic view, Molly is aware of the rule of past simple but she could not help making such mistakes. As to present perfect, Molly sometimes confused it with simple present or simple past, especially with the simple present. For example, she said "*I can't believe that **you just finish** that big piece of cheese.*" where she should have said "**you've just finished**". From the data, it seems Molly is more capable when using the future tense and very rarely confused it with other tenses.

• Using declarative as a question

With respect to clause, Molly has a habit of asking a question using a declarative statement with a rising tone in the end. For example, she asked Pauline "*So **Adrienne is** with them in Greece now?*" "*Why **they changed** now?*" She could have said "**Is Adrienne** with them in Greece now?" and "**Why did they** change now?" Carter and McCarthy (2006) discovered affirmative and negative declarative clauses may also occasionally function as questions or requests. Although this phenomenon is acceptable in communication, it may be even more popular among L2 learners than for native speakers.

• Missing a subject/object

On the other hand, Molly sometimes would miss a subject or an object in her spoken clause. For example, she said "*They have a very cozy home, not very big **but is** very comfortable.*" where she should have said "**but it is** very comfortable". Also, she said "*Actually they **sent to me** the afternoon before I arrived home.*" where it should be "they **sent it to me** …" In Carter's (1998) opinion that ellipsis is actually more appropriate than full forms in certain situations where full forms may be irritating and time-consuming. However, in Molly's case, it seems it is not a choice of ellipsis in her spoken language but a mistake she needs to pay attention to.

• Repeating

Carter and McCarthy (2006) reveal that speakers may repeat or recast what they said under the pressure of real time communication and this cannot be regarded as sloppy. Repeating is also common in Molly's utterance. For example, She said "*...she says people working there **they** are very friendly to her.*" "*...but one of my cousins, **she** got to school at the age of four.*" "*You know, some people, **they** just don't have good manners*" In this case, Molly is repeating the subject in her speaking. Although it does not hold up the conversation, but it seems an interesting phenomenon that she does not repeat other parts of the sentence, only the subject.

• Conjunction

Carter and McCarthy (2006) pointed out that real-time communication do not give speakers time to construct well-planned patterns of main and subordinate clauses, and sequences of clauses linked by coordinating conjunctions (and, but, or) or by simple subordinating conjunctions such as *because* and *so* are more commonly used. Molly is aware of this feature, however, the problem is that she tends to repeat the same conjunctions too many times making her speech repetitive and uninteresting. For example, she said "***And then** we stayed there for one week, I mean in St. Joseph College for one week. **And then** we went to Washington for a week **and then** New York for a week. **And then** we came back to Indiana, **and then** we went to Chicago.*"

• Third person singular

As to the form of third person singular, Molly often forgot about the correct –s form. For example, she said "*sometimes she still **tell** me that she **miss** him*" where she should have said "tells" and "misses". The reason for Molly making such mistakes is probably that there is no such form alteration in the Chinese language. Molly's L1 may have had another negative transfer on her English outcome in this respect.

• Question tag

In addition, Molly made mistakes with question tag. Tags are "short clauses added on to the main clauses either to create questions or to reinforce statements, directives and exclamations" Carter and McCarthy (2006, p532). Molly said "*But you have, you know, the minimum wage, **isn't it**?*" The tag "isn't it" here is not coherent with the main clause grammatically. The correct tag could be "**don't you?**" or "**haven't you?**" It seems Molly could add the tag "isn't it" on to any clause no matter whether it is positive or negative, whether it relates to a person or an article, or contains an auxiliary verb, an auxiliary *be*, or a modal verb. For example, she could say "Lily does like the dress, isn't it?" "We can go out this afternoon, isn't it?" It works for Molly and she normally receives effective responses from the listener when she says "isn't it?" and that is probably why she doesn't consider its incorrectness.

Subsection discovery

Hedge (2000, p146) points out the importance of noticing in learning grammar, and he states that "…learners pick out specific features of the language and pay attention to them". Although Molly made mistakes in spontaneous speech, she could explain most of the grammar rules when she started to analyze her own errors and she found the process of noticing very helpful. Therefore, Molly prefers explicit teaching of grammar and she considers that there is little opportunity for her to pick up grammar "naturally" even from sufficient exposure to lexical items or chunks. She spent ten years learning English in school and university in China which she believes has laid a solid foundation for her English language competence. She is confident that this grounding will benefit her no matter where her career may lead.

Scheffler and Cinciata (2011) signify that knowing explicit grammar rules can help learners to notice the structures that exemplify rules in the input, as well as helping them to obtain more comprehensive input. This is especially so in Molly's case. After she has analyzed the first group of data, she started to notice more of the grammatical structures in the input she received every day from the linguistic environment, especially from her conversations with native speakers. For example, she began to notice modality more often in conversations, and it not only helped her to receive more comprehensible input from native speakers but also to use it herself more practically. However, Molly holds a view that, even if she has understood the underlying grammar rules, it will still take a lot of practice in real situations before she will be able to make use of them accurately in spontaneous speech.

Pronunciation difficulties in communication

Data presentation and analysis

Although Molly is comfortable with her English having a Chinese accent, English vowels have posed her the biggest challenge. See details below:

Chart 5:
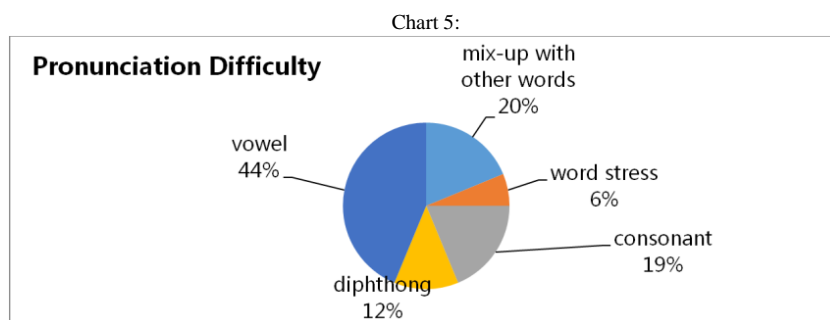
• Mix-up with other words

Sometimes Molly tends to mix up the pronunciation among different words. For example, when she observed to a friend that they wore the same size of clothes, she said "...*we are **kindly (kind of)** in the same size.*" where she pronounced the word "kindly" instead of "kind of". And another time when she wanted to say "need", it sounded like "near" where there is no "d" sound at the end. Molly is confident that it was not because she did not know these two words but really due to accidental mispronunciation. It seems that if she spoke quickly, there was more chance of her making such mistakes. She also has a slight difficulty with word stress. For example, she sometimes pronounced "Pauline" with a stress on the second syllable rather than the first.

• Vowel

With some vowel sounds, Molly experiences difficulty in selecting the appropriate long or short vowels. For example, from listening to the recording, she often mispronounces "live - /liv/" as "leave - /li:v/" which could convey a completely different meaning leading to unfortunate or embarrassing misunderstanding. The long vowel phonemes are those with a lengthening symbol /:/. As Kelly (2000: 31) explains for pronouncing /i:/, the lips should be spread and the tongue should be tense while for the short vowel /i/, lips are spread loosely and the tongue should be relaxed. However, Molly invariably pronounces both /i:/ and /i/ with spread lips. Also, she had some problems with diphthongs, which Kelly (2000: 34) defines as "a combination of vowel sounds" The most difficult one for Molly is the /ei/ sound because she often mixed it with the vowel /e/, such as the word "nail".

• Consonant

Molly is sometimes confused by the pronunciation of /l/ and /n/. For example, when she wanted to say "I knocked on the door three times", she actually said "I **locked** on the door three times" which had exactly the opposite meaning. Kelly (2000) gave a learner-friendly exercise for these two consonants: Put the front of your tongue against the bump behind the teeth. Use the voice, and let the air pass out of your mouth for /l/ and let the air escape through your nose for /n/. There are also /l/ and /n/ sounds in Chinese and, as Molly is capable of pronouncing them correctly, there should be a positive influence on her L2 pronunciation of these two sounds. Also, there was one time when Molly mispronounced the voiceless and voiced sound /p/ & /b/ and /k/ & /g/ in the word "magpie" but she corrected herself immediately afterwards.

Subsection discovery

Cook (2008) summarizes that the sound of language is a complex system which cannot be learnt at a time. Learners have they own "interlanguage phonologies" which are unique rules of their own. In Molly's situation, even though she had some difficulties in her own pronunciation, it should not hinder her from understanding native speaker's pronunciation as evidenced from how their conversations were continued. Walker (2010) also indicates that learners should receptively cope with the pronunciation features that they themselves could not produce. Gilakjani (2017) suggests that teachers should guide learners towards understandable pronunciation but not exactly native-like pronunciation. Molly could make efforts to practice the pronunciation repeatedly so as to improve her native-like linguistic competence, but it should not affect her communication in general.

From the outset of Molly's acquaintance with Max and Pauline, Molly requested them to draw her attention to any

mispronunciation she might make and she valued all the corrective feedbacks she received. Corrective feedback (CF) refers to teacher and peer responses to learners' incorrect L2 productions (Li, 2014). Max and Pauline both agreed that Molly's pronunciation had improved during the recording gap, so that Molly herself is convinced that her pronunciation can be developed with repeated physical practice. Also, as mentioned before, Molly can spot for herself most of the pronunciation mistakes she might make and she could pay immediate attention to them. Last but not least, Molly discovered that her satisfaction with her aptitude in English has been the main reason for her interest and confidence in learning English.

Second language acquisition in communication
Data presentation and analysis
• Linguistic environment

From the transcripts, it is noticeable that when Molly was relaxed and enjoying herself in conversation, her speaking performance seemed better, whereas sometimes the purpose of recording did put her under some pressure which impacted adversely on the accuracy of her spoken English. However, it has been more than 6 months since Molly moved to stay with Max and Pauline and they have maintained a friendly relationship ever since. Therefore, Molly should be able to present authentic spoken performances within such a linguistic environment. Whilst in the UK, Molly had met many native speakers from different walks of life, such as her foreign teachers and classmates, friends from the church, Max and Pauline's family and friends, and strangers in shops and restaurants. She speaks English frequently, almost as much as she spoke Chinese back in China.

When Pauline and Molly were talking about Primark, Pauline said: "*Lots of people won't go there because of the ethics of it.*" and Molly replied "*What do you mean the ethics of it?*" Obviously, Molly knew the meaning of the word "ethics" but she did not know what Pauline referred to and she was negotiating for meaning. Ortega (2009) points out that negotiation for meaning carry potentials for learning and attract attention to the language code. This displays positive evidence that Molly was taking the language advantage from the native speaker and Pauline's explanation would assist Molly to accumulate vocabulary with different connotation. By contrast, when Molly wanted to tell Pauline that there were a lot of seagulls on her roof and it was very noisy, she said "*I have this window on the roof, and those seagulls, very noisy.*" Apparently Pauline understood Molly because she knew the situation. However, Molly was not aware that she was using an incomplete and ungrammatical sentence. Although the communication was effective in conveying the information, Molly's descriptions could have been better.

The transcripts also show that Molly tends to use "gonna" a lot and she very often applies the word "like" in her spoken language. For example she said "*I think her mother-in-law is **gonna** take care of her.*" and "*They prepared lots of things for us; **like** we went to **like** local farms every day, **like** different farms.*" Some native speakers use "gonna" and "like" very often when speaking and it gave Molly the impression that it would make her sound more native-like if she introduce this usage into her every-day speaking and, at the same time perhaps help her to engage more easily in conversation. Cater (2007, p43) mentions that certain chunks, such as "sort of" and "you know" mark native speakers, and goes on to suggest those who desire native-like proficiency should learn to use them. However, it may be regarded as sloppy English and an L2 learner is often uncertain under which circumstances it would be appropriate to use such terms, acquired from badly-spoken input.

• Individual differences

As mentioned above, this research focuses on one advanced learner, therefore, the individual differences of this learner will probably determine the emphasis of the research in many respects. Ortega (2009) discovers that personality traits will influence the success of an L2 study. Some individuals experience a sense of apprehension, tension, and even fear when they think of foreign languages, which Ortega (2009) regards as "foreign language anxiety." Molly has an interest in English language debating and public speaking so that she is confident of her own linguistic and communicative competence in English. In her conversations with other L2 learners like herself, she tries to take the initiative to break the ice and open a dialogue, always being keen to develop and extend a conversation. However, it seems that she is reserved when talking with a native-speaker, demonstrating that foreign language anxiety influences Molly's intensions and spoken performance.

In one of the conversations from the transcripts, Molly spelt the word "salt" as "sault" saying "I can't make mistakes like this, being an advanced English learner." From a psychological point of view, Molly felt ashamed of her mistake. People often make spelling mistakes, even some native English speakers. However, a minor mistake can put more pressure on L2 learners who make great effort to improve their language competence whereas native speakers may regard minor errors as relatively unimportant. Also, L2 learners' different attitudes towards mistakes will have varying impact on their learning; some may be encouraged to improve while others might be disheartened. Molly recalls an experience during her undergraduate years when she was a bilingual broadcaster. Initially, she was wary of speaking Chinese in the office as everyone else spoke standard mandarin. It was the fear of making mistakes and people's judgment that made Molly afraid of speaking even her mother tongue at that time.

• L1 influences

Molly is from China, and Chinese is her mother tongue. Universally, mother tongue would influence the processes and outcome of L2 learning. Ortega (2009) explains that knowledge of the L1 interacts with L2 development by accelerating or delaying the learning process but it will not override it. Ellis (1997) considers that L1 influence might

result in negative transfer causing errors in the learner's language or, in some cases it might be a positive transfer helping to facilitate L2 acquisition. For example, Molly found L1 influence in her difficulty with numbers. When somebody mentions a sum of money, it always takes a long time for her to figure out how much it is. For example, £10,000, she would first convert into RMB 100,000 and then use the Chinese unit Wan, which is 1,0000, to finally know its value as 10 Wan, i.e. 10.0000. In real conversation, this cognitive process would certainly slow down the communication.

Another example of negative L1 influence is that Molly was sometimes confused with the plural and singular forms of a noun. This feature of the English language seems so demanding and complicated for a Chinese L2 learner, because it is not just a matter of adding an "s" at the end of a noun, but different nouns may have different plural forms. Also, there are non-count nouns which can be even more confusing. On the other hand, Molly tends to ask "*Do you understand what I mean?*" in the middle of her descriptions. It is not because she intends to check the interlocutor's comprehensive ability, but to ensure she is making herself clear and to find out whether she could have illustrated it better. Subconsciously, she reminds herself that she is speaking a second language and her interlocutor might find her way of saying things strange so that she needs to double-check.

• Culture differences

Tseng (2002) emphasized that competence in language requires the ability of using the language accurately and also knowing the culture that underlies the language. There was a time when Max wanted to tease Molly about British food. Max told Molly that he would cook her "toad in the hole" for supper. Molly was shocked "How can people eat a toad?" but she was afraid to decline the offer and did not know how to develop the conversation. However, Molly's reaction perfectly suited Max's intention and it turned out to be very entertaining. When Molly was explaining to Pauline the different levels of university in China, she referred to them as A-level University, B-level University, etc. Pauline could not understand her because she was thinking in terms of the U.K. secondary school A-level exams whereas Molly referring to the ranking of Chinese universities.

Here is another example relates to the cultural differences between Molly and the native speakers which have influenced the communication. For example, when Molly was asked whether she would like more potatoes, she just shook her head and said "hmm..." Max later pointed out that most British people would say – or certainly would be expected to say – "Thank you" in response to a service rendered or "No, thank you" to a service declined. In British culture a shake of the head is not an acceptable or polite response. Similarly, the use of "please" within a request for a service is almost essential. Molly also noticed a phenomenon that when British people mention someone, they will often give the name of the person straight away whereas Chinese people are more reticent in disclosing somebody's name to a stranger. Also, Molly found it interesting that British people kiss each other on meeting and parting but they do not normally like to walk arm in arm or hand in hand.

• Cognition

Irrespective to a learner's language level, it is more likely that cognition is more dependent upon general ability. Williams (2012, p427) defines the term "working memory (WM)" as a temporary storage system. He explains that WM is not just a short-term storage of information, but also a processing of that information so as to achieve a certain result. Molly always has problems remembering English names, especially place names. For example, there is a pub in town called Richard John Blackler and Molly used to pass it every day on her way home. But she always referred to it as "*that pub opposite to Boots*". She tried to remember the name but her working memory refused to retain it. It is the same with Indianapolis, she was never able to pronounce it correctly and she had to say "*the capital of Indiana*". Even familiar names, such as "Welsh rarebit", she found difficult to remember, whenever she heard a new name in a conversation, her brain immediately ignored the information, even with people's names, such as Shane, Gerald, and Annette. If she needs to explain something relating to a particular name she had to come up with a lot of peripheral information to identify the person or object which can obstruct the natural flow of a conversation. Perhaps it is because her brain finds it easier just to say "that building", "that person" or even simply to point to the things she wants to say.

Subsection discovery

Molly is sometimes afraid to take risks in her speaking and she tends to apply guessing, paraphrasing and avoidance quite frequently under such pressure. As a consequence, there may be only superficial understanding deriving from her conversations with native speakers and this must have a negative effect in her language learning. Molly's fear of talking to a native child and making mistakes in front of the others is almost certainly due to her foreign language anxiety. Zafar & Meenakshi (2012, p644) decribes anxiety as "the feeling of uneasiness", "frustration", "self-doubt", "apprehension", or "worry". And this can be affected by various factors such as the number of people present, the topic, and the circumstances. But Zafar & Meenakshi's (2012) also admit that not all anxiety generates negative influence as a certain amount of tension could sometimes facilitate learning. It is revealed from Molly's spoken performance, her L1 influenced her application of plural and singular forms of a noun, third person singular, word order, numbers, different verb forms etc. As to the cognition difficulty experienced by Molly, Zafar & Meenakshi (2012, p644) suggest a few cognitive strategies, such as "visualizing information for memory storage", "keeping a sound or sound sequence in the mind", "relating new information to other concepts in memory" and etc.

<center>IV. CONCLUSION</center>

Summary to research questions
Linguistic difficulties

A total of 205 mistakes are recorded in Appendices 1 to 10, lexis accounting for approximately 54% of the errors, grammar 38% and pronunciation 8%. Molly's difficulties with lexis have been divided into two parts: a lack of sufficient content words or expressions and also the struggle to use them within appropriate context and a weakness in making correct use of functional words. With respect to her difficulty with grammar, her inaccuracy with tense, especially past simple, is most prevalent. As to pronunciation, her biggest problem is her frequent mispronunciation of long and short vowels.

As revealed by the data, Molly sometimes corrects herself while she is speaking. From her previous study, she may have possessed a satisfactory capacity of lexis and grammar but she has difficulty in relating them to appropriate context for real use. With regard to her confusion of functional words and grammatical rules, L1 influence may be one of the main reasons, as well as perhaps an element of laziness obstructing the achievement of accuracy in spoken language. On the other hand, she needs to notice her weaknesses and should device strategies to correct them. Also, her limited usage of descriptive expressions and words, it is not only a matter of accumulating rich vocabulary, but also a determination to overcome the fear of taking risks in using them. Finally, her mispronunciation of long and short vowels may be due to her incorrect way of spreading the lips.

Psychological difficulties

In Molly's communication with native speakers, she relies on the habit of guessing and avoidance, and she expects her interlocutor to understand her even if she fails to convey her message fully, sometimes by ending with "Do you understand?" Her self-esteem urges her to make improvements in her linguistic competence but she feels a lack of confidence when speaking in front of a native speaker. Molly is aware that, subconsciously, she sometimes blocks the receipt of complicated target-language input and she is fearful of expressing uncertain information. As a consequence, she may be creating blind-spots which she realizes need to be overcome.

In Molly's case, foreign language anxiety has posed a major challenge to her self-confidence in second language acquisition. Her caution when speaking a second language has inhibited the spontaneity of her spoken discourse with native speakers. In this respect, Molly's needs and wants for reaching a high-level of spoken proficiency may overcome her anxiety and motivate her to offload this burden. In addition, cultural differences and L1 influence have some conscious and subconscious impact on her performance. Nonetheless, personality may play a more important role than linguistic competence in real life communication.

Recommended study strategies

During the gap between recording the two groups of data, Molly paid specific attention to mistakes discovered from the first group of data. It reveals that her usage of various content words and expressions have been enlarged since she started to collect them from the input in everyday life, and her pronunciation has been improved due to corrective feedback and repeated physical practice. However, there is no obvious progress with her grammar and usage of functional words.

Molly found that she hardly increased her vocabulary by attempting to memorize lists of words but was subconsciously acquire new words and expressions from everyday life. As Tomlinson (2013, p12) summarized that "a rich and meaningful exposure to language in use" would facilitate SLA. Secondly, Molly established a good relationship with Max and Pauline and she is appreciative of such a learning opportunity in which the emotional aspect has played an important role. This phenomenon fall into the category of "Affective and cognitive engagement" as Tomlinson (2013, p12) would mention. Tomlinson (2013) also suggest to make use of the mental resources which are typically used in communication in the L1. The resources he refers to are visualization and inner voice. Molly attempts to organize her ideas using inner voice in English, at the same time visualizing the image. She has discovered that it is a good way of stretching her skills without interference from outside pressure and it is helping her to overcome her foreign language anxiety. Finally, Tomlinson also emphasizes the importance of noticing. As mentioned, Molly has benefitted from her notice of mistakes she made, as recorded in the first group of data, and it is apparent that she had made progress subsequently.

Findings

This research reveals that grammar does not usually inhibit Molly in communication with native speakers whereas the lack of appropriate vocabulary always slows down her response. As to the difficulties with lexis, it seems to be possible to collect content words and expressions without formal instructions if there is sufficient immersion in the target language environment whereas the acquisition of functional words and the use of accurate grammar are more likely to be achieved from systematical instructions. The subsequent assimilation of these consciously-learnt rules and concepts for successful application in everyday use is almost always a lengthy process. With regards to pronunciation, it appears that certain sounds might present a challenge for some advanced learners if they have already picked up a habit of their own. However, pronunciation can be improved with constant physical practice and corrective feedback.

From a psychological point of view, foreign language anxiety seems to be a major problem in the communication between Chinese advanced learners and native speakers. In addition, cultural differences and L1 influence play an important role in their communication and interaction.

Last but not least, the study strategies derived from the research show that receiving continuous language exposure is the best way for advanced learners to improve their linguistic and pragmatic competence.

Limitations

First of all, Molly is playing the roles both of participant and a researcher. Consequently, there is an underlying risk of influencing the objectivities of the research. The data include not only the linguistic difficulties in Molly's speaking but also the psychological problems that she encountered in facing those difficulties. The psychological data is certainly subjective but also unique in displaying an immediate response and reaction of a Chinese advanced learner. It may contribute to future study if another participant is involved for documenting Molly's response rather than her doing it herself, although it might reduce the authenticity of the actual feeling of the participant. Furthermore, this research could have involved a few more Chinese advanced learners as participants but that would have greatly extended the scope of the research, which could be further explored.

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Effectiveness of Utilizing Systematic Approach to Improving Functional Writing Skills for Ninth Grade Students in Tafila Directorate of Education

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Abstract—**The study aimed at investigating the effect of using systematic approach to improving functional writing skills in the public schools in Tafila Directorate of Education in Jordan. The researchers used the prescriptive approach in preparing the literal framework of the study. The subject of the study included all the Ninth graders in Tafila Directorate of Education. The sample of the study was 70 female students chosen randomly to represent the subject. The students were distributed into two groups: experimental 35 and control 35. The instruments of the study were a list of writing skills and an achievement test. The test was administered before and after the experiment. The results showed statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental group over that of control group.**

Index Terms—**effectiveness, systematic approach, functional writing, ninth graders**

I. Introduction

The language is actually one major means of communication among people all over world. Human beings use it to think, write and communicate with each others. People use language for effective persistence among individuals and societies. Khater and Reslan (1988) indicated that expressional writing is one important tool of communication between writers and others far away from them. This type of writing takes various shapes such as: letters, articles, news, stories and other different pamphlets either written or audible. Using a written language, one can write memories, reports, homework and essay tests. Besides, language written form could be used in keeping records and archives, posters, advertisements, filling forms, lectures and other creative works (P. 65).

Norton (1997) focused on language written forms as something crucial for writing researches and other literary works. Language written forms are actually needed in conferences and symposiums. Some international corporations such as: "National Council of Teachers of English" published booklets explain the role of teachers in helping the students on how to write perfectly and then how to evaluate each others' writings.

The functional writing skills are so important for the students' future careers, field of works and other life aspects. They need to write administrative letters, reports and abstracts. However, the use of functional writing skills is so difficult for most of learners, either native speakers or foreign language learners, especially when they need it urgently in their daily life affairs.

Instructional approaches have been affected much as a result of the recent information explosion. So, educators have to adapt these approaches to meet the challenges and to be consistent with the modern technological revolution. New educational concepts have been emerged, these new concepts were absent in the beginning of the twentieth century. Teaching methods are also affected a lot by these recent changes, either on the speculative level or on the applicable level. That is why educators are called for making revolution on conventional methods of education to help learners recognize what is going around and to be appreciative to their own identity. Learners who are being able to select a right track which suits their own values and believes (Almanofi, 2002, 461).

Most of the time, recent instructional convention urges teachers to teach concepts and subjects separately, which leads finally to a cognitive pile of information inconsistent with itself or unpertaining with the educational nature. The only aim of this instructional convention is to support our students to pass exams with least learning. The actual instructional situation leads to graduates who think in a linear way, which is unfastened to the total framework related to the systematic approach, where we find real cognitive structure for humanitarian activities. Since we are interring the twenty first century, we need our instructional system to pass from linearity to systemic (Fahmi], and Juski, 2000, 1). Education in general and methods of teaching in particular play remarkable role in developing learners' abilities. This, in turn supports the learner to face the huge challenges and deal with them systematically. That is what we actually need for the generations to come. To achieve this goal, the teaching-learning process is required to embrace the systematic speculation. Teaching system should be totally changed at the national level to gain distinguishable learning.

Consequently, our objectives in all fields: socially, politically, commercially and culturally will definitely be accomplished (Obeid, et al, 2005, P. 362).

A learner is considered to be one major part of the teaching-learning system, so, he must practice systematic thinking to reach comprehensive personal advancement. Teachers have to create teaching strategies based on systematic thinking. When applying these techniques inside the classroom, they urge the students to be active participants, and this, in turn; will support them to gain their learning goals. Systematic approach is actually suitable for all stages; it enhances quality of instruction in all cognitive bents and subjects. In the twenty first century, systematic approach is a must for all teachers inside the classroom. It pushes learners to be creative participants and make them willing to be competitive. That is true, because it is difficult to recognize concepts and understand relations without seeing them in their actual nature regardless other surrounding factors.

A number of studies were conducted to prove the fundamentality and effectiveness of employing systematic approach for gaining objectives of all teaching materials. Many conferences, debates and symposiums were held to emphasize the significance role of systematic approach in the teaching-learning process e g. (Education in the Global Era, Poston, USA, 2012, Current Trends in Education and its Application – Tafila Technical University - Jordan, April, 2014).

English is one important language all over the world and highly used in literal and scientific works in Jordan, especially in the later recent years, so teachers should be aware of this fact and improve their methods of teaching. The main aim of teaching a language, any language, is to encourage learners in all stages to compose reports, letters, taking down notes and making their own remarks (Al-bajeh, 1999, P. 60).

The study which conducted by (Radwan, 2008) attributed the spelling and structural mistakes of seventh graders to linear teaching system which was adopted by the teachers. In his study (Muktar, 2010) assured the necessity of using systematic approach in teaching Arabic if we need to improve its skills for the secondary stage learners.

Study Problem

The problem of the study is focused on the ninth graders' weakness in functional writing skills which may be attributed to the linear organization of the English language syllabuses. The language skills are taught separately, no attachment between the language elements, so, learners use language with no effective functions.

Study Questions

The questions of the study could be briefed to the following two forms:
- What are the functional writing skills needed for ninth graders?
- How can a systematic approach improve the functional writing skills for ninth graders?

Study Hypothesis

The study attempts to investigate these two hypotheses:
- There are statistical significant differences between the means of the experimental group on the pre and post achievement test. The significance is in favor of the post test.
- There are statistical significant differences between the grades of the two groups (experimental and control) on the post achievement test. The significance is in favor of the experimental group.

Study Objectives

The present study aimed at:
- Determining the functional writing skills needed for ninth graders.
- Constructing an achievement test to measure the students' abilities in functional writing skills.
- Investigating the effect of utilizing systematic approach in improving the functional writing skills for ninth graders.

Significance of the Study

The significance of the present study is represented in the following points:
- Calling the EFL teachers' attention to the importance of functional writing.
- Presenting lesson models adapted by systematic approach to help teachers.
- Utilizing systematic approach to teaching all English syllabuses for all stages.

Limitation of the Study

The present study is restricted to the following factors:
- The study instruments were constructed by the researchers.
- The study was conducted in the first term of the academic year: 2016-2017.
- The sample of the study was 70 female students chosen from two schools in Tafila Directorate of Education.

Definition of Terms

• Systematic approach: studying subjects and concepts within a holistic system where all relations are transparent between any subjects or any concepts which enable a learner to link what has been learnt to what will be learnt in later stages (Fahmi, and Juski 2000, p. 4). From their own experiences in the field of education, the researchers could define the systematic approach as: "Presenting the English language syllabuses through a holistic system where all relations between various concepts are so clear through definite plan represented by effectiveness and integration to achieve the objectives of functional writing".

• Functional writing: a type of composition aimed at connecting people together to fulfill their needs, achieve their goals and organize their affairs. It could be also prescribed as a piece of writing which conveys functional objectives needed for the learner's life at school community.

Study Instruments

To achieve the objectives of the present study, the researchers used the following two instruments:

- A list of functional writing included: summarizing, report writing, letter writing, telegraph and invitation.
- An achievement test was also prepared to be applied on the sample of the study, before and after the experiment.

Procedures of the Study

To accomplish the present study, the researchers do the following:

- Revising literature and related studies in the field of functional writing skills and systematic approach.
- Preparing a list of functional writing skills suitable for ninth graders.
- Submitting the list to a group of experienced referees for judgment.
- Adapting two units form the first term material "Students' Book" to be consistent with systematic approach strategy.
- Constructing an achievement test for functional writing skills suitable for ninth grade students.
- Choosing the sample of the study and distributing it into two groups: experimental and control.
- Administering the test on the two groups before the experiment to be sure of groups' equivalence.
- Instructing the two adapted units to the experimental group according to systematic approach strategy.
- Administering the test on the two groups after the experiment.
- Collecting data and analyzing it.
- Providing some suggestion and recommendations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

* Functional writing skills:

Writing is a fundamental skill. People need it to implement their life affairs and accomplish their goals. Human beings are naturally social; no one can live alone without interacting with others. Sociologically, people need to communicate with each others, and writing is one important means of communication, especially needed when writing congratulations and condolences, reports, or a summary of an incident (Alramini, F. 2007, P.135). Functional writing has its own characteristics and its own style. These characteristics could be summed up in the following points:

- Superiority of inquiry or accountability style.
- Clarity and accuracy.
- Dealing with real-life situations.
- Direct exposition.
- Committed to certain places when writing.
- Scientific reliability.
- Concise summary.

* Writing Stages:

Writing process includes thinking and authoring which is carefully chosen by the writer. In this way, learners recognize that writing process is a repetitive work. It starts with thinking stage which precedes writing stage, then, elaboration of ideas, then, first writing, drafting and editing and finally evaluation (Arts Framework for California Public Schools, 1999, p. 26). However, before starting to write, the writer is required to think about the targeted readers, and accordingly he should write. Learners should be aware that writing is totally different from verbal communication. When speaking, spelling and grammatical errors are tolerated, but in writing such mistakes are catastrophic. Errors either, in spelling or grammar change words' meanings. So, students should learn how to find ideas, organize them, choose the correct vocabulary items and then write legibly and accurately.

Most of the language teachers confirm that writing is a renewable process. It requires rethinking and contentious evaluation (NAEP, p.1). Teachers should observe and keep in touch with the students while writing. They should guide the students to think creatively and critically before they start writing in order to express themselves clearly and persuade the readers. When writing, any writer should keep in mind the type readers he writes for, that is to say, his writing should be clear and persuasive.

Gunning (1996, p. 416) indicates that teaching writing is rapidly changed in the late years. Nowadays, teaching writing emphases on "writing stages" which is normally used by contemporary writers. Gunning adds that there is a sequence of phases which describes how writers start and finish writing professionally. He summarizes these stages by: before writing, actual writing, revision and then editing and publication.

Calkins (1986, p.13) describes a prominent pattern of writing which directs attention from final product to writing process itself and to the behavior of learners while writing. This attitude shows that final product of writing doesn't appear clearly as soon as the writer starts writing. The final product of writing could be shown after a number of repetitive trials. All writers who believe that final product of writing could be seen at the beginning of writing come to an incorrect decision (Kasim, H. M., 2000, P. 34).

A number of researchers agreed that it is difficult to isolate between the writing stages, since they are interfered; writers always transfer from one stage to another. However, the studies and researchers encompass the writing process

are not all in agreement, some say that the phases of writing are three and some say four and some others say they are more … etc. Regardless this controversy between researchers, (Tomkins, 1997, p. 12) summarizes the phases of writing as follows:

• Before writing: where 70% of the writing time is spent. Here, a writer prepares himself to write by choosing the subject, object of writing, organizing ideas and revising them.

• Drafting: where a writer attempts to create ideas, organize them, composing legible sentences by referring to the list in the first phase, ignoring spelling and grammatical mistakes.

• Revising: where a writer goes over the draft, reading it carefully, exchange his writing with others and rewrite it once again taking the remarks of other writers into account.

• Editing: in this phase, writers should correct spelling mistakes and write edited paper one more.

• Publishing: after correcting the mistakes and editing the corrected paper, a writer should write it again, read it aloud in the hearing of others and then, publish it in the school journal.

Functional Writing Skills

Functional writings could take some of the following forms:

• Summary making: summarizing or briefing is considered to be one remarkable field of functional writing, especially in the recent years which witness information explosion and knowledge outburst. Summarizing here means brief interpreting of main ideas, presenting them directly and to the point (Syyah, 1995, p. 230). Some define summarizing as presenting the factual text in few words concentrating on the core of the subject and putting the main ideas in it in one plain sentence (Alsaifi, p. 229). However, summarizing doesn't only mean to write the text in few words, a writer should be careful about the ideas that should be summarized. A writer, here, should work as a judge who decides which ideas should be raised and which should be ignored. He should be aware that omitting certain ideas or adding any doesn't affect the main object of the written text (Alramini, 2007, p. 292).

• Administrative letter: administrative letter is one important form of functional writing. It is actually a means of communication between two parts. These two parts could be official authority or an individual or vice versa for a functional purpose (Mahjoub, and Ali, 2004, p. 116). Administrative letter is prescribed with its objective features; it should have clear sequenced words, easiness and short sentences; far away from vagueness or hidden meaning. The sentences of the administrative letter should have no exaggeration, courtesy or any act of flattery (Alramini, 2007, p. 165). The administrative letter, in its two forms: social or official is important means of connection which facilitates discussion and communication with influential people or decision makers. Therefore, the administrative letter is significant for: saving time and effort, fast means of communication between people and states, durable document and an advertise instrument, especially for commercial advertisements.

• Reports: the report is defined as an exposition of authentic text related to a certain subject in an analytical way accompanied with evident suggestions in agreement with the final results (Alramini, 2007, 263). Bakhit, (2003, p. 187) recognizes a report as a written text for information, facts and special data related to a certain matter or subject attached with scientific analysis. The report is actually a type of functional writing in which a writer inserts a sum of information or facts about a certain person or a definite matter easily and directly which makes it clear to all readers (Mahjoub and Ali, 2006, p. 112). The reports are highly used in the governmental institutions and private sectors, since they expose clear facts and related information about a certain matter. Reports, sometimes, provide views attached to the given facts and conclusions (Mustafa, 2006, p. 196). The report as a type of functional writing is so important for all individuals and societies. It considered being a sort of scientific planning crucially needed for institutions, especially for newly appointed works, since it may help leaders and decision makers make correct substitutions (Zain, 2008, p.194). Reports promote correct decisions, especially if they are done well with accurate validity and reliability. They are used to exchange views and information between administrations and leaderships that have common interests. In this way, there will be strong relations between these institutions to draw legible plans for the future, especially with matters of common interests (Zain, 2008, p.194). However, there are certain steps that should be taken into account before starting to write a report: type of required report, objective of the report and the will to collect information and facts needed for the report. Any report should have at least the following: a title, introduction, exposure, conclusion, references and finally a signature of the writer. A report writer should be reliable, professional and have a strong vision to be able to draw a vigorous plan for the report.

• Telegram: Alramini (2007, ps.311-312) presents a telegram as a short massage sent to an individual or a group of individuals for certain occasions or urgent conditions to inform about something. Telegrams used for both grief and delighted occasions. A telegram is important form of functional writing needed by all individuals and societies, especially in social circumstances. Writing a telegram is sometimes confusing, especially when a person is ignorant of the rules of telegram writing. Writing a telegram has its own organization, and even has special sort of papers used only when writing a telegram. The most important thing in a telegram is its content which should be written briefly in one paragraph. However, when writing a telegram a number of points should be taken into account such as: clarity, briefness, organization of information, proper style for the occasion, choice of words and writing correct dress.

• Invitation: Sha'aban (2010, p. 111) perceives invitation as a piece of writing in which a writer demands form another person to come for some reason or for honorable ceremonies. Writing an invitation requires certain elements:

invitation destiny, invitation phrase, name of targeted person, greeting, invitation details, finishing phrase, and name of sender and finally date of invitation.

Systematic Approach

Fahmi, and Juski (2000) explain that systematic approach is the process of organizing concepts and convictions through interactive systems which include all bindings between concepts and convictions. So, the concept order is the corner stone for building the structures of systematic approach.

The systematic approach is one modern trend in the field of curricula and instruction. It directs and organizes the content of syllabuses and provides the syllabuses' designers with main features before starting to plan any textbook. It also, helps the learners to be aware of the syllabus's knowledge and draw a clear profile for it before coming to its details (Obeid, 2003, p. 128). Systematic approach is actually based on the concept of regularity; which means that organizing the common learning activities in a sequence of reciprocal and interactive net. The relations within one system work together to achieve the targeted objectives, since all the contents of a curriculum and learning activities are normally based on a series of organized system (Fahmi, and Muna, 2001, p. 22). So, systematic approach always confirms the inner relations between concepts, and the role of the teacher here is to build a conceptual map where he can connect between the previous learning of students with later learning. This means that the systematic approach is the comprehensive vision of the class setting and the organization of all its components, relations and activities which lead consequently, to promote teaching-learning process.

In the pedagogical point of view, the systematic approach plays an enormous role; where a learner can compose strong relations between various concepts. Depending on the systematic approach, learners can make a kind of connection between what had been learn to what will be learn later. In the light of this system, the learner is the core of teaching-learning process (Zaitoon, 2001, p. 45). Therefore, advocators of the systematic approach insist on an educational reform where a systematic approach should be utilized to build curriculum, contents, new teaching strategies and even new evaluation process. Some of them even insist on a comprehensive change for the entire teaching-learning process (Obeid, 2003, p. 127).

Significance of Systematic Approach

The systematic approach is aiming to improve teaching-learning process till it achieves total comprehensive quality. It also aims at motivating the students to learn and making the syllabuses more attractive and more charming. Systematic approach could be employed to draw a clear profile for any subject without loosing any of its details. For this reason, the systematic approach nowadays, is a must for all systems of education to face the future challenges and troubles which impose itself on the field (Fahmi, and Muna, 2001, p. 17).

The significance of systematic approach is attributed to its comprehensive vision to meet the difficulties which stand against improving and developing the teaching-learning process. Systematic approach could be used as a base for effective discussion between teachers and students. It may encourage cooperation between teachers and learners and support teachers to be more qualified and more effective in their instruction. It could be also used as an instrument for the teaching-learning process to simplify the content and expose it functionally and meaningfully (Fahmi, and Muna, 2001, p. 63).

Characteristics of Systematic Approach

The characteristics of systematic approach in education could be summed up in the following points:

- Systematic instruction concentrates on the learner and considers him as the center of the teaching-learning process.

- Systematic instruction works hard to achieve total comprehensive quality of instruction which tackles inputs of the teaching-learning process for the sake of persuasive outputs. According to this approach the teaching process is seen as a system which includes inputs and outputs, work together to achieve targeted goals (Halpern, 1992, p. 12).

- Instructional system aims at refining and developing instructional process to achieve its objectives. So, it takes part generally, to manipulate the shortcomings of instruction.

- Systematic instruction emphasizes the construction of a teaching strategy which subjects to everlasting evaluation. This strategy aims at organizing all the procedures of instructional design in a proper way to achieve the objectives of the instructional process.

- Systematic instruction supports achieving objectives of teaching effectively, which could not be obtained by conventional methods. Some of these objectives are represented in the following: improving scientific thinking strategy, problem solving, creative thinking and sustaining other manual and mental skills.

Philosophical Background of Systematic Approach

In education, systematic approach is basically reliant on psychological theories which deal with human behavior in general and with learning process in particular. However, the researchers will present three important examples in this regard for the sake of illustration.

a. Constructive Theory: The constructive theory is ascending to the fact that knowledge acquisition is an active, constructive and continuous action done by a constant change of individual's cognitive structure. This is also done by self-adjustment of the new knowledge to be consistent with environmental knowledge pressure. The mind maintains with the knowledge basis in the short memory and recognizes it in a proper way. During the daily and continues uses of the new knowledge it transfers from the short memory to the long memory, where it remains for a long time. The constructive theory assumes that a learner can interpret any new knowledge depending on his own experiences. So, the

meaning is built in the mind of the recipient according to his interests, needs and cognitive background. This is actually the basis of the systematic thinking; where an individual is being aware of what is going around as a clear model (Wilson, 1997, p. 47, Honebein, 1996, p.17, Jonassen, 1991, p.13-16).

b. Gagne Theory: Gagne theory was presented first as a conditional theory, since it was based on two halves, one of them concentrates on the learner as the centre of the teaching-learning process and another focuses on the conditions where learning occurs. Gagne indicated the necessity to organize knowledge hierarchy, since it is difficult for a learner to understand higher levels of knowledge before lower levels. The hierarchical formation of knowledge is designed in a way that each lower level is a base for the next level. So, he pointed out that learning settings should be always in harmony with hierarchical formation of knowledge in the field of cognition, skills, and emotional life. Gagne explained that there are eight forms of learning, moving gradually in a hierarchical related way, starting with easiest piece of learning which based on response to stimulation and ending with the most difficult piece which based on problem solving. Systematic approach is harmonious with the basis of Gagne theory, since it attempts to find a sort of contingency in the environment where learning occurs.

c. Auzubel Theory: Auzubel theory intends that human being has a sort of mental construction which enables him to perceive cognitive learning experiences. When a person passes a new experience it clings with the old one and creates a new cognitive structure. In this way, the learning occurs as a chain of construction and reconstruction with each new experience. Auzubel theory concentrates much on meaningful learning. This type of learning takes place when a new experience joins the cognitive structure of a person and becomes harmonious with what he had previously. Biologically, meaningful learning includes changes of the mental cells and its traits and psychologically, any new information or experience is automatically joined to the old ones in the cognitive structure. Meaningful learning doesn't occur if the new experience doesn't conjunct with old structure of information in the brain. Auzubel called this process "accumulated concepts". So, people are different in their learning according to the number of concepts.

When a person, who has no previous experiences, is forced to learn new ones, he actually needs to perceive them automatically and keep them in the cognitive structure. This, in turn, will urge learning other new experiences and join them to old ones. A learning process always needs connecting conjunctions to bridge new and old information together. Auzubel describes these conjunctions as concepts, which are more common and more abstracted from the new learnt information. In this way, the process of joint between old and new experiences becomes more easily, and then, the learning of a person could be described as meaningful and durable. Auzubel assured the necessity of availability of the basic concepts within a person cognitive structure in order to think properly. From Auzubl's point of view, school learning should focus on conceptual learning, especially those related to students' daily life. This could be achieved when we analyze scientific heritage to main and minor concepts. Auzubel ignored skills and attitudes, saying that they are not important to school curricula construction. As it is apparently seen in Auzubel's theory, meaningful learning should focus on the connectives between concepts, which promotes and enhances students' learning, making it more effective and more reliable.

Review of Related Studies

The researchers attempt to review some of the studies which confirm the results of the present study.

Bakhit (2003) conducted a study which emphasized the efficiency of using systematic approach in teaching in the Faculty of Sharia, especially when teaching legal sciences. He said, "The use of systematic approach contributed to high rank of graduate students" (185).

Radwan (2008) conducted a study based on the effect of systematic approach on Arabic spelling rules. He assured that using a systematic approach in teaching Arabic language skills strengthens relations between them and supports students to achieve total cognitive structure.

Probert (2009) conducted a study entitled "Improving Teaching and Learning: A systematic Approach to institutional Change". In a paper submitted to the conference on Quality of Teaching in Higher Education (QTHE). The paper outlines the key enabling factors behind the approach, both those which might be seen as institution specific and those which can be found in most universities.

Hammad (2009) executed a study to investigate the effect of using systematic approach to improving English reading and writing skills for sixth graders. The findings of the study indicated the superiority of the experimental group over control group on the post test. The superiority of the experimental group was attributed to the use of systematic approach in instruction. There were no significant differences on the post test between the means of the male and female students.

Muktar (2010) conducted a study which proved the benefitiality of using systematic approach in instruction. He studied the effect of using computer to improving the functional writing skills for secondary stage students in Saudi Arabia. The findings of his study emphasized the importance of using systematic approach in teaching functional writing skills for the first secondary students over conventional methods of instruction, which are consistent with the findings of the present study.

Alshobaki (210) carried out a study investigating the effect of systematic approach to improving concepts and visual thinking in physics for eleventh grade students in Gaza Stripe. The results showed significant differences between the means of the students on the concepts and visual thinking post test in favor of the experimental group. The significance was attributed to method of instruction.

Mustafa (2013) conducted a study proved the efficacy of employing systematic approach in teaching historical concepts and some historic thinking skills. The sample of his study was a group of 120 students in the Faculty of Education – Asswan University. The findings of his study assured the superiority of the students who used systematic approach over those who used traditional methods.

Pardamean and Suparyanto (2014) conducted a study investigated the effect of systematic approach to improving e-learning implementations in high schools. The main results of the study indicated that computer skill levels did have a direct correlation with a student's academic performance level. The database was further parsed based on demographical factors, resulting in a set of recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of e-learning.

III. PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

• Study Instruments: the instruments of the study were prepared as follows:
- The researchers made a list of functional writing skills for ninth graders.
- They constructed a test paper for these skills.
- They manipulated two units in the "Students' Book" first term, to be fit with the systematic approach strategy.
The list of the skills requires the students to do the following:
- Write legibly.
- Compose suitable headlines for the subjects they write about.
- Organize ideas logically.
- Differentiate between main and minor ideas.
- Schedule a suitable plan for writing.
- Use reporting style when writing.
- Make a summary.
- Write a report.
- Write a telegram.
- Invite people for certain occasions.
- Fill various questionnaires.
- Use figures for illustration.
- Commit to the rules of quotation.
- Correct common mistakes.

The list was given to a group of experienced referees for judgment. No remarks were given by them, so it was applied on the sample of the study. The researchers then, constructed a test for functional writing skills. The test objected to measure the effect of using systematic approach to improving writing skills for ninth graders. The test includes five domains for writing; each domain consists of three questions. A student has to select one question from each domain and answer it. The test validity and reliability were both achieved.

Test Validity: The test was judged by three experienced referees who work in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL).The referees ware asked to judge the questions in the light of their reference to the skills they measure. All the views and remarks of the referees were taken into account.

Test Reliability: The test reliability was accounted by a "Test—Retest" method. It was administered on a sample of 30 students and after two weeks the students were retested. The researchers account the test reliability using "Kuder Richardson". The reliability of the test was found to be 85% which is suitable for the present study.

Two units were chosen from the "Students' Book" for ninth graders and manipulated to be fit with the techniques of systematic approach.

Study Sample: The sample of the study was chosen randomly to represent the subject of the study. 70 female students were chosen from two cooperative schools, (Fatima Bint Elyaman and Bilat Alshuhda), one section from each school. The students were distributed into two groups "experimental and control". The test was applies first on the two groups "experiment and control" to measure equality between them. The two adapted units were taught to the experimental group for three weeks. Then, the sample of study was retested. Data was collected and analyzed.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

To test the credibility of the first hypothesis which says "There are statistical significant differences between grades of the experimental group on the pre-post test. The significance is in favor of the post test as shown in table (1) below.

TABLE (1)
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON PRE-POST TEST

Group	Test	Means	SD	T-test
Experimental	Pre-test	5.28	2.36	
	Post-test	7.86	2.75	4.77

As it is clearly shown in table (1) above that there are statistically significant differences between the means of the grades of the students in the experimental group in favor of the post test.

To test the cridability of the second hypothesis which says "There are statistically significant differences between the means of the grades of the students on the post test". The significance is in favor of the experimental group. Table (2) below illustrates the differences.

TABLE (2)
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF THE STUDENTS' GRADES ON THE POST TEST

Group	Test	Means	SD	T-test
Experimental	Post-test	7.67	2.53	
Control	Post-test	5.07	2.34	4.91

As it is clearly shown in table (2) above that T-value is higher than significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) which indicates statistically significant differences between the means of the two groups on the post test. The significance is in favor of the experimental group. This result proves the cridability of the second hypothesis.

The findings of the present study support the fact that using systematic approach in instruction is much better than using linear methods of instruction. Applying systematic approach in instruction enhances learning and urges students to be active, creative and cooperative participants. It also, enriches the syllabuses' activities and makes them more attractive and more incentive to the students.

The findings of the present study are highly consistent with the findings of (Radwan, 2008) who assured that using systematic approach in teaching Arabic language skills strengthens relations between concepts and supports students to achieve total cognitive structure. Hammad (2009) indicated the superiority of the experimental group over control group on the post test. The superiority of the experimental group was attributed to the use of systematic approach in instruction. Muktar (2010) emphasized the importance of using systematic approach in teaching functional writing skills for the first secondary students over conventional methods of instruction. Alshobaki (2010) showed significant differences between the means of the students on the concepts and visual thinking post test in favor of the experimental group. The significance was attributed to method of instruction. Mustafa (2013) indicated the superiority of the students who were taught by systematic approach over those who used traditional methods. Pardamean, and Suparyanto (2014) investigated the effect of systematic approach to improving e-learning implementations in high schools. The main results of their study indicated that computer skill levels did have a direct correlation with a student's academic performance level.

V. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings of the present study, the searchers suggest and recommend the following:
• Paying more attentions to functional writing skills.
• Training EFL teachers to teach functional writing skills.
• EFL supervisors should focus on writing skills in general and functional writing skills in particular.
• Balancing between teaching the four language skills.
• Studying the effect of improving listening and speaking skills on reading and writing skills.
• Using systematic approach to improving all the four language skills.
• Constructing a genuine systematic approach program for the basic stage students to improve writing skill.

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Ideological Manipulation in C-E Translation of the 13th Five-year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China

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Abstract—The Manipulation School argues that the translation study should shift itself from the pure language level to a broader range such as political, cultural or social level. Among several parameters, ideology, poetics and patron are the most important three in manipulation theory. This paper tends to analyze the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China under the perspective of ideology, which aims to prove the efficiency and feasibility of ideological manipulation for the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan.

Index Terms—manipulation theory, ideology, the 13th Five-year plan, translation principle, translation strategy

I. Introduction

With the enhancement of China's comprehensive national power, China's international influence gradually rises. Therefore, more and more countries in the world begin to pay more attention to the fundamental policy and development direction of China's politics, economy, culture, society and so on. As the guiding ideology for the development of the five years (2016-2020), the 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China (the 13th Five-Year Plan for short) is not only the blueprint of China's economic and social development and an action plan for people of all nationalities together, but also the important basis of performing economic adjustment, market supervision, social management and public service of Chinese government. In addition, the analysis of any translated text must extend to contemporary social, cultural, political and ideological features (Mátyás B, 2015, p. 144). The link between language and ideology is central (Munday J, 2007, p. 198). This paper mainly discusses the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan from the aspect of translated principles, translated strategies and so on under the manipulation of ideology, which aims to prove the efficiency and feasibility of ideological manipulation for the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan. Firstly, this paper introduces the manipulation theory and the 13th Five-Year Plan simply. Secondly, it analyzes the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan from the perspective of ideology manipulation theory. Finally, this paper gives brief summary of what has written above and a simple suggestion for future research.

II. Theory of Manipulation

In the past, people believed that the translators should not be visible during the translation. At the same time, translation should be based on the original document, reproduce the spirit and charm of the original works and fulfill the principle of equivalence and fidelity. In addition, translation is not only the power to shape literature, but also a principled means of text manipulation. The Manipulation School holds that the translation is a kind of "rewriting", that is to say, rewriting is manipulation, and translation is a means to serve power (Wei J. H., 2004, 29-32). The manipulation theory of Andre Lefevere expands the translation study from the pure document to the field of culture. Among several parameters, ideology, poetics and patron are the most important three in manipulation theory.

A. The Manipulation of Patron

There are many important factors during the process of translation, patron is the one of the most important parameters in the manipulation translation. Lefevere proposes that patronage refers to "something like the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing, and rewriting of literature"(Lefevere A., 2010, p. 15). As an important political document of the government, the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan must meet the government's will. That is to say, the government of China is the patron of the 13th Five-Year Plan and its translation.

B. The Manipulation of Poetics

Lefevere argues that poetics consists of two components, "One is the inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols; the other is a concept of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole" (Lefevere A., 2010, p. 15). As one of the most important aspects of the manipulation theory, poetics requires that the translation should conform to the aesthetic of the English readers. Poetics could improve the acceptability of translation in the target language culture.

C. The Manipulation of Ideology

Ideology is a view of the world and society on a specific economic basis. For example, Philosophy, politics, law, art, religion and morality are all specific manifestations of human ideology (Li X. J., 2014, P.1566).Liu holds that ideology in Manipulation Theory refers to a type of belief, ideas or values that operates our behaviors. (Liu J., 2016, p.31). Ideology is regarded by Lefevere as the "grillwork of form, convention and belief which orders our actions" (Lefevere A., 2010, p. 16). There is a close connection between ideology and language. In any class society, language is a tool for the class to express and inculcate its ideology (Liu C. P., Chen J. H., 2015, pp. 91-94). Translation ideology "regards the ideology as a critical perspective, and shows the level of ideology in translation. The translator's translation strategies and translation result has a certain impact because of it" (Fang Y. L. 2013, pp. 202-206).In the process of translation, ideology manipulates the text by manipulating the translator. Therefore, lots of translation activities of the translator are controlled by ideology, because the translation is executed by the translators and all translators are guided by ideology. Language is an instrument for carrying class ideology. Therefore, translation will be influenced and manipulated by ideology because it is a tool of language transformation. In addition, as a tool of interlingual communication, translation is closely related to ideology. From the choice of translation, the choice of translator's translation strategy, the publication and distribution of translation to the acceptance and evaluation of translation, translation has been branded with ideology. Wang pointed out that in the process of translation, in addition to the dominant role played by the language operation platform, the implicit role of ideology also exerts pressure on translation (Wang D.F., 2003, pp.18-25). The effects of ideology during the translation are reflected in many aspects, such as the principles of translation, translation strategies and so on. All of these may be involved and applied in the process of translation.

III. A Brief Introduction of the 13th Five-year Plan

The 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China was delivered in the Fifth Plenary Session of the 18th Communist Party of China Central Committee on October 29, 2015. The 13th Five-Year Plan not only outlines the bright prospects for China to build a moderately prosperous society in all respects in the future, but also will be an important force to the recovery of global economy. As one of the most influential and authoritative political documents, the 13th Five-Year Plan attracts great attention of people both at home and abroad. Foreign readers can better understand China's policies and measures such as political, economic, cultural, social and defense policies and measures. Hence, the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan is as important as the original text. In the following chapters, this thesis intends to expound the effectiveness of the ideological manipulation theory in the process of the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan.

IV. The Analysis of Ideological Manipulation in The Translated Version of 13th Five-year Plan

Ideology is regarded by Lefevere as the "grillwork of form, convention and belief which orders our actions" (Lefevere A., 2010, p. 16). Translation, as a transmission activity of ideas or concepts, is also a representation of ideology, and its process is restricted or dominated by ideology (Lu S., 2008, pp. 46-48). In addition, translation is a kind of discourse, and the history marked by discourse should have a distinct ideological nature (Deng W.S, Zhang W.R., Zhang K., 2010, pp. 129-132). In this thesis, the translators should conform to the belief of China's government. That is to say, the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan should obey the interests of China's government ideologically. Translation under the ideological manipulation is actually achieved through manipulation of the translator. Ideology promotes the creation of translation works by manipulating translators' choice of translation materials, selection of translation styles as well as the selection of translation principles and strategies.

The 13th Five-Year Plan is one of the most authoritative political documents in China, which involves politics, economy, culture, ecology and other aspects. Ideology not only manipulates the contents of the original texts of the 13th Five-Year Plan, but also manipulates the translation of form of it (Chang N.F., 2010, pp. 235-258). This thesis pays more attention to the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan and the manipulation of ideology. Specifically speaking, this thesis analyzes the ideological manipulation in the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan from the aspects of the principles of translation and translating strategies.

A. Translators' Professional Literacy in the translation of the 13th Five-year Plan

In most cases, translators' translation activities are under the control of ideology. In China, the ideology of the communist party of China inevitably influences all aspects of political and social life. Therefore, the communist party's ideology is also bound to influence the output of translated works. Although the text is translated directly by the translators, the translators must take the mainstream ideology into consideration. The translation of political texts is easy to touch the sensitive nerve of ideology, which requires translators to fully meet the requirements of ideology. In

addition, translators should have profound scientific and cultural knowledge such as politics, economy, culture, history and so on so that they could understand the meaning of the original text accurately. To be exact, the translators are required to accurately restore the meaning of the original text under the manipulation of ideology by using his/her knowledge. There are two examples below in the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan.

Example1: 坚持不懈纠正"四风"。

Translation: ……remain steadfast in the fight against formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism, and extravagance.

As the example shows, translators must fully understand the characteristics of Chinese political texts. Translators should know the connotation of abbreviations in political texts. The translators are required to know some background information about anti-corruption in China. For example, the translators should know that "四风" means formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism, and extravagance. The translators cannot accurately convey the meaning of the original text if he does not understand this basic knowledge.

Example2: 推进公铁水及航空多式联运。

Translation: We will advance the development of multi-modal transportation that integrates expressways, railways, waterways and airways.

In this translation of the example, it is difficult for foreign readers to understand what the "公铁水" means unless it is translated concretely. Therefore, the translators should translate the translation accurately on the basis of understanding the implied meaning of the original text. The translation of "expressways, railways, waterways" fully explains what "公铁水" means, which avoids misleading and misunderstanding undoubtedly.

The two examples above show that it is necessary for translators to master the contents of the communist party's ideology as well as the basic knowledge of the political documents in China. Translation of political texts requires high professional quality of translators. Only by understanding the current social ideology and mastering the basic knowledge of the translation of political texts can translators get the translated job done successfully.

B. The Adoption of Translation Principles under the Influence of Ideology

At the micro level, the ideology influences on the level of linguistics, such as the choice of translating principle and translating strategy. In the process of the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan, the translating principles used by translators are not arbitrary. The application of the translating principles should obey the dominant ideology of China. In other word, the translators must translate the 13th Five-Year Plan accurately, instead of any subtracting, adding, distorting or derivation to the 13th Five-Year Plan. Translators are not allowed to violate the prevailing ideology when they use certain principles. There are three principles here.

1. The Principle of Accuracy

In the translation of 13th Five-Year Plan, there is a much more rigorous standard of fidelity. It is due to the fact that the political constitution involves major national policies, basic policies, etc. If the translation is wrong, the consequences will be serious (Cheng Z. Q., 2003, pp.20-24). The translation of any political documents is more politically sensitive than the translation of other genres. Compared to other principles, there is no doubt that the principle of accuracy is the first and most important one when translators translate the 13th Five-Year Plan. The translators are not allowed to make such mistakes as changes and ambiguity of the source text. Accuracy is not confined to the linguistic level, but also manipulates the translation to adhere to the prevailing ideology of the original context. There are some examples in the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan.

Example3: 提高行政效能，激发市场活力和社会创造力。

Translation: ……, so as to refine government performance and stipulate market vitality and social creativity.

Instead of using words like "improve" or "increase", the translators choose to translate the expression "提高行政效能" into "refine government performance" in example 3. Ideology requires translators to translate texts accurately and there should not be any ambiguities. The word "improve" or "increase" may give foreign readers the impression that the Chinese government is inefficient before. However, the expression "提高行政效能" in the 13th Five-Year Plan just aims to make the performance of Chinese government more excellent other than implies that the government is incompetent. Under the manipulation of this ideology, the word "refine" is more appropriate to express the meaning of the original text.

Example 4: 发挥科技创新在全面创新中的引领作用。

Translation: We will see that scientific and technological innovation leads the way in all areas of innovation.

In example 4, there is no subject in the sentence, which is common enough in Chinese because Chinese tends to omit the subject. While in the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan, the subject "we" is added in this sentence by the translators. On the one hand, the English version of the 13th Five-Year Plan should be consistent with English expression habits. To be exact, it is customary to specify the subject in English expressions. On the other hand, the addition of the subject "we" could help the translation version be more accurate. Under the manipulation of ideology in China, the word "we" represents the Chinese government. It could indicate that Chinese government will try its best to take positive measures in terms of scientific and technological innovation. Therefore, the addition of the subject "we" is in full accord with contemporary ideology.

2. Readability and Comprehensibility

It is well known that the translation is designed to make it easier for people with different languages to communicate with each other. Therefore, accuracy is not enough for the English version of the 13th Five-Year Plan. Readability and comprehensibility are very important and indispensable for a good translation because the translation of 13th Five-Year Plan is to disseminate Chinese policy of politics, economy, culture and so on. Through reading the translation of 13th Five-Year Plan, foreign readers could know the policies and objectives of contemporary China. As a result, the translation of 13th Five-Year Plan must be readable and comprehensible to serve the aim of communication. This requires the translators to follow the rules of English grammar and change the original text slightly when necessary to avoid ambiguity and misreading. Please have a look at the examples below.

Example5: 秉持亲诚惠容，坚持共商共建共享原则。

Translation: We will uphold amity, sincerity, mutual benefit, and inclusiveness as well as the principle of joint discussion, common development, and shared growth.

In the translation of this example, there are Chinese four-character forms. Let's take "亲诚惠容" for example. The translators translate the "亲诚惠容" into "amity, sincerity, mutual benefit, and inclusiveness", which fully explains the original one to the foreign readers. Each word in Chinese represents a certain meaning correspondingly. If the translators do not explain the implied meaning, the foreign readers may not understand this Chinese four-character form well. On the premise of not violating the original meaning, it is very important to add the necessary information in the translation and explain it to make foreign readers understand.

Example6: 支持共建大珠三角优质生活圈。

Translation: We will support joint efforts by Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao to build a quality living area in the Greater Pearl River Delta region.

In the example above, the meaning of the Greater Pearl River Delta is well-known to Chinese people, but the translators still need to add background to explain the Greater Pearl River Delta region for foreign readers, which is a generic terms of Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao. Because the translation aims to help people who use different languages to communicate with each other and know each other, the translators must take the readability and comprehensibility of the translation into account. It is necessary for the translators to further explain the Greater Pearl River Delta region, because there are few foreign readers could understand this expression in a correct way. Such translation not only conforms to the habit of English expression, but also effectively conveys the meaning of the original text. Translators eliminate the reading barriers of foreign readers and enhance the readability and comprehensibility of the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan. The translated text can help foreign readers better understand the content of the 13th Five-Year Plan.

The two examples above show that the principle of accuracy is not the only requirement in the translation of political documents. Good translation is for communication, which is inseparable from understanding each other. Under the principle of readability and comprehensibility, the translators should not only pursue the equivalence between the original text and the translated version, but take the understanding of foreign readers into account. That is to say, in addition to considering the accuracy of the translation of 13th Five-Year Plan, translators should also pay attention to the acceptance level of the foreign readers for the aim of multinational communication.

3. Avoidance of Repetitious Words

In the process of translation, translators are likely to deal with the repetitious information in the source language. Improper handling will lead to Chinglish because it does not conform to English habits. The translators should make proper translation omission, which requires the translation version conform to the thinking habits of the audience, and to deal with the repetition of Chinese-English translation correctly. According to the expression habit of Chinese, there will be many expressions that have different forms but the same meaning. English speakers, however, tend to express things in plain and simple language. In order to make the translation more accurate, precise and professional, it is necessary to delete all kinds of repetition in the process of Chinese-English translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan. There are several examples in the document.

Example7: 深化行政审批制度改革，最大限度减少政府对企业经营的干预，最大限度缩减政府审批范围。

Translation: We will deepen reform of the government review and approval system, reducing to the greatest possible extent government intervention in enterprises as well as the scope of the government pre-approval system.

In the Chinese original sentence, "减少"and "缩减"appear at the same time in order to make the Chinese sentence more professional. However, the translator only uses the present participle form of "reduce" to substitute to the two words "减少"and "缩减" in the translated version. It does not affect the meaning to be expressed in the original text. On the contrary, this translation method better conveys the meaning of the original text. The translation accords with the reading custom of foreign readers and enhances the readability of the article. It can be seen from this example that due to the different expressive habits of Chinese and English, translators need to adopt the method of translation omission when it is necessary to avoid repetition in the target language culture.

Example8: 推动与周边国家基础设施互联互通。

Translation: We will increase infrastructure connectivity with neighboring countries.

In this Chinese example, "互联互通" is a structure that conforms to Chinese usage. It means "connect and communicate with each other", but in English it is a repetitious structure of a sentence and does not conform to the

idiomatic expression of English. Therefore, in the process of the Chinese to English translation, it is obvious that "互联互通" has been translated into one word "connectivity" in order to avoid repetition.

Example9: 构建官民并举、多方参与的人文交流机制。

Translation: We will create mechanisms for official and nongovernmental cultural exchanges that involve the participation of multiple parties.

Here "并举" is not translated into the English version by the translators. There is no doubt that "并举" in the original is a supplement part, which is in line with the expression habits of Chinese. But this kind of expression is repetitious in English, thus it will cause sentence repetition to some extent, which is generally not adopted in English. Because the omission of "并举" does not affect the overall sentence structure and sentence meaning, the translators omit it in the translated version. The omission of repetitious words is more acceptable to foreign readers. The aim is to bring the expression closer to the idiomatic usage of English without changing the original meaning.

The examples above show that ideology requires not only the accuracy and readability of translation, but also the proper use of abbreviated translation methods. It can make the translation more in line with the reading habits of target language readers, so that they can better understand China's policy measures of politics, economy, culture, education, national defense and other aspects.

C.   The Application of Translation Strategies with the Impact of Ideology

In this part, the author tends to analyze the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan from the aspects of translation strategies. Two translation strategies are introduced in the following part. It is dependent on what the purpose is of translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan under the manipulation of the dominating ideology when the translators pick them.

1. Foreignization

Foreignization refers to the use of the original expression in the translation process, so that the translation is full of exotic atmosphere. It focuses on the differences of national culture and aims to preserve and reflect the national characteristics and linguistic styles of foreign countries. Foreignization can fully reflect the diversity of culture and facilitate the exchange and learning between different cultures. To preserve as much of its original flavor as possible in the process of translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan, there are many examples of the using of foreignization.

Here are several examples below. These are all expressions with Chinese characteristics and use foreignization translation strategies to retain the original flavor of Chinese expressions.

Example 10: 建设新疆丝绸之路经济带核心区。

Translation: We will work to develop Xinjiang as the core region for the Silk Road Economic Belt.

Example 11: 发挥妈祖文化等民间文化的积极作用。

Translation: ……give full expression to the positive role of folk cultures such as Mazu culture.

Chinese has many culture-loaded expressions which need to be translated without any changes. That is to say, some expressions with Chinese characteristics should be translated literally under the guidance of foreignization translation strategies. It is helpful to reserve the original flavor in the translated version. Here "丝绸之路经济带" and "妈祖文化" are respectively translated into "the Silk Road Economic Belt" and "Mazu culture" literally, which fully retains the charm of the expression with Chinese characteristics.

Example 12: 促进全球贸易投资的自由化和便利化。

Translation: We will help promote the liberalization and facilitation of international trade.

"……化" is a usage with Chinese characteristic and there is no such homologous expression in English. "自由化" and "便利化" here are translated into "liberalization" and "facilitation" respectively, which intends to demonstrate the support of China's government towards the international trade. The strategy in the translation could make the translation more acceptable to foreign readers. There is no doubt that the strategy of foreignization is indispensable.

2. Domestication

In contrast with foreignization, the so-called domestication translation requires the translators to be close to the target language reader and adopt the target language expression method that readers are accustomed to in order to convey the content of the original text. The proper use of domestication in translation can achieve image reconstruction and help readers to have the maximum resonance with the readers of the source language. When the foreignization translation strategy can't handle the original text well, the translators can try it by adopting the domesticating translation strategy. Please read the following examples.

Example 13: ……畅通海上贸易通道。

Translation: ……maritime trade routes are clear and free-flowing.

There is no doubt that it is an important criterion to evaluate the quality of translated works whether the target readers could fully understand the translation or not. In order to help foreign readers to understand and appreciate the translated version thoroughly, the translators need to explain the difficult words in the translation. Here "畅通" in the original sentence has been translated in another way so as to expound the original meaning for the foreign readers. It is obvious that the strategy of domestication is applied in the translation here.

Example 14: 强化社会监督。

Translation: We will sure that public oversight is strengthened.

It is common to omit the subject in Chinese as the example shows above. In order to make the sentence more accurate and fluent, the translators add the main clause "We will sure that" into the translation of this sentence. The added part demonstrates China pays high attention to the public oversight. This example shows that the translators domesticate the structure of this sentence in order to make the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan more readable.

V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, translation is a dynamic and complex process, which is dominated and manipulated by ideology. Under the influence of the manipulation theory of Lefevere, especially his ideology manipulation theory, this thesis analyzes the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan smoothly. The thesis chooses to analyze the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan from the ideological manipulation aspect, which not only proves the efficiency and feasibility of ideological manipulation for the translation of the 13th Five-Year Plan but also demonstrates that the ideological manipulation will exert influence on the choices of the translated principles and translated strategies of the translators. The ideological manipulation requires that translators should ensure accurate transmission of information and make sure that readers can accept it.

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Pronunciation Rating Scale in Second Language Pronunciation Assessment: A Review

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Abstract—**By reviewing previous studies on pronunciation rating scale in second language pronunciation assessment, this article aims to summarize research gaps and weaknesses so as to contribute to the pronunciation rating scale research and development. Several research topics concerning construct, criterion, descriptor, scale length, scale format and scale users and suggestions with regard to participants, data collection methods and data analysis methods are provided for future research.**

Index Terms—**Pronunciation rating scale, review, second language pronunciation, language assessment**

I. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is one way to externalize language (Peng, 2014). It is important because it can facilitate communication (Gilner, 2008; Ketabi, 2015) and raise one's social status (Derwing, Rossiter & Munrol, 2002). In the field of second language assessment, although there is a resurgent interest in pronunciation assessment (Isaacs, 2013; Isaacs, Trofimovich, Yu, & Chereau, 2015; Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor, 2011), relevant research is still scare (Knoch, 2017; Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor, 2011), let alone studies concentrating on pronunciation rating scale exclusively.

A rating scale is essential for the successful execution of all kinds of language assessments. It is a manifestation of the underlying construct of language assessment (Isaacs & Thomson, 2013), the reference for raters to score test takers' performances (Harding, 2017; Isaacs & Thomson, 2013; Mcnamara, 2002; Underhill, 1987) and the guidelines for test takers or other score users to interpret the assessment results (Isaacs & Thomson, 2013). It is the same with pronunciation rating scale. Meanwhile, previous studies have identified some problems of pronunciation scales (Harding, 2013; Harding, 2016; Isaacs, 2013; Isaacs, Trofimovich, Yu, & Chereau, 2015), whether it is about scale design or about scale use. The scarcity of relevant studies, the importance of rating scale, and the need to improve pronunciation rating scale constitute the necessity for more research.

This article is aimed at reviewing previous studies that take the pronunciation rating scale in second language assessment as the research object. The author will compare their merits and drawbacks and tentatively put forward several future research directions.

In the following sections, several general key concepts relevant to pronunciation rating scale exploited in this article are elaborated. Next, relevant studies are categorized in accordance with research topics and are examined in details to discuss their strengths and weaknesses so as to put forward future research directions. The last section concludes this article by summarizing future research directions and suggestions about research methods.

II. KEY CONCEPTS

The first key concept needs clarification is pronunciation. Across rating scales, this term is not used consistently (Isaacs & Trofimovich, 2012). Most studies regard it as the production of suprasegmental features along with the segmental ones (e.g., Chen & Li, 2017; Harding, 2017; Isaacs, Trofimovich, Yu, & Chereau, 2015). It is reasonable since suprasegmental features are important for pronunciation, especially for achieving an intelligible and comprehensible pronunciation (Tian & Jin, 2015).

Currently, the intelligibility and comprehensibility goals are well recognized in the field of second language acquisition, instruction and assessment as a result of a globalized environment, the spread of English as the international communication tool and the resurgent desire for a more reasonable goal for second language learners (Ketabi, 2015). In addition, although some researchers maintain that pronunciation is an inalienable part of either intelligibility (e.g., Ketabi, 2015; Wen, Liu & Jin, 2005; Zeilinski, 2006) or comprehensibility (e.g., Isaacs, Trofimovich, & Foote, 2018), it does not imply that pronunciation should be defined in terms of intelligibility or comprehensibility. Instead, it may be better to treat it as one influential factor of intelligibility or comprehensibility. Based on these two reasons, this study defines pronunciation as the production of both suprasegmental and segmental features.

The second key concept is rating scale. It is an instrument that not only contains the operational definition of certain construct (Davies, Brown, Elder, Hill, Lumley, & McNamara, 1999; Mcnamara, 2002), but also provides "a series of constructed levels" (Davies et al., 1999, p.154) on which judgment about test takers' performance is based. Construct is "the trait or traits that a test is intended to measure" (Davies et al., 1999) and it is the third key concept in this article.

Any rating scale is supposed to operationalize certain construct and rating scales are usually the instantiations of the underlying construct (Harding, 2017).

Another element in a rating scale is the criterion and it is the fourth key concept. Generally it is defined as "a quality on which test performance is judged" (Davies et al., 1999, p. 38). Criterion is important because it reflects the underlying construct (Isaacs, Trofimovich, Yu, & Chereau, 2015). There are both linguistic and non-linguistic criteria and different selections of criteria and different weighting given to different criteria can lead to different rating results (Davies et al., 1999). Therefore, if a rating scale fails to present intended criteria or intended weighting of various criteria, it may be never able to perform its duty.

A criterion are usually displayed by descriptors of a rating scale (Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor, 2011), which are defined as statements that "describe the level of performance required of candidates at each point on a proficiency scale" (Davies et al., 1999, p.43). It is what is presented to scale users and represents both the construct and criteria.

Another important facet of a rating scale is its format (Knoch, 2017). While holistic scales contain general descriptions, analytic scales provide several criteria that are contributing to test takers' performance (Knoch, 2017).

A rating scale provides "a series of constructed levels" and the number of levels is known as the scale length. Research suggests that it is an important facet since it closely relates to the usability of the scale (Alderson, 1991; Flege & Fletcher, 1992; Fulcher, 1996).

The last concept is usability. Usability is defined as the easy of use (Harding, 2017). In the research of rating scale in language assessment, therefore, usability refers to whether a scale is easy to use for raters or for other scale users. Since a rating scale is designed to be used while a valid rating scale does not necessarily entail a useful rating scale (Harding, 2017), the usability of a rating scale can never be neglected.

III. REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

To ensure the studies reviewed are closely related to the pronunciation rating scale and the studies chosen are representative enough and are of high quality, the author conducted "key word" search on CNKI, Google Scholar, and EBSCOhost and finally selected thirteen most relevant studies. Two broad branches are identified: rating scale design and rating scale user. Studies that fall into the rating scale design branch are further divided into construct, criterion and descriptor, length and format. Studies which fall into the rating scale user branch are further divided into rater's characteristics and scale usability.

A. Rating Scale Design

construct

Constructs that have been discussed in pronunciation assessment include comprehensibility (Derwing & Munro, 2009; Isaacs, Trofimovich, & Foote, 2018; Munro & Derwing, 1999; Trofimovich, & Isaacs, 2012), accentedness (Trofimovich, & Isaacs, 2012), and pronunciation and intonation (Chen & Li, 2017).

The first question under examination is how certain construct should be defined. Munro and Derwing (1999) distinguish comprehensibility, intelligibility, and accentedness conceptually. According to them, while both comprehensibility and intelligibility relate to how well a massage is understood, comprehensibility is more linked to listeners' subjective perception and intelligibility is more linked with the objective proportion of speech that is understood (Munro & Derwing, 1999). As for accentedness, it is more related to the comparison with native speakers' norm (Munro & Derwing, 1999). While this distinction is gaining momentum in recent years (Isaacs & Thomson, 2013), problems concerning definitions are still pervasive not only in pronunciation scale design, but also in pronunciation scale use.

Conflations between constructs in rating scales are found between accentedness and intelligibility (Anderson-Hsieh, Johnson & Koehler, 1992) and between accentedness and comprehensibility (Harding, 2013; Isaacs &Trofimovich, 2012). Intelligibility is also frequently used as a synonym of comprehensibility (Levis, 2006). It suggests that conceptual definitions are not enough for scale developers to understand what they really mean. More concrete definitions or at least descriptions of what certain construct is are therefore necessary for scale design and development. That is why studies that inquire into the most relevant linguistic correlates of certain construct are valuable.

Isaacs & Trofimovich (2012) and Trofimovich & Isaacs (2012) are representative ones. Both of them try to figure out what certain construct is by investigating what linguistic correlates comprise comprehensibility (Isaacs & Trofimovich, 2012) or by comparing respective linguistic features of comprehensibility and accentedness (Trofimovich & Isaacs, 2012). The first study combines the quantitative analysis of speech samples and qualitative analysis of introspective reports about linguistic correlates that raters rely on when judging comprehensibility. Lexical richness, fluency, grammar, discourse, and word stress errors emerge as the five correlates most frequently referred to. The popularity of lexical richness and grammar is also present in Trofimovich & Isaacs (2012). In that study, participants are asked to select measures that affect their ratings and to type in linguistic aspects they depend on for rating comprehensibility and accentedness respectively. Results illustrate that phonological features are more linked with accentedness. These two studies fill the research gap concerning the definition issue, which can be illustrating for rating scale design and development. However, what they actually probe into are constructs of the pronunciation assessment on a whole rather than certain underlying of a pronunciation rating scale. It is possible that constructs of a pronunciation assessment are

different from constructs of the rating scale employed. Therefore, what does certain construct embedded in a pronunciation rating scale refer to or what linguistic correlates consists certain construct embedded in a pronunciation rating scale requires further exploration.

While the two studies mentioned above inspect the most relevant linguistic correlates, Isaacs, Trofimovich, & Foote (2018) attempts to derive empirically the operational definition of comprehensibility construct in a rating scale. Focus group discussion is held after each rating session and comments made in the group discussion are brought together for scale revisions before the next rating session. Comprehensibility is eventually defined as the effort to understand the speech and it is deemed as the optimal operational definition. But there is an additional condition for this definition to operate: the raters should be professional English teachers with exposures to various second languages. Although this condition serves to minimize potential influences of some non-linguistic factors such as listener's attitudes (Kang & Rubin, 2009), real rating situations in most cases can seldom meet this high standard. It therefore raises the question as to whether the rating scale centering around comprehensibility can generate better rating effects or whether the operational definition is applicable.

Studies that illustrate how scale users understand or interpret certain construct in a scale also shed some light on construct definition. Isaacs & Thomson (2013) focuses on comprehensibility construct while Chen & Li (2017) examines pronunciation and intonation constructs. Research methods of these two studies are both qualitative. Raters' interpretations or understandings are gathered through verbal reports (Isaacs & Thomson, 2013), stimulated recalls (Isaacs & Thomson, 2013), interviews (Chen & Li, 2017; Isaacs & Thomson, 2013) or questionnaires with open-ended questions (Chen & Li, 2017). Data are then analyzed through thematic analysis. Results reveal that the same construct is likely to receive different interpretations (Chen & Li, 2017; Isaacs & Thomson, 2013). These results are of great importance since diverse understandings of the construct mean different linguistic traits are assessed by scale users. If scale users do not agree upon this point, the results generated by such a scale can be highly unreliable. These two studies emphasize the urgent need for a clearer and more concrete definition of constructs. Nevertheless, they seem to treat constructs of their instrumental scales as fit for pronunciation assessment without questioning whether it is indeed the case. More research is therefore required to discover which construct is appropriate for assessing pronunciation.

Another issue deserves attention is construct validation. Construct validation is "an investigation of what a test actually measures and attempts to explain the construct." (Davies et al., 1999, p. 220). When it comes to pronunciation rating scale, Sawaki (2007) touches upon this problem by examining the construct validity of the speaking rating scale used in a Spanish language assessment. It is an analytic rating scale and pronunciation is counted as a sub-scale in this rating scale. Fifteen raters are asked to 214 speech samples and scores are given for further analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis is employed to find out the structural relationships among the five sub-scales while multivariate generalizability theory is accessed to find out the interrelationships among the sub-scales and between sub-scales and the overall rating. By doing these, the author is able to test the convergent validity, discriminant validity, and relationships among sub-scales and between scales and the overall rating. For the pronunciation scale, results show that it is less reliable and that contributes less information than grammar scale to the overall score. The author explains this by referring to the test purpose, according to which more importance is placed on grammar than on pronunciation. This study merits in its contribution to a highly important yet less explored field in language assessment. The clear research format of this study also allows future studies to learn from by examining other scales. However, in this study, pronunciation is regarded as a sub-scale of the speaking scale although it does not necessary to be so. Dimensions including segmental, rhythm, intonation, speech rate, etc. are all contributing to pronunciation so that it is probable to divide a pronunciation scale into sub-scales reflecting dimensions mentioned above. The recent trend from judging based on global features like comprehensibility or intelligibility to placing more emphases on more specific features (Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor, 2011) also suggests that future research should focus more on pronunciation specially. What, then, are the convergent validity, discriminant validity, and relationships among sub-scales and between sub-scales and the overall rating when only the pronunciation scale is focused on requires further illustration.

Criterion

The first question that is discussed by previous research is which criterion revealed in rating scales is appropriate for assessing pronunciation.

Intelligibility is treated as a criterion instead of a construct in Isaacs (2008). This study tests whether treating intelligibility as one criterion is appropriate for pronunciation assessment in academic context. Eight participants with various L1 backgrounds first record samples for rating. Next, the ratio of intelligible words of samples is calculated manually by researcher to form the quantitative data. Answers to open-ended questions from 18 native raters are analyzed to form the qualitative data. Results from that study proves a close correlation between the quantitative data and the qualitative data and lead to the conclusion that intelligibility is not a sufficient condition though it is an adequate criterion for assessing pronunciation proficiency of international teaching assistants. However, intelligibility depends on both sides of communication (Rajadurai, 2007) and is constructed by multiple factors, such as listeners' attitudes toward the speakers, communication context or even listeners' familiarity toward the topics discussed. In this study, these factors are neither examined nor controlled. How these non linguistic factors interact with intelligibility or influence the intelligibility as a criterion requires more research.

Isaacs (2008) examines the criterion of pronunciation assessment as a whole instead of restricting to the rating scale. By contrast, discovering appropriate criteria of a rating scale are the goals for both Isaacs, Trofimovich, Yu, & Chereau (2015) and Harding (2017). The first study tries to find the criteria that are discriminating enough for band 5 and band 7 in IELTS scale. Semantic differentiate scales are first developed based on focus group discussions. Raters are then asked to rate samples based on existing IELTS speaking scale for the first session and on semantic differentiate scales for the second session. Focus group discussions are held at the end of each session and during the third session, focus group discussion is held again to discuss linguistic features that influence raters' judgments most. Semantic differential scales are related back to the IELTS scale to discover linguistic features that best distinguish band 5 and band 7. Results suggest that grammar and lexical richness serve best as the discriminating criteria while segmental accuracy and comprehensibility, the worst. Test takers with higher proficiency are best distinguished by criteria including grammar accuracy, sentence structure, lexical richness and word stress. Qualitative data reveal that the existing IELTS pronunciation sub-scale fail to provide specific criteria at band 5 and band 7 and thus leading to the implementation difficulties. However, different results emerge from Harding (2017), a study which also utilizes focus group discussion as the research method. Raters in this study tend to exclude grammar criterion and accentedness criterion from pronunciation scale and combine pronunciation criterion with fluency criterion as one criterion and add intelligibility criterion into the scale. Differences may lie in that the instrumental scale in the former study is the IELTS rating scale (pronunciation sub-scale included) while the latter takes phonological control scale as the research subject so that some criteria such as grammar which are less relevant to pronunciation are not emphasized. Despite of their achievements, there are more to explore. Future studies can either select certain pronunciation scale instead of some speaking scales to investigate the most appropriate criteria, or applying similar research methods to examine other scales to challenge or substantiate results of previous research.

The second question addressed by previous research is the definition of certain criterion. Previous studies reveal that the lack of precise and concrete definitions of criteria leads to different definitions construed by raters themselves (Orr, 2002; Wang, 2008; Gao, 2007; Brown, 2007; Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor, 2011). Most studies are qualitative since it is possible that raters define criteria differently yet arrive at similar quantitative scores (Wang, 2008). For instance, both Orr (2002) and Wang (2008) studies analyze data from verbal reports of raters and discover that during rating process using a rating scale, raters not only give different definitions to criteria, but also take other non-criterion information into consideration, thus undermining both the validity and reliability of assessment results. Similar results are also generated in Brown (2007) in which verbal protocol is exploited to collect raters' comments on previous holistic IELTS scale. These studies merit in their incorporation of raters' using experiences and reveal that without clear and concrete definitions of criteria, raters simply do not share similar understandings of criteria although the scores they give may achieve high correlation coefficient. The next step, then, is to discover what should be the appropriate definitions of individual criteria in a pronunciation scale so as to facilitate their understandings of criteria in rating scale and reduce individual differences in their interpretations.

The third topic that is important for criteria is the criterion-related validation. Only Gao (2007) attempts to analyze this validity of a pronunciation rating scale developed by herself. Students' samples of a reading-aloud task are first collected and annotated for mistakes. All mistakes are then categorized based on the type of competence (theory driven) they represent. The next step is to decide different weighing given to different types of mistakes and to decide how to calculate the scores. These steps form the ultimate rating scale that includes pronunciation, fluency, sentence structure and lexical richness as the four criteria. Criterion-related validation process of this rating scale is followed by conducting correlation analysis, factor analysis and variance analysis. Results favour this rating scale in term of criterion-related validity. However, this study seems to be too sloppy in the categorization of mistakes. For instance, inappropriate pause is regarded as sentence processing problem while failure to produce proper rhythm of the target language may also contribute to this problem (Meng & Wang, 2009; Zhou & Song, 2015; Yu, 2013; Zhu, 2011). Regarding faster speaking rate as higher proficiency is also problematic since it is simply not the case: a speaker can read very fast and produce unintelligible and non-comprehensible speech. Moreover, when assessing the criterion-related validity, students' CET 4 scores are utilized for coefficient analysis. Although reading aloud task can reflect the overall proficiency level (Gao, 2007), it is to the essence a speaking task which CET 4 does not assess. How reliable the analysis is then if the CET 4 scores are used as reference is questionable. Nevertheless, considering the scarcity of relevant studies, this study still stands out for probing into this issue. More research is therefore demanded considering both the problems of this research and the scarcity of relevant studies.

Descriptor, Length and Format

Although there is no research that exclusively examines descriptors, they are touched upon in many pronunciation rating scale studies. Relevant research generally gathers data concerning raters' perceptions and views through qualitative methods like verbal reports (Wang, 2008; Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor, 2011), stimulated recalls (Wang, 2008), open ended questionnaires (Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor, 2011) or focus group discussions (Isaacs, Trofimovich, Yu, & Chereau, 2015; Harding, 2017; Isaacs, Trofimovich, & Foote, 2018). Three facets are usually lamented about by raters: the lack of clear and exact wording of descriptors, the wording inconsistency of descriptors across different levels within a rating scale and the length of descriptors within a level.

Wang (2008) analyzes verbal reports after raters using the speaking rating scale (pronunciation as one criterion) for TEM 4 and indicates that some vague wording of descriptors in the rating scale will induce raters to form operational definitions based on their own understandings. Similar results are also obtained by Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor (2011) and Isaacs, Trofimovich, Yu, & Chereau (2015) which examine the IELTS pronunciation scale and by Harding (2017) which probes into CEFR Phonological control scale. The consistency problem is noted Isaacs, Trofimovich, & Foote (2018) when endeavouring to establish a comprehensibility scale in which a pronunciation sub-scale is included. The scale is developed by incorporating raters' comments after each rating session. The results imply that a scale with consistent wording among sub-scales and within each sub-scale is more friendly for raters. Similar remarks are given by Harding (2017). Although problems identified are illuminating, suggestions followed are not. For instance, to counter wording vagueness problem, researchers suggest that the wording of descriptors should be made more specific. Little is known about what kind of descriptors are considered to be specific enough and what scale designers and developers can do to reduce the vagueness of descriptors' wording. More research is therefore required in this respect. Lastly, while Isaacs, Trofimovich, Yu, & Chereau (2015) warns that the length of descriptors within each level should be neither too long / specific nor too short /generic, Harding (2017) specifies the length by saying that descriptors consisting of three to five clauses per level may be considered optimal. However, this conclusion needs further support not only due to the scarcity of relevant studies, but also due to the fact that how many clauses are required may depend on various factors such as test purpose, the stake of a test, rating time limit, etc.

Another length issue is concerned with the number of levels within a rating scale. Isaacs & Thomson (2013) directly addresses this topic. Raters are invited to use two IELTS pronunciation scales (one with five levels, one with nine levels) to evaluate 38 speech samples. Scores that they give are then processed by quantitative methods. Although the mean scores among raters generated from a five-level scale and a nine-level scale are not significantly different, more levels lead to more difficulties in differentiating adjacent levels. This is different from Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor (2011) in which raters are quite positive about the 9-point pronunciation scale. But it can be explained by the fact that what Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor (2011) reports is raters' perception before using the scale and no comment is made in terms of the length after their use. But what is agreed upon is a scale should neither be too long nor too short since short one can be overly crude (Brown, 2006; Cumming et al., 2002) while long one can be clumsy for raters to discriminate between adjacent levels (Alderson, 1991; Flege & Fletcher, 1992; Fulcher, 1996; Van Moere, 2013). Six levels are advocated both by Harding (2017) and Isaacs, Trofimovich, & Foote (2018) as the optimal choice. However, Harding (2017) derives the conclusion from raters' comments after using the scale only once. In other words, raters only believe that six levels are optimal for a pronunciation rating scale. Whether it is really the case needs further studies by applying the revised scale again. Isaacs, Trofimovich, & Foote (2018) has advantages over Harding (2017) in this respect. Several turns of rating sessions, discussions and revisions are held before the authors claim their findings, making the conclusion more convincing. Besides, the number "six" falls within the magical spectrum, namely, seven plus or minus two. This spectrum is known as the limits on our brains for processing information (Miller, 1956). However, due to the scarcity of relevant research and for the convenience of developing scale, still more research is required to test whether six levels is the optimal choice for a pronunciation rating scale.

For format, usually two types are examined: holistic and analytic. While holistic scales contain general descriptions, analytic scales provide several criteria that are contributing to test takers' performance (Knoch, 2017). Despite of its importance, none pronunciation rating scale study has ever made an effort to compare these two formats. Instead, these two terms are more often used to describe two rating styles. For instance, both Wang (2008) and Chen & Li (2017) reveal that raters prefer holistic rating style over analytic one. The lack of precise and specific descriptors and criteria is employed to account for this phenomenon. For most studies, scales under examination are analytic ones. It is understandable since an analytic scale is believed to be better. An analytic scale format is congruent with the current trend of viewing language ability as being composed by various components (Bachman, Lynch & Mason, 1995) and it allows raters to attend to more specific criteria which they may ignore when using a holistic scale (Brown & Bailey, 1984). However, whether an analytic scale is better is more dependent on various factors such as constructs, criteria, test purposes, the stake of a test or rating conditions. Besides, how pronunciation scale format influences rating process also deserves more attention.

B. Rating Scale User

Rater's Characteristics

Raters are important since they are users of rating scales. It is impossible to expect that two raters are completely the same. Individual differences always exist (Douglas, 1994; Lumley, 2005). Raters vary in their previous rating experiences and teaching experiences (Isaacs & Thomson, 2013; Schairer, 1992), degrees of severity in rating (Schairer, 1992), their views on language (Gao, 2007), their attitudes toward test takers' accents (Kang & Rubin, 2009), etc. These differences will affect how they apply the rating scale (Douglas, 1994; Isaacs & Ron I. Thomson, 2013; Orr, 2002; Wang, 2008; Brown, 2007), thus greatly undermining the validity and reliability of rating results. In spite of their importance, when it comes to pronunciation rating scale, only Isaacs & Thomson (2013) specially focuses specially on this issue. Data are collected from verbal protocols and interviews and are analyzed by thematic analysis. Results reveal that experienced raters and novice raters indeed differ in rating strategies, including how they utilize rating scales. However, although it reports that rating experiences can lead to different rating behaviors, how individual

characteristics including rating experiences interact with the use of rating scale is still not clear (Knoch, 2017). For instance, which individual characteristics are most influential to rating scale use, which criteria are more subject to certain individual characteristic and what are the best ways to control individual differences in using certain rating scale? For the last question, rater training and automated rating can be the answers (Isaacs, 2013). However, it is not clear if rater training is really efficient as expected and if the automated scoring can achieve scoring results similar to those given by human raters. More research is therefore necessary.

Scale Usability

Another area concerning users' effects is the scale usability. Research questions of this branch mainly include how raters perceive or view certain pronunciation rating scale from the perspective of usability, what problems are identified based on scale using experiences and what suggestions can one derive correspondingly. Raters' perceptions about the usability of IELTS pronunciation rating scale are examined by Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor (2011) and Galaczi, Lim and Khabbazbashi (2012). Raters' feelings about the usability of IELTS pronunciation rating scale are extracted from qualitative comments in open-ended items and from verbal protocol. Both of them report that raters are less confident and less comfortable in using the pronunciation rating scale. While the former also reveals raters' using experiences before using the scale, the latter differs in its comparison between the pronunciation scale and other component scales within the IELTS speaking scale. Their results echo conclusions of Brown and Taylor (2006).

Raters report difficulties in applying the rating scale due to the vague descriptors (Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor, 2011), vague concepts (Galaczi, Lim & Khabbazbashi, 2012) and overlap with other scales (Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor, 2011) or in terminology (Galaczi, Lim & Khabbazbashi, 2012). The recommendations given in Harding (2017) also reflect these problems and are further divided into technical ones and construct-related ones. Another problem is observed in Isaacs, Trofimovich, & Foote (2018) and Harding (2017), namely, the consistency of descriptors. Raters in these two studies maintain that the inconsistency of descriptors across levels renders the scales less user-friendly. In these two studies, different scales are explored and focus group discussion is used instead of verbal protocol. While the former aims to develop a comprehensibility scale (pronunciation sub-scale included) by incorporating scale using experiences, the latter aims to improve existing scale by identifying problems mentioned by scale users. These studies merit in their focus on usability. In many cases, feelings, experiences, opinions, perceptions and views of using scales are seldom used as data in pronunciation assessment research (Harding, 2017). Meanwhile, raters should never be ignored wince they are the ultimate users of a rating scale. By examining raters' using experiences, these studies fill this gap to some extent. However, relevant studies are still scarce.

Further studies can also focus on score users that have seemingly been neglected in pronunciation rating scale research. This group of users relies on scales to interpret what scores mean. For individual test takers, making inference about their pronunciation proficiency by resorting to a pronunciation rating scale can help them locate problems to be solved for self-improvement. For some institutions, making inference about some test takers' pronunciation proficiency by resorting to a pronunciation rating scale can help them grasp both strengths and weaknesses of test takers and make decisions accordingly. If rating scales are not well-developed and not user-friendly, difficulties and inconvenience can arise for this user group. Exploring how score users perceive certain pronunciation rating scale from the perspective of usability might therefore generate more interesting results for both scale design and scale development, at least for the design and development of the public version of the scale which is usually accessible for most score users.

C. Suggestions Concerning Research Methods

Two sections above reveal several future research directions. In this section, the author will illustrate what can future research learn from methodological problems of previous studies.

Firstly, for the selection of participants, the biggest problem centres on rater's prior rating experiences. While there are some studies that specially attend to raters' experiences (e.g., Isaacs & Thomson, 2013), be it rating experiences or more general experiences (native language, age, education background, teaching experiences, etc.), most studies allow great variance of experiences of raters while focusing on other issues. For instance, in Harding (2017), some raters have more than ten-year assessment experience while others have got none (at least not mentioned in this article). It is doubtful since raters' experiences have been reported to affect the rating results (Isaacs & Thomson, 2013). If the rating experience is not the research aim, its influences are supposed to be reduced to the minimum. Harding (2016) defends himself by suggesting that the variance ensures the ecological validity which requires that instruments and methods employed in a research should resemble the real-world under-examination to the maximum (Brewer, 2000). However, if the variance is overly huge, whether the results can represent the real assessment situation is questionable since real assessment situation always tries to minimize differences among raters, including raters' experiences. The same problem also resides in Isaacs & Trofimovich (2012), Trofimovich & Isaacs (2012), and Isaacs, Trofimovich, Yu, & Chereau (2015). To enhance the reliability of research results, future research should take great care of raters' experiences when designing a study.

Secondly, rating process is an inalienable part for scale relevant studies. However, rating process in studies reviewed above seems to be not authentic enough. Some rate samples by watching recorded videos of authentic test (e.g., Orr, 2002) and others by listening to the samples (e.g., Isaacs, 2008; Harding, 2017). It is highly possible that results obtained will be altered in real assessment situations where raters may attend to different criteria and cast different

interpretations of criteria. Future research can attempt to incorporate data from more authentic rating process to shed more light on the mystery of pronunciation rating scale.

Thirdly, although most studies reviewed above utilize verbal protocol to peep into raters' mind during rating process, it is actually not valid enough as a data collection method since it somehow intrudes the rating process and therefore cannot truthfully represent what happens during rating process (Brown, 2007). Other methods are desired along with the verbal protocol. For example, future studies can, if possible, record videos of authentic rating sessions and ask the very raters in the videos to participate in the research immediately after the assessment. These participants can be invited to watch recorded videos and recall their rating processes. In this way, researchers can not only observe the posture, facial expressions, body movements and any linguistic behaviours of raters in the video, but also ask the very raters to provide verbal report when watching the video with regard to what they are thinking during the rating process. This multi-modal approach may generate more information about how raters use the rating scales, how they understand the construct, how they define and use criteria and how they perceive the descriptors, length and format of the scale during rating process.

Lastly, for the data analysis method, the reliability of analysis process needs to be addressed. For instance, both Isaacs, Trofimovich, Yu, & Chereau (2015) and Harding (2017) employ thematic analysis without checking the reliability of the coding procedure. Future research therefore needs to make an improvement in this respect.

IV. CONCLUSION

Previous research suggests that pronunciation rating scales seldom receive attention it deserves. For studies that are relevant, pronunciation rating scales are more often examined as a sub-scale of other larger scales, such as a speaking scale or a comprehensibility scale. However, pronunciation itself is a multi-componential concept and deserves a finer treatment. Moreover, the recent trend from judging based on global features like comprehensibility or intelligibility to placing more emphases on more specific features (Yates, Zielinski, & Pryor, 2011) also suggests future research to focus more on the pronunciation rating scale exclusively.

For construct and criterion, future research can endeavour to find out more useful, properer, and more concrete definitions, discuss which constructs and criteria are appropriate for pronunciation rating scale, provide more insights on construct validation and criterion-related validation of pronunciation rating scale, and explore the relative weighting of scales within a pronunciation rating scale. Moreover, how non-linguistic factors interact with criteria also requires further exploration.

For descriptors and scale length, future research can strive to provide more concrete suggestions concerning the wording and the length of descriptors and the length of a pronunciation rating scale.

For scale format, how various factors such as test purpose, construct or criteria affect the choice of format and how format influence raters rating decisions can be further explored.

For users, the interactions between users' characteristics and criteria weighting and interpretation require more research. How score users perceive certain pronunciation rating scale from the perspective of usability can also be illustrative. It is also not clear if individual differences reduction methods such as rater training on using scale and automated scoring system developed based on rating scales are effective or not.

For research methods, future studies are suggested to take great care of individual differences of participants, to incorporate data from more authentic scale using settings, to employ other methods along with the verbal protocol to tap into raters' mind and to conduct reliability check for the data analysis process.

Lastly, to date, IELST pronunciation rating scale has received most attention and English pronunciation scale has been more often explored than others. Future research therefore can either substantiate or challenge previous conclusions by examining other pronunciation rating scales. For instance, in the context of China, future research can take the pronunciation scale in China's Standards of English Language Ability as the instrumental scale to explore its underlying construct, criteria, descriptors, length, format, and users' effects, etc.

To conclude, pronunciation assessment is still a relatively less fertile land while cultivating this land from the angle of pronunciation rating scale is promised to yield fruitful results.

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The Impact of Written vs. Oral Corrective Feedback on Omani Part-time vs. Full-time College Students' Accurate Use and Retention of the Passive Voice

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Abstract—The present study was an attempt to discover the effects of explicit written vs. explicit oral corrective feedback on Omani part-time vs. full-time College students' accurate use and retention of the passive voice. The participants consisted of the students of six intact classes, i. e. three part-time and three full-time, who took an Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) as a general proficiency test. Following the proficiency test, the participants took three similar, but not identical, tests on the target structure as pretest, posttest and delayed posttest. In response to the errors made in the pretest, the experimental groups received explicit written and explicit oral corrective feedback in their treatment phase whereas the control groups did not receive such explicit written or explicit oral feedback. The accuracy of the use and retention of the passive voice was measured by a posttest and a delayed posttest. The results indicated a significant difference between the pretest performance of the experimental groups and their performance in the posttest and the delayed posttest. Similarly, the results showed a significant difference between the performance of the experimental groups and that of the control groups in the sense that the experimental groups outperformed the control groups. In addition, there was a significant difference between the performance of the part-time students and that of the full-time students in that the part-time students outperformed the full-time students. Finally, there was no significant difference between the experimental groups' performance on the posttest and their performance on the delayed posttest.

Index Terms—corrective feedback, explicit written, explicit oral, part-time, full-time

I. INTRODUCTION

Being skeptical about the effectiveness of corrective feedback (CF) in second language (L2) development (e.g. Krashen, 1982, Truscott, 1996, 1999) has sparked a good number of CF research in the last three decades or so (e.g. Doughty and Verela, 1998; Mackey, 1999; Ashwell, 2000; Chandler, 2003; Hattie and Timperley, 2007; Ferris, 1999, 2003; 2008; Bitchener and Knoch, 2008, 2009; Sheen 2007, 2010; Ellis, 2010, Lyster, Saito, and Sato, 2013; Vahdani Sanavi and Nemati, 2014; Rassaei 2015, 2017, to name but a few). With a robust literature, CF is now said to be "not only beneficial but… necessary for moving learners forward in their L2 development [due to playing] pivotal role in the…scaffolding that teachers need to provide …learners…" (Lyster, Saito and Sato, 2013, p.1 and p. 9).

However, the question as to which types/modes of CF play 'pivotal role', and are more effective in the development of L2 writing is still a matter of debate. In this respect, some researchers, such as Hyland and Hyland (2006, p.83), criticize feedback research for not being, "unequivocally positive about its role in the development of L2 writing." According to Hyland and Hyland (2006) issues related to feedback have not been sufficiently investigated by the researchers. Others, such as Ellis (2009), address unresolved issues such as the role of CF in L2 development, the type of errors CF research should address, and the most effective CF strategy.

Although among the issues referred to by Ellis (2009), one, i.e. the most effective CF strategy, or as Ferris (2008) calls it the 'mode of delivery', seems to have been addressed more frequently (e.g., Lochtman, 2002; Bitchener and Knoch, 2008; Nassaji, 2009; Lopez and Manchon, 2010; Erlam, Ellis and Batstone, 2013, Rassaie, 2013, 2017; Lyster, Saito, and Sato, 2013; Lyster and Saito, 2010; Yang and Lyster, 2010, to name but a few), the problem is that there is still no unequivocal yes/no answer to the 'mode of delivery' question as it is not yet clear which structures are more amenable to which CF strategies. That is possibly why CF research has been described as lacking 'ecological validity'. (Storch, 2010) According to Storch (2010, p.43) "Studies which provide feedback on one type of error and only on one piece of writing and in controlled environments are unlikely to be relevant to language teachers because they do not reflect real classroom conditions." To address the 'ecological validity' issue and inconclusive nature of CF research, this study was conducted to investigate the impact of two types of corrective feedback, i.e. explicit written vs. explicit oral CF on Omani full-time and part-time College students' accurate use and retention of the passive voice.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ellis (2010), CF research is carried out for theoretical as well as practical reasons. Theoretically speaking, researchers following Chomsky (e.g. Krashen, 1982; Truscott, 1996, 1999), assign little role to CF on the grounds that L2 acquisition occurs as a result of positive evidence, hence no need to provide L2 learners with negative evidence whereas those working in cognitive-interactionist domain (e.g. Long, 1996) attribute some roles to CF on the assumption that negative evidence can raise leaners' awareness and help them bridge the gap between form and meaning when communicating. (Ellis, 2010) On the other hand, researchers working within Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of mind (e.g. Aljafreh and Lantolf; 1984, Nassaji and Swain; 2000) take a fine-tuned approach to feedback provision. The reason, in Ellis's (2010, p.336) word, is that "sociocultural theory rejects the view that a single type of CF is best for learning." From a practical perspective, novel ideas have been sought by CF researchers in that they have been keen to know how L2 learners may improve their L2 writing. In Ferris's view (1999, cited in Ellis 2010), the main concern of these researchers has been L2 learners' writing development.

To operationalize CF strategies, various classifications have been proposed by CF researchers. Lyster and Ranta (1997), for example, proposed six CF strategies: explicit, recast, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation and repetition. Ranta and Lyster (2007) modified Lystrer and Ranta's (1997) classification and put the six strategies under two broad categories: Reformulation and prompts. Reformulation included recasts and explicit correction while prompts included elicitation, metalinguistic clues, clarification requests and repetition.

Lyster and Saito (2010) amended Ranta and Lyster's (2007) taxonomy as a result of which the six strategies and the two broad categories were rearranged on an explicit/implicit scale. In the case of implicit reformulation, for example, one may conceive of conversational recasts, repetition and clarification requests while in the case of explicit reformulation, didactic recasts, and explicit correction with metalinguistic explanations can be conceived. Similarly, Ellis (2009) classified CF strategies into direct/indirect, focused/unfocused, electronic, meta-linguistic and reformulation strategies. In direct feedback, learners are provided with the correct forms while in indirect feedback, learners are given hints showing that there are some mistakes somewhere in their sentences hoping that learners will discover the correct forms themselves. According to Bitchener and Knoch (2008), direct feedback can have various forms:

Additional forms of direct feedback may include written meta-linguistic explanation (the provision of grammar rules and examples at the end of a student's script with a reference back to places in the text where the error has occurred) and/or oral meta-linguistic explanation (a mini-lesson where the rules and examples are presented, practised and discussed; one-on-one individual conferences between teacher and student or conferences between teacher and small groups of students).(p.1)

Direct feedback, in Sheen's (2010) study, included both oral and written feedback on an error along with some metalinguistic explanation. Oral feedback was operationalized as the "teacher's [oral] provision of the correct form following an error, together with metalinguistic information [while written feedback operationalized as] the provision of [written] metalinguistic explanation to justify the correct form when an error [was] made." (p.213)

The types of CF strategies mentioned above have been employed by teachers or researchers as oral or written CF. In the former, feedback is provided when L2 teachers/researchers have verbal communications with learners while in the latter, feedback is given when students' papers, scripts, and assignments are marked by teachers/researchers. In this respect, Ferris (2008) contends that some teachers prefer to provide written feedback on the same written text or in a separate sheet whereas some other teachers like better to sit with their students in a face-to-face manner and give them oral feedback with the intention that 'discussions of the student can be 'two-way' [and] clarification and explanation [can be] facilitated' (p.101).

III. ORAL CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

With respect to oral CF, there has been a tendency among CF researchers to compare recasts and explicit strategies. (e.g., Lochtman, 2002; Nassaji, 2009; Erlam, Ellis and Batstone, 2013, Rassaie, 2013, Lopez and Manchon, 2010; Bitchener, and Knoch, 2008; Lyster, Saito, and Sato, 2013; Lyster and Saito, 2010; Yang and Lyster, 2010, to name but a few). Lochtman (2002), for example, studied recast, explicit corrections, and teacher initiations and their impact on learners' uptake. It was initially hypothesized that explicit correction could be more salient than recast because it could make learners notice their errors without much effort and could lead to their higher rate of uptake. However, the results indicated a lower rate of learner uptake as a result of both recast and explicit corrections but a higher rate of uptake as a result of metalinguistic feedback and elicitations.

Similarly, Ellis, Lowen and Erlam (2006) studied recast and metalinguistic explanation and their impact on the acquisition of regular past tense morpheme –ed. The results indicated that explicit metalinguistic group outperformed the implicit one.

Likewise, Nassaji (2009) investigated the effects of recasts and elicitations on learning two linguistic items. To begin with, implicit and explicit forms of feedback were identified and their subsequent immediate effects were studied. Recast was overall found to be better than elicitation. However, learners performed better when they were provided with explicit rather than implicit feedback implying further that the more explicit the learners' feedback was, the better was their performance both in immediate as well as delayed posttest.

In a similar vein, Rassaei (2013) compared the effects of recast with explicit correction on learners' acquisition of definite article 'the' and indefinite article 'a'. The results indicated that explicit correction was more effective since learners could become more aware of the corrective force of explicit feedback compared to recast. According to Rassaei (2013), "learners who received explicit correction outperformed those who received recasts because the explicit correction group could more easily notice the gap or perceive the interlocutors' corrective utterances as corrective feedback." (p.482)

Erlam, Ellis and Batstone (2013) compared the performance of two groups of learners in two similar writing tasks. The first group, called the 'explicit group', received explicit oral feedback based on cognitive-interactionist model while the second group, called the 'graduated group', received a 'tailored' type of feedback based on Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural model of feedback provision. The results indicated that participants in the 'graduated group' outperformed the 'explicit group' because of the degree of person-specific explicitness which was lacking in the 'explicit group'. In other words, the 'graduated group' feedback was more explicit than the 'explicit group' feedback in the sense that it was 'tailored' to and matched with each and every learner's specific level of attention, noticing and awareness.

Finally, Lyster et al (2013) reviewed various theoretical and practical aspects of oral CF such as frequency, preferences, laboratory vs. classroom studies and the targets studied. According to Lyster et al (2013, p. 20) "classroom studies of CF consistently confirm that oral CF is significantly more effective than no CF and also reveal a tendency for learners receiving prompts or explicit correction to demonstrate more gains on some measures than learners receiving recasts."

As the above studies may have indicated, in oral CF, explicit correction is more effective because students may have opportunities of awareness raising when compared to implicit strategies such as recasts. Commenting on oral CF, Ellis (2010, p.173) also points out that "in classroom context, it would appear that explicit CF is more effective than implicit recasts."

IV. WRITTEN CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK

As Bitchner and Knoch (2008) note, written CF studies have been a comparison between direct vs. indirect or between various types of indirect CF strategies. According to Bitchener and Knoch (2008), while Laland (1982) and Ferris and Helt (2000) report on the superiority of indirect CF, Chandler (2003) report on the superiority of direct CF. On the other hand, Robb, Ross and Shortreed, (1986) and Semke (1984) report no significant difference between the two types of CF, i.e. direct vs. indirect.

As for the comparison of different types of indirect feedback, no difference has been reported. (eg. Ferris and Roberts, 2001; Ferris et al, 2000; Robert et al, 1986, cited in Bitchner and Knoch, 2008, p.415). Although Bitchener and Knoch (2008) are critical of written CF studies on the grounds that they suffer from design limitations, the overall results indicate that explicit written CF has been more effective than implicit CF strategies. To explain the above-mentioned results, Ellis (2010, p.173), for example, maintains that such "studies have shown that focused error correction leads to gains in linguistic accuracy and that the more explicit the feedback is, the better the results."

Furthermore, Sheen (2007) studied the impacts of two types of written CF on the acquisition of articles. The groups were a direct-only explicit correction group, a direct metalinguistic correction group (more explicit CF), and a control group. The results showed that both experimental groups outperformed the control group on the immediate posttest. However, the direct metalinguistic group, i.e. the more explicit one, performed better than the direct-only correction group in the delayed posttests. The results showed that written CF which was focused on one linguistic item was more effective especially when it was supported by metalinguistic explanations.

Considering oral vs. written CF, a number of studies have compared the effectiveness of the two types and/or modes of CF. For example, Bitchener and Knoch (2008) compared direct corrective feedback, written and oral meta-linguistic explanation; direct corrective feedback and written metalinguistic explanation; direct corrective feedback only; and no corrective feedback. The results indicated that learners who received written CF performed better than those who did not receive written CF, including those who received oral CF, and that they could retain the accuracy level for several weeks. Similarly, Bitchener and Knoch (2009) found that learners who received written CF outperformed the control group on all four post-tests on both functions.

Lopez and Manchon (2010) investigated the effects of two direct CF strategies, i.e. error correction and reformulation on noticing and uptake in the written output of a group of EFL learners. The results confirmed the positive effects of written CF with a clear advantage of error correction over reformulation as far as uptake was concerned.

Finally, Sheen (2010) compared the effectiveness of oral vs. written CF on learners' correct use of English articles. Five groups were compared: oral recast, oral metalinguistic, written direct correction, written direct metalinguistic and control. The results indicated that the three CF types, i.e. oral metalinguistic, written direct and written direct with metalinguistic explanations but not oral recasts were effective. The point was that the degree of CF explicitness did matter for the effectiveness of the three types of CF strategies.

As the above brief review might have indicated, the extent to which CF strategies (written or oral) have been explicit may explain the reason as to why they have been more effective. The point is that various types of explicit feedback have rarely been compared. As Sheen (2010, p.172) argues, "to date, the effects of oral and written CF have been investigated independently of each other, and no study has systematically examined the relative efficacy of oral and

written CF." Likewise, Bitchener and Knoch (2008) complain that "less attention has been given to a comparison of different direct feedback options." (p.415)

Addressing the 'ecological validity' issue in CF research (Storch, 2010) on the one hand and Sheen's (2010) and Bitchener and Knoch's (2008) concerns regarding the lack of comparison between types of direct feedback, this study was conducted to probe the efficacy of two types of explicit feedback, i.e., explicit written vs. explicit oral CF on Omani full-time vs. part-time College students L2 writing development. To operationalize the present study, Lyster et al's (2013) classification of CF was adopted. According to Lyster et al (2013), CF can be reformulations or prompts and both can be explicit or implicit. In explicit reformulation, explicit correction plus some metalinguistic explanations are provided. This study is, therefore, an attempt to make a comparison between explicit written vs. explicit oral CF on Omani full-time vs. part-time College students' accurate use and retention of the passive voice.

V. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

Based on the convenience sampling, six intact classes took part in an Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) as a general proficiency test. Following the test rubrics, those who scored low were selected as the sample of the study since no one was supposed to know the target structure in advance.

B. Target Structure

The passive voice was selected as the target structure because of three reasons: The first reason was to address Storch's (2010) 'ecological validity' issue because it was part and parcel of the participants' curriculum and their classroom context. Secondly, as part of the participants' learning outcome, the passive voice was expected to be learned and utilized by the students in their end of the semester writing assignment. Third, and following Storch (2010) argument against CF's narrow scope, a less researched (Algarawi, 2010) target structure was selected.

C. Participants

The participants consisted of six intact classes who had registered in ARWB (Academic Reading and Writing for Business) module in the first semester of the academic year 2017-2018. Three classes included full-time students who attended their morning classes from 9:00 to 11:00 AM twice a week. Three classes included part-time students who attended their evening classes from 5:00 to 8:30 PM. Both full-time and part-time students studied at the Faculty of Business Management (FoBM) pursuing different pathways. The mean age of the full-time and part-time students were 20. The participants in the six classes were mixed-gender. Therefore, gender was not controlled in the study.

D. Research Questions

RQ1. Do types/modes of corrective feedback (explicit written vs. explicit oral) and modes of teaching (part-time vs. full time) have any differential effects on Omani College students' accurate use of the passive voice?

RQ2. Do types/modes of corrective feedback (explicit written vs. explicit oral) and modes of teaching (part-time vs. full time) have any differential effects on Omani College students' retention of the passive voice?

E. Data Collection

Oxford Quick Placement Test (OQPT) was administered as a general proficiency test. Based on the test results and the rubrics of the test, and for homogeneity reasons, those who scored high, i.e., upper intermediate and intermediate, were excluded from the study. This means that from among 150 students who took the proficiency test at the initial stage, 50 students were eventually selected. 27 students were full-time and 23 students were part-time students. The selection process was influenced by two factors: high score and low attendance. The students who scored high in the proficiency test and the students who did not attend either the pretest, or the posttest or the delayed posttest were dropped from the analysis.

Having taken the general proficiency test, the participants took a test as the pretest which was on the passive voice. The pretest consisted of 20 multiple-choice recognition and production items on the passive voice including four tenses: simple present, simple past, simple future and present perfect. The reason why the four tenses were included was that they were all part and parcel of the teaching materials and none of them could be eliminated from the syllabus of instruction.

The multiple choice items consisted of one recognition item and four production items for each tense. The rationale behind having recognition items before the production ones was that recognition was thought to be instrumental to the more difficult stage of production. In the recognition items, participants had to differentiate between a passive and an active structure whereas in the production items, they had to change a given active voice into a passive voice following an example given or had to produce passive structures on their own.

The pretest papers in the experimental groups were collected, and marked by two markers: The researcher himself and one of the two colleagues already mentioned. Following the pretest, the students in the experimental groups were provided with relevant explicit written and explicit oral CF. In the case of explicit written CF, the students' erroneous sentences were corrected by the researcher and written metalinguistic explanations were provided at the end of their

papers. To do so, the erroneous word or structure was underlined and explanations were given at the end of their question papers. For example,

Student's writing: The books is written by a well-known author.

Teacher's written explanations: The books are written by a well-known author. [Explanation: Please note that the books are plural so 'the books' should be followed by an appropriate plural auxiliary verb. In this particular case, 'are' rather than 'is' should have been used.]

In the case of explicit oral feedback, the participants' written sentences were read one by one by the researcher and oral metalinguistic explanations were given to each and every student in a face-to-face manner. The only difference between the two types/modes of feedback was that in the latter case, the feedback had to be vocalized and presented orally while in the former, it had to be written and presented in a written form.

Having provided the students with relevant written or oral feedback, the posttest was administered in the following session. The question items in the posttest were similar to the pretest items. The reason for having similar test items was to be consistent in terms of test construction and test administration. The posttest was marked by the researcher twice and an intrarater reliability of 0. 99 was obtained. In addition, the same colleague who marked the pretest, marked the posttest and an interrater reliability index of 0.97 was obtained. One week after the posttest, the delayed posttest was given. The same markers marked the delayed posttest and a similar interrater reliability index of 0.97 was obtained.

F. Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using SPSS software employing Two-way ANCOVA was employed. Two-way ANCOVA's assumptions such as normality of the data, reliability of instruments and homogeneity of variances were met. In addition, a selected sample of the students' end of semester writing assignments were analysed to find out if the participants were affected similarly or differently by the two explicit types of feedback.

VI. RESULTS

With respect to Two-way ANCOVA's assumption, normality of the data was obtained as the absolute values of the ratios of Skewness and Kurtosis over their standard errors were all lower than 1.96. As for the reliability of the instruments, a KR-21 reliability was performed. Table 1 displays the KR-21 reliability indices for the proficiency test, the pretest, the posttest and the delayed posttest. The reliability indices for the four tests were .88, .83, .98 and .95 respectively.

TABLE 1.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND KR-21 RELIABILITY INDICES

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	KR-21
Proficiency	50	3	30	18.04	6.960	48.447	.88
Pretest	50	0	40	15.10	8.481	71.929	.83
Posttest	50	5	90	33.40	26.696	712.694	.98
Delayed	50	0	75	25.00	17.814	317.347	.95

Regarding homogeneity of variances was met because the results of the Levene's test (F (5, 44) = .890, p = .496) indicated that there were no significant differences between the groups' variances. (Table 2)

TABLE 2.
LEVENE'S TEST OF EQUALITY OF ERROR VARIANCES ON PROFICIENCY TEST

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
	Based on Mean	.890	5	44	.496
	Based on Median	.562	5	44	.729
Proficiency	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.562	5	32.098	.728
	Based on trimmed mean	.834	5	44	.533

Note. The Levene's test based on median was reported

Based on the results displayed in Table 3, (F (2, 44) = .264, p = .769, partial µ2 = .012 representing a weak effect size) it can be claimed that there were not any significant differences between the three groups' means on the proficiency test. Thus it can be claimed that they were homogenous in terms of their general language proficiency prior to the administration of the treatments.

TABLE 3.
TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS; PROFICIENCY TEST BY TREATMENT BY MODES OF TEACHING

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Treatment	25.207	2	12.604	.264	.769	.012
Mode	29.422	1	29.422	.616	.437	.014
Treatment * Mode	233.260	2	116.630	2.440	.099	.100
Error	2103.175	44	47.799			
Total	18646.000	50				

The results displayed in Table 3, (F (1, 44) = .616, p = .437, partial µ2 = .014 representing a weak effect size) indicated that there was not any significant difference between the two modes of teachings' means. As shown in Table 4, the part time (M = 17.12, SE = 1.45) and full time (M = 18.66, SE = 1.33) groups had almost the same means on the proficiency test.

TABLE 4.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS; PROFICIENCY TEST BY MODES OF TEACHING

Mode	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Part Time	17.122	1.452	14.196	20.047
Full Time	18.667	1.331	15.985	21.348

And finally, there was not any significant interaction between types of treatment and modes of teaching on the proficiency test (F (2, 44) = 2.44, p = .099, partial µ2 = .100 representing a weak effect size) (Table 3). As displayed in Table 5, the full time mode of teaching had the highest means across all treatments, except for the oral group where the part time mode had a negligibly higher mean.

TABLE 5.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS; PROFICIENCY TEST BY TREATMENTS BY MODES OF TEACHING

Treatment	Mode	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	Part Time	13.286	2.613	8.019	18.552
	Full Time	20.778	2.305	16.133	25.422
Oral	Part Time	18.857	2.613	13.591	24.124
	Full Time	18.778	2.305	14.133	23.422
Written	Part Time	19.222	2.305	14.578	23.867
	Full Time	16.444	2.305	11.800	21.089

Testing the first research question

The first research question asked if the types of feedback, i.e. explicit written vs. explicit oral and the modes of teaching, i.e. part time vs. full time, had any differential effect on Omani students' accurate use of the passive voice in the posttest. A two-way ANCOVA was run to investigate the effects of types of treatment and modes of teaching on the performance of the participants on the posttest, while controlling for the possible effects of their entry knowledge on passive voice as measured through the pretest. Two-way ANCOVA's assumptions such as normality of the data, reliability of instruments, homogeneity of variances, linear relationship between the covariate (pretest) and (posttest) and homogeneity of regression slopes were met. The former two assumptions were reported earlier. As for homogeneity of variances, the groups enjoyed homogenous variances on the posttest after controlling for the effects of the pretest (F (5, 44) = 2.07, p = .086) (Table 6)

TABLE 6.
LEVENE'S TEST OF EQUALITY OF ERROR VARIANCES; POSTTEST BY TREATMENTS BY MODES OF TEACHING WITH PRETEST

F	df1	df2	Sig.
2.078	5	44	.086

The significant results of the linearity test (Table 7), (F (1, 41) = 20.48, p = .000) rejected the assumption that there was not any linear relationship between the covariate and the dependent variable. Thus it can be claimed that there was a linear relationship between pretest and posttest.

TABLE 7.
TESTING LINEARITY OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRETEST AND POSTTEST OF ACCURATE USE OF PASSIVE VOICE

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Posttest * Pretest	Between Groups	(Combined)	14758.738	8	1844.842	3.751	.002
		Linearity	10071.716	1	10071.716	20.480	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	4687.022	7	669.575	1.362	.247
	Within Groups		20163.262	41	491.787		
	Total		34922.000	49			

And finally; the non-significant three-way interaction between types of treatment, modes of teaching and covariate (F (2, 38) = 2.73, p = .078, Partial η^2 = .126 representing a moderate effect size) indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met.

TABLE 8.
TESTING HOMOGENEITY OF REGRESSION SLOPES

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Treatment	610.610	2	305.305	1.412	.256	.069
Mode	868.745	1	868.745	4.019	.052	.096
Pretest	683.824	1	683.824	3.163	.083	.077
Treatment * Mode	1585.805	2	792.903	3.668	.035	.162
Treatment * Pretest	43.688	2	21.844	.101	.904	.005
Mode * Pretest	8.534	1	8.534	.039	.844	.001
Treatment * Mode * Pretest	1181.834	2	590.917	2.733	.078	.126
Error	8214.715	38	216.177			
Total	90700.000	50				

A two-way ANCOVA was run to investigate the effects of types of treatment and modes of teaching on the performance of the participants on the posttest, while controlling for the possible effects of their entry knowledge on passive voice as measured through the pretest. Based on the results in Table 9, $(F_{(2, 43)} = 13.30, p = .000$, partial $\mu2 = .382$ representing a large effect size) it can be claimed that there were significant differences between the three groups' mean values on the posttest.

TABLE 9.
TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS; POSTTEST BY TREATMENTS BY MODES OF TEACHING WITH PRETEST

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Pretest	1998.176	1	1998.176	8.540	.006	.166
Treatment	6225.399	2	3112.699	13.304	.000	.382
Mode	5225.157	1	5225.157	22.333	.000	.342
Treatment * Mode	4191.391	2	2095.695	8.957	.001	.294
Error	10060.554	43	233.966			
Total	90700.000	50				

Table 10 displays the descriptive statistics for oral, written and control groups on the posttest after controlling for the effects of the pretest. The oral group (M = 44.06) had the highest mean value on the posttest, followed by the written (M = 39.95) and the control (M = 16.38) groups.

TABLE 10.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS; POSTTEST BY TREATMENTS WITH PRETEST

Treatment	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	16.380[a]	4.072	8.168	24.592
Oral	44.069[a]	3.862	36.279	51.858
Written	39.958[a]	3.709	32.479	47.438

The results of the post-hoc comparison tests (Table 11) indicated that explicit written group (M = 39.95) significantly outperformed the control group (M = 16.38) on the posttest (MD = 27.68, p = .000); that explicit oral group (M = 44.06) significantly outperformed the control group (M = 16.38) on the posttest (MD = 23.57, p = .000); and that no significant difference was observed between explicit oral (M = 44.06) and explicit written (M = 39.95) groups' mean values on the posttest (MD = 4.11, p = .443).

TABLE 11.
PAIRWISE COMPARISONS: POSTTEST BY TREATMENTS WITH PRETEST

(I) Treatment	(J) Treatment	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Oral	Control	27.689*	5.671	.000	16.252	39.125
	Written	4.110	5.314	.443	-6.606	14.827
Written	Control	23.578*	5.712	.000	12.060	35.097

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Finally, based on the results displayed in Table 9 above and Table 12 below, $(F_{(1, 44)} = 22.33, p = .000$, partial $\mu2 = .342$ representing a large effect size), it can be claimed that the part time group (M = 43.78) had a significantly higher mean than the full time group (M = 23.15) on the posttest.

TABLE 12.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS; POSTTEST BY MODES OF TEACHING WITH PRETEST

Mode	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Part Time	43.781[a]	3.212	37.303	50.260
Full Time	23.156[a]	2.950	17.207	29.106

a. Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Pretest = 15.10.

The results displayed in Table 9, showed that there was a significant interaction between the types of feedback and the modes of teaching on the posttest (F (2, 43) = 8.95, p = .001, partial µ2 = .294 representing a large effect size).

Testing the second research question

The second research question asked if the types of feedback, i.e. explicit written vs. explicit oral and the modes of teaching, i.e. part time vs. full time, have any effect on Omani students' retention of the passive voice in the delayed posttest. A two-way ANCOVA was run. Before discussing the results, it should be noted that the groups enjoyed homogenous variances on the delayed posttest (F (5, 44) = .962, p = .451).

Based on the results displayed in Table 13 (F (2, 44) = 10.29, p = .000, partial µ2 = .319 representing a large effect size), it can be claimed that there were significant differences between the three groups' mean values on the delayed posttest.

TABLE 13.
TESTS OF BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS; DELAYED POSTTEST BY TREATMENTS BY MODES OF TEACHING

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Treatment	3335.939	2	1667.969	10.291	.000	.319
Mode	2261.422	1	2261.422	13.952	.001	.241
Treatment * Mode	2386.128	2	1193.064	7.361	.002	.251
Error	7131.746	44	162.085			
Total	46800.000	50				

Table 14 displays the descriptive statistics for oral, written and control groups on the delayed posttest. The written group (M = 35.27) had the highest mean on the delayed posttest, followed by the oral (M = 23.33) and the control (M = 15.59) groups.

TABLE 14.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS; DELAYED POSTTEST BY TREATMENTS WITH PRETEST

Treatment	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Control	15.595	3.208	9.130	22.060
Oral	23.333	3.208	16.868	29.799
Written	35.278	3.001	29.230	41.325

The results of the post-hoc comparison (Table 15) tests indicated that explicit written group (M = 35.27) significantly outperformed the control group (M = 15.59; MD = 19.97, p = .000) on the delayed posttest; that there was not any significant difference between the explicit oral (M = 23.33) and control (M = 15.59) groups' mean values on the delayed posttest (MD = 7.81, p = .233) and that the written group (M = 35.27) significantly outperformed the oral group (M = 23.33) on the delayed posttest (MD = 12.15, p = .029).

TABLE 15.
PAIRWISE COMPARISONS; DELAYED POSTTEST BY TREATMENTS WITH PRETEST

(I) Treatment	(J) Treatment	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Written	Control	19.97*	4.374	.000	8.88	31.05
	Oral	12.15*	4.374	.029	1.07	23.24
Oral	Control	7.81	4.501	.233	-3.59	19.22

*. The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

Based on the results displayed in Table 13 above and Table 16 below, (F (1, 44) = 13.95, p = .001, partial µ2 = .241 representing a large effect size), it can be claimed that the part time group (M = 31.50) had a significantly higher mean than the full time group (M = 17.96) on the delayed posttest.

TABLE 16.
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS; DELAYED POSTTEST BY MODES OF TEACHING WITH PRETEST

Mode	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Part Time	31.508	2.673	26.120	36.896
Full Time	17.963	2.450	13.025	22.901

VII. DISCUSSION

The first research question asked if the types of feedback, i.e. explicit written vs. explicit oral and the modes of teaching, i.e. part time vs. full time, had any differential effect on Omani College students' accurate use of the passive voice in the posttest. The results indicated that both explicit written and explicit oral CF did have significant effects on Omani College students' accurate use of the passive voice in the posttest. However, no significant difference was found between the effects of explicit written and explicit oral on the students' accurate use of the passive voice. This may mean that explicit written and explicit oral have been equally effective.

With respect to the modes of teaching (part time vs. full time), they were found to be differentially effective in the sense that part time students had a significantly higher mean value than that of the full time students in the post test meaning further that part time students benefitted more from the feedback provided than the full time students in using the passive voice accurately.

The second research question asked if the types of feedback, i.e. explicit written vs. explicit oral and the modes of teaching, i.e. part time vs. full time, had any differential effect on Omani students' retention of the passive voice. The results indicated that while explicit written CF did have a significant effect on Omani students' retention of the passive voice, explicit oral CF did not. In other words, there was no significant difference between the effect of explicit oral CF and the control group. In addition, a significant difference was found between explicit written CF and explicit oral CF on the students' retention of the passive voice in the delayed posttest meaning that explicit written was found to be more effective on the students' performance. Finally, With respect to the modes of teaching (part time vs. full time), they were found to be differentially effective in the sense that part time students were found to have benefitted more from the feedback provided compared to the full time students.

Based on the post test results, three differences can be identified. The first difference is between the experimental groups' pretest and their posttest performances which is significant as both groups' pretest scores and their posttest scores are significantly different from each other showing improvement from the pretest to the posttest while this is not the case in the control groups. The second difference is between explicit written and explicit oral groups' performances on the posttest which is NOT significant. The third difference is between part-time vs. full-time students' performance on the posttest which is significant. This shows that students in part-time vs. full-time have not benefitted from the given feedback in the same way as part time students did benefit more from the feedback given. There may be reasons for the differences observed.

Similarly, and based on the delayed posttest results, a couple of differences can be identified. The first difference is between explicit written and explicit oral on the one hand and explicit written and control group on the other. In other words, while explicit written CF group seem to have been significantly affected by the feedback provided, explicit oral group does not as explicit oral group did not perform better than the control group who did not receive any feedback. This may mean that participants in explicit oral group may have forgotten the feedback they received two session ago. Their performance was no different from that of the control group.

There might be reasons for the difference pointed out. Regarding the difference between the experimental groups on the one hand and the control groups on the other, feedback can be the reason as to why they performed better than the control groups in the posttest. In other words, the fact that feedback was explicit rather than implicit can explain why experimental groups outperformed the control groups. The difference can be attributed to the explicit feedback effect and the input enhancement effect they may have had leading to the experimental groups' better performance given that similar difference has already been observed by other researchers. For example, Bitchner and Knoch (2008) found out explicit feedback did assist learners clarify the points for themselves by making the presented learning input salient thereby helping them remove any possible doubts or misunderstandings of the input. Likewise, they pointed out that explicit feedback did assist learners to notice issues including grammar thereby helping them on their hypothesis making and testing. Finally, as Scrivener's (2005) points out, explicit feedback can be the fastest, and most helpful type of help that each and every student may be provided with. Though in this case written explicit seem to have worked better in the delayed posttest if not in the posttest. Finally, Caroll's (2001) views may be noteworthy here to note that explicit feedback can be more effective than implicit feedback. However, the aforementioned result is not in line with what Ellis et al (2013, p.363) proposed that "the advice given to teachers is to try to elicit self-correction from the learners rather than to correct them directly and explicitly."

With respect to part-time and full-time students' difference, there can be a number of explanations. The first reason can be attributed to the students' study behaviour. While full-time students had not been employed before attending their class, part-time students had been employed. The reason as to why part-time students attended evening classes was that they were busy with their jobs in the morning and they had no option but to attend their evening classes. Furthermore, and based on their class attendance record, part-time students did have better class attendance despite being busier with their work during the day. Besides, they showed more motivation to get involved in class activities. Finally, part-time students were seeking carrier promotion in addition to their higher education degree.

The second reason can be attributed to nature of the part-time and full-time students' classes. While part time students do attend from 5:00 to 8:30 in the evening, they are given a 20 minutes break after 110 minutes of teaching. This is not the case with full time students who attend their class in the morning and a break of 24 to 36 hours is given before they attend their second session of the week. This 20 minutes vs. 24/36 hours break difference might explain the reason as to why full-time and part-time students performed differently. Another reason is that full-time students may have been preoccupied with other modules so that they may have forgotten about the feedback they were provided with. The third reason can be attributed to the fact that part-time groups and full-time groups did not have the same teachers. Although for the sake of consistency, the researcher did attend both part-time and full-time classes and administered the tests, marked the tests and provided them with the required feedback, full-time students may not have taken the feedback they received as seriously as they did in the part-time groups wo were sitting in the researcher's class as the regular students.

VIII. Conclusion

To conclude, and based on the results, it may not be too unrealistic to say that explicit written and explicit oral CF are both effective in raising the students' awareness to write correctly in their subsequent writing. Although there was no significant difference between the two types of feedback in the posttest, there was a significant difference between the two in the delayed posttest showing that explicit written could last longer due to the nature of the medium. In other words, while both types of feedback have been effective, explicit written feedback has been more effective in the delayed posttest. This may have been due to the possibility that explicit oral feedback may have had less lasting and more ephemeral effect. In other words, those receiving oral feedback, because of poor listening skills, may have been suffered and poor listening skills may have been responsible for the participants' performance in the post test and in the delayed posttest in that their feedback experience has been affected negatively. Indeed, some kind of initial comprehension check could have been given indicating that the feedback had actually been registered. Like any other study, this study has some limitations. The first limitation is the nature of the sampling which was convenience sampling. The second limitation could be the type of treatment provided which was based on the errors participants had made while answering the pretest items. This can be addressed in future studies where random sampling and writing samples can be employed.

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Woman Language: Features and Historic Change

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Abstract—**This paper first briefly looks at the previous studies done on female language from 1970s till now. Then it makes a brief analysis of some of the distinctive features of female language. Explanations about the reasons as to why these feature exist are offered from the physiological, psychological, social historical and social cultural standpoint. Finally, some changes about the woman language in recent years are expounded.**

Index Terms—**woman language, Women's Movement, language change**

I. Literature Review on Woman Language Study

The research on woman language is inaugurated by the publication of Robin Tolmach Lakeoff's book *Language and Woman's Place* in 1975, and it has long been reckoned as the beginning of the linguistic subfield of language and gender studies. After her initial observation, many other efforts have been made to enhance the study in this field. Here I want to mention some of the key influential contributions that have been made during these four decades.

Due to the popularity of radical feminism in 1970s, scholars located the woman language within historical context both within language and gender research and within feminist scholarship.

Sally McConnel-Ginet who is active in feminist, gender and sexuality studies makes a research on how ideologies are constructed through language and points out the fundamental relationship between subjectivity, stance and language.

Janet Holmes, the New Zealand linguist, through drawing on several linguistic corpora, notifies the central role that woman language plays in the politeness theory within linguistics, a role often overlooked by scholars who miss the connection between the gendered linguistic features---politeness and power.

There are also attempts to study woman language from inter-culture communication. Deborah Tannen discusses the importance of cultural differences in woman language. She proposes the genderlect theory and argues that gender is fundamentally a component of conversational style, along with ethnicity, region, age, class, and other factors.

Some scholars focus on exceptional speakers in addition to those who conform to gender ideologies. Kira Halls, the linguist and anthropologist, shows that there are some men, who remove themselves from structures of power also use feminine linguistic practices (hippies, gays and academics). Thus "women's language" is not fundamentally about gender but more basically about the displayed lack of power. By this, she locates the relationship between language and gender within the framework of power.

A different relationship between woman language and power is further explored by Jenny Cook-Gumperz (1977). She demonstrates the ways in which preschool girls experiment with and against powerful language. As a little girl learns to become a "lady", she also learns how to use language strategically, though not always successfully.

Shari Kendall (1999) in her research addresses the place of mothers in gendered language socialization. She notes the difference between the roles that a mother and father assume in interacting with their daughter at dinner time.

The woman language research extends as far as the technological area. Susan C. Herring's extensive research (1999) on gender and computer-mediated communication poses a contrary to the "technological determinism" of some feminists, which holds that cyberspace renders gender invisible and that there are sharp gender inequities in cyberspace.

There are also some linguists who notify the diversity of ways that women use language. Judith Mattson Bean (2006) considers how professional woman negotiates gendered expectations with her public role. They describe how the powerful women report their use of profanity to express authority and strong emotion but mitigate their self-description by using hedges. Thus, they conclude that woman identity is more a matter of social attribution and less a matter of choice---that's to say, gender identities are culturally constrained.

The research is also addressed towards a group of speakers who must negotiate both racist ideologies and gender stereotypes. Marcyliena Morgan (2005) demonstrates how features of "woman language" characterizes the racial subordination and shows how African American women today exploit and reject elements of white "women's language" in indexing their identity. Mendoza-Denton (2011) points to her own research on class, gender and ethnicity, focusing on how recent-immigrant, working class Mexican girls confront the stereotype of cultural conservatism and linguistic conservatism.

What has been mentioned are the chief achievements attained since 1970s. The range and diversity of the research on woman language continue to offer a rich theoretical basis for new work on the relationship of language, gender and sexuality in social life. These researches suggest that there is still much work remains to be done on the feminist linguistics and female culture study.

II. Features of Woman Language

Before this issue is deeply explored, it is necessary to analyse the following pairs of sentences.
A1: Gee, this hat is so lovely.
B1: This hat is not bad.
A2: Oh dear, you've put the peanut butter in the fridge again.
B2: Shit, you've put the peanut butter in the fridge again.
A3: You know, I really sort of hate driving because it's rather boring.
B3: I hate driving because it's boring.

Even people without linguistic knowledge will easily and definitely classify A1,A2,A3 as the typical woman language; while B1,B2,B3 are the man language. Some clues exist here, upon which people base their conclusions. Woman language is a lot different from man language with its unique characteristics.

The research on woman language can be traced back to 1664, when several features of woman language had been taken notice of by some anthropologists. As early as 1920s, Otto Jesperson pointed out that woman tried their best to avoid rude and aggressive expressions in their verbal communication. (Xu, 1997) However, this topic hadn't been widely explored until 1960s when feminist movement came into life and reached its peak. Under this huge wave, American linguist Robin Lakeoff proposed the term "woman language" in 1973 and two years later she published her groundbreaking work Language and Women's Place which triggered a wide-spread interest among linguists as well as other researchers in topic on woman language. Her research has laid a corner stone for all the future investigation on this topic.

In some countries or areas, women use their language differently in term of phonology, morphology and syntax. They even possess their own language, with Nvshu in China as a typical example.

Phonological differences between speech of men and women have been noted in a variety of languages. In Gros Ventre, an American Indian language of the northeast United State, women have palatalized velar stops. For example, female says "kjasta", male says "djatsa". In a northeast Asian language, Yukaghir, women have /ts/ and /dz/, differing from men's /tj/ and /dj/. In Bengali men often substitute /l/ for initial /n/; while women do not do this. Likewise, in a Siberian language, Chukchi, men but not women, often drop /n/ and /t/ when they occur between vowels, e.g. female nitvaqenat and male nitvaquat. School girls in Scotland apparently pronounce the "t" in words like "water" and "got" more often than school boys, who prefer to substitute a glottal stop. In Koasati, an American language spoken in southwestern Louisiana, among other sex-linked differences, men often pronounced an "s" at the end of verbs but women did not; for instance, male says "lakaws" and female "lakaw". In Japanese language, similarly, for the same character "ga", women and men pronounced differently. Women say /na:/, while men say /ga:/. However, there's also a change over for young women to pronounce "ga" as /ga: /.

There are certainly gender-related differences in word choice in various languages. Japanese women demonstrate their linguistic traits when they speak, for example, by the use of a sentence final "ne" or another "wa". In Japanese, too, a male speaker refers to himself as "boku" or "ore" whereas a female speaker uses "watashi"or "atashi".For example, if a man says "boku o chia o nomu"(I will drink tea), a woman should say "atashi o chia o nomuwa". Children learn to make these distinctions very early in life.. In polite conversation, a female speaker of Thai refers to herself as "dichan" whereas a man uses "phom". In Thai, too, women emphasize a repeated action through reduplication, ie, by repeating the verb, whereas men place a descriptive verb, "mak", after the verb instead. The Yana language in California contains special forms for use in speech by woman.

The differences mentioned above are more or less conventionalized historically. If the languages are used cross-genderedly, people in that culture will render it grammatically inappropriate.

Besides what have been mentioned, Robin Lakeoff in her book Language and Women's Place proposed several features of woman language and she also provides some insightful discussion related to them. The data on which she based her claims have been gathered by introspection. She has examined her own speech and that of her acquaintances and has used her own intuitions in analyzing them.

Some anthropologists and sociolinguists who prefer to use the data-gathering techniques, such as the recording of random conversation may object to these introspection methods. Yet, later research results have shown that most of these so called dubious introspections proved to be surprisingly correct and accurate. Although Lakeoff's conclusion about woman language features is not all inclusive, it's of great significance in pointing out for the further research in this area. Just as what has been said, woman language shows up in all levels of the grammar of English.

Generally speaking, woman language is different from man language in three aspects.

A.   Specialized Vocabulary

Compared with man, woman tends to use more specialized color terms. For example, they will use mauve or lavender instead of purple. "…words like beige, aquamarine and so on are unremarkable in woman's active vocabulary, but absent from that of man…" (Lakeoff, 1975, P73)

According to Lakeoff, woman's discrimination of color might be attributed to women's tender feelings and high sensitivity. "A clue is contained in the way men in our society view other 'unworldly' topics, such as high culture and church, as outside the world of men's work, relegated to women and men whose masculinity is not unquestionable. Men tend to relegate to women things that are not of concern to them, or do not involve their egos…" (Lakeoff, 1975, P43) This means that since women are not expected to make decisions on important things, they focus their energy on some

noncrucial matters as a comfort. Compared with this explanation, most feminists believe that women discriminate color terms better because they are more sensitive.

Another theory can also prove this point. According to the Sapir-Whorf's cultural relativism, the evolution of color terms can reflect the level of a culture's development. The cognitive psychologists are now exploring into the issue about whether woman's psychological world is more developed than that of man's. Eleanor Rosch, through many experiments put forward the "prototypical theory" and ultimately formed a proposition: man and woman have the same cognitive feature in terms of color sense, hue discrimination and color codification. In addition to this, many researches also testified Lakeoff's view. Not only do women like employing the fancy color terms, but also they probably have a larger and richer color corpus. However, there are some issues remained to be explored as to how women's universal advantage in language acquisition is shown through their learning of color terms and what the statistical differences of color code information storage, procession and extraction are.

B.   Milder Expletives

In Lakeoff's book, the milder expletives are also called "weaker" expletives contrasting to man's "stronger" expletives. For example, when man uses "Dam it" or "shit", woman always uses "Darn!" The difference between using "shit" or "dam" as opposed to "dear" lies in how forcefully one says how one feels. "…choice of particle is a function of how strongly one allows oneself to feel about something, so that the strength of an emotion conveyed in a sentence corresponds to the strength of the particle." (Lakeoff, 1975, P44)

It might be asserted that male is more emotional than female. However, it's neither what we feel in our daily life nor can it be supported by our intuition. Quite contrarily, women always are regarded as more emotional. They swear or curse less because they are socially unacceptable. An English proverb can offer an explanation: A whistling sailor, a crowing hen and a swearing woman ought all three to go to hell together. Lakeoff also pointed out that it's inappropriate to use such trivial particles as "goodness" "oh, dear" in a very serious situation. For example, you can't say, "oh dear, my baby is kidnapped." or "Goodness, my hair is on fire!", unless you are joking.

C.   Empty Adjectives

There are adjectives that can be used by both sexes to show their approbation or admiration for something. But some adjectives are largely confined to women. Here is a list:

neutral	women only
great	adorable
terrify	charming
cool	sweet
neat	lovely

The column on the left are some neutral terms which are used by both sexes; the terms on the right column are, in most cases, restricted for women.

In Chinese, there are also some words which are mostly restricted to women, for example, "Wasai"(Wow) "Hao piaoliang"(Gorgeous). What invariably happens is that when a man uses the words solely reserved for woman, he'll be laughed at and this sometimes could even damage his reputation.

However, it shouldn't be inferred from this that a woman's use of "woman's words" is without its risks. For instance, if a woman wants to be a chief executive, she should say "What a terrific idea." instead of "What a divine idea". What this implies is that woman, if she wants to move into higher position, shouldn't speak like a woman, because, according to Lakeoff's explanation, the empty adjectives like "divine" are so trivial that they don't deserve any attention at all. "…women's language suggests that concepts to which they are applied are not relevant to the real world of (male) influence and power". (Lakeoff, 1975,P44)

As it has been mentioned, if we say woman's use of milder expletives shows that she doesn't have strong feelings, then the fact that she can employ more adjectives show that she does have strong feelings. Is this a kind of paradox? It can be justifiably said, not showing any bias toward either sex, that man and woman both have strong feelings which are usually expressed in quite different situations as well as in different manners. Woman is more easily moved than man. When she is happy or depressed, she likes using these empty adjectives; while man is more apt to pick up a temper, hence he swears or curses more frequently and heavily than woman when he gets angry.

D.   Frequent Use of Tag-question

There is no syntactic rule in English that only women may use. However, there's one rule that women will use in more conversational situations than men. This is the rule of tag-question formation.

Tag question is mid-way between an outright statement and a yes-no question. It's less assertive than the former, but more confident than the latter. It is used when the speaker is not quite sure about the claim he made. "A tag gives the addressee leeway, not forcing him to go along with the view of the speaker." (Pride, J.B, 1986, P248) There are some conditions on which the tag question can serve as a way of establishing conversation with others. One of the conditions is that when there is no uncertainty about the truth, in other words, the speaker doesn't need confirmation from the listener, the tag question might be used, for example, "Sunny day, isn't it?" Apart from this, there are other possible interpretations of tag question. One of them is that the speaker has already had a definite opinion in his mind, but he's

unwilling to state it baldly. "These sentence types provide a means whereby a speaker can avoid committing himself…avoid coming into conflict with the addressee." (Pride, J.B, 1986, P245)

This sort of tag question, according to Lakeoff, is much more apt to be used by woman than by man. This claim has been testified by Dubois and Crouth (1975) The frequent use of tag question leaves such an impression on people: women are not sure of themselves and have no views of their own.

Besides this, there's also a peculiar sentence intonation pattern in woman language, which has the form of a declarative answer to a question, but has the rising inflection typical of a yes-no question, for example:

(a): When will dinner be ready?   (b). Oh…around six o'clock?

Although (b) gives a very definite and clear answer, it seems that she is seeking for some kind of confirmation. This way of using language has brought much criticism. One likely criticism is that woman can't be trusted with any real responsibilities, since she can't make up her mind and isn't sure of herself. Here again, it can be seen that people always make hasty judgment on the superficial linguistic behavior that might have nothing to do with woman's inner characteristics. Speaking positively, the frequent employment of the tag questions and rising intonation prove woman's consideration for other's feelings and her willingness to get along well with others, which illustrates her preference of solidarity to competition.

E. Super Polite Forms

Women like using complex and indirect request, when they ask listeners for a favor. Here are five sentences of requests, each being different in terms of degree of politeness.

(a) Open the window.
(b) Please open the window.
(c) Will you open the window?
(d) Will you please open the window?
(e) Won't you open the window?

(a) and (b) are the "overt" imperative sentences which demand listener's straight obedience. It suggests the speaker's superior position to the addressee. Whereas (c) (d) and (e) leave space of consideration for the addressee. "The more particles in a sentence that reinforces the notion that it is a request, rather than an order, the politer the result is". (Lakeoff, 1975,P50) (a) is a direct order; (b) and (c) are simple request; (d) and (e) are compound requests. Obviously, sentences (c) (d) and (e) are the ones women prefer to use. This indicates that the more one compounds a request, the more characteristic it is of woman's speech.

F. Standard Variety

Women prefer using standard form both in syntax and in accent. Much of the evidence has come from the research carried out in Britain and America. The sets of data have provided have one extremely striking feature: women use form more approaching those of the standard. Consider the following figures about the use of non-standard multiple negation (I don't want no one.) in Detroit.

PERCENTAGE OF MULTIPLE NEGATION USED

	UMC	LMC	UWC	LWC
Male	6.3	32.4	40.0	90.1
Female	0.0	1.4	35.6	58.9

(Peter Trudgill,1986)

This suggests that women are far more sensitive to the correctness of grammar than men.

In Norwich English, for example, the same sort of pattern emerges. The table below gives the percentage of non-RP-in' forms (e.g. walkin') used by speakers in different class and sex groups.

PERCENTAGE OF NON-RP-IN' FORMS

	MMC	LMC	UWC	MWC	LWC
Male	4	27	81	91	100
Female	0	3	68	81	97

(Peter Trudgill,1972)

Once again, women use a higher percentage of standard form than men do. Some evidence has also shown the same result from Australia, South Africa and New Zealand.

G. No Sense of Humor

This feature of woman language might be the most obvious and least controversial one. Although lacking precise statistical evidence, I conclude from my own daily observation that most women are not adept at creating and understanding humor. People wouldn't fail to notice that when they are at school or in the work place, it's always the male students or male workers who like cracking jokes rather than females. Most of the stand-up comedians are man. There are historical and social reasons for women's lack of humor. It is known that when a joke is told or played upon a person, he or she will unavoidably be made fun of. Besides, the content of the joke in many cases is a little

inappropriate. The society more often than not won't allow for this damage to morality. This ideology is more deeply rooted in the eastern culture. If a woman always cracks jokes or laughs, she'll be considered as unwomanish and wild. However, in the western countries like U.S, it seems more acceptable.

H.   The Cooperative Conversational Style

Recent years, people begin to move their attention from the language structure to the discourse behavior in interaction. They try to solve the problem on a higher level and in a much more accurate way. According to the observations made by E. Aries on the social interactions, there are some conversational style differences between male and female speakers in the following aspects: (1) topic choice (2) quantity of speech (3) speech strategy

1. Topic Choice

Nearly all the investigations have shown that people of different genders talk on different topics. Generally speaking, women talk more about personal relationships and something that happened immediately, while men tend to talk something impersonal, and they keep distant from the present context of situation. For example, E. Aries (1996) investigated among the middle class people and discovered that women liked talking about personal things and they also liked to express their emotions. Men liked to talk about sports, politics and competitions. This claim has been proved by other researchers as well.

The topic choice differences are not only confined to adult people. Some investigations are made on the daily conversation of the white and black children. J, Brooks- Gunn and W, Matthews (1979) discovered that white boys liked exchanging information while white girls liked expressing their inner emotions. Black boys liked talking about their achievements while black girls liked discussing people's appearances or personal relationships.

2. Quantity of Speech

People for a long time have been holding such a stereotypical view that women talk more than men do. If you look up the words "babble" "chatter" "gab" "gossip" in the dictionary, you can always find a woman image in the example sentences. There is a Chinese saying: "Two women equal a thousand ducks", which describes women's talkativeness. However, what many people have noticed in the social interaction is quite contrary to what we expect.

In most of the places including the street markets, homes, restaurants, parties, meetings, sports events and so on, men talk more than women. This phenomenon is more obvious in the cross-gender conversations, for example, the conversation between couples, relatives, friends or colleagues. There is a funny story: A person had been watching a couple for 3 hours at a party and discovered that the husband spoke 5 times as much as his wife did. But after the party, when people were asked about their impression on this couple, they said the husband spoke too little and the wife was too talkative. This story illustrates that people tend to use different standards when they come to judge the speech behaviours of different sexes.

3.Discourse Strategies

Many studies (Coates, 1985; Tannen,1990) have shown us that the most significant gender differences in speech behaviors lie in the discourse strategies.

Generally speaking, during a conversation, women are more cooperative. Everyone takes turns to speak and they all have their chances. When a woman starts to speak, she always mentions what the previous speaker said and tries as much as she can to relate it to what she is going to say; she focuses on the conversational coherence and fluency. In this way, women usually spend a long time on one single topic. During the process of talking, they pay attention to the listeners' reaction and participation, which can be manifested by using the words like "we", "you" and "let's".

When others are talking, women will respond actively, they use "mm", "hmm" or "yeah" to indicate their attention. Occasionally, they'll offer some comments and raise some questions. They seldom interrupt others. Even if they do, they will add an apology like "Sorry to interrupt". When they want to express different opinions, their speech tends to be round about and hesitated. Some mitigating devices are often used like "sort of", "maybe" and "I guess". They hardly pose straightforward challenge to other people's opinions.

Compared with women, men tend to show strong competitiveness in their talk. They like to manipulate the topic and unwilling to give away "floor" to others, which always result in the fact that one person speaks too much, while others have no chances to speak. When men start talking, they seldom mention the previous speaker's talk. They just like to talk about what they want to say. Consequently, there is always a sharp switch of topic; also, there is not so much coherence in what they say. As to the listeners, men are not as concerned as women about their reaction and participation.

Many researchers (Zimmerman & West, 1975; Coates, 1985; Tannen, 1990) also studied the speeches in the cross-gender conversations. They discovered that in the cross-gender conversation, there are also significant differences between male and female and these differences are even larger. The differences have produced great effects on their communication.

Aries (1996) has shown that women are more willing to provide topics than men do, but men generally decide which topic should be talked on. For example, some linguists studied some family conversations by way of recording. They discovered that wives produced topics two times as many as husband did. However, most of these topics had to be given up for the husbands' lack of interest. Contrarily, although husbands proposed fewer topics, nearly all of them received warm responses from wives. Consequently, the cross-gender conversation is totally under men's control.

Why do men have more chances to speak? Why is it easier for them to talk what they like to talk about? Why can

they control the whole process of talking? One of the reasons may be that women are more cooperative and more responsive. Another reason may be the differences of interruption between men and women. A number of researchers have done some surveys on the interruption of speech (Zimmerman & West, 1975; Tannen, 1990). The result has shown that, whether they are adults or adolescents; men interrupt women much more than women interrupt men. In this way, women's opportunity to speak is lost due to men's frequent "aggression". When interrupted, women will keep silent more often than men do and the "silence" period lasts much longer. Undoubtedly, these differences will only enhance the "imbalance" in the cross- gender communication.

Men and women have different understandings about use of questioning in conversation. During the talk, women like asking questions to indicate their interest in conversation and they find it a good way of keeping the speaker's mood for talking. To put it another way, they consider questioning being a strategy of keeping and promoting communication. However, men question for information. Women's constant questioning is equally considered by men as an interruption of the conversation.

Similarly, men and women hold different views towards the "verbal aggressiveness" like swearing, shouting and cursing. Women take them as unfriendly behavior or a great damage to the normal conversation. Quite contrarily, men consider them unavoidable and necessary, or the conversation would be very boring.

These differences in speech behavior can not only cause the conflicts between men and women but also lead to the communication failure. Wives' complaint to husbands "Why don't you listen to me?" has become a widespread phenomenon around the world.

I.   Higher Pitch and Rising Intonation Patterns

Women also differ from men in terms of voice quality, pitch and intonation patterns. The differences in voice quality; pitch and intonation patterns between sexes are due to the different biological structures, cultures, economic positions and communication backgrounds between man and woman.

Biologically speaking, women's speaking organ is different from that of men's. The vocal cords of the former are shorter and thinner and less elastic than the latter's. Women's average phonetic value is higher than that of men's. According to a survey made in America, men's voice frequency ranges from 78-698, while woman's ranges from 139-1108.

Beside these biological reasons, some social as well as psychological reasons also give rise to the differences of voice qualities between men and women. Speech signal is a complex acoustic activity, which can provide information about speaker's identity, individuality and emotions. In American English, there're two ways of pronunciation. When there's a vowel in front of a nasal: nasalization and non-nasalization. Austin (1962) discovered that nasalization is widely noted in the case of male rather than female. It's probably because nasalization will give an impression of roughness which is unsuitable for women's graceful image.

1. Higher Pitch

Pitch refers to the frequency of vocal cord vibration. The higher the frequency is, the higher the pitch is. Generally speaking, men's pitch ranges from 100-150H, women 200-325H. Many documentary materials have shown that high pitch is one of the remarking features of woman language. However, in the daily use of language, women often intentionally lower their pitch in various contexts. In people's mind, high pitch can hardly be related to serious topic. Not only is it the case in western culture, but also it is true in eastern culture. Almost in any of the society, high pitch reminds people of quarrelling or gossiping or even wordy while the low pitch means seriousness and dignity. Women's intentional lowing of their pitch can be best explained by the speech accommodation theory which suggests that addressors make certain modifications about their speech according to different contexts in order to accommodate themselves appropriately to the situations.

2. Rising Intonation Pattern

There are some gender-differentiated intonation patterns in English. Coming to 1970, studies in this area came up one after another. These researches generally demonstrated three points: first, psychologically, women's emotion is more outward, so their intonation pattern varies much more than men. Secondly, in societies, man's instrumental feature is emphasized while woman's social/emotional feature is more emphasized than their instrumental feature, which gives rise to the differences in the outer linguistic form between men and women. Last, in society, women lack sense of security and strong determination, so they like using the rising intonation.

III.   REASONS OF THESE FEATURES

A.   Physiological Reasons

Physiologically, women are different from men. Some scientists recently made an acclamation that they have found more statistics to prove that women speak more than men. This evidence has consolidated people's general impression on women. It is said that women's emotion is affected by endocrine hormone. Consequently, their emotion variation is bigger than men's, especially in its exuberating period, like before or after the menstruation.

All these explanations are intended to support one viewpoint: women speak much more than men, which, as has been mentioned earlier, is quite contrary to the fact. Is this a paradox? It might be explained in this way: women have strong willingness to speak; they like speaking and also are good at speaking. However, they have no chance to speak for the

reason that they are most of the times suppressed by men, especially in the public domain.

B. Psychological Reasons

1. Lack in Competitiveness

Most of women, especially women in the conservative areas are content with what they are. Unlike men, they don't want to be the best in everything. What they are concerned about is how to establish a good relationship with others rather than taking the lead in the group. When there's conflict, they're in most cases willing to make a compromise. So when women participate in the conversation, they are more willing to take on a supportive role instead of playing the central role. They would rather give up the floor than pick up the fight with other speakers.

2. Lack in Confidence and Sense of Security

People often hear women say 'Oh, dear! What shall I do?' They often question their own ability to handle difficult situations, or even the things they are adept at. Even if they feel sure about something, they will not take a venture to do it or to speak it out. Before making any real decision, they always like asking somebody else for advice or for conformation. Very rarely can we hear a woman say an absolute "Yes" or "No". Their indeterminacy is shown in the sentences they use, for instance, "He's probably right", "I kind of like this decision.", "John is coming back, isn't he?" However, if considered in a positive way, women's lack of confidence can also be reckoned as modesty, which is their remarkable virtue as females. There has always been something that they find in need of improving. Hence, there is always room for change in what they have just said. That's to say, if they want to take back their words, people could hardly be able to find fault with them.

3. Higher Sensitivity

It's widely acknowledged that women's feeling is tender and exquisite. They can notice every tiny little thing men ignore and try to make sense of it. To them, words usually don't mean what they appear to mean. Thus, one should by no means take what she says literally. When they send out an invitation, ask for a favour or express a viewpoint, they usually do it in a roundabout way instead of doing it straightforwardly. There's always implied meaning in what they say. Sometimes, people even have to rack their brains to discern the implied meaning. That's why quarrels frequently happen between couples. Women's sensitiveness can lead to men's misunderstanding.

Here are some interesting examples to illustrate woman's usual implied meaning by what they say:

No= Yes

Yes=No.

Maybe=No.

I'm sorry= It's you who should have felt sorry.

Go on with your own things= Please stop.

You are mannish= you should shave your beard.

This kitchen isn't good enough= We need a new house.

Do you love me? = Get prepared psychologically, I want something expensive.

In a minute= you'd better go to watch TV for an hour.

Another example is given to show women's tactfulness in their speech. If a lady past her prime time is asked about her age, she always answers, for example, "I have passed the age when I believe that man will change" or "I have passed the age when I want to get married."

C. Social Reasons

1. Social-historical Reasons

In the primitive society, survival is the most important in human life; people attached great importance to child bearing, so women played a dominant role in social and economic life. They took on important tasks such as hunting and ploughing. Their social status was much higher than that of men. However, as society gradually developed, due to the rough living environment and primitive manner of production, physical power and physical labour had been the primary means for human beings to fight against nature. Consequently, men with strong physical power, were pushed to the leading position. Since then, men have begun to undertake the heavy labour work. As the living style changed, there came into popularity of such an ideology: "The stronger, the superior; the weaker, the inferior." Male and female formed different experiences and psychological features in their respective working domain, which enhanced the polarization of personality trend and social status, which in turn gave rise to the conversion of social relation. This led to the consequences that patriarchy and andocentrism were consolidated both as a social order and a social convention. Men had become the representative of human civilization and the dominator of human society; contrarily, woman had to slide into the subordinate position and had to take on the supportive role. They hadn't their own voice and their own individuality. They even hadn't their own names.

In today's society, patriarchy has become a pretext to safeguard authority and social order. The gender discrimination has been entitled such good names as "social morality" and "social convention", which mostly tell a woman what's right and what's wrong. Society requires woman's behaviour to be different from that in man's society and culture. Women are given a set of different teaching based on their gender. Once their sex is determined physiologically, their names as well as clothing are different from men's. They are expected to become gentle and docile. If their behaviours didn't adhere to social conventions, they would be reproached, repelled or even punished.

2. Social-cultural Reasons

In both eastern and western countries, the religions and languages contain a great number of stories about women's degeneration. In the Christian Bible Old Testament---Genesis: Eve disobeyed God's order and ate the forbidden fruit, thus was driven out of the Garden of Eden. She is obviously the source of human's original sin. In the Greek myth, Zeus, in order to revenge Prometheus, who stole fire from Olympus, created Pandora to send disasters to human world. Also, in the war of Troy, two countries fought for decades for the most beautiful woman in the world---Helen. So there's a proverb goes: No war without woman. In ancient China, two kings got so addicted to the great beauty of women that they couldn't be able to deal with state affair.

Here, in very general terms, at various times throughout history, all the female and male images in the legendary not only reflect the culture and social customs, but also have a huge impact on the ideology of later generation.

IV.   WOMAN LANGUAGE CHANGE

One of the major functions of language is that it serves as a tool of communication. Hence, language is closely related to our society and it changes and develops with the development of human world.

For woman language, it has changed considerably and will be changing in the future. So when efforts are exerted to make people believe the features of woman language mentioned early on, it's no strange case that they will raise controversies. Although we are not feminists, yet in the world today, we find these traditional views on woman language are not as justifiable as it was before. It's an undeniable truth that more and more women are getting much tougher and diversified than before. That's to say, apart from the traditional features which are still the hallmark of woman language, new features have been making their ways into it. The followings are some changes that have taken place until now.

A.   More Cursing and Swearing

More and more women are now beginning to employ the terms that used to be forbidden by the social morality. This becomes even more obvious among young women or female teenagers. The followings are some sentences drawn from the most popular American TV series---Friends.

Monica (a head chef in a New York restaurant): Are you nuts? We've got George Stephano poulor's Pizza. (Season 1 Episode 4)

Monica: George, baby, drop the towel. (This happens when George, the guy whom she is peeping, covering his private part)(Season 1 Episode 4)

Rachael: (the head of Ralph Lauren Company): Come on! You guys can pee standing up. (Season 1 Episode 4)

Phoebe (a masseuse): I just want to bite his bottom lip. (When Phoebe sees Rachael's new boyfriend Paul) (Season 1 Episode 4)

Monica: Oh, really? So why was I busting my ass to make this delicious thanksgiving dinner. (Season 1 Episode 9)

Rachael: Oh, yeah? Well unless you pushed a desk out of your vagina, not the same thing. (Rachael has just given birth to a baby) (Season 9 Episode 8)

Amy (Rachael's sister): You bitch! You just think you are so perfect. (Rachael's having a fight with her sister--Amy) (Season 9 Episode 8)

Languages in situational comedies are mostly based on real life conversations. From these conversations, we note that these women tend to employ a huge number of forbidden words like cursing or swearing. They don't even feel shy to show their desire for men through the language they use. These are the examples of women's discourse that is "testimonial" to their social power.

B.   More External Topics

Women begin to include more external subjects into their conversations. With women's gradually coming out of their home and making their way into the public domain, they are no longer content themselves with the role of baby-carers or the housekeepers. More women especially the young girls are getting more and more interested in talking about Kobe Bryan and Kofi Annan.

The emergence of more women politicians serves as a great factor that contributes to women's ever-increasing concern about state affairs. Today, we have ever increasing number of women politicians coming up the political arena: Thatcher, Clinton, Rice, to name a few, which has denounced the traditional view that women are unfit for politics. The notion that women can do as equally well as men now seems to make more sense. Since women politicians and women athletes are making greater achievements, there's no reason why they couldn't talk of the great contributions they have made. In the chatting room on the Internet, many girls are enthusiastic about mentioning various sports championships and tournaments and international and national affairs. When we watch the monographic interview broadcasted on TV, women occupied much of the time period allocated to the interaction part with the audience. They gave their opinions, discussed and argued with the host on some specific issues of national or international interest.

Beside their great concern about politics and sports, professional women also like talking about their careers when they gather together, since working has been gradually becoming focus of their lives. In America, there are many sororities, whose members usually gather together at weekends and attend various activities. During these activities, they share their experiences with each other, working experiences being one of their favourite topics. One of the lesbian

groups in Los Angeles called "Wonder Woman's Island" is composed of the most powerful women in American society. Some of them are chief executives; others are millionaires or successful businesswomen. They have no children to look after, no housework to do; they don't depend on men. Most of their topics are confined to art, history, philosophy, commerce and trade.

C. More Straightforwardness

Women begin to speak more straightforwardly than before. This tendency seems to be more obvious in western countries.

Lakeoff once said, "The speech heard in commercials or situation comedies mirrors the speech of television-watching community." (Lakeoff, 1975, P87) If it did not, it wouldn't succeed. Correspondingly, this constructed speech provides clues to sociolinguistic phenomena and can offer insights into the linguistic attitude of viewers. Lakeoff develops this point further when discussing the influence of the media, arguing that the stereotypical images are often more influential than statistics. Women seen on the media have many traits of women's language built into their speech, which has of course been constructed for them by a team of writers. Female viewers pick up on these traits and seek to emulate the characters in their turn. This circuit of influence and reaction is difficult to analyse without close scrutiny of media images.

In the past, women, when they wanted to say something that might cause inconvenience, embarrassments or hurts to other people's feelings, they would speak it in a roundabout way. Now, they are more likely to say them out straightforwardly and feel free to do so.

This is even more obvious when women speak to men. Based on personal experiences and some theories, there are probably three reasons.

First, according to the speech accommodation theory, one speaker will accommodate his or her speech style to the other speaker when they are holding a conversation. Men, who are considered to speak more straightforwardly, carry their masculine conversational style to women in the cross-gender conversation.

Second, men are less sensitive than women. They won't get hurt by what others say as easily as women. So when a woman is trying to tell another man something that might cause offence, she needn't have to take great care. Tannen (1996) have provided both theoretical and statistical justification for this.

Third, there's a Chinese saying: Different sexes are mutually attractive. Women feel more at ease to speak what they want to speak with their male good friends than female good friends. They can scold them; lose temper on them without causing anger on the other side. There are perhaps some challenges towards this claim. Therefore, it needs further clarification. Psychologically speaking, many women subconsciously treat their male good friends as someone they can rely on or feel much closer to. Harry and Sally in the American movie When Harry Met Sally are just two stereotypical images representing such cross gender friendships. The above assumptions are based on the examination of some of my acquaintances' speech. Those familiar with what seems to them more error proof data-gathering technique may object that these introspective methods may produce dubious results. However, to justify the intuition, it should be clarified that any procedure of researching is at some point introspective, and if we are to have a good sample of data to analyse, this will have to be elicital artificially from someone. What's more, it's usually believed that introspection sometimes produces better and accurate result than quantitative analysis.

Even in the most sex-differentiated countries like Japan, woman language is also changing. Zhao Rong (2001) argued that in Japanese language, gender-related differences are largely shown in the ending word of a sentence. For example, women scarcely used "da", which is a word showing certainty. They say "dameyo" instead of "damedayo". However, recent investigation suggests that more and more Japanese women now use "da". The frequency of this usage increases with the decreasing of age: aged 20-30: 52.6%; aged 31-40:30%; aged 41-50: 30%; aged 51-60: 4.5%.

In a random sampling done on the way of expressing the meaning "It's raining", the researchers chose "amedayo; ameyo; amedazo; amedazeyo; amedawayo" five ways. The first three are the male style; the last two are female style. The following table shows light on this issue.

TABLE 1

Word used / Age period	amedayo	ameyo	amedazo	amedaze	amedawayo
21-30	92%	31%	9%	3%	5%
31-40	81%	63%	4%	3%	13%
41-50	51%	74%	2%	2%	22%
51-60	19%	83%	0%	0%	37%

(Zhao Rong, 2001)

From the preceding statistics, we note that Japanese women born before the World War II mainly employ female language. For the women born in 1950s, the chance of their using male language increases; for the women born in 1970s, most of them would use male language.

The result of the random sampling suggests that more and more females use male language in nowadays.

V. REASONS FOR THESE CHANGES

Linguistic change and social change go hand in hand. Thus, it's worth having a look at some factors which contributes to the great change of woman language through these decades.

A. Improvement of Women's Social Status

In the pre-historian period, there was no such problem as gender inequity. People's labour division is based on their physiological features. Women gave birth to children and got engaged in planting; men went out for hunting.

However, when human beings entered the feudal society, the ruling class began to advocate the superiority of male to female. Women's rights and talents were tramped. For instance, Confucius put forward "three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues" for women to abide by. After human race entered the capitalist society, women began to be more and more aware of their inferior position in society and started to demand for gender equity and equality. Thanks to the two waves of women's movements in 1960s and 1970s and women's constant struggle, they now have acquired nearly all types of basic rights they should have: voting rights, educational rights. They are no longer forbidden to work outside. They can be professors, doctors, lawyers, which used to be completely occupied by men. A huge number of women have gotten into the political arena. For the time being, women participate in all kinds of activities in areas like economy, culture, education, social charity work and so on. Li Yinhe (2000) mentioned the famous feminist Simone de Beauvoir's proposal of the three approaches for women to deal with their gender oppression. First, women should go out to the society to work. Second, women should become intellectuals. Third, society should be transformed into socialism to solve the conflicts between subject and object, self and others.

B. Women's Movement

Women's inferiority has its social and cultural reasons. The task of women's movement is to bring challenge to the present social order and try to change it. A clear concept of women's movement can be attained by briefly reviewing some historical events concerned about it.

In 1848, July 19th, the first American Women Right Conference was held in New York. The chief organizers Lucretra Coffin Motol, Elicabeth Cady Standin, Susan B Anthony were later called the "Mothers of Feminist Movement". Some historians labeled the opening of this conference as the beginning of American women's movement.

One activity deserves our special attention--- the "Consciousness Raising Movement" which had been extremely popular in the 60s and 70s. Women would get together and hold conversations; each week, through their personal experiences as daughters, wives, sisters, lovers, students and workers, they criticize the current social structure, which keep women silent and miserable. This activity reached its peak from 1970 to 1974. Women who took part in the activity were engaged in every female-related topic and re-evaluated the mainstream cultural ideology through their personal experiences. Every woman in the group was encouraged to tell her emotional life and express herself. They were even encouraged to discuss their sexual life, desire and the significance of sex.

Generally speaking, feminists showed their great confidence in the second wave of women's movement. However, this confidence, through the resurgence of conservative force in 80s, declined. Yet, in the 21st century, many new theories and schools are coming up continuously and are sneaking their way into every aspect of our life as well as the mainstream ideology.

VI. CONCLUSION

Through many decades' study on the women issue by sociologists and sociolinguists, people began to know more about the language that women speak including its features and linguistic changes. Some features of woman language have testified people's general impression, while others are not. This paper, basing on Robin Lakeoff's book *Language and Woman's Place*, proposes several universal features of woman language, ranging from phonology, morphology, vocabulary, and syntax to conversational style. Language is closely related to our society. It changes and develops with the development of human world. The changes of woman language happen also because of some social, cultural and historical reasons, for example, the improvement of woman's social status and women's movement. All the achievements made on the study of woman language must be attributed to the women movement in 1960s and to the development of feminist theories whose theoretical approach provides us a solid base for researching the woman language.

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A Reflective Study on Intercultural Transmission and Appreciation among Silk Road Countries

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Abstract—The paper firstly introduces the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China with a global vision and long-term benefits advocating comprehensive cooperation among the Silk Road countries in infrastructure, politics, economy, finance and culture. Then it focuses on the theoretical analysis of culture, intercultural communication and cultural effects of the ancient Silk Road which had been transformed from a trading route to a comprehensive one containing economic ties, political trust, cultural exchange and common prosperity. The economic energy and cultural vitality of this ancient road is revived under the Belt and Road Initiative framework in accordance with the principles listed in the third part of the paper including respecting different cultural concepts, contributing our new thoughts, understanding other cultures with cultural empathy and making mutual choices in cultural interaction. Our great mission today is to contribute to the common development in and beyond cultures and ultimately attain the goal of building a community of shared future for all humankind.

Index Terms—The Belt and Road Initiative, the Silk Road, culture, intercultural communication, intercultural appreciation

I. INTRODUCTION

The Belt and Road Initiative is a global initiative proposed by China, which creates a brand-new international relationship model aimed at enhancing and promoting economic cooperation and common development among Silk Road countries so as to implement the vision of building a community of shared future and shared virtues. Our objectives are comprehensive, multi-leveled, and wide-ranged interactions and development in politics, economy, civilization, and culture; they are not solely limited to the construction of economic strategy and promotion of economic cooperation and advancement, for the single economic strategy cannot achieve the ultimate goal of soul-to-soul bonds. Our top priority is to realize this goal from humanistic orientation, but not from the functional one because the cultural resources are getting more with more digging while the energy resources are just the opposite. As to those vast-invested, highly-risky projects like highways, bridges, ports, tunnels, industrial parks and infrastructures, it is necessary to supplement such asset-light projects like culture, education, health, tourism or professional service to assist in and facilitate those long-cycled and risky projects. It is necessary to strengthen the overall plan and coordination, and to improve the theoretical study and construction of the discourse system. It is also necessary to promote the publicity and guidance to reinforce the fostering of international transmission ability. All of these efforts constitute solid theoretical foundation, publicity support, and cultural condition. The cultural condition is the key point stressing what the Belt and Road Initiative pursues: it is not only commercial opportunity to break business barriers, but also cultural opportunity to break cultural barriers that work together to build the community of a shared future and values on the basis of multi-culture.

Priorities should be given to cultural development so as to further deepen cultural exchange and cooperation among Silk Road countries. The ancient Silk Road and Maritime Silk Route derived from the aspirations of cultural communication and integration of diverse ethnicities; these economic and cultural roads have been transformed into the prime platform on which culture and arts are exchanged and commercial activities are carried out heatedly. The Belt and Road Initiative covers dozens of Silk Road countries and benefits billions of people who create various civilizations in different styles and play great parts in the treasure house of human civilization. We should make the most of these plentiful cultural heritages to inherit and develop the Silk Road culture which represents the appealing cultural symbol: to promote the common development of different civilizations through intercultural communication and multicultural integration.

II. THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF CULTURE, INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL EFFECTS OF THE ANCIENT SILK ROAD

A. The Analysis of Culture in Definition and Components

Culture has very broad scope of connotation and extension. Although it's hard to come to a commonly-accepted definition of culture, we can understand its elements and features through the following analysis: Bates and Plog (Bates & Plog, 1990) propose a descriptive definition of culture: Culture is a system of shared beliefs, values, customs,

behaviors, and artifacts that the members of a society use to cope with their world and with one another, being transmitted from generation to generation through learning. According to this definition, culture includes everything from diet and dialect to dress and dwelling (so called four Ds). Culture, as a comprehensive demonstration of the people living in the same territory, can be learnt in many ways and from a variety of sources, such as their routine lives, religious ceremonies, folk tales, legends, arts, proverbs, mass media, and, above all, their formal education. The best way to figure out a foreign country and their countrymen is to approach their lives, for their lives is their panoramic display of their cultures.
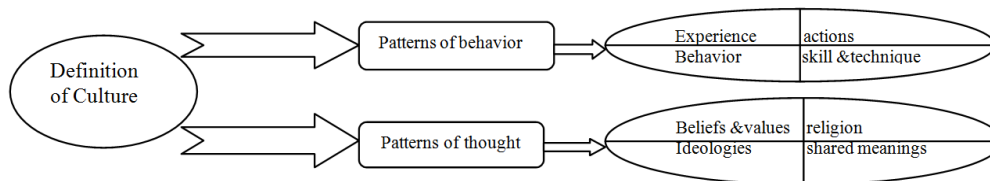
Fig.1: The descriptive definition of Culture according to Bates and Plog.

B. The Analysis of Intercultural Communication in Definition, Significance and Effective Approaches

Intercultural communication is the communication between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication event. (Samovar & Porter, Stefani, 2000) Here, intercultural communication includes interracial communication, interethnic communication, and intercultural communication. At present, with the rapid development of modern technology in computer, transportation and communication, more and more countries are being involved in global interactions in politics, economy and culture. Once international communications get normal and highly-frequent, intercultural communication will inevitably turn into a hot issue.

Different ethnic groups interacted and integrated during the development process of the Chinese nation. The Silk Road dates back to the 2nd century B.C. when ancient Chinese people communicated with people from central Asia, west Asia, Africa and Europe. The introduction of Indian Buddhism, the eminent monk Jian Zhen's visit to Japan, and Zheng He's sailing to West Ocean, all these activities included complex processes of intercultural communication. (Hu, 1999) Intercultural communication has been a long-term atmosphere since antiquity, and the reason why it attracts people's increasing attention nowadays is that the communication among people in different countries, nations and races is more frequent and convenient thanks to the fast development of transportation and computer technology. The anywhere-anytime Internet access enables intercultural communication to take place at any moment. With the large-scaled shifting population and frequent communication, intercultural communication is the most prominent feature of this era and also the most important and valuable activity in our routine lives. Harms (Harms, 1973) believes that the communication in these two decades is featured by intercultural element, which is the fifth stage of human's communication. Indeed, the importance of intercultural communication can be compared to the language production.

In the process of intercultural communication, there are various obstacles to keep us from conducting successful and effective communication including cognitive misunderstanding, stereotyping and ethnocentrism. (Hu, 1999) To overcome this negative psychological cognition, the intercultural scholars designed many approaches in different levels to help decrease the bad effects of the invalid communication. According to Brislin's summary (Brislin, 1986), there are generally six approaches contributing to effective communication covering information-provided training (a traditional approach to introduce the history and culture by means of speech, video, discussion, etc.), reason-analyzed training (a practical approach to narrate an event reflecting cultural conflict and offer different explanations, and then select the right one), cultural awareness-enhanced training (an operational approach to devise very dramatic activities to help the trainees learn about their own cultures), cognitive behavior-reformed training (a seldom-used approach to improve the cognition so as to change their behavioral pattern), experimental training (a role-play and field-training approach to devise some foreign cultural circumstances to make the trainees solve various problems relevant to the culture), and interaction training (an interactive approach to carry on the actual intercultural communication among the trainees and the expert or representative from other culture). After a period of formal and intentional intercultural training, the trainees will, at the first level, have a rough understanding about the foreign cultures through travelling or textbook, experiencing its strangeness and exotic atmosphere; at the second level, they find some important and subtle differences of foreign cultures from theirs due to cultural conflicts, experiencing depression with unusual conduct; at the third level, they are acquainted with the important and subtle features of foreign culture by means of rational analysis, accepting it in cognition; at the fourth level, they learn to see everything from the perspective of the local people because of long-term living experience in foreign cultures, accepting it in emotion. (Hanvey, 1979) Table 1 illustrates the distinct and concrete description of diverse training approaches and training goals.

TABLE1:
SIX TRAINING APPROACHES AND TRAINING GOALS FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN FOUR DIFFERENT LEVEL

Six training approaches to intercultural communication	1. Providing information training approach
	2. Analyzing reason training approach
	3. Cultural awareness-enhanced training approach
	4. Cognitive behavior-reformed training approach
	5. Experimental training approach
	6. Interactive training approach
Training goals for intercultural awareness in four different level	1. To have rough understanding about the foreign cultures
	2. To see some important and subtle differences of the foreign cultures from ours
	3. To be acquainted with the important and subtle features of foreign cultures
	4. To learn to see everything from the perspective of the local people

C. The Historical Comments on the Ancient Silk Road and Its Significance in Cultural Exchange and Integration

The Silk Road is a concept initiated by geologist Ferdinand Freiherr von Richthofen, a distinguished scholar from Germany who invented "die Seidenstrasse" (the Silk Road) in the first volume of his Chinese research book published in 1877. Maybe he used this term very casually, but this definition helped him establish his prominence in the study of the Silk Road. In view of this historical fact, the western research in Silk Road can date back to 1800s. Chinese expert Lv Wenli believed that the Silk Road originated from the mutual attractions of different cultures and the communication of civilization, interaction and integration on the ancient Silk Road became the promoter in the history of human civilization progress, leading the directions of the world historical process. He classified the civilizations into four aspects including material, technology, arts and ideology, giving the following names for the Silk Road: the Exchange Road of Material Resources, the Dissemination & Promotion Road of Advanced Technology, the Blending Road of Eastern & Western Arts, and the Symbiotic Road of Religions and Collisions of Different Ethnic Ideas. (Zhao, 2017) East-West silk trade had a long history of about four-thousand years, much earlier than Zhang Qian's travel to western countries from the capital of Tang Dynasty, Chang'an, to the European continent. (WEI, 2017) Silk is not only a product of trading contact, but also the link for cultural exchange. With the prosperity of the Silk Road, artistic forms from western countries were firstly introduced to Sinkiang and Hexi District of Gansu Province, and the first cultural convergence of home and abroad can be traced back to Han and Tang Dynasties. What they mainly absorbed was the cultures from the Western Regions (Central Asia and Western Asia) and South Asian Sub-continent (Baidu, 2017) where Buddhism were popular. Buddhism was remolded, while its essence was digested, being integrated into Confucianism tactfully in the process of Buddhism's developing in China. Owing to the wide diffusion of Buddhism, many cultural aspects in China were influenced profoundly. As a result, the Silk Road is not only a commercial trading road and cultural corridor, but also a civilized road opening up to the outside world, whose history is full of friendly communications between ancient China and the world.

The reason why Silk Road became the main artery of economic exchange and cultural interaction was that this particular road was firstly a passage of economy and trade. Apart from the study on its material spreading, we should focus on its function of cultural exchange and integration behind Silk Road and its remarkable significance in the modern world. After experiencing the social unrest and changes around the world, the memory of ancient Silk Road almost faded away, but the Silk Road cultures which have been inherently embedded in the long journey, the historical heritage, the literary production, the works of art and the folk life shouldn't be forgotten forever. The Silk Road cultures are integrated cultures revolving around northwest culture, west culture, immigrant culture and multi-ethnic culture, reflecting multiple characters of openness, generosity, straightforwardness, familiarity and fun. All those excellent cultures that Chinese history absorbed from other cultures through the Silk Road played very decisive roles in sustaining and inheriting our Chinese local cultures, contributing a lot to the development of the continuous Chinese cultures and civilizations for thousands of years. The lesson we can learn from the history of the Silk Road is that only by opening up and learning from successful experiences of the world can we promote human being's civilization; the mutual learning from other cultures among different ethnicities around the world is the essential feature of human civilization, and also a crucial impetus to foster civilization. Our challenge today is how to deal with relationships among different cultures and how to promote mutual understanding of other cultures to attain common improvement. (News Agency, 2016)

III. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF INTERCULTURAL TRANSMISSION AND APPRECIATION AMONG SILK ROAD COUNTRIES

From the historical perspective, the human society was in the era of mega development, transformation and adjustment. As the strength of western countries represented by America descended in recent years, they began to worry about the increasing power from the newly-revived and developed countries, forming very severe strategic anxiety and maladjustment. In addition, the global economy has been gloomy since the financial crisis in 2008. At this critical moment, the Belt and Road Initiative was proposed and made known to the world. Under the framework of this initiative, to strengthen the cultural exchange with foreign countries is the effective approach to obtain solid support from the masses. Meanwhile, it is conducive to eliminate misunderstanding, furnish conditions for solving geopolitical

contradictions, sovereignty disputes, and trade frictions as well. Furthermore, it can be beneficial for the establishment of a more just and equal international order. Given the slow development of some Silk Road countries, the complex international political environment, the distinctive cultural differences and religious conflicts among different ethnic groups, the Belt and Road Initiative is bound to go through a long-term improvement before attaining its ultimate perfection. In order to reduce religious conflicts, we should take full advantage of positive energy of the religion in the process of cultural exchange. The common principle is to seek commonness while reserving differences and to pursue the common-shared cultural connotation and value orientation. People-to-people bond is the social foundation and supreme goal of the Belt and Road Initiative, so we should carry forward the spirit of friendly cooperation and harmonious co-existence along the Silk Road by promoting extensively cultural and academic exchange, personal communication and cooperation, media cooperation, youth and women exchange and volunteer services so as to win public support for deepening bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

China has transformed into the era of Global Citizen; the Belt and Road Initiative is becoming the new focus and Chinese people are paying more and more attention to improving relationships with the Middle East, Central Asia, North Africa, Central and Eastern Europe, and Latin America. According to the recent statistics, there have been more than one thousand new books about the Belt and Road covering history, politics, law, economy, culture, linguistics and arts, over 10 million relevant news reports, 30 Chinese cultural centers in the countries along the Belt and Road by the end of 2016. There is an obvious growth in the number of Chinese educational aid and cultural cooperation in relevant Silk Road countries. China offers ten thousand governmental scholarships to the countries along the Belt and Road in order to implement Educational Action to Promote the Belt and Road. Till now, China and other Silk Road countries have held National Cultural Year for 20 times, signing 43 intergovernmental agreements in cultural exchange. Under the guidance of the Belt and Road Initiative, the vast areas of cooperation in transnational academic research, technological innovation, ecological protection, and the improvement of people's lives will be conducted extensively and deeply in accordance with the following principles:

A. To Respect Different Concepts in Order to Make Cultural Communication Persistent and Prosperous

The fundamental principle of intercultural communication is the dialogue reflecting face-to-face relationship instead of unified ideas or thoughts. When Chinese culture is transmitted to other countries, we shouldn't depend on the cultural influence or unilateral instilment to promote its transmission. Instead, we can take part in building a multicultural world encouraging diverse cultures to co-exist and learn from one another through approaching and understanding other cultures. Any culture in this world is equal to another one, so our attitudes toward any culture should be filled with respect and humility.

Chinese culture is characteristic of its ancient philosophical wisdom: harmony actually fosters new things and similarity doesn't sustain. This philosophy emphasizes that only mutual interaction and enrichment can urge different civilizations to rejuvenate and continue to grow. Under the guidance of ancient philosophy, the new generation of cultural inheritor should take an equal and moderate attitude to transmit our culture to other countries, learning and absorbing the merits and advantages of foreign cultures. Through positive and equal cultural communication, we can really promote common development and accomplish multicultural interaction and prosperity.

In the modern world, the starting point of cultural transmission is not spiritual colonization, but cultural sharing, cultural co-existence and cultural co-prosperity. In view of our common wish, the worldwide equal dialogs will be the central premise to make different cultures develop according to the combination of their own cultural genes and modern characteristics. As a matter of fact, many difficult and long-period global issues tend to derive from cultural differences and misunderstanding. Once we arrive at the consensus that cultures should be maintained and developed in accordance with their own genes, characteristics and their own pace instead of cultural assimilation, coercion or unification, most of those irreconcilable conflicts and hot issues around the world will be defused gradually, and resolved eventually.

B. To Contribute Our Chinese New Thoughts to the World as the Core of Chinese Cultural Transmission

Li Zehou, the most influential thinker in the late 20th century in China, believed that the fundamental principle of Chinese aesthetics was to refine temperament, and to cultivate sentiment in order not to turn people into objects, or into people with extreme utilitarian pursuit. (Shi, 2016) As a result, the most important cultural heritage in China is the aesthetic culture resisting materialization and the big problem we confronted now is how to return to the original aesthetic culture. The ideological core of sentiment put forward by Li Zehou was resonated among western scholars, advocating sense and sentimentality to replace pure rationality. Another Chinese professor Zhao Tingyang advances the theory of Tianxia (the Universe) System which regarded Tianxia as the only greatest one and considered various cities could be in harmonious co-existence, understanding one another and eliminating absolute national concept. (Zhao, 2011) Chinese and western scholars agree that our cultures go ahead on the basis of mutual complement, as Lin Yutang, one of the well-known Chinese cultural communicators in foreign countries, once said that the ideal life was a mutual complement of Chinese and western cultures.

According to the brief introduction of two Chinese modern scholars and their creative ideas, we know that Chinese philosophy doesn't stop going ahead, but keeps up with the modern times, which represents the key element of Chinese cultural genes. With the new problems and circumstances arising across the world, the new thoughts on the material and

spiritual world will be turned into proper and rational ones. Chinese and western cultures can be complementary, moving forward together at the same time.

C. To Understand Other Cultures with Cultural Empathy

In the process of Chinese and western cultural communication, the premise is to have a thorough understanding about our own Chinese culture with passion and devotion. Without Chinese cultural details, what and how can we convey to our communicative companions? With deep insight of Chinese cultural information, we can transmit a great number of cultural resources and share with our counterparts. Lin Yutang wrote *My Country and My People* (in 1935) and *The Importance of Living* (in 1938) full of passion for his motherland, China, and his countrymen. Only with deep love for our own country and our own culture can we Chinese become better cultural inheritors and transmitters. Secondly, we have to know about the westerners' cultural tastes through which we can provide with proper cultural products. It isn't the cultural instillation or propaganda, or even self-display, but equal communication and friendly interaction based on sympathized understanding that really counts most. Thirdly, we should be endowed with free spirits and calm attitudes. All those remarkable and distinguished literature works and cultural ideas could be created and produced in a comfortable and delighted atmosphere. Last, every successful cultural communication is firmly built on the solid foundation of cross-cultural thinking and practice.

D. To Choose, but Not to Instill in the Process of Cultural Interaction and Integration

The sympathetic response is very important when one culture has the influence on another culture; both cultures have the rights to make choices. Voltaire, a French enlightenment thinker and philosopher, once said that China was a good example for France to follow, and China was indeed an ideal country, no matter from the perspective of politics, law, the attitude towards religion, or morality, and way of dealing with people. He even said that the happiest and most respectable era in history was when we followed the law proposed by Confucius, and China was a good example for him to criticize his own culture. In the mega trend of globalization, what we are facing is a great civilization's rejuvenation with a long-standing history of five thousand years whose depth, breadth and intensity in cultural development is unprecedented in human history. We are fully confident in making our original contributions to the world civilization, being capable of learning virtues of other civilizations without losing our own, neither showing off, nor instilling our culture into other cultures.

It's a noble mission for the modern people, especially the people along the Silk Road countries, to maintain and develop the Silk Road cultures. We should, first of all, pay attention to the academic research in the Silk Road cultures to preserve and spread the huge amount of cultural legacy and master works worthy of elaborate collection and sorting. Secondly, it's of great importance to create particular brands of Silk Road cultures to increase their creativity in order to strengthen the appealing power of the Silk Road products. Finally, it's high time that we establish personnel exchange and training unions to promote academic cooperation among the famous universities and research institutions, sharing the Silk Road cultural recourses and striving for common educational and cultural development of all the Silk Road countries.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The world has transformed into a new age advocating mutual dependence, multilateral cooperation and common development without competing values, antagonism and conflicts. China, as a responsible great nation, puts forward the Belt and Road Initiative in due time with great foresight and high practicability. According to the comprehensive framework and delicate details of this historic initiative, we should not only fulfill the fundamental mission of economic cooperation and development to realize common welfare, but also strengthen people-to-people bonds through intercultural exchange and appreciation. Culture is the root of an ethnic group and the source of the vitality of a nation, so the top priority of establishing friendly relationship with a foreign country is to approach and understand its abundant cultural meaning as a brilliant mixture of different civilization achievements, diverse life styles and traditional values. Only with culture-equality awareness and culture-appreciation grace can we open the door to carry out cultural exchange and interaction. The ancient Silk Road not only achieved commercial legends among China and other Silk Road countries, but also witnessed brilliant cultural movements among a great number of ethnicities and nations. Today, the economic energy and cultural vitality of this ancient road is revived under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative and our great mission today is to establish and enhance mutual trust in culture, to make great contributions to the common development and prosperity in and beyond cultures and to ultimately attain the goal of building a community of shared future for all humankind.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A Contrastive Critical Discourse Analysis of Netanyahu's and Abbas's Speeches on the Gaza War (2014)

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Abstract—This study provides a contrastive critical discourse analysis of the speeches of the Israeli Prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to the United Nations General Assembly regarding the Gaza War (2014). The analysis explores the representation of the "Self" and the "Other" in relation to the war. Van Dijk's 'Ideological Square' theory is adopted to explore the group polarization of Us versus Them dichotomy. Moreover Halliday's Systematic Functional Grammar is utilized in the analysis to study how the polarization of the "Self" and "Other" is constructed via particular grammatical transitivity choices. The results indicated that the representation of the "Self" and "Other" in the speeches reflects two different opposing ideologically-governed perspectives on the Gaza conflict. Both speakers present the "Self" as 'strong', 'human' and 'honorable' in contrast to the "Other" that is deemed to be a 'dire threat' and an 'agent of destruction'.

Index Terms—Gaza War, ideology, ideological square, transitivity structures

I. INTRODUCTION

The Gaza conflict is considered as one of the most intractable within the wider Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The root of this conflict dates back to the Arab-Israeli War in 1948 which resulted into the Israeli control over the land and the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians from their homes (Masalha, 1992). After the end of the war, thousands of the Palestinians who fled their homes inhabited Gaza, a tiny stripe on the Mediterranean. Gaza was first controlled by Egypt. However, Israel occupied Gaza after another war in 1967. Gaza remained completely under the Israeli control until 1994 when an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza took place after the Palestinian-Israeli peace agreements known as 'the Oslo Accords'. Israel transferred governmental authority to the Palestinians but with limited control. A power struggle has arisen then between the two main political Palestinian factions, Fatah and Hamas, resulting into a split in the Palestinian authority (Wikipedia, 2018).The conflict between Hamas and Fatah intensified after Hamas won the elections of 2006. Gaza then became a self-governing territory controlled by Hamas. Hamas refused to recognize Israel's seized power in Palestine and rejected previous agreements with Israel (BBC, 2015). Consequently, Israel held Gaza under a blockade leading to drastic reduction of food and medical supplies (Sanger, 2011). Tensions between Hamas and Israel intensified leading to three main wars in the years 2008, 2012 and 2014. Following the outbreak of the third war which Israel waged against Gaza in 2014, thousands of Palestinians were killed and many more injured. On the Israeli side, 66 soldiers and 5 civilians were killed. Accordingly, the Human Rights Watch urged the Human Rights Council to investigate the violations by both sides to identify those responsible for the crimes. The Human Rights Council identified the attacks by both Israel and Hamas as war crimes (Wikipedia, 2015). Such outbreaks led to various speeches regarding the Gaza conflict in front of the United Nations.

Drawing on Critical Discourse Analysis as its general theoretical framework of analysis, this study aims at providing a contrastive analysis of two political speeches- one given by the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu and the other by the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas regarding this conflict in the year 2014. These speeches are part of the general debate of the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly in which the two politicians highlighted their standpoints regarding the Gaza War (2014) to elicit support for their positions from the international community.

The study draws on both van Dijk's 'Ideological Square' theory and Halliday's Systematic Functional Grammar (SFG) to show how the different discourses in the speeches embody different ideologically governed opinions towards this conflict. The study, in particular, seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How are the Self/in-group and the Other/out-group represented with regard to the Gaza War (2014) through particular choices in the transitivity structures within the general framework of SFG?

2. How do such specific transitivity choices reflect the ideological standpoints of the speakers? To what extent does the representation of the Self/in-group and the Other/out-group through transitivity structures go in line with van Dijk's 'Ideological Square' theory?

II. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The crucial role of language in constructing socio-political cognition as well as in expressing, changing and reproducing ideologies has been the focus of many studies in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for so many years. Such an approach provides an insight into the way social power abuse and social dominance are enacted and reproduced by text and talk (van Dijk, 1998, p. 352). It focuses mainly on the relationships between language, power, society, ideology and politics. Within CDA, language is perceived as a mean through which specific ideologies and culture of those groups in power come to dominate a society and social practices. In this context, it is believed that lexical choices can reflect and accentuate the thoughts and the intentions of their users (Fairclough, 1995, p. 210). Thus, language is highly connected with ideology. The main aim of any study in CDA is to analyze those mechanisms and strategies used in a discourse to reveal and unravel the underlying embedded ideologies and agendas connected with it (van Dijk, 1998, p. 352).

In the CDA literature, there has been a large body of research that examined the relationships between language, politics, power and ideology in political speeches. These studies focused on political speeches in a variety of contexts. Some have investigated the US election campaign speeches (Rahimi et al.; 2010; Wang, 2010) and the US presidential speeches within the 'War on Terror' discourse (Rashidi and Souzandehfar 2010; Yu, 2011; Sarfo and Krampa, 2012; Morgan, 2014). Some other studies have analyzed political speeches in an African (Alo, 2012) and in a Pakistani context (Memon et al. 2014; Iqbal, 2015) and. It seems that CDA studies on political speeches related to Middle Eastern issues are limited in scope and number. Within these studies, little emphasis has been given to the political speeches on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular. Relevant studies are based on a single orientation of power and ideology, as they focus in their analysis on the speeches of only one speaker (Ashale, 2013; Nejad et al. 2013). In this way, they present a single ideologically driven view of the conflict.

In view of the foregoing, the study reported here attempts to conduct a contrastive critical discourse analysis on the speeches delivered by the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas giving a closer exploration of the two opposing ideologies. The study seeks to examine how the conflict is constructed in the speeches and how underlying ideologies are unveiled.
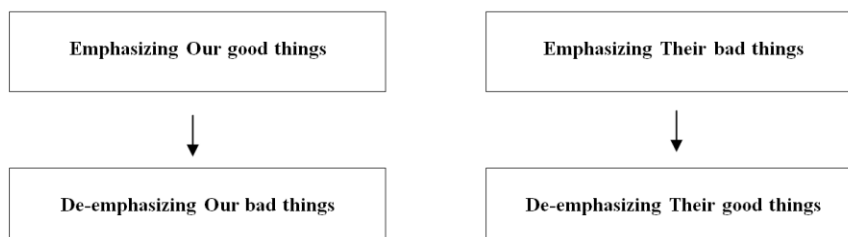
The importance of the study stems from its originality since to the researcher's best knowledge, there has been scarcely any study that has analyzed and contrasted the speeches of top political leaders within the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

III. Theoretical Framework

A. Van Dijk's 'Ideological Square'

In his remarkable conceptions of CDA, van Dijk (1997; 1998; 2006) devises a theoretical framework that relates ideology, politics, cognition and discourse. Van Dijk's (1997, 1998, 2001) stresses a cognitive dimension of language use and social practices. Within this approach, cognition is perceived as an **interface** between social practices and discourse. Cognition is also perceived as **mental models** or schemata that construct ideological values and attitudes of people. Given the view that such models are ideologically driven mental constructs, they consequently direct the production of discourse and therefore control social practices or actions. In the same vein, discourse through mental models, influences ideologies and enact and reproduce them. It is through discourse that such abstract social beliefs (ideologies) are given an explicit expression and formulation.

Van Dijk's (1997) socio-cognitive approach places a specific focus on Political Discourse Analysis (PDA), which deals the "reproduction of political power, power abuse or domination through political discourse" (p.1). In order to adopt a systematic procedure for conducting an analysis of political discourse, van Dijk (2006) proposes some general strategies that can be applied to different forms of texts and talks including political speeches. He posits that ideological discourse often presents some overall strategies that are called the **"Ideological Square"** of positive self-presentation (semantic macro-strategy of in-group favoritism) and negative other-presentation (semantic macro-strategy of out-group derogation). These strategies highlight the following:

Emphasizing Our good things	Emphasizing Their bad things
↓	↓
De-emphasizing Our bad things	De-emphasizing Their good things

Politicians tend to emphasize all meanings that are positive about themselves and their own group (nation, party, ideology); likewise they tend to highlight all meanings that are negative about the Other. At the same time, they hide and mitigate implicit information that may give themselves a bad impression.

B. Halliday's Systematic Functional Grammar

Halliday's Systematic Functional Grammar (SFG) is one of the most substantial theories of language adopted and employed in CDA due to its focus on meaning and the functional aspect of language.

Halliday (1985) offers 'a theory of meaning as choice' which views language as 'networks of interlocking options' from which language users make choices to construct meaning (p. xiv). Accordingly, a systematic choice made for expressing meaning in language is governed by social and cultural contexts and situations. Socio-cultural contexts are a key element in this respect. Halliday's SFG studies language on the basis of the functions it serves in a situational socio-cultural context. This language function is referred to as metafunction.

Halliday (1985) proposed three language metafunctions, viz, (1) the ideational, (2) the interpersonal, and the (3) textual metafunction. These functions can provide a useful tool for textual analysis. However, for space limitation the analysis in this study focuses only on the ideational function.

The **ideational** function presents a clause as a *representation*. It construes the world of experience. It is through this function that language users express their experiences about the outer objective world around them and the inner subjective world of their consciousness, cognitions and perceptions to describe events, states and entities.

This function is realized by the transitivity structure. In the transitivity structure, a clause is analyzed into (1) a **process** (verb), (2) the **participant**(s) involved in the process, and (3) the **circumstances** associated with the process, e.g. time, space, cause or manner (Halliday, 1985, p.101).

The following is a list of different **types of processes** through which the structures of transitivity represent experience:

a. Material Processes. These refer to designate processes of acting or performing things. They are realized by an Action Verb (e.g. take, go, give, make), an **Actor** (a logical subject or an agent) and the **Goal** of the performed action. These processes express the notion that something or an entity (through a process of 'doing' or 'acting') does something which may in turn be done to some other entity.

b. Mental Processes. These refer to processes related to thinking, feeling and perceiving. They are realized by A Perception Verb (e.g. see, look), cognition (think, believe, convince, know), desideration (e.g. want, hope, wish) and emotion /affection (e.g. feel, like, please, fear, wonder). Two participants are involved in these processes: a **Senser** (a person who senses) and a **phenomenon** (the object involved in the process or what is sensed, felt or seen).

c. Relational Processes. These are processes expressing 'being' (e.g. *Sarah is wise*) or 'having' (e.g. *Peter has a piano*). The central meaning of this type is 'something is x'. These processes fall into two subtypes: **Attributive** (e.g. *John is rich*) and **Identifying** (e.g. *John is the richest*). The two participants involved in the attributive processes are a **Carrier** and an **Attribute** and those involved in the identifying processes are an **Identified** and an **Identifier**.

d. Verbal Processes. These are processes of 'saying' or exchanging information and meaning. They enact human experience in a form of language. They are realized by some verbs like 'say', 'claim', 'talk', 'describe', 'praise', etc. These processes involve two participants; a Sayer and a Receiver (e.g. *Mary told* (sayer) *told us* (the truth)).

e. Existential Processes. These processes indicate that something exists (*There was a storm*) or happens (*There was confusion, shouting and breaking of chairs in the parliament hall*). What set this type of processes from the other ones is that the subject is not a participant but the item 'there' which indicates the feature of existence or what exists rather the participant that exists (it has no representational function). The phenomenon (be it a person, thing, object, institution or abstraction) being said to exist is called the **Existent**.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The present study presents a critical discourse analysis which is based on van Dijk's and Halliday's framework. The analysis thus operates on both micro and macro levels. As it can be noted from the earlier account on the 'Ideological Square' theory, van Dijk adopts an approach which is less oriented to linguistic forms and is more focused on social variables such as power and ideology. In contrast, Halliday's model relies much more on linguistic textual analysis, focusing on lexico-syntactic elements. While CDA provides a textual analysis with an ideological dimension focusing on social variables such as power and ideology, SFG complements such a critical perspective by providing linguistically oriented insights into the social function of a particular discourse (Clarence-Fincham, 2001, p.25). Accordingly, SFG serves as a powerful tool for providing a detailed textual linguistic analysis which CDA might lack. Hence, the adoption of both approaches for the purpose of textual analysis relates the linguistic dimension with the social one. Put it another way, this methodology combines the micro-pattern (local semantics) in a text with the macro-patterns of culture and society.

The analysis proceeds through four stages. The speeches are first divided into separate excerpts according to themes embedded in them. Then, the excerpts related to the same identified theme are put together and parsed into separate clauses. All clauses in each theme discourses are then subjected to transitivity analysis identifying the types of processes and participant roles forming each clause. The following chart presents the stages of the analysis.
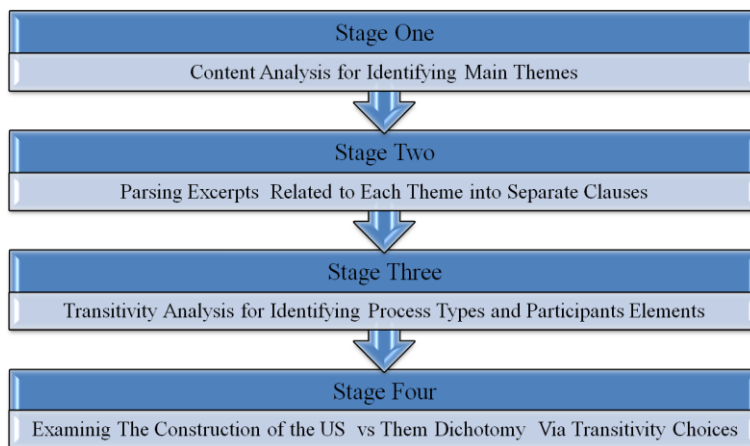
Figure 1. Stages of the Analysis

Analyzing transitivity structures of the speeches has ended the researchers to identify the process types predominate in the speeches (material, mental, verbal, relational, existential). The analysis has also highlighted the exact processes associated with different participants (the Self/ in-group (Israel/Palestine) Other/out-group (Israel/Palestine) and in connection to the theme each participant has assumed a particular role- associated with a particular process. The analysis is meant to reveal how the ideological standpoints of the two speakers are manifested in the representation of the Self/in-group and the Other/out-group through the transitivity structures in the discourse of both speeches.

In other words, the analysis shows how certain grammatical patterns and structures within SFG go in line with the general discourse strategy of positive self-presentation and negative other –presentation in van Dijk's 'Ideological Square'.

V. ANALYSIS

A content analysis of the speeches has revealed two main shared themes developed therein in relation to the Gaza War (2014). These themes are (1) Victimhood and (2) Self-power and Self-Defense. Below is a detailed analysis of the construction of the Self and Other in relation to each one of the two themes.

A. Netanyahu's Speech

The following figure presents the frequency of the processes used to represent the Self (Israel) and Other (Hamas) in Netanyahu's speech.
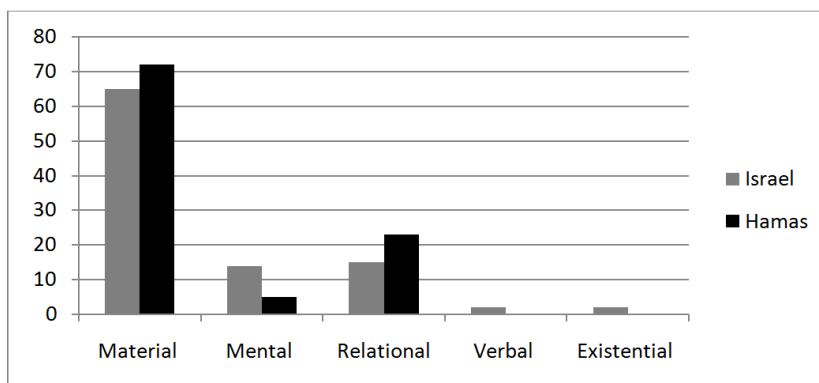

Figure 2. Processes of the Self (Israel) and Other (Hamas) in Netanyahu's Speech

Expectedly, the Material processes (verbs of acting and performing) dominate Netanyahu's speech taking precedence over other process types. This indicates that the speech places more emphasis on the actions of the Self/in-group and the Other/out-group. The material processes representing Israel and Hamas accounted respectively for 65 percent and 72 percent of the material processes. However, as it can be noted from the percentages there seems to be more emphasis on the actions of the Other. Similarly, the number of the relational processes (verbs of attributes and possession) depicting the Other (accounting for 23 percent) exceed those representing the Self (accounting for 15 percent). In contrast, the number of the mental processes (verbs of cognition/affection/wants) describing the Self (accounting for 14 percent) are more than those representing the Other. As far as the other minor verbal (verbs of saying) and existential processes (verbs of existence) are concerned, it seems that these processes are used only to depict the Self.

In his speech, Netanyahu continually exposes all that is positive about the Israeli in-group and all that is negative about its opponent, Hamas. He first presents Israel as a victim of Hamas' attacks and then proceeds to depict Israel as being extremely powerful and highly glorified as shown below.

Victimhood Theme

One of the main themes permeating the discourse of Netanyahu's speech is that of Victimhood. Netanyahu emphasizes the suffering of the Israeli people during the Gaza war (2014) and the challenges they faced. In his speech, Netanyahu emphasizes the negative deeds of the Other and so expose his in-group's victimhood.

The processes through which this theme is presented are mostly material. They depict Israel as a victim of Hamas' violations and attacks during the war.

1. **Hamas** *fired* thousands of rockets at Israel
2. **terrorists** (Hamas) *fire* rockets at … cities with impunity
3. **terrorists** (Hmas) *dig* dozens of terror tunnels under …borders
4. to *infiltrate* ... towns in order to *murder* and *kidnap* … citizens
5. **Hamas** cynically *used* Palestinian civilians as human shields
6. **Hamas** *embedded* its missile batteries in residential areas

As it can be noted from the examples (1-4), Hamas is presented as an active agent of atrocious acts firing rockets at Israel, kidnapping and murdering the Israeli people. Israel, on the other hand, is constructed as a passive recipient of such violent action carried out by Hamas. Furthermore, Hamas is depicted as also causing harm to the Palestinians by using them as human shields (5-6).

7. **Israel** justly *defended* itself against both rocket attacks and terror tunnels
8. As **Israel** surgically *struck* at the rocket launchers and at the tunnels,
9. Palestinian civilians were tragically but unintentionally *killed*
10. **Israel** *dropped* flyers, *made* phone calls, *sent* text messages, *broadcast* warnings …. always to *enable* Palestinian civilians to *evacuate* targeted areas
11. **We** deeply *regret* every single civilian casualty

The material processes associated with Israel, however, place it into a sharp contrast with Hamas. Israel's actions during the war are depicted as defensive ones (7).

Thus, through the material processes, the Other/out-group is presented as an active agent of destruction while the Self/in-group as an agent of self-defense. This construction of the Self/in-group and Other/out-group is in line with van Dijk's "ideological Square" theory whereby the Self/in-group is presented with positivity while the other with extreme negativity.

Even when the Self/in-group is assigned the role of active agency in negative material processes entailing violence, its negative acts are de-emphasized through the use of euphemisms. The circumstance of manner "surgically" used in connection with the material process "struck" indicating the killing of the Palestinians (8) downtones the harshness of this act and lends some justification to the Israeli actions (8). Thus, the violent acts of the Self/in-group are justified as being righteous and reactional.

In the same vein, the Israeli launched attacks at Gaza are backgrounded through the use of agentless passive material process as in "Palestinian civilians were tragically but unintentionally killed" (9).

Further, the de-emphasis of the Self/in-group's negative actions is also realized through some other mental and material verb processes. The successive material process verbs associated with Israel in "dropped flyers", "made phone calls", "sent text messages" and "broadcast warnings" (10) represent the Self/in-group as being protective and considerate of the lives of civilians.

The Self/in-group is also represented as being the Senser participant of the mental process "regret" in relation to the killing of civilians (11). The choice of this mental process indicating feelings of sadness and pity over the killing constructs the Self/in-group as virtuous and human. Through these transitivity structures, the Self/in-group is depicted as an honorable and human that cares about the safety of civilians and wants to protect itself and other people from the danger posed by Hamas.

The dichotomy between the Self and the Other is further emphasized through parallel transitivity structures, probably to sharpen Netanyahu's perspective of the moral difference between Israel and Hamas.

12. **Israel** *was doing* everything to *minimize* Palestinian civilian casualties
13. **Hamas** *was doing* everything to *maximize* Israeli civilian casualties and Palestinian civilian casualties
14. **Israel** *was using* its missiles to *protect* its children
15. **Hamas** *was using* its children to *protect* its missiles

A close examination of the examples 12-15 reveals that the sharp contrast between Israel and Hamas with regard to their actions in the Gaza War is reflected in the construction of the Self/in-group and the Other/ out-group through alternating parallel transitivity structures. This places the Self/ in-group into sharp contrast to the Other/ Out-group. The Self/in-group is positively presented as minimizing the killing of civilians while the Other/ out-group maximizing it (12-13). The group polarization is realized through presenting the Self/ in-group and the Other/ Out-group as being involved in material processes that are semantically each other's opposites as in "maximize" and "minimize". A similar

presentation of both groups is made through the use of the material clause "using its missiles to protect its children" in parallel contrast to "using its children to protect its missiles" (11- 12).

16. **Israel** also *faced* another challenge

17. **We** *faced* a propaganda war

18. **Jewish people** have *been demonized* with blood libels and charges of deicide

19. The **Jewish** state *is demonized* with … charges of genocide

The transitivity structures in the discourse of Victimhood also depict Israel as a victim of biased charges of targeting civilians and genocides. Examples 16-19 show further manifestations of the in-group's suffering and victimhood. Israel is not only depicted as a victim of Hamas' attacks this time but also of a propaganda war and biased criticism.

Netanyahu accentuates his in-group's victimhood by emphasizing the UN Human Rights biased and contradictory position from the Gaza War.

20. **Israel** *is* a tiny country (Identifying)

21. Yet nearly half, nearly half of the **UN Human Rights Council'**s resolutions *focusing* on a single country *have been directed* against **Israel**

22. **Israel**, which *took* unprecedented steps to *minimize* civilian casualties, **Israel** is condemned

23. **Hamas**, which both *targeted* and *hid* behind civilians – that a double war crime –**Hamas** *is given* a pass

As is clear, the transitivity structures present Israel as a victim of the UN Human Rights Council's resolutions. The construction of Israel through a relational identifying process as a small country (20) emphasizes the in-group's victimhood. Furthermore, the material passive process in example 21 construes Israel as a helpless and passive participant upon which the injustices practiced by the UN are inflicted.

The contradiction in the position of the UN Human Rights Council is further emphasized by sharpening the contrast between the Self/in-group and Other/out-group. Again through comparisons and parallel transitivity structures and semantic opposites, the profound moral difference between the Self/in-group and Other/out-group is emphasized (22 - 23). The Self/in-group is depicted as 'virtuous' holding the highest moral values during the war while the Other/out-group is depicted as an 'evil enemy' using civilian as human shields. These structures in turn intensify the Self/in-group's victimhood. They include a condemnation of the UN position from Israel during the Gaza War. Israel that took steps to save civilians is condemned by the UN Human Rights Council for committing war crimes while Hamas that used civilians as a human shield is given legitimation.

Analysis of the transitivity structures in which the Other/out-group is involved reveals display further manifestations of negative other-presentation. Netanyahu depicts Hamas as a serious threat not only to Israel but to the whole world. This is achieved by positioning Hamas within the category of "Militant Islam". This presents Hamas as a global threat, because in his speech, Netanyahu refers to various terrorist out-groups (e.g, al Qaeda, ISIS, Hezbollah, Nusra) all of which are interrelated and categorized /classified under the umbrella of "Militant Islam". This is further highlighted by drawing a correlation between Hamas and 'Militant Islam' and thus presenting them as one cohesive unitary enemy. The transitivity structures in the discourse of Netanyahu's speech present 'militant Islamists' and Hamas as being one camp that share the same goal, i.e, to dominate the whole world.

24. **Hamas**'s immediate goal *is* to *destroy* Israel (identifying)

25. But **Hamas** *has* a broader objective (attributive)

26. **Hamas** *shares* the global ambitions of its fellow militant Islamists

27. **Their** ultimate goal *is* to dominate the world (attributive)

The relational identifying process depicts Hamas as a hard enemy setting the destruction of Israel as its main goal (33). Hamas is further presented as a global threatening enemy with a broader goal of dominating the whole world (25 and 27). The threat of Hamas is presented as stemming from sharing the same global goals of militant Islamists. The material process "share" in (26) creates an **adequation** between Hamas and 'militant Islamists' and so places them in the same boat of enmity and threat.

As van Dijk (1991) indicated, parallelism is commonly adopted to "emphasize negative properties of opponents" (p. 219). A noticeable function of parallelism in this case is to **adequate** the negative properties of the out-groups. As Hodges (2007) put it "adequation is a tactic not only used by a group to identify itself, but used from an outside position of power to impose sufficient sameness on others for political purposes" (p.83).

The notion of 'militant Islam' is repeatedly juxtaposed with the necessity of sharing efforts to defeat Hamas. This designates Netanyahu's intention to elicit support for Israel's fight against Hamas. The construction of Hamas as a global threat serves to make the fight against Hamas a subject of concern for the international community as a whole. This act of globalizing the out-group's threat and this imposed adequation go in line with the general strategy of negative Other-presentation within van Dijk's 'ideological Square'.

Self-power and Defense Theme

After emphasizing the in-group victimhood and aggravating the out-group's threat, Netanyahu shifts toward another theme of power and self-defense. The Israeli in-group is placed in defiance against its enemies. A sense of power is constructed and the in-group is no longer positioned as a victim.

28. Today **we**, the **Jewish people**, *have* the power to *defend* ourselves

29. **Israel** *be able* to *defend* itself by itself against any threat

30. **We** *will defend* ourselves against our **enemies** on the battlefield

31. **We** *will expose* their lies against us in the court of public opinion

32. **Israel** *will continue* to stand proud and unbowed

A careful analysis of the transitivity structures in this discourse of power shows that Israel is constructed as a capable self that has the power to defend itself. The relational processes associated with the Self/in-group depict Israel as being in possession of self-defense power (28) and as being strong and competent with self-derived power (29)

The depiction of the Self/in-group as being endowed with power is also realized through other material processes. The material clauses "defend ourselves", "expose their lies" and "continue to stand" exhibit the Self/ in-group as an influential, steadfast and strong Agent in the face of enemy (30-32).

The developing escalating construction of the self-power theme is finally accumulated with glorifying the Self. In Netanyahu's speech the general strategy of positive self-presentation is implemented by praise and positive references to the country of Israel, its history, its religion and its people.

33. In **Israel**, **we** *have* a record of making the impossible possible

34. **We**'ve *made* a desolate land flourish

35. **We** have *used* the fertile minds of our people to *turn* Israel *into* a global center of technology and innovation

36. **Isaiah**, **our** great prophet of peace, *taught* us nearly 3,000 years ago in Jerusalem to *speak* truth to power

The glorification of the in-group is realized through both Relational and Material processes. The Self/in-group is presented as being involved in positive identifying relational process of possession. The Self/in-group is identified as being in possession of "a record of making the impossible possible" (33). The semantic contrast expressed through the use of "the impossible" and "possible" construes the Self/in-group as highly influential. Similarly, the use of the nominal group "desolate land" in contrast to "flourish" within the material clause in which the Self/in-group is involved places it in charge of positive actions. The embedded implied metaphor of plantation and growth in "desolate land flourish" (34) and "fertile minds" (35) also plays a contributing role in this respect. They represent the Self/in-group as being a great achiever that is highly glorified.

Moreover, the Self/in-group is positively projected through material processes as a global center of technological innovation (35) and a beacon of truth and wisdom (36).

B. Abbas's Speech

The following figure presents the frequency of the transitivity processes used to represent the Self (Palestine) and Other (Israel) in Abbas's Speech.
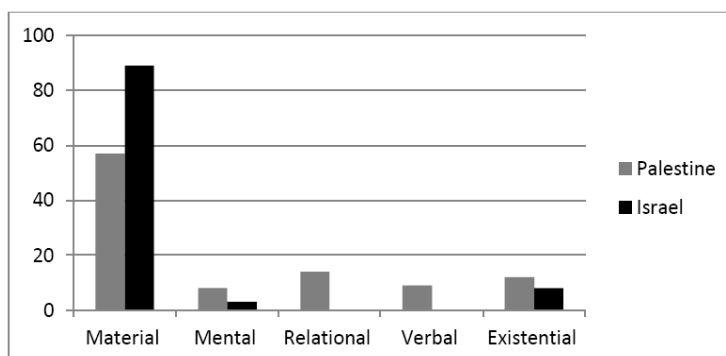

Figure 3. Transitivity Process of the Self (Palestine) and Other (Israel) in Abbas's Speech

A note on figure 3 shows that the material processes (verbs of acting and performing) representing the Self and Other dominate Abbas's speech. This indicates that the transitivity structures of the Self and Other in the speech gives much more focus on their actions. However, a comparison between the percentages of the material processes of the Self (accounting for 57 percent) with those of the Other (accounting for 89 percent) indicates that there is much more emphasis on the actions of the Other. However, a far as the mental (verbs of cognition/affection/wants) and existential (verbs of existence) processes are concerned, it is the processes associated with the Self that have a higher percentage accounting respectively for 8 percent and 12 percent in contrast to those processes associated with the Other and accounting for 3 percent and 8percent. Moreover, the relational (verbs of being and possessing) and verbal processes (verbs of saying) adopted in the speech are only used in the depiction of the Self.

Like Netanyahu, Abbas accentuates his in-group's victimhood and emphasizes the out-group's threat. He presents his in-groups (the Palestinians) as victims both in the past and present. His speech presents Israel as an existential threat to both the Palestinians and peace. He finally exposes the power of his Palestinian in-group and their right of self defense and glorifies their deeds as shown below.

Victimhood Theme

Abbas commences his speech by conjuring the suffering of the Palestinians since Al-Nakaba[1] of 1948 till the present time. In his account on the Gaza War (2014), Abbas presents the hard experiences of the Palestinians during the War as only one part of a prolonged history of an ongoing suffering. The accentuation of the in-group's victimhood and suffering is manifested in some transitivity structures which construe the Self/in-group (Palestinians) as victims of the Other/out-group's (Israeli) atrocities along the history both in the past and present.

1. In this year, in which this Assembly… conveyed the world's yearning … …in order to rectify the historic *injustice inflicted* on the **Palestinian people** in Al-Nakba of 1948

2. the **occupying Power** *has chosen* to defy the entire world by launching its war on Gaza

3. **its** jets and tanks brutally *assassinated* lives and *devastated* the homes, schools and dreams of thousands of Palestinian children, women and men

4. here **we** *are* again today

5. Here **we** *find* ourselves, full of grief, regret and bitterness *raising* the same long-standing conclusions and questions after a new war,

The transitivity structures in the discourse of Victimhood portray the Self/in-group (Palestinians) as victims both in present time and past history. The construction of the Self within the passive voice structures presents it as a helpless and passive participant upon which the injustices and miseries of Al-Nakba are inflicted (1). The Self/out-group is assigned the role of the Recipient or the Patient affected by Material process entailing enforced suffering (as in the verb 'inflicted on').

The transitivity structures associated with the Other/Out-group, however, presents Israel as a defiant and aggressive enemy. The use of the material process 'has chosen' in connection with that of 'defy' (2) entails its deliberate and aggressive acts against the Palestinians. Furthermore, the construal of Israel's defiance against the whole world as a choice depicts Israel as an arrogant entity endowed with a volitional power. Moreover, the Other/Out-group is depicted as a brutal enemy murdering lives and causing destruction (3).

The contrast in roles assigned to both groups brings the Self/in-group's victimhood into much focus and exposes the crimes and atrocious acts of the Other/out-group. This goes in line with the general strategy of negative other-presentation in van Dijk's "Ideological Square".

The relational processes in which the Palestinians are involved project them as victims of repeated and continued suffering. After a third new war launched against Gaza, the Palestinians once again find themselves "full of grief, regret and bitterness". This is reinforced through the use of the adverb of frequency 'again' indicating the repeated occurrence of the action (4) and adverb of time 'still' (7).

Abbas continues to show that the difference within the cycle of the Self/in-group's suffering is that the consequences of the Israeli occupation are much greater in the present time after the last War on Gaza (2014). This places further emphasize on the Self/in-group's victimhood.

9. The difference today is that the scale of this genocidal crime *is* larger (Attributive)

10. and that the list of **martyrs**, especially children, *is* longer (Attributive)

11. and that **dozens of families** *have been* completely *decimated*

12. The difference today is that approximately **half a million people** *were displaced* from their homes

13. and that the number of homes, schools, hospitals, public buildings, … mosques, factories and even cemeteries destroyed *is* unprecedented

14. And, the difference today is that the devastation caused by this recent aggression *is* unmatched in modern times,

15. **we** *face* a formidable challenge to *reconstruct* what has been destroyed by the occupation.

Again, the Self/in-group is presented as being a victim of much larger scale of crimes in the present time. The overgrowing consequences of the Israeli crimes against the Palestinians are emphasized through comparison, repetition and parallelism (parallel syntactic structures).

Analysis of the transitivity structures reveals that the Relational processes used in this discourse depicts the Self/in-group as experiencing a growing amount of trauma and grievances in the present time. This is realized through the attributive comparative clauses involving implied comparisons between the past and present suffering of the Self/in-group (9-10). In the same vein, crimes committed against the Self/in-group are described in terms of circumstances of manner and attributive adjectival clauses entailing an unmatched and aggravated scale. Thus, families "have been completely decimated" (11), and the scale of destruction and devastation is "unprecedented" and "unmatched" (13-14).

The growing suffering of the Self/in-group in present time is further reinforced through the repeated occurrence of the expression "The difference today". Moreover, the presentation of the suffering in terms of parallel transitivity structures brings it into more focus and intensifies the sense of in-group's victimhood (9- 14).

The Self-group/in-group is further presented through material processes as a victim of the future challenges of rebuilding of what has been destroyed by the Other/ out-group. The Self-group/in-group is, hence, depicted as a victim of destruction (15).

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[1] "Al-Nakba" (Plight) is a popular broad term used in reference to the establishment of the State of Israel and the disastrous consequences of the 1948 war which led to the expulsion of thousands of Palestinians from their homes (Sadi and Abu-Lughod, 2007). The term summarizes and foregrounds the Palestinian suffering and presents the Israeli statehood as a catastrophe.

Thus, the Self/in-group through the transitivity structures in Abbas's discourse is projected as a helpless victim of continued suffering in the past, present and the future.

In this same discourse of victimhood, the Palestinians are presented as peace seekers while at the same time Israel is depicted as a peace destroyer. The Palestinians are continually depicted as strongly devoted to the negotiations of peace while Israel is presented as renouncing any peace offer.

15. Even as **we** watched the ongoing and escalating Israeli *violations*, we *exercised* unimaginable self-restraint, *silencing* our cries and *tending* to our own wounds in order to *give* the American efforts the best possible chance for success

16. However, and as usual, the **Israeli government** *did not miss* the opportunity to *undermine* the chance for peace

17. **Israel** *refuses* to end its occupation of the State of Palestine since 1967, but rather *seeks* its continuation and entrenchment,

18. (Israel) *rejects* the Palestinian state and *refuses* to find a just solution to the plight of the Palestine refugees.

19. Israel *has confirmed* during the negotiations that it *rejects* making peace with **its victims**, the **Palestinian people**

It is notable that the choices in transitivity structures construct the Self/in-group as struggling for attaining peace. The Material processes associated with the Palestinians constructs the Self/in-group as an active Agent who is making great sacrifices for the sake of peace (15). This collectively, emphasizes the Palestinian victimhood and presents their commitment and contribution for peace as extremely great and sacrificial.

In contrast, Israel is presented throughout this discourse as standing in opposition to peace. This is manifested in the involvement of the Other/out-group in negative material processes. The material processes "undermine" (16), "refuses" (17) and "rejects" (17-18) construe the Other/out-group as a malicious enemy that despite peace offer and negotiations acts with refusal and rejection. The material clause in "did not miss the opportunity to undermine the chance for peace" depicts the Other/out-group as an active agent that snipes and targets any chance for peace (16).

Such dichotomy established through the transitivity structures of the Self/in-group and Other/out-group in Abbas's speech is in line with van Dijk' "Ideological Square". The transitivity choices in Abba's discourse serve to emphasize the positive deeds of the Self/in-group and those negative ones associated with the Other/out-group.

Abbas continues to present Israel as an eminent threat. Abbas warns that Israel is causing a new Nakba for the Palestinians by launching a third new war against Gaza.

20. **I** have *addressed* you (UN) in this hall during similar days in 2012 and *cautioned* that the **colonial occupying Power** *was preparing* for a new Nakba against the Palestinian people

21. **I** *appealed* to you (UN): Prevent a new Nakba

The transitivity structures in this context of threat construct the Other-out-group as posing extreme danger to the Self/in-group. The Other-out-group is depicted through material process as a malicious destructive entity causing much more suffering for the Palestinians (20). The involvement of the Self (represented by Abbas) in verbal processes indicating warning casts urgency on the matter and intensifies the in-group's victimhood (20-21). Moreover, describing the third last war waged against Gaza as a "new Nakba" intensifies and aggravates the scale of the Israeli threat posed against the Palestinians.

In this same discourse of Victimhood, Abbas presents Israel as posing a great threat to the lives of the Palestinians and their national authority presenting it as almost continually prone to violence and terrorism.

22. Over the past years, the **occupying Power** *has pursued* a policy aimed at deliberately *weakening* the **Palestinian National Authority** to *undermine* it and, in essence, to fully *negate* its role

23. When our efforts to end the internal division through national dialogue succeeded … and **we** *prepared* to *restore* the unity of our land, nation and institutions …all countries of the world welcomed this achievement, with the exception of **Israel** which *has* constantly *sought* to *fragment* **our** land and **our** national unity

24. The occupation's campaign specifically *targeted* the City of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, *attempting* to artificially *alter* the spirit, identity and character of the Holy City

25. At the same time, racist and armed gangs of **settlers** *persisted* with their crimes against the **Palestinian people**, the land, mosques, churches, properties and olive trees

26. This culture of racism (settlers), incitement and hatred *was glaringly* manifested in the despicable, appalling crime *committed* months ago by **fascist settlers**, who *abducted* the young **Jerusalemite boy** Mohammed Abu Khdeir, *burnt* him alive and *killed* him

29. It requires, in this context and as a priority, bringing an end to the **Israeli occupation** of our country, which *constitutes* in **its** practices and perpetuation, an abhorrent form of state terrorism and a breeding ground for incitement, tension and hatred.

Analysis of the transitivity structures in this discourse of victimhood and threat construct the Other/out group as an agent of destruction while the Self/in-group as helpless victim. The material verbal process "pursued", 'insists", "sought", "undermine", "negate" and "targeted" (22- 23) used in connection with the Other/out-group construe Israel as an aggressive entity which sets the crimes against the Palestinian as its main target. It is depicted as destroying lives, depriving the Palestinians of having national authority (22-23) and judaizing the holy city of Jerusalem (24). The circumstances of manner "deliberately" and "constantly" (22 and 23) associated with the Other/out-group's act reinforces the sense of threat and present it as being continuant. Moreover, the Other/out-group is presented as greatly

threatening through the use of the material verb process "restore" in contrast to "fragment" (23). Hence, while the Palestinians are making efforts to restore the unity of their land, Israel is seeking to fragment it.

Through the analysis it has been noted that the threat of Israel is further exposed by the adoption of pronominal adjectives with negative overtones in relation to the Other/out-group.This is revealed in the negative loaded words and phrases (involving meanings beyond the literal one) denoting the out-group (the Israeli settlers) and their actions. The Israeli settlers are repeatedly identified as 'racist' and 'fascist' (25-26). Such loaded terms foreground the hostile attitudes of the settlers towards the Palestinians. This is further reinforced by the negative phrases "culture of racism, incitement and hatred". These discourse constructions present the Palestinian in-groups as innocent and defenseless victims of such a racist Israeli out-group's racist ideology and aggressive acts.

Furthermore, other transitivity structures present the Israeli out-group as an active agent of atrocities. The material verb processes "abducted", "burnt" and "killed" (26) depicts the Other/out-group as extremely brutal and murderous and so constructing it as a dire threat.

The construction of the Other/out-group's threat culminates with the depiction of the Israeli occupation as a source of extremism, terrorism, tension and hatred (29).

Self-Power and Self-Defense Theme

By the end of the speech, Abbas's discourse is directed towards another theme of power and defense. Abbas affirms that the Palestinians will not abandon their legitimate right to defend themselves.

30. **we** *will not forget* and **we** *will not forgive* and *we will not allow* war criminals to escape punishment.

31. The **Palestinian people** *will continue* their struggle and steadfastness

32. And *will rise* brave and strong from the rubble and destruction

33. **I** *affirm* in front of you that **the Palestinian people** *hold* steadfast to their legitimate right to *defend* themselves against the Israeli war machine and to their legitimate right to *resist* this colonial, racist Israeli occupation.

34. **We**, as our poet Mahmoud Darwish said: "*are* infected with an incurable disease, that is hope, and **we** *love* life if **we** *are given* the chance for it".

The Self/in-group is constructed through parallel successive material clauses as strongly holding a firm position against its opponent (30) and persisting on its struggle (31 and 32). The Self/in-group is further projected as insisting on its right of self-defense and resistance (33) and preserving itself by strongly hanging onto life and hope (34). The presentation of the Self/in-group as rising from "the rubble and destruction" (32) and as being "infected an incurable disease" of 'hope' (34) projects the Palestinian in-group as extremely powerful, resolved and dedicated.

Abbas proceeds on in his speech to affirm the right of the Palestinians to have peace and protection.

35. **Palestine** *refuses* to *have* the right to freedom of her people … *remain* hostage to Israel's security conditions

36. **We** *will not accept* to forever be the ones being demanded … to *remain* silent as they are killed and their land is stolen

Again the transitivity structures present the Self/in-group as 'strong' and 'defiant'. The Self/in-group is depicted through material processes as rising to their rights to freedom and security by facing the Other/out-group's violations with rejection and refusal (35and 36).

37. At the same time, **I** affirm that our grief, trauma and anger *will not for* one moment *make* **us** *abandon* our humanity, our values and our ethics;

38. **we** *will always maintain* our respect and commitment to international law, international humanitarian law and the international consensus,

39. **we** *will maintain* the traditions of our national struggle established by the Palestinian fedayeen and to which **we** *committed* ourselves since the onset of the Palestinian revolution in early 1965

In this same discourse of Self-power and defense, the Self/in-group is also glorified. It is represented through some material processes as human and honorable maintaining its values and ethics despite all challenges (37) and strongly committed to international law (38) and the traditions of its struggle (39).

VI. CONCLUSION

This study provided a critical discourse analysis of the speeches of the Israeli Prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu and the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas to the United Nations General Assembly on the Gaza War (2014). The analysis is based on van Dijk's and Halliday's framework to examine the representation of the "Self" and "Other" in relation to the war. The results revealed that both speakers portray the Self/in-group as a beacon of strength, humanity and goodness in contrast to the Other/out-group that is depicted as bit hole of evilness. In the speeches, both speakers victimize their in-group and identify the out-group as an eminent threat. In trying to elicit support for their claims and agendas concerning the Gaza War (2014), they both expose and aggravate the negative acts and grievances of the out-group.

A micro analytical reading of both speeches has uncovered some embedded ideological patterns. In the speeches, linguistic choices in the transitivity structures encode the ideological positions of each speaker projecting the strategy of positive-self presentation and negative-other presentation. The in-group in both speeches is continually inscribed as the Actor in material processes that construct the Self as an influential and committed agent seeking peace and defending itself against the danger and threat posed by the Other while the out-group is presented as an agent of negative acts. In

the same vein, the out-group is presented through relational processes as an identified participant or a Carrier of negative attributes denoting violence and atrocity. Within these transitivity structures, embedded senses of threat, danger, in-group suffering and sacrifice are expressed and reinforced through the circumstances of manner. Moreover, the polarization pattern is also implemented in the speeches through parallel grammatical structures and polarized lexicalization (semantic contrast).

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A Study on the Network Catchphrases from the Perspective of Memetics

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Abstract—**Memetics is a new theory in linguistic research. It was put forward by Richard Dawkins in order to explain cultural evolutionism. Meme refers to imitation, replication and propagation, which plays an important role in language and cultural development. Memetics has already attracted many scholars' attentions and has become more and more popular. With the thriving of the internet, netizens make changes in word selection and sentence patterns, so that meme is suitable for potential hosts. Network language is replicated quickly and disseminated widely, which influences people's daily life. Therefore, the study of network catchphrase memes is valuable and meaningful. Memetics can explain cultural inheritance and language variation. It can also help people find the potential law of network language transmission. This thesis shows the characteristics of memes and network catchphrases respectively. Then the author analyzes the ways and factors of network catchphrases' dissemination from the perspective of memetics, and discusses factors that affect the dissemination of network catchphrase memes. Therefore, the study on network language, especially catchphrases, has theoretical significance and practical value.**

Index Terms—**memetics, network catchphrase memes, replication, dissemination**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Memetics is a novel theory deduced from Darwin's doctrine of evolution. Meme's reduplication and transmission depend on imitation. With the flourishing of internet, network catchphrases can be disseminated, replicated and entertained. The use of popular language becomes more and more universal. Meme provides a new perspective for the development of language. Internet catchphrases embody anthropogenic activities and reflect culture. Internet popular language is regarded as a basic unit of cyber language.

People can convey their opinions and express emotions on the internet by using network language. Once some social events happen, certain network language will appear. Network catchphrases have broad and narrow meaning. They are specific expressions and netizens circulate them on the internet after a long social practice. As a network communication tool and a carrier of culture diffusion, they are favoured and admired by many netizens.

B. Importance of the Study

Memetics reflects the imitation and duplication of information. Internet catchphrases are affected by memes. People express their views and feelings by means of them. The study on memetics explicates the prevalence and development of internet popular language. The analysis of network catchphrase memes' characteristics and the explanation of their popular causes are on the basis of memetics.

Internet catchphrase memes that are accepted diffusely can be described as strong meme. Internet popular language is a linguistic phenomenon that originates from society. Once network catchphrases are understood, approved and used by people in daily life, memes can be successful.

C. Significance of the Study

The purpose of this thesis aims to explain the inheritance and evolution of meme. The study on the internet catchphrases is of great value on theory and practice.

In recent years, many scholars study network popular language from different perspectives. But there is few research that study language from memetics. Memetics is important for explaining language and cultural phenomenon. Network language, a communication medium, is used widely in people's daily life nowadays. Meme plays an important role in the development of network language. Therefore, it is necessary to study network catchphrases.

D. The Definition of Meme

Meme can decide the dissemination of cultural information. The transmission relies on imitation. The function of meme is the same as gene in evolution. The difference between meme and gene lies in the way of transmission. Meme is extragenetic, but gene is inherited. For example, the type of meme is different, such as thoughts, slogans, fashion, mental cultivation and manufacture of buildings. However, there is a little gene's classification. The reproduction of meme is from one brain to another, while gene is bred between different bodies.

The core of meme is imitation. Things that are transmitted through imitating can be called meme. Meme refers to things like language, ideas, faith and manners. Any language unit can be meme because they are imitated and spread. A term can be popularized by replication, so can thought.

The imitation of meme includes strong meme and weak meme. Strong meme means far-ranging duplication with little hindrance, everlasting transmission and formidable vitality. However, weak meme refers to impotent force and fleeting propagation. Meme that exerts positive effects can become strong meme. Language of strong meme can be memorized and imitated easily. Strong meme undergoes four stages: assimilation, retention, expression and transmission.

Language meme is a kind of meme. It is a widespread unit including vocabulary, sentence and discourse, which can be copied. Network language is a special linguistic pattern coming from online communication. It is a new combination of script, picture and spelling that involves letters and punctuation. Users give it different meanings that represent specific connotations at different times and in certain contexts. Network language is flexible, changeable and innovative. Its development is closely related to meme.

E.   The Definition of Network Catchphrase

Network language is a variant used by a certain social community. It reflects cultural phenomenon. Netizens form special network language when they communicate on the internet, just like communicating in daily life. But because of unique langauge context, network language has its own features, such as brief and fashion. Using several words shows complicated meanings. It varies from time, showing vitality.

Network catchphrase is a kind of expression spread by netizens. It is the product of cultue and internet. Catchwords are a term spread and prevailed quickly and widely at a particular time and within a certain range. It appears at a high frequency at a certain stage. As a linguistic phenomenon, the widespread dissemination of catchphrases reflects social problems, phenomena and objects that arouse citizens' concern.

Among a considerable amount of information, some words are so energetic that may be transmitted for a long time, while others prevail for a short time. Network language is a new form of language because of the rapid development of internet. If a word is popular, it must be imitated, replicated and transmitted. It prevails by means of meme's power. Therefore, the popularity of catchphrases is a typical meme phenomenon.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

After the publication of The Selfish Gene, people realize that biological theory can be applied in sociolinguistics. Memetics has attracted linguists' attention and aroused their heated discussion.

A.   Studies on Memetics Abroad

Memetics was first presented in *The Selfish Gene* written by Richard Dawkins who was a famous Oxford biologist in 1976. Gene can transmit genetic information to the next generation. Meme is similar to gene. There is a divisor that replicates cultural information, and that is meme. Meme is defined as a cultural communication unit. *The Journal of Memetics-Evolutionary Models of Information Transmission* shows how to learn meme. It lays a solid foundation for further research.

Susan Blackmore summarized the study of memes in other fields in *The Meme Machine* in 1999. After that memes became very popular in linguistics. Blackmore's research was a milestone in the development of memetics. Memes are replicator because they duplicate information by selection and variation. Any information can be called as meme only if they can be duplicated by imitation (Blackmore, 1999). Memetics is a theory that can explain rules of cultural evolution. Meme facilitates the development of society due to duplication and transmission.

Dennett (1995) described meme as an information pattern. It is a schema that a memory can be copied from one to another. Deacon (1999) regarded memes as signs. They can influence human minds and change their behaviors. Hudson (2000) pointed that memes are social symbols and cultural units that are perceived easily. Meme is the form of replication that can be stored in people's brains, books, computers and other mass media.

B.   Studies on Memetics at Home

The study of memetics was introduced into China very late. Many scholars have studied the translation of relevant books. He Ziran first introduced memetics and explained the relation between meme and language. He and other linguists compiled some books, such as *Relevance Theory*, *Adaptation Theory* and *Memetic Theory*.

The transmission of language, perception, faith and behavior is similar to the inheritance and replication of gene in biological evolution. What distinguishes genes from memes is the way of transmission. Gene is a vertical proliferation by heredity. However, meme is copied and spread by imitation, which can be transmitted either by inheritance or by the same generation (He Ziran, 2005).

Chen Linxia (2006) explained the causes of successful dissemination of advertisement from the angle of memes, such as genotype and phenotype memes. Xie Chaoqun (2007) used memes in the linguistic politeness. Memetics develops quickly at the end of 2007. Chen Yuan (2000) believed that catchwords are the reflection of culture, politics and web environment through the way of meme propagation. He Ziran and He Xuelin (2003) discussed the film language memes

through their mechanism of transmission. They compared memes with genes and explained the propagation law of language meme.

Xie Chaoqun, He Ziran and other domestic philologists discussed the definition and dissemination of memes. Zhang Xuhon studied how the linguistic memes affect language teaching. There are many memetics articles in Chinese academic journals, magazines and newspapers from 1999 to 2010.

III.   THE CHARACTERISTICS OF MEMES AND THE NETWORK CATCHPHRASES

Memetics mainly explore the social evolution model of information's dissemination. It shows the connections between things and cultural inheritance.

A.   The Characteristics of Memes

Dawkins stated that fidelity, fecundity and longevity are three ways to measure the quality of memes. The successful replicator is a steady gene that survives for a long time, reproduces itself quickly and replicates itself accurately. It possesses three features.

1. Fidelity

Fidelity is one characteristic of memes. The better it duplicates, the more it will be remained. Language and culture can be passes down due to superior fidelity. The copied memes in the course of transmission can reserve the nature of previous memes. Classic words or phrases can stand out after the competition of dialogues in conversations. The popular network catchphrses have simple forms and concise contents. Although the form may be varied, the essence of content is not changed completely. The forms of network catchphrases may be changed in different contexts, but the meaning is alike.

2. Fecundity

Fecundity is a main trait of memes. The faster the replication, the better the meme. It means that spread fast and wide scope. Catchphrases that have been replicated can be active in the internet and media. Netizens are committed to communication, therefore, many catchphrases with derivative forms are created. "Ungelivable", "unkaoable" and "undingable" are examples of this feature. It depends on the amount of communication.

3. Longevity

Longevity shows meme is enduring, which can maintain in people' minds. The longer the replication remains, the more the probability and quantity of duplication will be. It is an important feature of meme. If network catchphrases need to be improved, time is necessary. They are disseminated through inheritance and infectivity of its culture, which depend on media, such as internet, television. Some network catchphrases can be memorized forever, while others vanish quickly.

The relationship between meme and language is close. The spread of memes depends on language and promotes its development. Memes drive the development of network language and make it popular. Language meme can be used to analyze the characteristics of network catchphrases. It can also explain reproduction and dissemination of forms. Language is the carrier of culture, which survives through the replication and dissemination by language users. So language is meme. Language meme is not invariable because of people's powerful creativity, which enriches our language and culture.

B.   The Characteristics of Network Catchphrases

Network catchphrases are a variant of language that is affected by human's thinking ways and cultural knowledge. They are spread from one generation to the next through imitation and reproduction. Therefore, most of the characteristics are embodiment of people's thinking. Internet buzzwords and catchphrases are spread widely. Although some network catchphrases violate Chinese grammar, they reflect the expression of the order of Chinese characters.

1. Fashionability

People who carry memes are hosts. Netizens are hosts who replicate memes. The main part of netizens is young people. They use the internet to spread information. Network catchphrase memes are related to front-burner issues. It is easy for the young generation to accept new things, use advanced technology and spread information. They are the main force that makes network catchphrases popular. People imitate and spread them far and wide. Network catchphrase memes reflect social tendencies over a period of time, which can be in line with public thinking. People like to quote language, so these colloquial words turn into buzzwords. For example, the network catchphrase "skinny blue mushrooms" (蓝瘦香菇) comes from an online video. The meaning is someone feels unhappy and wants to cry with a hilrious expression. It causes a heated debate at that time. The network term "melon-eating masses" (吃瓜群众) describes onlookers with a self-mockery attitude who browse the forum without commenting. It represents a popular trend. Netizens tend to use such entertaining words to achieve fashion effect. It csn satisfy the freshness of the public.

2. Originality

The network catchphrase memes are novel and creative. They expresses the psychology of people who want to find originality. The innovation of language is based on imitation. People tend to use the popular language with novelty and extraordinary. Language innovation can renew the network catchphrase memes that are disseminated by media tools. Meme is the indication of social development and the embodiment of culture. The term "antizen" (蚁族) refers to a

group of people with low incomes and poor living condition. It combines "ant" with "citizen", showing ridicule about social situations and problems.

3. Simplicity

The network catchphrases are concise. Users use less words to convey more information. Simple and brief forms can gain recognition and support from people. And clarity is catchphrase memes' superiority. It is efficient to use brief phrases. The expression "No zuo no die" creates a public uproar. Then it is widespread on Twitter. It means that there is nothing to be indecent if you do not do anything stupid. This catchphrase was included in the American slang website of "*Urban Dictionary*" in 2014.

4. Authority

The spread of network catchphrase is from one host to another or a group. Meme can be accepted and copied by the public. They are disseminated by those who are expertised in a field or have high status. Network catchphrses are so popular because of enormous netizens' communication power.

5. Popularity

Network catchphrase memes can be popularized. With the updating of buzzwords, the main body extends from the younger generation to the other generation. They are curious about new things and imitate those expressions. Network users utilize simple forms to show rich meaning.

There are many prevalent network catchphrases, such as "给力". It means excellent and remarkable, which belongs to a kind of cyber language. "Gelivable" originates from northeast China. It describes joyful feelings that personal anticipation is actualized in some situation. "Ungelivable" appears after that. It describes something or someone that is not splendid or wonderful. With this form comes into being, many similar catchphrases are used in daily life, such as "niubility", "zhuangbility" and so on.

There exists a lot of catchphrases that combine the first part of one word with the hind part of another word. The ultimate word's meaning blends both meaning of two words. For instance, "brunch" is the variant of "breakfast" and "lunch", which is spread quickly on the internet. Netizens put "vegetable" and "steal" together to express a popular internet game. "Livelihard" refers to people who earn their own living toughly.

IV.   THE ANALYSIS OF THE WAYS AND FACTORS OF NETWORK CATCHPHRASES' DISSEMINATION

A.   Ways of the Dissemination of Network Catchphrases

The form of reproduction and dissemination of network catchphrases is not onefold. Genotype and phenotype memes are two ways of dissemination. Genotype memes is that content is similar but form is various. Phenotype memes is that analogous form but different content.

1. Genotype Memes' Dissemination

Genotype memes include two cases. One is the identical form based on same meaning. Another is the same meaning with diferent forms. The form of information is related to current affairs and social phenomena. It refers to idiom, idiomatic phrase, proverb and famous aphorism that are spread originally. During this process, the initial information is unchanged, but the context and the way of dissemination change. Although form is transformed, the content is copied.

Some network catchphrases are so dialectical that they become abnormity. In recent years, internet buzzwords use abbreviation and harmonic tone. Because online communication emphasizes convenient and quick, netizens use abbreviation to raise efficiency. For example, "网红" is the abbreviation of "网络红人"；CP means "couple", which refers sweethearts on the screen. "蓝瘦香菇" is the most typical example. This word originates from a disappointed net friend who said he was grieved and wanted to cry on video. His words have a strong Guangxi accent, sounding like "蓝瘦香菇". It was posted on internet with embarrassed face, then it was spread quickly. "小公举" and "虾米" refers to "小公主" and "什么". "猴赛雷" is a harmonic tone of "好犀利，好厉害". Besides, "歪果仁"means "外国人", "油菜花" refers to "有才华". These catchphrases with accents are used to express inward feelings. It is not only humorous, but also cater for modern people's release of pressure and emotion. There are many buzzwords with English accents, such as "逼格". It derives from iphone's advertisement "bigger". It applies to the style that people make grand gestures pretendedly. "狗带" means "go die", coming from Huang Zitao's rap in his concert. On the internet platform, someone would say "我选择狗带" when they are helpless and discontented. It is vividness and expressiveness that make network catchphrases more popular.

2. Phenotype Memes' Dissemination

Phenotype dissemination accounts for a large proportion of network catchphrases. It refers to the identical form but different contents. Although information reserves basic form, contents are completely different. Different situations require different contents. Behavioral expression is a symbol in the process of replication and dissemination. He Ziran thought phenotype memes propagates in three ways: homonym, homomorphic association and isomorphic different meaning.

"洪荒之力" refers to the most primitive power of God. After Olympic Games, it implies people with   mightiest power make great efforts. People also use it to ridicule and mock themselves. There are many similar examples, such as "套路" in 2016. It initially meant a whole set of martial art movements, systemic skills, and methods. Now it refers to

intentional, deceptive statement or practice, even trick and trap. "也是醉了" is not about drunkenness, but it expresses helpless and speechless about people and things.

"XXX 也是蛮拼的" is an example of phenotype memes. Another classic example is "友谊的小船说翻就翻". This catchphrase came from caricature The Boat of Friendship, which means friendship can not stand test. In a few months, fans of this cartoon are up to nine hundred thousand and spread to the circle of friends. Netizens compile many variants, such as "XXX 说 X 就 X". "任性的体重说涨就涨", "刚吃的晚饭说饿就饿", "好好的姑娘说胖就胖" and so on. This variant permeates work, study and life. "一言不合" means words are untimely. Now its meaning generalizes, showing people are capricious and do something unexpectedly. Many terms are based on the structure of "一言不合就 XXX". For example, "一言不合就飙车", "一言不合就辞职", "单位一言不合就发奖金".

Many variants are contextual generalization of initial catchphrases. "任性" comes from a news that the elderly is deceived to buy healthy products. Netizens mock up them "有钱就是任性". To satisfy certain desire or achieve some goals, people are willful and unscrupulous. It is a derogatory term in the traditional sense, but it is tinged with commendatory meaning, such as innocent, spontaneous, decisive and responsible for doing something. For example, "年轻就是任性", "有房就是任性", "成绩好就是任性". "宝宝" is a nickname that parents call their baby. Ever since the buzzword "吓死宝宝了" came out in 2015, it has become a term for girls to be cute when they are scared. Now this catchphrase can be used in any relaxing and casual situation. For example, "乐死宝宝了" and "笑死宝宝了".

The thrid type is more popular. For example, "xx 门", which derives from Watergate scandal, refers to disgracefully scandalous matters in policy. Now it refers to any scandals in any realms, such as entertainment, sports. "甄嬛体" is copied quickly and spread widely. The more popular language patterns are "xx 是极好的，xx 倒也不负", "xx 真真". Put new wine in old bottles, network catchphrases become creative and recreational. They make network language relaxing and amusing, which meets psychological demands of the public.

B.   Factors Affecting the Dissemination of Network Catchphrase Memes

The network catchphrase is not only a linguistic phenomenon that reflects language change and development, but also a cultural phenomenon at specific times. Network catchphrases affect people's thinking and expression to some extent. Online intercourses are transformed into daily communication, which enriches expression and promotes language development. Network catchphrases are successful and powerful memes that are preserved by choice and elimination.

Dawkins pointed that successful memes is longevous, productive and loyal. Leigh stated the replication and propagation of better memes go through four stages: assimilation, memory, expression and dissemination. Catchphrase, a successful meme, is affected by five factors: the mental disposition of people who are the subject of information; contextual conditions selected by potential information; pragmatic function expected by subjects; surface features of information that is convenient to imitate and memorize; public character effect and media publicity.

According to the degree of language popularity and creativity, the most popular catchphrases can be estimated and elected annually. Network catchphrases increase year by year. Nearly thirty thousand netizens who were launched by the People's Daily voted the top ten network catchphrases in December in 2017. The first one is freestyle that refers to improvisation and casual exertion. "扎心了！老铁" "老铁"means best friends in the northeast China. This sentence shows people's emotion is touched by something. "贫穷限制了我的想象力" is usually used to make fun of people who have a large amount of money and live an inconceivable life. "你的良心不会痛吗？" expresses the bad mood of speakers. "惊不惊喜意不意外"refers that things happen unpredictably, which is used to ridicule a dramatical reversal. "请开始你的表演" was said by judges who appeared on TV's talent shows. Contestants should keep the attitude of pious and respectful listening. "还有这种操作" is the same as "套路" that is used for internet chat to express shock and suspicion. "尬聊" shows an awkward chat and the atmosphere falls into a freezing point. "戏精" refers to someone who pretends to have special effects. "皮皮虾，我们走" sweeps the internet. To the extent of the range and speed of transmission, the influence of the internet on language is enormous. "疯狂打 call" means fans wave fluorescent stick, cheer and bolster up, which creates an atmosphere of enthusiasm. They show their supports for the idol who sings on stage. Now it means backing up somebody or something. With the spread of this catchphrase, it becomes a popular expression in reality. Variants with the content "为 XXX 疯狂打 call" appear accordingly. They are used to describe all kinds of people.

"Prehistoric powers"(洪荒之力) comes from legendary TV drama Hua Qiangu. Two factions yearn for the most powerful power to be invincible. It was widely disseminated in Rio Olympics in 2016. The athlete Fu Yuanhui used this phrase in a humorous tone to express that she had already used all strengths. Her exaggerated countenance and funny expression attracted people's interest and attention. The buzword is reported on TV, internet and newspapers and spread quickly. "洪荒之力" is in line with psychological tendencies of young people who hope to have positive attitude and fighting spirit. In terms of pragmatic effect, it conveys a positive energy and inspires people to commit themselves to their cause. The buzzword became a hot word in 2016. It is easy to find and use it in life. When "洪荒之力" appears, it is a commendatory term that people devotes them to work. However, with the widespread use of various social

platforms, its meaning has changed in some contexts. For example, a sense of sarcasm spawns.

"洪荒之力" and "疯狂打 call" are representatives of network catchphrases. Netizens make catchwords enrich the network language. Their language forms are short, pithy, simple, memorable and readable. They find resonance with readers originally. Then by drawing on the popularity of public figures, network catchphrases are spread by mass media, such as online social media and TV. They respond to people's optimism. People are deeply influenced by these expressions as if they had experienced them. Because they can imagine those situations. Therefore, their ability to replicate is powerful, which is suitable for different circumstances and contextual spaces. People copy a variety of catchphrases to express true feelings and intentions. It is obvious that their popularity fit five factors above. When information is publicized by public figures or mass media, it is easy to imitate, memorize, copy and disseminate further.

"We are 伐木累" is very popular in *Running Man of Best Variety Program*. Deng Chao inspires team's morale to finish tasks when they faced challenges. The pronunciation is funny and ridiculous. "Smilence" (笑而不语) shows someone is unwilling to give opinion, just smile and reflects social hot topics. Their spread is due to the prevalence of the internet.

The way of thinking in China not only influences internet buzzwords, but also affects network catchphrases. In order to have a relaxing and pleasant network communication environment, internet users create entertaining words. There are also a lot of popular sentences on the internet, such as "long time no see". Now it becomes a standard English phrase. Network catchphrase is the symbol of the integration of network culture and native culture. For example, "No zuo no die" and "you can you up" are famous expression, which are imitated, replicated and disseminated widely on the internet.

Network catchphrase memes is essentially similar to strong memes. They lay a solid foundation for language innovation. The creation of network catchphrases is concise and interesting, revealing people's contemplation. They receive support from people because of their specialization and originality. It is network catchphrases' vividness and liveliness that convey people's feelings.

V. CONCLUSION

A. Findings

Memetics provides a prerequisite for the correct understanding and proper use of language and cultural evolution. It is helpful to explain rules of the dissemination of the network catchphrases. Virtual cyberspace and language community create a new social model. In addition, the combination of social culture and network culture contributes to the development of network catchphrases.

After analyzing the examples of network catchphrases from the perspective of memetics, the author makes some findings. Firstly, the characteristics of memes in network catchphrases can reveal the reasons for the popularity of buzzwords. Secondly, netizens like to create simple new words and phrases from social phenomena. Thirdly, the meaning of some network catchphrases will change in the process of dissemination.

B. Limitations and Suggestions

There are still many problems to be solved. The examples cited in this thesis are limited. Accumulating sufficient information sometimes impedes the correct understanding. Besides, memetics is a new field that is worth exploring.

Meme is a new theory to explain cultural evolution. Language is the carrier of cultural diffusion. Language itself is meme. Network catchphrases are not only a special language, but also a cultural phenomenon. And they reflect social hot spots and mental requirement. Some of them will become very popular and influence people's lives. So the study of network catchphrases has great sociocultural and linguistic value. Memetics also provides a new theoretical basis for the study of network catchphrases. People can know more about the development and popularity of language. Memetics and network catchphrase memes are worthy of further study by linguists and researchers.

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An Investigation of Oral Corrective Feedback in an ESL Listening and Speaking Class[*]

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Abstract—**The ability of listening and speaking has been playing an essential role in helping English as a Second Language (ESL) students in terms of academic performance and mental well-being. Oral corrective feedback (CF) provided by ESL teachers is important in the improvement of students' listening and speaking ability. However, conflicting results exist about the frequency of oral CF used by ESL teachers. The present paper focuses on the frequency of oral CF used by a teacher in a university ESL listening and speaking class. The results show that there are 13 types of oral CF in a total of 154 turns of interactions between the teacher and the students.**

Index Terms—**oral corrective feedback, frequency, English as a second language listening and speaking class**

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Statement of the Problem

Instructors of English as a Second Language (ESL) Listening and Speaking classes usually use various types of oral corrective feedback (CF) to improve students' oral proficiency (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). However, the frequency of using these oral CF strategies in language classes is often inconsistent across the different instructional settings. Lyster, Saito and Sato (2013) reviewed 12 descriptive studies of classroom CF and found that there was no agreement among the research as to what types of oral CF were used more frequently than the others. For example, the percent of using recasts was as high as 83% in Sheen's (2004) study on adult learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in Korea, while the percent of using recasts was only 31% in Yang's (2009) study on learners of high school EFL in China. Therefore, further research into oral CF strategies in different instructional settings is still needed because of this contradictory evidence.

B. Background Information

Speaking proficiency plays an important role for students who are planning to study abroad. As the world becomes more and more interconnected, students tend to choose to study abroad after they complete high school or undergraduate study in their native countries. However, studying and living in a foreign country is never an easy thing to do. Students are likely to encounter numerous unexpected difficulties, among which using their second language to communicate with people around them may be the most difficult. If this communication problem cannot be addressed properly, it might be harmful for the students themselves psychologically and academically.

In terms of mental well-being, the students might experience psychological stress or feel isolated from their new surroundings if they cannot understand others or make themselves understood by speaking accurately and fluently. More importantly, their academic performance can be affected unfavorably if the interactions between the students and their professors are disrupted frequently because of the students' poor speaking and listening ability. Therefore, the proper emphasis on speaking and listening in a second language for those who intend to live or study in a foreign country is of great importance.

C. Significance of the Study

ESL Listening and Speaking classes can provide the students with a useful way of improving their communicative ability to use a target language (Li, 2010). In order to make the students' speaking ability improve in a relatively short period of time, the instructors usually utilize various types of teaching methods to make classroom activities more effective. Among them, oral CF is an important method. Sarandi (2016) pointed out that "corrective feedback is an indication that all or part of language that learners produce is deviant" (p. 236). In an ESL Listening and Speaking class, the instructors can use a variety of oral CF strategies to encourage the students to notice gaps between their utterances and the target language. This may improve their speaking ability through the uptake of the oral CF and also repair their interlanguage, i.e., a version of a language produced by a foreign language learner. Sarandi (2016) further argued that "the widely accepted CF strategies are: a) recasts, b) metalinguistic explanation, c) elicitation, d) repetition, e) clarification requests, and f) explicit correction" (p. 236). These strategies are frequently used in the research that investigates the frequency of various oral CF strategies used in different instructional settings.

Moreover, based on the differential oral proficiency levels of students, using appropriate oral CF strategies in a Listening and Speaking class can provide all students with suitable CF they need to improve their own speaking ability. For example, in a Listening and Speaking class, the instructors can use more output-pushing strategies for the more proficient students, while using more input-providing strategies to the less proficient students. Specifically, the output-pushing strategies are used because of the sociocultural framework that argues that the instructors should use the concept of scaffolding and "Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)" to push these students to achieve desirable learning results (Aljaafreh & Lantolf 1994). Meanwhile, input-providing strategies should be used because it is hard for the less proficient students to benefit from the scaffolding offered by the instructors. Whatever strategies instructors use, they are creating a language environment in their classrooms to immerse their students in the foreign language.

In addition, an investigation into the classification and frequency of oral CF in an university-level ESL class can also help those who teach at the same level make more informative decisions when providing oral CF. As will be presented in the following section, the existing literature about the frequency of providing oral CF often produce inconsistent findings. In this case, sometimes it would be difficult for the instructors to distinguish the more frequently utilized oral CF from the less frequently utilized ones. In addition, most existing studies utilized the classification of oral CF originated from Lyster and Ranta's 1997 study, which might be too narrow to cover the dynamic classroom environments.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of oral CF plays an essential role in facilitating students' oral performance in ESL Listening and Speaking classes (Sheen, 2004). In classroom interactions, the instructors tend to vary the frequency of providing different types of oral CF to the students since they teach in different instructional settings and face the students with different oral proficiency levels. Thus, research on the teaching practices using oral CF in classes usually leads to conflicting results. In this part, I will show how the studies of Sheen (2004), Panova and Lyster (2002) and Ellis, Basturkmen and Loewen (2001) on the use of oral CF produced conflicting results. Then I will briefly review oral CF studies with different levels of students to show that oral CF research of adult ESL learners is still needed.

A. *The Frequency of Feedback Types across Instructional Settings*

Sheen (2004) investigated the difference in instructors' use of oral CF types and the rate of learner uptake and repair across four different instructional settings, which are French Immersion, Canadian ESL, New Zealand ESL and Korean EFL. The author uses Lyster and Ranta's taxonomies of CF types of explicit correction, recasts, clarification requests, metalinguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition, or combinations (Lyster & Ranta, 1997) to explore the research questions. In terms of the rate of learner uptake and repair, the author uses Lyster and Ranta's categorization of 'repair' and 'needs repair' (Lyster & Ranta, 1997). There are four data sets from four different instructional settings in this study. Three of the four data sets are from existing studies, while one of them is from the author. The three existing data sets are from Lyster and Ranta (1997), Panova and Lyster (2002), and Ellis et al. (2001). The data from the author are from two communicative EFL classrooms, each of which has four to six adult Korean learners. Also, in order to collect the data from the author, two teachers record thirteen English lessons totaling 12 hours over a four-week period. The results show that among the four instructional settings, recast is used most frequently in Korean EFL (83%), followed by New Zealand ESL (68%), and French Immersion (55%) and Canadian ESL (55%). Specifically, in the data from the author, which is about the adult EFL in Korea, the frequency of other feedback types in addition to recast is also distinguished from the other three data sets. For example, the frequency of explicit correction is 11% to EFL in Korea, while it is 2.2% to Canadian ESL. The frequency of clarification requests is 3% to EFL in Korea, while it is 11% to Canadian ESL. Various instructional settings can lead to different frequency of feedback types.

B. *The Frequency of Feedback Types to ESL Learners*

In addition to the fact that different instructional settings can provide inconsistent frequency of feedback types, the similar instructional settings can also produce these inconsistent findings. Ellis et al.'s (2001), and Panova and Lyster's (2002) study, both targeting ESL learners, will be reviewed to show the inconsistent findings on frequency of various types of feedback.

Ellis et al.'s (2001) study investigates the nature and extent of focus on form in communicative ESL lessons. The authors target two ESL classes in New Zealand, each of which has 12 students. 12 hours of classroom activities were audio-recorded in a length of two and a half weeks. The results show that recast is still the most frequently used feedback type (68%), followed by explicit correction (12.7%), elicitation (6.9%), repetition (5.8%), and clarification requests (4.2%).

In contrast, Panova and Lyster's (2002) study presents different results as for the frequency of types of feedback. With the research question about feedback types that lead to the greatest amount of uptake, the authors first identify the different types of feedback used in the classroom. A class of 25 students in a Canadian ESL classroom was observed over a period of four weeks, with 18 hours of classroom interactions audio-recorded. Among the 412 feedback moves based on their observation, recast is used most frequently (55%), clarification request (10.7%), explicit correction (2.2%), elicitation (3.6%), repetition (1.5%), which were all distinguished from those in Ellis et al.'s (2001) study. Thus,

similar instructional settings, such as ESL, can also produce inconsistent findings on the frequency of oral CF types.

C.   Younger ESL Learners

In addition to the conflicting results about the frequency of different types of oral CF, there are also studies that focus on young ESL students instead of adults. For example, using French-speaking children of grades five and six in intensive ESL programs as subjects, White (1991) investigated the effectiveness of teaching adverb placement to these children. The children were divided into two groups, with one group instructed on adverb placement and another on question formation. The results showed that only the group that was instructed on adverb placement knew that adverbs should not interrupt the verb and object. In Lyster and Ranta's (1997) research, their subjects were primary level students in Grade four, five, and six. The researchers collected data through classroom interaction, transcribed the data, and analyzed them using a model built for the study to disclose various moves in a sequence of error treatment. The results indicated that the teachers used recasts much more frequently than other feedback types, while recasts were ineffective in eliciting the students' self-repair. Also, Tsang's (2004) study involved secondary level students ranging from grade seven to 11 in Hong Kong. The study investigated the frequency of teacher feedback and the effectiveness of student uptake. The results showed that the most frequently used feedback types by the teachers were recast and explicit correction, and the students could produce the most self-repair when the feedback was provided as the form of repetition.

Therefore, as the literature about targeted subjects suggests there is still a need to investigate the frequency of oral CF in adult ESL settings. As Panove and Lyster (2002) pointed out that there are different factors that exist in terms of context, language, and cognition between adults and young learners (as cited in Lee, 2013).

The purpose of this study was to investigate the frequency of oral CF used by the instructor of an university-level ESL Listening and Speaking class. In the literature of oral CF research, similar or different instructional settings produced conflicting results of the oral CF frequency used by instructors. These results cause instructors themselves feel perplexed as to which types of oral CF are used more frequently and more effectively than others across these instructional settings. Thus, this study has attempted to address the problem of oral CF frequency, and add to the existing literature by focusing on an adult ESL Listening and Speaking class in an American university.

III.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Two theories will be addressed in this part because they are closely connected to the analyses of oral CF and are frequently adopted as theoretical framework in the research of oral CF. The first theory is the interaction-hypothesis developed by Long in 1983 and 1996. Long (1983) argued that there were two stages involved in our interactions. The first stage was the negotiation of meaning occurring when the interlocutors were working together to make interactions move forward smoothly by resolving communication problems (Pawlak, 2014). The second stage was interactional modification through which the communication problems were resolved with the use of various types of strategies, such as repetitions or asking for clarifications (Pawlak, 2014). However, as Pawlak (2014) pointed out, this version of the interaction-hypothesis should be revised because it failed to elaborate on the relationship among negotiation, comprehension, and acquisition. In other words, it assumed that negotiation can lead to acquisition only because negotiation can facilitate comprehension which is the premise of acquisition. However, Long (1983) did not elaborate on these potential causal-effect relationships.

Long's (1996) revised version of interaction-hypothesis was more suitable for the analyses of oral CF. Long (1996) focused more on the process of negotiation of form which involved various types of conversational strategies used to provide corrective feedback such as explicit correction, elicitation, and repetition. The negotiation of form was important in the development of second language learning because it was useful to the improvement of some language learning areas, such as speaking and listening (Long, 1996). In terms of oral CF, Lyster et al. (2013) argued that recasts, one of the most frequently used type of oral CF, were closely connected with the use of interaction-hypothesis, and were helpful in improving students' communication performance because "[...] recasts are hypothesized to provide learners with a primary source of negative evidence while freeing up cognitive resources that would otherwise be used for semantic processing" (p. 10). In other words, oral CF, such as recasts, can help to improve learners' communication performance by correcting their oral errors in an efficient way and letting them have more time and energy to process other language related problems.

Another theory associated with oral CF was the skill acquisition theory, which is "best presented in L2 acquisition by the work of DeKeyser" (Polio, 2013, p.381). According to Polio (2013), there were three stages of development concerning skill acquisition theory: declarative, procedural, and automatic stages. Generally, students' errors in oral utterance were spotted and corrected by their teachers using either implicit or explicit types of strategies. In this case, if the teachers used prompts as an implicit way to correct the students' errors instead of providing corrections explicitly, the students were provided with "[...] scaffold opportunities for guided practice in the context of communicative interaction" (Lyster et al., 2013, p.11). This guided practice was helpful in improving the students' oral performance because it provided the students with opportunities to practice their thinking ability and to have access to correct declarative knowledge. Subsequently, in the stage of procedural development, it was more secured that the knowledge entering into this stage was correct, and should be proceduralized by the students themselves in their future learning.

The ultimate goal of learning advocated by the skill acquisition theory was to make the proceduralized knowledge automatically retrieved whenever the students needed it. Thus, the skill acquisition theory is useful in analyzing the function of oral CF because of these three stages of learning development mentioned above.

IV. METHODS

A. Participants

Five students were enrolled in this ESL Listening and Speaking class. They were two male and three female students with the ages ranging from 18-25. Among these five students, two were from Saudi Arabia, two from Korea, and one from Albania. All of them were in the U.S. for under six months. The female instructor in this class has been teaching ESL for about six years. She is a native English speaker.

B. Setting

The university in which the present study was conducted is located in a Midwestern US state. It offers 277 degree and certificate programs, including bachelor's degrees, professional certificates, masters degrees and doctoral degrees. Currently, more than 19,000 students are enrolled in majors such as Arts and Sciences, Business Administration, Education and Human Services, Engineering and Computer Science, Health Sciences, Nursing, and Medicine.

The ESL program at the university was established in 1999. It has trained students from more than 50 countries. This program consists of three required courses: speaking/listening, reading, and writing. Each of the three courses has eight levels with level one being the lowest and level eight the highest. Basically, these courses are for non-native speakers whose English proficiency needs to be improved before they receive further undergraduate or graduate education.

The course I observed was Speaking/Listening, which provides students with suitable training to support them with necessary skills in an English-speaking academic environment. Among the eight levels of this course, the level one and two provide basic practice in English conversation. Level three is mainly for the practice of conversational skills. Students are introduced to American culture and customs in level four. In level five, students learn more about listening and speaking for academics. Level six provides students with opportunities to practice academic conversations with native speakers. More importance to specific academic skills in communication is attached at level seven and eight. To move from one level to the next, students are first required to get a certain grade at the original level. From the consecutive order of the eight levels, we can see that students are gradually exposed to the real practices of the academic communications environments that they will be facing after finishing the courses. The Listening and Speaking class I observe is level seven, at which students receive practice in both academic speaking and listening and English language proficiency tests. Compared with other lower levels, students at level seven tend to have relatively more interactions with instructors or peers, which can produce more useful data for the analysis of oral CF frequency.

C. Methodology

The data in this study were collected by means of classroom observations. First of all, the observer's field notes were used as a supplementary resource for the investigation of the use of frequency of oral CF. In the field notes, the observer wrote down as much information as possible using brief forms so that he could keep pace with the movement of the class. After each session of the classroom observations, the field notes were modified through the observer's retrospection, and observer comments were added as well if needed. Second, the observer videotaped three sessions of the Listening and Speaking class. Transcription and coding of data followed each of the three sessions.

D. Procedures

After establishing the research purpose, the researcher made a contact with the head of the ESL faculty at the university, and obtained permission to observe level seven of Listening and Speaking classes. Subsequently, the researcher went into the class to observe after obtaining the university's Institutional Review Board's (IRB) clearance.

To collect the classroom observation data about oral CF classification and frequency, the researcher observed an ESL Listening and Speaking class for seven hours over two weeks. The instruction time for each class was one and a half hours, and there were five students in the class. The classes were videotaped and transcribed. Because of the audio problems with the settings of the camera in the first observation, the researcher did not derive any useful data from it. Therefore, as a matter of fact, the researcher observed the class four times, but only transcribed three sessions.

E. Data Analysis

After each session of the observations, the researchers transcribed and coded the videotaped data according to a code-book adapted from Lee's (2013) classification of CF types. In Lee's (2013) study, the author classified CF into six types, which were explicit correction, recast, clarification request, meta-linguistic feedback, elicitation, and repetition. However, based on the data in our study, the researcher derived 13 oral CF types:explicit correction, recast, clarification request, repetition of questions, repetition of students' errors, elicitation with questions, support with example, elicitation with encouragements, elicitation for correction, explanation about language rules, explanation about meanings, direct denial, and explicit agreement.

Different from Lyster and Ranta's (1997) and Sheen's (2004) studies, the error treatment sequences in the present

study were operationalized as a question posed by the teacher, the students' responses, then the feedback provided by the teacher. For example,

T: What is the meaning of "call in"?

S: Present?

T: Think about this, "I don't feel good, I am gonna call in to my job. I am gonna call in sick to work today." (30-32)

To establish inter-rater reliability about oral CF classification and frequency, the researcher invited three inter-raters to code 10% of the data independently, among whom two were Ph.D. candidates in reading education who are also EFL teachers and speakers of English as a second language themselves, and the other one was a faculty member. After the three inter-raters finished their coding, they discussed the divergences in the coding, and agreed on how these divergences should be coded, either by adding new codes, or by combining some of the existing ones together. Subsequently, the faculty member independently coded these data. The inter-rater reliability correlation was 0.95.

V. RESULTS

The data contained 154 turns of oral CF provided by the instructor. These turns can be classified into 13 types of oral CF, of which the frequency and the rate are indicated in Table 1.

Of all the oral CF types, the instructor in the university-level ESL Listening and Speaking class utilized elicitation with questions most frequently, with a rate of 17.5%. The frequencies of utilizing other types of oral CF were as follows: explanation about meanings (13.6%), explanation about language rules (12.3%), support with examples (9.1%), repetition of students' errors (9.1%), direct denial (7.1%), clarification request (7.1%), repetition of questions (5.2%), explicit correction (5.2%), elicitation for correction (5.2%), elicitation with encouragements (3.9%), recast (3.2%), explicit agreement (1.2%).

Generally, the results of the present study indicated that the instructor utilized the elicitation with questions feedback type more than others. In other words, the instructor thought that prompting the students to find out answers by posing questions to which they needed to respond played a significant role in this ESL Listening and Speaking class. In addition, the instructor frequently explained language rules to the students in certain contexts in order to provide them with corrective feedback. However, we found that the feedback type of recast, which was utilized most frequently by ESL instructors in the literature, was only utilized a few times in the present study. Therefore, we may assume that the instructor in our study thought that it was not useful to "reformulate all or part of the incorrect word or phrase, to show the correct form without explicitly identifying the error" (Lee, 2013, p. 218).

TABLE 1
FREQUENCY OF FEEDBACK TYPES

Feedback types	Frequency	Rate
Explicit corrections	8	5.2%
Recast	5	3.2%
Clarification requests	11	7.1%
Repetition of questions	8	5.2%
Repetition of students' errors	14	9.1%
Elicitation with questions	27	17.5%
Support with examples	14	9.1%
Elicitation with encouragements	6	3.9%
Explanation about language rules	19	12.3%
Explanation about meanings	21	13.6%
Elicitation for correction	8	5.2%
Direct denial	11	7.1%
Explicit agreement	2	1.2%
Total	154	100%

VI. DISCUSSION

The present study explored the question what types of oral CF the instructor provided in an university-level ESL Listening and Speaking class. The results indicated that the instructor utilized 13 types of oral CF in the class, and the frequency of utilizing them were (from high to low frequency): elicitation with questions, explanation about meanings, explanation about language rules, support with examples, repetition of students' errors, direct denial, clarification request, repetition of questions, explicit correction, elicitation for correction, elicitation with encouragements, recast, correct. Among them, there three groups of seven types of oral CF that have the same frequency: support with examples and repetition of students' errors; direct denial and clarification request; repetition of questions, explicit correction and elicitation for correction.

The results of the present study were distinguished from the former studies in both the frequencies and the classification of oral CF types. First, in terms of CF frequencies, the present study found that elicitation with questions was most frequently utilized by the instructor. In other words, the instructor frequently prompted the students to find out answers themselves in providing feedback instead of presenting them with the answers directly. For example:

T: Please do not bring up all information about my past. What does "bring up" mean here?

S: It is something...

T: Something from where? (11-13)

In this example, the student didn't provide a correct answer to the instructor's question. The instructor, instead of presenting the meaning of "bring up" directly, tried to encourage the student to find out the answer herself.

However, in some other studies on oral CF associated with ESL classes, the results showed that recast was most frequently utilized by the instructors. For example, in Ellis et al.'s (2001) study on oral CF of a New Zealand ESL class, the results showed that for the 189 turns of oral CF, the instructors utilized recast in 129 turns, occupying 68.3% among the six types of oral CF. Also, in Panova and Lyster's (2002) study, there were 412 oral CF moves provided by the instructors. Among them, 226 moves were delivered to the students by the type of recast, occupying 55% of all seven types of oral CF in that study. However, in the present study, recast was only utilized by the instructor for five oral CF moves among the 154 in total, or 5.2% overall. For example:

T: Please do not bring up all information about my past. What do we mean here?

S: ... in our mind?

T: Come to ... mind. (14-16)

In this example, the instructor reformulated the student's incorrect phrase by providing the correct form. Moreover, the feedback type of elicitation with questions, which was utilized most frequently in the present study, was not utilized frequently in either Ellis et al.'s (2001) or Panova and Lyster's (2002) studies, with only 13 turns in the former and 15 in the latter. In addition, the former studies classified elicitation as just one type of feedback. However, in the present study, we found that elicitation could be sub-classified as elicitation for correction, elicitation with questions, with encouragements, and support with examples. As a matter of fact, the classification of oral CF types in the present study was more detailed than the frequently used one in the oral CF literature, which was originated from Lyster and Ranta's (1997) study.

Second, in terms of the classification of oral CF, the present study was distinguished from the former related studies. Most former studies on oral CF classified feedback into six types, which were explicit corrections, recasts, clarification requests, meta-linguistic feedback, elicitation, repetition (e.g., Lyster and Ranta, 1997; Sheen, 2004; Lee, 2013). Initially, we adopted this classification to analyze our transcriptions, conducting a priori coding. However, we found that this classification didn't work well with our data since some of them could not be coded if we utilized that classification. Therefore, a classification of 13 types of oral CF was developed based on our transcriptions. Among these 13 types of oral CF, some remained the same as the former studies, such as explicit correction, recasts, and clarification requests. Some were expanded from those in the former studies, such as repetition of questions, repetition of students' errors (originally classified as repetition); elicitation with questions, with encouragements, elicitation for correction, and support with examples (originally classified as elicitation). Some were newly created based on the present study, such as explanation about language rules, about meanings; direct denial; explicit agreement.

VII. CONCLUSION

A. Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations in the present study. First, the total observation time was not quite long enough. Future studies can extend the observation time, which may lead to more solid results about the classification and frequency of oral CF. Second, the present study didn't take into consideration the students' uptake status after receiving oral CF from the teacher. It is not uncommon that students cannot utilize teacher's feedback correctly and efficiently. Thus, the various types of students' uptake status should be investigated in future studies, which will contribute more practical evidence to oral CF studies. In other words, future studies can explore the effectiveness of these oral CF types. Third, the views of the students and the teacher about these 13 types of oral CF were not explored in the present study. Future studies, for example, can utilize questionnaire or interviews to investigate students' and teachers' preferences to the different types of oral CF. For example, if teachers utilized elicitation with question type more frequently than the other feedback types, and students, however, prefer recast feedback type, then the conflict between them need to be addressed to help improve students' oral proficiency. Thus, the data derived from class observations should be triangulated to lead to more significant results in terms of how to use feedback effectively in ESL classes.

B. Conclusions

The present paper investigated what types of oral CF the instructor provided for the students in an university-level ESL Listening and Speaking class. The results indicated that there were 13 different types of oral CF provided by the instructor, which was a more detailed classification compared with the former related studies. In addition, the present study also was distinguished from the former related studies in terms of frequency of utilizing these types of oral CF, indicating that the instructor in this study utilized elicitation with questions most frequently when providing oral CF, which can be regarded as a sub-classification of elicitation. Also, recast, which was utilized most frequently as a type of oral CF in most related studies, was utilized just a few times. The results of the present study can contribute to the related literature by presenting a detailed classification of oral CF, and the different frequencies of utilizing oral CF, with which can help ESL instructors in providing oral CF in class and in conducting research about how to provide effective oral CF.

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An Experiential Learning Approach to Fostering Learner Autonomy among Omani Students

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Abstract—**Experiential learning is a learner-facilitating tool that has not been sufficiently explored in Higher education institutions in Oman. There is a growing body of literature that recognises the importance of 'learning by doing,' 'hands-on approach' or 'experiential learning.' Experiential learning grew in popularity with adult learners since the time of Dewey and progressed with several scholars researching on the potential benefits of applying experiential learning methods in vocational and technical training institutions. The notion that knowledge is gained through active involvement in a specific task is a construct that has been researched in the present study. It endeavours to foster learner autonomy through the implementation of instructional tasks based on Kolb's experiential learning cycle. The main objective was to observe the change in perceptions of learners on their autonomous behaviour before and after the intervention. Through convenience sampling of 60 undergraduate students, enrolled for various pathways on the business programme were selected for this study. The quantitative data was collected by administering a learner autonomy questionnaire and a set of self-designed experiential learning classroom activities. The findings of the study revealed that experiential learning cycle activities implicitly fostered learner autonomy and enabled learning necessary skills for the workplace.**

Index Terms—**learning cycle, learner autonomy, responsibilities, experiences, reflection, the experiential learning method**

I. INTRODUCTION

Numerous seminars, workshops, and educational meets are regularly organised to deliberate on educational practices that would bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and employability skills. Research has shown that employers in Oman are dissatisfied with the graduates that exit higher education institutions. Several Omani researchers have observed that the problem arises from schools and this is carried forward to the tertiary institutions. As quoted by (Al-bulushi, 2012), grade 12 graduates who enter tertiary institutions lack the ability to, ''use language effectively and appropriately in all four skills throughout the range of social, personal, school, and work situations required for daily living in a given society''. This is not only the case with schools but also with a large number of students who were awarded scholarships to study abroad in English speaking countries (pg 142,143).

The Oman government has strenuously put in efforts to elevate English language teaching to cater to the demands of the global market. The drive towards higher education development was manifested at a conference held in Muscat in March 2001. The theme of the conference was,' The University of the 21st Century' (Al-Hussaini, 2001) gives an account of the recurring themes of the conference, "Globalisation, skills in information technology, the shift from teaching to learning, a lifelong learning culture and the need to involve private sector in higher education". He notes that the conference and the themes were conducted at the right time as he states that 'higher education – especially professional education – lies fettered by examination-oriented courses that are rigid, pattern-bound and overcrowded. Many students fail to acquire professional skills, self-learning ability and the right ethical attitudes' (pg 1).

(AL-DHAFIRY, 2003) expresses disappointment at the state of the educational systems in the GCC countries and highlights the gap between graduates and the needs of the labour market. As a result of weak basic skills, there is a surge in unemployment (pg 65). Furthermore, he brings to our attention that soft skills are gaining importance in the labour market. Cited in (Al-bulushi, 2012), Akkari 2004, calls for a need to develop technical skills, such as problem-solving, innovation, critical thinking, cooperation and creativity (pg 146- 147). As observed from the studies discussed, there is a dire need of a major transformation in the educational system. The country's economic development is closely linked to adequate human capital, 'the graduates.' To corroborate the requirement, the eleventh philosophy of education document is listed. The Sultanate of Oman laid down a set of 16 principles of 'Philosophy of Education.' Specific objectives are derived from these 16 philosophies. Philosophy of education number 11, is enumerated here as it relates to the main aim of the current study. (Philosophy of Education in the Sultanate of Oman, pg 25)

Eleventh Philosophy of Education: Education and Work

1. The practical application of theoretical knowledge.

2. Reinforce the values of work and production.

3. Appreciate all professions.

4. Develop basic job skills.

5. Align educational outcomes with the requirements of the comprehensive development of society and the needs of the labour market.

6. Develop work skills for local and international competitiveness.

7. Encourage a culture of professionalism and reinforce its effectiveness in the professional lives of individuals in the labour market.

Considering the needs of the nation, this study adopts Kolb's experiential learning cycle which utilizes the learners' experience on the topic, contextualizes it to the job market, and allows them to reflect on the experiences, concretise the concepts and implement the knowledge gained to societal needs. By active involvement in the four modes of the learning cycle, students develop an awareness of their responsibilities, capabilities and take ownership of the learning process. In other words, they cultivate autonomous behaviour in and out of class and in the work environment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Successful experiential learners develop into autonomous learners with skills that enable them to undertake the responsibility to work alone or in a group (Moon, 2004). It is seen that no matter what activity is planned, reflection and application play a vital role in ensuring a deeper understanding of abstract concepts. (Clark, Threeton, & Ewing, 2010) state that in order to acquire more in-depth understanding, learning should not halt at the experience stage; if this occurs, then the learner is denied the chance to absorb or retain valuable knowledge gained through experience.

A. Kolb's Experiential Learning Model

There is a large volume of published studies describing the role of experiential learning however, the current study adopts Kolb's experiential learning cycle, which has gained recognition in recent decades. Kolb draws his ideas of experiential learning from theories laid by Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget. A working definition of the learning process coined by Kolb is '*Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experiences.*' Kolb's experiential learning theory is a holistic theory that encompasses the learning process as an adaptation of the whole being, with sound background from humanistic concepts of learning. He characterized learning as (i) a process; (ii) a continuous process based on experience; (iii) a dialectic process; (iv) a holistic process of human adaptation; (v) a transaction between the individual and the environment; (vi) a process of creating knowledge. (pg 26-37)

According to Kolb, learning is cyclical in nature. The four-component cyclical mode of learning is known as the 'Kolb Learning Cycle.' For successful learning, the learner should involve actively in all the four modes, i.e., Concrete experience (CE), reflective observation (RO), abstract conceptualization (AC) and active experimentation (AE). The first stage requires the learner to be prepared to receive new experiences and fully immerse themselves in gaining knowledge from experience. The second stage is reflective observation, which is indispensable to any successful learning. As the stage suggests, the learner must reflect on the experience and observe any meaningful knowledge from various perspectives. This is followed by the abstract conceptualization stage where the knowledge gained from the two stages are integrated. In other words, their observations are integrated with rich learning experiences that would assist in creating and comprehending concepts. The last stage in the experiential cycle is the active experimentation, in which the learner transforms the new knowledge gained from observing and reflecting on the experience to that could be applied in making decisions and problem-solving.

B. Experiential Learning Task Design

Kolb's experiential learning cycle integrates knowledge from experiences by applying it to the formal learning setting and reflecting on the knowledge gained. The activities designed by the researcher are developed in a way to facilitate a smooth transition from one stage of the learning cycle to another. (Driscoll & Driscoll, 2011) enumerate eight principles of good practice for all experiential learning activities laid down by the (National Society for Experiential Education, 2013) as; Intention, preparedness and planning, authenticity, reflection, orientation and training, monitoring and continuous improvement, assessment and evaluation and acknowledgment. The activity ensures that the experience is cyclic and completes the loop of the learning process. According to NSEE, the facilitator plays a major role in ensuring that the principles of experiential education are fulfilled. While implementing the experiential learning model, the facilitator chooses experiences that match with the learning outcomes, ensures that suitable resources are provided to facilitate the process of learning, and support learners in problem-solving and active experimentation (pg 26, 27). (Burrell, Finch, Fisher, Rahim, & Dawson, 2011) support the view that opportunities which involve students in the learning process prepare them to meet the needs of the future (pg 52). Consequently, the tasks prepared for this study include reflective learning logs, simulations, discussions, authentic case studies, pair work, and group work. All the tasks are intended to assist the progress of the learning cycle.

C. Defining Learner Autonomy

"Autonomy" is a complex terminology to be defined yet very significant in pedagogy. The term autonomy was first defined by Holec (1981) as "the ability to take charge of one's learning" cited in (Benson, pg 22). However, Benson claims that literature published on autonomy has rocketed drastically the past decades that it has complicated the definition of what "autonomy" really means. (P. Benson, 1997) and (Little) believe that autonomy is the capacity of the learner to take responsibility for their learning. There is a very thin line of difference between "capacity" and "ability". While Holec mentions "ability" of the learner, (Little) elaborates on "capacity" of the learner to take independent action, the willingness to plan, monitor, evaluate and set agendas for their own learning process. In order to carry out the tasks successfully, the learner needs to deploy appropriate strategies, more specifically cognitive strategies. (Oxford, 1999) summarized the definition of autonomy as:

Ability, attitude, + action = autonomy → achievement

The learner's ability and willingness to execute a task independently, reflect on situational needs and ability to select appropriate strategies to accomplish a task successfully (pg 111).

In (Dickinson, 1995)'s view, the attitude of the learner plays an important role, where the learner should take ownership of the decisions they make about their own learning (pg 167). (Nunan, 1980)goes a step further away from ability and capacity to the degree of being autonomous. He endeavors to lead the learner away from the dependence on the teacher to autonomous learning. Nunan identifies nine steps to making the learner autonomous in the educational process (pg 195-203).

Step 1: Make instruction goals clear to learners
Step 2: Allow learners to create their own goals
Step 3: Encourage learners to use their second language outside the classroom
Step 4: Raise awareness of learning processes
Step 5: Help learners identify their own preferred styles and strategies
Step 6: Encourage learner choice
Step 7: Allow learners to generate their own tasks
Step 8: Encourage learners to become teachers
Step 9: Encourage learners to become researchers

As it is obvious from the steps stated above, if the learner creates their own goals, they are more likely to follow them since they are self-created, by thinking in the shoes of teachers and researchers, they are aware of their own preferred learning strategy and attempt at generating their own means of achieving the learning goals set by themselves. Sharing similar views,(Dickinson, 1995) points out that learner involvement in decision making ensures that learning is effective(pg 176). Pedagogically, most of the researchers on learner autonomy support the view that when learners are psychologically attached to the learning process, it is more meaningful and relevant. Autonomy is defined as an ''ability to use a set of tactics'' to take control of one's learning (Sara Cotterall, pg 195). The tactics as described by Cotteral would include most of the steps specified by Nunan, such as goal setting, selection of materials, planning, monitoring and evaluating their own progress in learning. All aspects of learner autonomy are evident in kolbs experiential learning cycle, where the learners are made aware of their learning strategies, reflect on their experiences, set learning goals and take responsibility of learning in an out of class.

D. Related Studies on Learner Autonomy

"Before interventions aimed at fostering autonomy are implemented, it is necessary to gauge learners' readiness for the changes in beliefs and behavior which autonomy implies" (S. Cotterall 195). Are learners ready to accept responsibility? Are teachers confident in allowing learners to be autonomous? There are several such questions that challenge the practicality of theoretical assumptions on teacher-learner autonomy. Horwitz (cited in S.Cotteral) argues that "erroneous beliefs" of learners about language learning impedes their progress. Hence, before their negative beliefs transform them into low proficient learners, it should be controlled. (pg 196) An exploration of learners' perceptions and beliefs would enable a teacher to prepare their learners towards being autonomous. Several studies have been conducted to identify the learners' abilities, the willingness to take responsibilities and their attitudes towards learning activities.

(Van, 2011) conducted his study across 24 universities in Vietnam to investigate the perceptions of Non-English Majored students on being autonomous learners. It was a large-scale study that involved 631 students. The findings revealed that students were not aware of the concept of autonomy, and were satisfied with their current learning environment (pg 43, 46). (Hussein, 2014) wanted to examine learners readiness to be autonomous. He conducted his investigation on 140 students who were enrolled in two introductory courses in English at a university in Palestine. The study specially measured learners' readiness on aspects such as responsibilities, abilities and their readiness to perform autonomous activities in English. The data from questionnaires and interviews revealed that the teacher was held responsible for a student's success or failure. However, they were willing to exhibit autonomous behavior if they were given a chance to do so. The researcher calls for training to raise awareness of the benefits of autonomous learning (pg 323, 332-335). A similar study was carried out by (Üstünlüoğlu, 2009) in a university in Hong Kong involving 320 students and 24 teachers. The purpose of the study was similar to that of (Hussein, 2014). Additionally, the study investigated the influence of variables such as motivation level and gender on perceptions towards autonomy were also examined. It was evident from the quantitative data and interviews that both the students and the teachers were not in

favor of autonomous learning. Students did not own responsibility for their learning, and the teachers do not view students capable of handling the responsibility for their learning. (Üstünlüoğlu, 2009) suggests a training programme be included in the curriculum (pg 154,160-162). While all the three studies (Van, 2011) (Üstünlüoğlu, 2009) (Hussein, 2014) reflect a lack of awareness and ownership of responsibilities by students and teachers, a study administered in a Polytechnic University in Hong Kong by (Chan, 2010) revealed positive views of learners regarding autonomy unlike the previous studies. The study used a survey to assess the attitude and expectation of learning a language, learning preferences, and the perceptions of teachers and students towards autonomous learning. The results were unexpected by the researcher. Students seemed to be aware of their role in the learning process, preferred learning styles and clear learning goals. Moreover, they were willing to take responsibility for the learning process, which is the main characteristic of being autonomous (pg 508, 514-515).

Another study was conducted in China by (Xu, 2009) to examine the extent of autonomous learning among Chinese postgraduate students. The results were not satisfactory. The surveyed students displayed no motivation or clear objectives towards autonomous learning despite being at the post graduate level. The researcher expresses concern that the students did not value the significance of English in their studies and did not participate cooperatively in English activities (pg 26-29). A study carried out in an Iranian context by (Farahani, 2014) involves 450 EFL learners, 219 female and 186 male. By analyzing data obtained through a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and non-participant observations it was concluded that there was a gap between learner's awareness of autonomous learning and practical usage in the classroom. Learners felt that they were motivated, however, they believed that the teacher is indispensable and should be the one who should be responsible for creating awareness in the learners towards being autonomous (pg 100,109-110). To sum up, the studies dealing with students views on autonomy, it is apparent that students are partially aware of autonomy in language learning and perceive themselves motivated but consider the teacher as the dominant figure who is responsible for their progress in language learning. Although there are myriad studies on teacher's beliefs and perceptions of autonomy, a few studies of relevance will be discussed below.

A large-scale project on exploring teachers beliefs on learner autonomy was conducted by (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012) at Sultan Qaboos University in Oman. 30.5% responses were recorded through an online questionnaire, and 20 well-qualified staff were interviewed. A variety of perspectives were expressed. Despite providing opportunities to facilitate leaner autonomy, the teachers were not sure to what extent their learners utilized the chance given to them. Most of them believed that they have contributed to the promotion of learning autonomy by advocating a variety of pedagogical strategies. Additionally, they welcomed the idea of involving the learner in certain aspects of planning and organizing learning activities. The teachers felt restricted by the centrally defined curriculum which constrained them from experimenting with learner autonomy (pg 9, 20-21). Another interesting study was done in Turkey by (Balçıkanlı, 2010). The sample population comprised of 112 student teachers. The purpose was to identify the beliefs of student teachers about learner autonomy. A selected no of 20 teachers were interviewed apart from administering a questionnaire to 112 respondents. The study reported that the teachers were positive towards the concept of learner autonomy but were not comfortable with involving students in the decision making process (pg 92, 98). (Al Asmari, 2013) conducted his survey in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at Taif University. The aim of the study was to gather teachers' opinions on the practices of learner autonomy in their classes. The sample population consisted of 60 teachers of different nationalities. The data revealed that teachers were positive to the notion of students involving in decision making as compared to the student teachers view in (Balçıkanlı, 2010) study. Although the teachers seemed positive towards supporting autonomous learning, the researcher mentions that they lacked the training to promote autonomy (pg 4, 7).

Reflecting and reviewing the studies on teachers and learners beliefs and perceptions on autonomy provide an overall opinion that learners perceive themselves as autonomous but consider the teacher responsible. Teachers perceive themselves as facilitators of autonomy but are hesitant to handover certain aspects of the learning process to the learners. Each one of them has constraints on implementing or adopting autonomy to its fullest potential.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The participants for this study were 60 full-time undergraduate students registered for Level 2, Semester One Business programme. It is to be noted that only full-time mode students were part of this study to avoid the influence of external factors that could be a threat to the validity of the study. The samples for this study were chosen using a convenience sampling technique based on convenience and accessibility. The majority population of this study were from a linguistically homogenous background (Arabic), aged between 20-23 years, and share common characteristics with regards to socio-cultural aspects. Hence convenience sampling was deemed as suitable. The intervention of the project was carried out in an English module class. The 'Professional Skills Module' was the last English module on the programme. The pre-requisite of the 'Professional Skills module' was the completion of two English modules in Level 1.

B. Data Collection Instrument

(Chan, Spratt, & Humphreys, 2002) designed a questionnaire to examine the relationship between the attitude of students and their perceptions on autonomous practice. The questionnaire adopted inputs from Deci (1995), Deci and

Ryan (1985), Holec (1981) and Littlewood (1999). The questionnaire was influenced by Holec's notion of ability and responsibility to develop autonomy. It consisted of four main sections containing a total of 52 questions. The four sections focused on the learner's perception of their English teacher's responsibilities and their own responsibility, their ability at decision-making, reflect on their motivation to learn English and ponder over the different autonomous activities they involve in outside and inside the class. (Üstünlüoğlu, 2009) revised the questionnaire and piloted it to check for validity. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient was .81, suggesting that there was the consistency of responses. The instrument used for this study was the one adopted by (Üstünlüoğlu, 2009) as it was revised keeping in mind the Arabic context. Unlike the four sections in the questionnaire that was devised by (Chan et al., 2002) the background questionnaire asks the respondent to provide personal information regarding gender and motivation level. Section one is the section on responsibility, where students read the descriptors and select between three option; teacher's responsibility' student's responsibility' and 'both.' The next section (Items 11-20) draws their attention to their abilities, providing a 5-point Likert scale to choose their ability ranging from very poor to very good. The last section (21-41) is based on the activities they do inside and outside the class, with choice of preference ranging from never, rarely, sometimes, often and always.

C. A sample of an Experiential Task

Topic: SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats)
Learning Outcome- To identify personal strengths and weakness and reflect on ways to overcome the weakness.
Task Description
Concrete Experience

Module name was written on the board as a starting point for a mind-map. Students' brainstormed ideas in groups on what they expected to learn in this module. Group representatives came forward to write the goals of the English module. Teacher initiates discussions and deliberates on setting goals to achieve the expected learning outcomes.

Reflective observation

Based on the goals they set for themselves, students completed a personal SWOT. They reflected on their strengths and weaknesses and identified possible threats and decided on an action plan to achieve the goals that they devised in the first part of the lesson. The teacher handed out the reflecting learning log sheet 1 for students to record their reflections.

Abstract Conceptualization

The knowledge from CE about the module expectations and RO – actively reflecting on the experience, they draw inferences on the possibilities of dealing with learning difficulties. At this point of time, the teacher gave each group an A3 size plain paper and asked students to work in groups and do a SWOT analysis for their educational institution (the University where they are currently studying in). Once it was completed, the A3 posters were displayed on the wall at a regular distance.

Active Experimentation

Students went around the class in sequential order, noting down any areas of the SWOT that they would approve or disapprove. After the given activity time, students returned to their seats, and the teacher elicited suggestions and recommendations that would benefit the institution. This activity generated a lot of language practice as students were eager to debate on strengths/weaknesses of the college that they were pleased/not pleased with.

Teachers Reflection on activity 1:

Rogers (1969) comments that "Experiential philosophy proposes that learners set their own goals and assess themselves" cited in (Knutson, pg 61). Students have completed two semesters of Level 1 and were used to being dictated about what to do and what not do. This was the first time; they felt the choice of setting goals was given to them. Owing to the nature of the module, there was room for being flexible with the goals of the module, although it is not officially permitted to do so. Although students set the goals, the teacher judiciously added a few objectives through negotiation students. So it was a twofold task. The activity not only created an awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, but it also gave them self-satisfaction as they set their own learning goal. "The curriculum does not start out by specifying and sequencing the material that is to be 'covered,' but it starts out with the activities, needs and emergent purposes of the learner" (van Lier, pg 53). The task activated their prior knowledge and acquainted them with strategies that would help them to overcome their learning difficulties. Reflection was conducted as a group within the task, however, the student's preferred to complete the individual self-reflection learning log at the end of the session.

D. Description of the Procedure

The study used 11 self-designed experiential learning activities and a learner autonomy questionnaire to gain insights into the change in perceptions of students on autonomy after the execution of the tasks for about 14 teaching weeks. Intervention is divided into three phases; the pre-intervention phase, during the intervention phase and the post-intervention phase.

Pre-Intervention Phase

"When learners are not given a purpose for learning or not allowed to find a purpose on their own, the quality of learning is doubtful" (Buriak, McNurlen, & Harper, 1996). In order to plan and organize experiential learning activities that would facilitate autonomy, it was imperative to explore student's perspectives on how autonomous they are. Data

were collated through a learner autonomy questionnaire designed by Chan, Spratt, and Humphreys (2002) that was modified by (Üstünlüoğlu, 2009). The questionnaire was administered to students at the beginning of the first week of teaching as a pre-survey learner autonomy tool. Students' college identification numbers were used to direct the survey link to students' emails with the consent of the college management. Since the researcher was teaching both the experimental groups, it was convenient to take the students to a lab to complete the questionnaire.

During-Intervention Phase

The intervention phase comprised of instructional tasks designed to facilitate the experiential learning cycle and enhance language strategies. 11 tasks were planned for 11 teaching weeks, with each lesson lasting for 120 minutes (2 hours). A reflective journal activity was included during the 'reflective observation' stage of the experiential learning cycle, however, this depended on the task and time.

Post-Intervention Phase

The learner autonomy questionnaire was once again sent to students via email towards the end of the treatment schedule.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Responsibility

TABLE-1
STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

Item no.	*Post and Post*	Teacher	Student	Both
1	Students-Pre	13%	30%	57%
	Post	16%	24%	61%
2	Students-Pre	10%	80%	10%
	Post	6%	78%	18%
3	Students-Pre	18%	25%	**57%**
	Post	16%	**59%**	27%
4	Students-Pre	21%	38%	**40%**
	Post	29%	**41%**	33%
5	Students-Pre	3%	**70%**	26%
	Post	35%	18%	**49%**
6	Students-Pre	44%	26%	29%
	Post	53%	24%	35%
7	Students-Pre	56%	11%	33%
	Post	61%	10%	31%
8	Students-Pre	59%	20%	21%
	Post	55%	29%	18%
9	Students-Pre	36%	20%	**44%**
	Post	**53%**	24%	24%
10	Students-Pre	**44%**	16%	39%
	Post	24%	22%	**55%**

Note: Reference Items in Table 1

1	to ensure that you make progress during English lessons	6	to decide what students should learn next in your English lessons
2	to ensure that you make progress outside class	7	to choose what activities to use to learn English in your English lessons
3	to stimulate interest in learning English	8	to decide how long to spend on each activity
4	to identify your weaknesses in English	9	to choose what materials to use in your English lessons
5	to decide the objectives of your English course	10	to evaluate your learning

Table 1 presents the perceptions of students' pre and post the intervention phase. No change in perception was observed in Items 1, 2, 6, 7, 8. In both pre and post survey, students perceived a shared responsibility between teacher and student to ensure progress is made in the class, and in item no.2, they took complete responsibility(80%,78%) of monitoring their progress outside of the classroom This clearly indicates that they are aware of their responsibilities. They prefer to give the authority of planning lessons to the teacher. For example, they believe that the teacher should be the one to decide on activities (item 7) and duration of each activity (item 8). Their observation was valid, as during the implementation of the experiential activities, the teacher timed the stages of the lesson to facilitate the transition from the four modes of the learning cycle, so this was evident in their choice in the questionnaire.

The items numbers where a difference in perception was observed are 3,4,5,9 and 10, the percentages are highlighted in bold and shaded to draw attention to the variations. In the pre-autonomy survey, students believed that creating an interest in learning the language was the responsibility of both the teacher and the students, while in the post-survey, students considered it as their responsibility. The most prominent one was on' whose responsibility is it to identify the student's weakness in English.' In the pre-survey, students said it was the responsibility of both, student and teacher, but post-survey, they realised that it is their responsibility to detect their own weaknesses. This change of self-realization could be attributed to the reflective learning logs and personal SWOT analysis activity that was used during the cyclic learning process. What was surprising is, before the start of the intervention, students' perceived themselves as responsible for deciding on the objectives of the lesson.

Contrary to the pre data, the post survey indicates a shared responsibility on the deciding the objectives of a lesson. These results are consistent with the study carried out by (Sakai et al.), where students wanted to participate in decision making. However, the notable aspect in the current study is that after the intervention of the experiential learning activities, students understood the meaning of objectives by creating tangible objectives along with the teacher during Activity 1- experiential task. As a result, they attributed the responsibility to both the teacher and the student in setting objectives, contrary to the perception of complete responsibility in the pre-autonomy survey. The results differ in the study conducted by (Üstünlüoğlu) who reported that students perceive teachers as responsible to decide the objective of an English course (pg158) , however, this difference could possibly be due to the experiential activities given to the students in the current study. In Item 9, students felt it was a mutual responsibility of both to choose the teaching and learning materials, but in post-survey, they believed that choice of materials should be left to the teachers. In Item 10, students earlier took no responsibility in evaluating their own learning, however, post the treatment, they thought it to be a collaborative responsibility to evaluate the learning process.

B. Abilities

If you have the opportunity, how good do you think you would be at?

11	choosing learning activities in class	16	choosing learning materials outside of class
12	choosing learning activities outside of class	17	deciding what you should learn next in your English lessons
13	choosing learning objectives in class	18	deciding how long to spend on each activity
14	choosing learning objectives outside class	19	identifying your weaknesses in English
15	choosing learning materials in class	20	evaluating your learning

Notes: Reference table for items 11-20

Items 11-20 in the questionnaire require the respondents to respond to their abilities to do certain activities. The choice is between poor, OK, good and very good. The pre-and post-survey have indicated similar areas of preference, so it is not illustrated. Students consider themselves "GOOD" in all activities listed. Starting with item number 11, students are good at choosing activities in class (pre 54%/post 59%), choosing learning activities outside class (41%), choosing learning objectives in class (56%/49%), choosing learning objectives outside class (48%/47%),choosing learning materials in class (43%/53%) ,choosing learning materials outside class (50%/43%), deciding what you should learn next in your English lessons (48%/41%), deciding how long to spend on each activity (48%/39%), identifying your weaknesses in English (35%/41%), and evaluating your learning (43%/57%).

(Sara Cotterall, 1995) mentions that "autonomous learners not only monitor their language learning but also assess their efforts". According to Blanche (1988: p. 75), an appreciation of their abilities, the progress they are making and of what they can do with the skills they have acquired is essential if learners are to learn efficiently (pg 199).

C. Frequency of Activities

TABLE-II
STUDENTS PERCEPTION ON FREQUENCY OF ACTIVITIES
(PRE-LEARNER AUTONOMY QUESTIONNAIRE)

PRE-		Students frequency of Learning Activities				
		Always	**Often**	**Sometimes**	**Rarely**	**Never**
21	done assignments which are not compulsory?	20%	16%	41%	18%	6%
22	noted down new words and their meanings?	29%	41%	22%	6%	2%
23	read newspapers in English?	18%	25%	18%	31%	8%
24	visited your teacher about your work?	26%	34%	20%	12%	8%
25	read books or magazines in English?	18%	35%	31%	10%	6%
26	watched English TV programs?	47%	27%	23%	2%	--
27	listened to English songs?	35%	29%	22%	2%	12%
28	talked to foreigners in English?	29%	37%	27%	2%	4%
29	practiced using English with friends	29%	20%	31%	16%	4%
30	done grammar exercises?	18%	31%	25%	20%	6%
31	done group studies in English lessons?	22%	25%	35%	16%	2%
32	attended the self-study center?	14%	16%	27%	16%	27%
33	asked the teacher questions when you didn't understand?	37%	22%	27%	12%	2%
34	made suggestions to the teacher?	12%	33%	22%	20%	14%
35	planned your lesson/study?	21%	25%	37%	12%	4%
36	activated your prior knowledge while studying?	29%	27%	35%	4%	4%
37	made inferences about your lesson?	27%	29%	37%	6%	-
38	done classifications/mind maps while studying?	21%	22%	30%	19%	8%
39	summarised your studies while studying?	24%	29%	39%	6%	2%
40	taken notes while studying?	41%	27%	24%	6%	2%
41	used resources while studying?	25%	20%	38%	11%	6%

	The post-students frequency of Learning Activities	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
21	done assignments which are not compulsory?	24%	27%	22%	14%	12%
22	noted down new words and their meanings?	24%	51%	18%	4%	2%
23	read newspapers in English?	12%	16%	41%	16%	14%
24	visited your teacher about your work?	24%	22%	40%	8%	6%
25	read books or magazines in English?	16%	14%	49%	12%	8%
26	watched English TV programs?	29%	29%	33%	8%	2%
27	listened to English songs?	39%	8%	27%	20%	6%
28	talked to foreigners in English?	29%	35%	24%	4%	8%
29	practiced using English with friends	22%	35%	31%	10%	2%
30	done grammar exercises?	8%	29%	39%	16%	8%
31	done group studies in English lessons?	15%	40%	33%	12%	2%
32	attended the self-study center?	16%	20%	**65%**	35%	12%
33	asked the teacher questions when you didn't understand?	45%	22%	29%	2%	2%
34	made suggestions to the teacher?	12%	27%	43%	12%	6%
35	planned your lesson/study?	22%	27%	40%	7%	4%
36	activated your prior knowledge while studying?	8%	50%	28%	12%	2%
37	made inferences about your lesson?	10%	37%	37%	12%	4%
38	done classifications/mind maps while studying?	10%	29%	39%	10%	12%
39	summarised your studies while studying?	29%	37%	22%	8%	4%
40	taken notes while studying?	43%	33%	16%	2%	6%
41	used resources while studying?	20%	48%	20%	10%	2%

Table 2 and 3 illustrate the pre and post survey results on students' perception of activities in and out of class. 41% students sometimes do assignments that are not compulsory, but post-survey, the percentage is distributed in '20s between always (24%), often (27%) and sometimes (22%). It could be that students in the post-survey decide on the necessity of the assignment. In the experiential learning tasks, there were some sample assignments that students were asked to do in order to gain more experience in the activity although they were awarded marks. The percentage increased from 41% to 51% in the post-survey in students' habit of noting down new vocabulary words with their definitions. A big difference was observed in students reading English newspapers. In the pre-survey, 31% rarely read English newspapers, and in the post survey, 41% sometimes read English newspapers. This was an achievement as students rarely read Arabic newspapers so reading English newspapers was a far-fetched activity. This is confirmed by a study carried out by (Al-Bulushi & Al-Issa, 2012) which concluded that 41% of students rarely read English newspapers. The increase in students reading newspapers is due to the fact that students engaged in real world activities in class that required them to update themselves regarding companies, job opportunities and other activities.

34% of students visited the teacher often while the visits to the teacher reduced from 'often 'to 'sometimes' (40%) in the post-survey. It could mean that students felt more independent than before or perceived themselves capable of dealing with academic issues. It was a similar case with the next item no.25. The frequency of reading books 'often' reduced from 35% to reading books or magazines sometimes (49%). The intervention activities encouraged authentic materials like newspapers, case studies from internet and journals, this could be the reason for the reduction in reading books often. At the start of the new semester, 47% of students claimed that they always watched English programs on TV, however, in the post-survey the frequency of watching English TV programmes reduced to 33%. At the time students took the pre-survey, they had just completed Level 1 and progressed to Level 2. The results could mean that as students' progress to higher levels of the programme, they prioritize time spent on certain activities. Several English videos were played during the intervention period, so this could have reduced their need to watch English TV programmes.

Contrary to this, the majority of them acknowledged that they listen to English songs which were quite surprising since this was not a culturally accepted practice. Majority conceded talking to foreigners in English. The institution where the study is conducted accommodates students from different countries, so this provides opportunities for the locals to mingle and communicate with them. 31% of students 'sometimes' practice their English language skills with friends, while the frequency slightly rose from 'sometimes' to 'often' (35%) in the post-survey. English is a foreign language in Oman, even a minor improvement in students' initiative to practice the target language is gratifying.

At Level 2of the programme, there were fewer grammar exercises compared to the lower levels of the programme. Hence it was obvious that students at the pre-stage 'often' (31%) did grammar exercises, but 'sometimes' (39%) did such exercises in the post stage. A reasonable improvement in group activities has been observed between the pre and post survey. 35% of students confirmed that they 'sometimes 'did group studies but post-treatment, 40% of students claim that they' often 'do group studies in English lessons. Most of the experiential tasks followed the four modes of Kolb's cyclic learning process which required students to work in groups at various stages. This could be the justification for the increase in percentage. A significant difference is observed in students using resources while studying. Earlier, only 38% 'sometimes' referred to resources while studying, but post-intervention, students claimed that they used resource 'often' (48%). The increase in the frequency of referring to resources is a positive change in

study habits. Item no. 32 is closely linked to the previous statement on utilizing resources. While 27% only 'sometimes' attended the self- study center pre-intervention, the visit to the self-study center rose dramatically to **65%.** This is an overwhelming change brought about in students' perception of independent learning. Student's perception of the teacher is that of a subject expert who clarifies their uncertainties in the learning process (37% and 45%) 'always' ask the teacher questions if they do not understand something. A rise in the percentage of students asking the teacher question is an achievement. (Sara Cotterall, 1995) explains that regular teacher feedback is given in the classroom, but effective learning depends on how learners utilize the given feedback. When learners are ready to share queries about the learning process with the teachers, it displays responsible behaviour, a characteristic of an autonomous learner. (pg 199)

Another notable difference was observed in item no. 36. Students 'sometimes' activated their prior knowledge while studying, but post-treatment, 50% 'often 'activated their prior knowledge while studying. The first mode of the experiential cycle stimulates students' prior experiences before moving on to the reflection observation mode. Items 37-40 were about study skills that have been reiterated in all levels of the programme starting from Foundation level onwards, so there was not much of a difference observed. It was noted that students continue to make inferences, create mind maps while studying, take notes and summarise. The current study indicated an obvious change in student's perception in areas where they consider themselves accountable. (S. Cotterall, 2000) believes that the 'potential for learner autonomy increases as an individual's learning awareness grows.' Consequently, tasks or activities should be designed to stimulate reflection on the learning process (pg 112).

Students have realized that deciding objectives of the English course and the responsibility to evaluate their learning is a joint responsibility, however, with regards to the choice of materials in class, they realized the authority in this matter. It is no doubt that they feel the teacher is the ultimate decision-maker in choosing materials as they consider the teacher as the subject expert. Üstünlüoğlu confirms the claim that students sense that the teacher is the one who decides on the objectives of the course (pg 157). There was a substantial change in study habits identified in the post learner autonomy survey. Students developed independent study habits by attending the self-study study. There was an increase in the number of students who often (50%) activated their prior knowledge while studying.

It can be inferred from the observations of the post autonomy questionnaire that students displayed balanced perceptions in segregating tasks between teachers and students thus displaying an interest in shared responsibility. The experiential learning tasks taught students to work independently and at the same time recognise the teachers' expertise. The classroom activities increased their knowledge of the current affairs of the country, drew their attention to job requirements for Omani graduates and identified organisations that provided financial support to start SME's (Small and Medium Businesses). The simulation and role play of group meetings, and interviews gave them the confidence to face interviews. It can be concluded that autonomy was achieved to some extent. As Sinclair et al., 2000, notes, 'complete autonomy, is an achievable, but idealistic goal''. The development of an individual's potential is, in many ways, constrained by the cultural conventions and political aspirations of the society they belong to (cited in Chan, pg 506). Efforts to promote autonomy are an ongoing process and as quoted by Sinclair et al., it is achievable despite constraints.

V. LIMITATIONS

The major limitation of this study is the duration of the intervention. Although the study was spread across 14 teaching weeks, two sessions were missed due to college activities, and it had to be covered by borrowing class time from other lecturers. Another challenge that was felt was the time consumed for planning and preparing experiential learning tasks and materials. The researcher could not deviate from the approved course syllabus, so it was imperative to work with the existing materials and embed experiential learning tasks.

VI. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this study have some recommendations for future research. The study was limited in nature with a duration of 14 teaching weeks, however, the impact of ELM can be extended and followed up with the same cohort through a longitudinal study to observe autonomous behaviour in the next level. An experiential classroom environment provides a conducive climate for action research and exploratory studies. The Omani educational system is in search of an educational framework that produces competent graduates in the workforce, so alternative teaching methods and approaches can be tried and tested just as the current study employed ELM in teaching. There is a need for more studies to study the impact of ELM in the field of English language teaching. The current scenario illustrates several studies in medical, technical and engineering field of education, but very few in ELT, specifically in Oman.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study indicated that ELM creates a safe, flexible and engaging classroom environment through social interaction, sharing of experiences and reflection. At the outset, students held the teacher responsible for learning within the classroom however after experiencing the intervention tasks there was a change in students' perception. They became more focused and accepted ownership of their learning. This shift from dependency to independency is vital to any

work environment where the person has to take the initiative to solve problems rather than depending on the boss or the person in authority. The active involvement of students in the ELM activities depicts their enthusiasm and motivation towards being a part of the learning cycle. ELM prepares students for future careers by linking theory with practical implications thus instilling in them confidence in responding to the needs of the job market. The confronting challenge of educational institutions to generate employable graduates compels educators to revisit their teaching practices. (Silva) remarks that: "Rules, set by the government, make autonomous learning more and more impossible (pg 483). When the teacher is in the class, he/she is in charge of the teaching and learning process, all authority remains abstract and arbitrary, so why not take risks and experiment with innovative teaching methods that engage students and achieve set goals. Rather than dictating what the government or the universities should do or grieving on the defects of a particular system of education, it is suggested that the realization should start from the basic source, which is the teacher. There is no doubt that teachers are restrained by centrally approved syllabi, but within the given boundaries, the teacher has the flexibility to transform even a boring task into an engaging and active lesson.

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