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# Multi-Peer Feedback as a Means for Enhancing Students' Writing Skills

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**Abstract**—Teachers' role in helping students develop their writing is significant. However, as teachers regularly exercise too much control in the classroom in many schools and universities, there are frequently instances where teachers' instructions do not have a significant impact on each student, and, as a result, the desired results cannot be accomplished. The current study aims to find out whether peers can help each other develop this crucial skill through feedback, i.e., multi-peer feedback, in a more effective way. This empirical study was conducted with the second-year BA students of the English Department at AAB College in Kosovo. It lasted three months in 2022 and had 23 students. In addition, we aimed to find students' attitudes towards multi-peer feedback using a questionnaire. After collecting the data, it was found that multi-peer feedback contributed highly to the writing process, helped students produce better essays, and made them eager to discuss each other's essays once they got used to providing and getting feedback. Moreover, this very effective practice has been warmly embraced due to the following: first, it helped students get accustomed to receiving feedback from their peers by providing good examples in class; second, students learned how to be effective critical readers when reading and providing feedback on their peers' essays; and third, students realized how important it is to understand the structure of a well-written composition before trying to build one of their own.

**Index Terms**—multi-peer feedback, writing, essays, students

## I. INTRODUCTION

The writing process is compared to a road map since it allows teachers to keep track of their students' thoughts and actions. If the writing process is a road map, the teachers are its co-drivers. When planning a road trip, drivers and navigators each have their own tasks. Since writing is a means of communicating with others and exchanging information, ideas, and experiences, mastering this skill is crucial (Cahyono, 2009). The improvement of students' writing performance is anticipated to be attained through the execution of this study approach. It is hoped that by creating an interaction between students to collaboratively create written discourse, students will be more involved in the learning process and consequently improve their writing skills. By using a creative approach, students' creativity will be developed too. We encounter changes every day, and they have historically produced better outcomes when put into practice. It is the author's contention that a change in the educational process, specifically in writing instruction and application, would greatly improve students' writing skills and raise their self-esteem. It is highly suggested that to create a better outcome, students should interact with each other, write collaboratively, and develop their creativity by having their own way of doing things.

### A. Research Aims

We decided to conduct empirical research with AAB college students to determine whether multi-peer feedback plays any significant role in developing their writing skills because it has been observed that not always the instructions given by teachers are effectively accepted by each student separately. Thus, it is aimed at investigating the role of peer-feedback as an innovative tool to improve writing skills in particular. In addition to the challenges this approach might bring, we aimed at finding out how students perceive multi-peer feedback and providing the researcher's perspective from the observations he made with the students under the study. We intend to provide recommendations based on empirical findings for teachers of writing and those who intend to apply multi-peer feedback in their classroom.

### B. Research Importance

Although many arguments are still running among researchers and linguists about the issue of peer feedback in improving students' writing skills, multi-peer feedback is relatively new among teachers of the English language in Kosovo in particular. Since multi-peer feedback is a tool that is utilized infrequently in many universities and schools, its advantages and disadvantages are not well known to a greater extent. This makes the research findings all the more significant. Thus, English course teachers in both higher education and pre-university settings will be provided with ground data and may act accordingly, allowing their time in the classroom to be used productively. These findings may be introduced as a planning tool in order to assist teachers in planning. Because our research findings related to multi-

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peer feedback will provide an in-depth investigation into various aspects of it, as well as a wealth of information that is not available in the literature and would be difficult to obtain by other means, English teachers will be able to plan and effectively utilize their time in a more effective manner when it comes to enhancing students' writing skills.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a common belief in many colleges and universities—possibly so today—that the teacher is the authoritative figure who should make decisions and provide feedback to students. It is he or she who views himself or herself as the ultimate authority and believes that his or her feedback is unparalleled in its efficacy. However, no longer is there a demand that teachers be the only subject-matter experts in the classroom (Sackstein, 2017). Nowadays, peer feedback is seen as a very productive practice that puts the student at the centre. It goes under different names. It is further known as peer review and peer assessment. It has typically been studied as a teaching and learning tool in a variety of settings and has generally received substantial study support (see Topping, 1998; Liu & Hansen, 2006; Liu & Carless, 2006; Lee, 2017, as cited in Schunn & Wu, 2019). Its positive impact has been shown in the opinion of Topping (2009) too, where according to him, it encourages students to share their knowledge with others and fosters teamwork, in addition to assisting them in identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Some use peer feedback as a less formal way of soliciting comments or advice, including how to edit a work, how the reader could improve it, and providing an assessment of the quality of the writing. For Hansen and Liu (2006), it is a fundamental and crucial component of writing instruction. They go on to say that this practice encourages students to assume the role of authors by asking them for feedback on the writing their colleagues have produced. Peer reviews provide the author with the opportunity to determine whether the message is clear or not, which helps build an audience (Rollinson, 2005). Typically, "peer feedback" means the process by which members of a particular field critically evaluate and help shape new works.

### A. *Teaching Students to Give Peer Feedback*

It takes more than just telling your students, "Today, you are going to give each other feedback" to introduce peer feedback into your classroom. You must create a friendly and courteous setting that encourages taking risks and being open with others. As claimed by Sackstein (2017), students must first have the confidence to present their work to others before they may do so. It is the teacher who should try to build such confidence in his or her students. So, prior to undergoing the process of giving and receiving feedback, students should be comfortable telling their peers about themselves, presenting their work, and soliciting others' opinions. They should be instructed to be receptive to any questions and comments from their peers, and they should be open with their own ideas when asked for input. This, however, is not that easy, given that it is known that teachers have to deal with multi-level students from multicultural backgrounds. Often, in such settings, there might be a group of students who want to show off and establish superiority over the others (Sackstein, 2017). In this case, teachers need to safeguard student pride and ensure that the classroom is as free of negative judgment as possible. Unless this is achieved, progress cannot be guaranteed, for it is not acceptable for students to say nasty things to one another or make fun of something they don't understand. In order to enhance and promote feedback, the teacher should focus on providing a positive atmosphere, nurturing relationships, and assisting students in gaining meaningful insights from their peers.

### B. *Pros and Cons of Peer Feedback*

In studies by Lee (1997), Mendonça and Karen (1994), Min (2006), and Wakabashi (2013), peer feedback has been shown to be very effective in fostering and improving students' writing. Because it serves so many purposes, it is extremely powerful. It: 1) assists in pointing out mistakes the student has overlooked; 2) calls attention to elements of the circumstance the learner had previously missed; 3) clarifies any misconceptions the learner may have and deepens their understanding of the subject; 4) offers fresh approaches or suggestions for enhanced performance; and 5) inspires the learner to get better (Hu, 2005; Liu & Carless, 2006; Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Gao et al., 2018; Wu, 2019, as cited in Schunn & Wu, 2019.) The writers, once they receive peer feedback, produce better and more effective writing based on the comments and suggestions made by their peers. According to Min's research from 2005 (Min, 2006), students' abilities in general, including the structure and content, increased dramatically. As a result, it is a very successful, effective, and highly recommended research-based method of obtaining genuine, high-quality writing. Additionally, it was discovered in Wong's (1999) study, which examined the effectiveness of peer feedback, that this method reduced writing errors. However, peer feedback should be framed and follow some criteria in order to qualify as appropriate. Gibbs and Simpson (2004), as cited in Gielen et al. (2010), outline a number of circumstances in which feedback enhances learning. Feedback should be: (a) sufficient in frequency and detail; (b) focused on students' performance, learning, and actions under their control rather than on the students themselves and/or on personal characteristics; (c) timely in that it is received by students while it still matters and in time for application or for asking for more help; (d) appropriate to the goal of the assignment and its criteria; and (e) appropriate in relation to students' conceptions.

However, not everyone perceives peer feedback as advantageous. According to Yu and Lee (2016), teachers and lots of students have a lot of mistrust in the reliability of peer feedback. They argue that how can students who are developing their writing skills assist their classmates in improving theirs? Furthermore, students' lack of experience in this area is viewed as an impediment to the use of peer feedback. Yang et al. (2006) and Lee (2011), as cited in Shun

and Wu (2019), list, among other things, the limited prior experiences students had with peer feedback in instruction because of large class sizes, heavy teacher workloads, and tight teacher schedules. Rollinson (2005), who holds the same view, claims that peer feedback takes time, especially if students are unfamiliar with it. Based on this, a student who finds it difficult to learn from peers would face difficulties for sure. However, he or she is encouraged to engage with a certified tutor and gain practical experience in peer review. He asserts that reading a draft, providing feedback, and then making changes in response to the feedback all take a lot of time. Moreover, some teachers do not feel comfortable delegating their responsibilities to their students, and they may believe that if they do not intervene during the peer feedback session, the students will become less confident and disengaged from class activities (Rollinson, 2005). Not every student is able to accurately assess his or her classmates. According to Sackstein (2017), only a really self-aware student can accurately assess their classmates and comment on their work.

### III. METHODOLOGY

We investigated multi-peer feedback's impact on improving students' writing skills. Students of AAB College who were attending their second year of study at the BA level in English were part of the study. They were of both sexes, 20 to 22 years old, with 22 of Kosovar nationality and one Bosnian. The whole class of 23 students was the sample. The research was carried out from March to May in the summer term of 2022. Of the students selected, 73.73 percent were female and 26.27 percent were male. Before conducting the empirical research, the students were taught how to write essays; they were instructed about the components of an essay and about the different types of essays. Lastly, they were made to read a number of essays by previous students and view the feedback the professors had provided them with. In order to have the students conduct peer reviews for one another, the researcher developed a peer review worksheet and shared it with them. Additionally, it gave them a simpler and better understanding of where to focus when providing feedback. The students were further encouraged to provide solutions and suggestions in addition to detecting the problems, because then their feedback could qualify as constructive. In an effort to reduce subjectivity and increase objectivity, the researcher divided students into groups of four students each (five groups) and one group composed of three students. He did this purposefully, given that students would prefer to join with their closest friends, thus leading to subjective results. Students had to write essays as homework assignments in four genres, namely narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive, and bring copies to class to distribute to their group members. Each student would then provide comments to three of his or her group members and receive feedback from the same peers. The same essays, but modified based on the comments received from two peers, were required to be submitted the other two days to the course instructor (in this case, the researcher). During peer review sessions, the researcher observed and provided feedback to students while they worked.

#### Mock peer review session

Though this practice is new to such students and may appear difficult to adapt to, students can become excellent peer strategists with minimal training and ongoing assistance (Sackstein, 2017). Therefore, two weeks prior to applying this approach, students were subjected to a mock peer review session. They were informed about the significance of multi-peer feedback in helping them develop professionally. In light of the above, practice activities and writing assignments related to the mock peer reviews at this stage should be seen as just preparatory stages for later use of the multi-peer practice. They were further instructed on how to provide effective peer feedback given that, at first, typically, students tend to be very brief in their comments due to their generality and trying not to sound like critics to their classmates. They were told that comments like "Well done!" and "Awesome!", and "Great improvement!", etc. are not really helpful and therefore not constructive. Therefore, they were encouraged to avoid them. In addition, they were encouraged to be as specific and detailed and as suggestive and constructive as possible so that their peers understood what they were doing well and what needed to be improved (*ibidem*). Besides, the researcher asked students to limit their feedback to the essay context only, though optionally they could provide feedback on grammatical, syntactical, vocabulary, and spelling mistakes.

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to measure students' progress, we chose four topics as their written assignments. The reason behind the decision to choose four different topics for students' written assignments lies in the number of English classes students have per week. Students attend two English classes once a week, and each class lasts 45 minutes.

The table below introduces the general progress achieved by the six groups, though it was not our aim to measure each group's percentage separately. Only for the first essay did we introduce the percentage for students' performance in the essay prior to receiving feedback and after receiving feedback. We did this on purpose because it was necessary for statistical recordings. For the other three essays, only the results achieved after multi-peer feedback are recorded.

TABLE 1  
RESULTS ON FOUR ESSAYS

		Introduction		Body		Conclusion	
		Written Properly	Percentage	Written Properly	Percentage	Written Properly	Percentage
Essay 1 <b>Narrative</b>	Before multi-peer feedback	5	21.73%	9	28.12%	8	34.78%
	After multi-peer feedback	8	34.78%	11	47.82%	12	52.17%
Essay 2 <b>Descriptive</b>	After multi-peer feedback	13	56.52%	14	60.86%	12	52.17%
Essay 3 <b>Expository</b>	After multi-peer feedback	13	56.52%	16	69.56%	16	69.56%
Essay 4 <b>Persuasive</b>	After multi-peer feedback	19	82.60%	20	86.95%	20	86.95%

#### A. Essay 1 (Narrative Genre)

Basically, the most important goal for developing the introduction paragraph is to have a thesis statement and be sure it is supported by facts. Students seemed to have had significant difficulties framing the introduction paragraph correctly in the first essay once they were asked to complete it. Only five out of 23 participants were able to do so based on the required components. In the first peer feedback session, most students were very short and rather critical, albeit mildly, and few gave constructive suggestions. This prompted the researcher to once again organize an informative session for more constructive feedback. However, things have taken a turn for the better ever since.

The performance in the body paragraphs was slightly better (19.7%), however, the performance in the conclusion section was best (more than 50% of respondents were able to conform to the requirements necessary).

At first, the participants offered only general remarks and comments. Some made very brief comments like, "Yes, it is properly ordered," "It contains the conclusion," "It is not clear," and so on. Even though most of the students were unable to adhere to the standards, it is worth noting that almost all of them acknowledged this shortcoming and encouraged one another to pay close attention to the thesis statement, body, and conclusion section in upcoming essays. Some students focused more on the grammatical, syntactic, spelling, and vocabulary aspects of the text they were reviewing than on the components of the essay. These were, of course, taken seriously by the feedback recipient, and the fact that four students were checking the same essay and therefore offering suggestions only opened up new constructive and innovative ways for the student who had to reproduce the same essay once again.

#### B. Essay 2 (Descriptive Genre)

The students did not demonstrate equal proficiency in all genres. Because, in addition to the structure and skeleton of essays with their components, students must review the essay in terms of adhering to the genre for which it was written. The unique demands of the essay genre make each specific type of essay distinctive. The second essay belonged to the descriptive genre and had the title, "Describe an inspiring friend or family member." However, although the result was more satisfactory than in the first essay, our expectations were greater. Following the feedback, things began to improve. Even if the outcomes were still unsatisfactory, it was clear that their input was more detailed this time. Again, most of them started to focus on detecting deficiencies without offering problem-solving or alternative approaches. It would have been better if they had used more detailed feedback and provided some kind of structured problem-solving exercise. However, this approach undermined passivity and uncertainty, given that everyone was learning from each other's ideas. Nonetheless, the work on their analysis seemed to be helping them start to get a grasp of the situation. Even though their paragraphs were longer than the previous ones, 10 students, or 43.47% of them, once again were unable to produce a proper thesis statement. The students found it difficult to write a thesis statement. However, if comparing the body of the first essay with the second one, one notices that the effectiveness of the restructuring of the body has increased by 13.04%. Over 60% of the students under study were able to write one, two, or three paragraphs according to the standards, depending on the topic, with satisfactory language and structure. Students were expected to provide more precise, strong, useful, vivid, and logical feedback at this stage, given that they were better prepared than in the previous session. However, they did not perform so satisfactorily even in the conclusion part, where the conclusion remained where it was in the first essay, i.e., with 52.17%.

#### C. Essay 3 (Expository Genre)

This time, students were assigned to complete an expository essay as their homework assignment on the topic "Why do some parents seem to be strict with their children?" The students were considerably more prepared this time since they handled things really well. Their comments were rather suggestive, and their compositions were of a rather high standard. However, compared to the previous essay, no further progress was shown in the introduction section. As a result of their fast-paced and intense writing, 43.48 percent of the students omitted the thesis statement from their sentences. On the other hand, almost 70% of the students succeeded in summarizing and completing the conclusion. Not all groups performed as expected. Despite their best efforts, the second and fifth groups of students demonstrated significantly less improvement in their language skills than the other groups. That level of performance showed that

these two groups were not yet ready to write expository papers, so the teacher’s feedback was necessary. The same results were achieved in the body paragraphs. The final comprehensive statistics showed that out of the 23 students, the top 75% presented their arguments in a coherent and syntactically correct manner, while the other 25% needed to make further improvements and work harder than before.

*D. Essay 4 (Persuasive Genre)*

The students’ improvements are clear when it comes to their final assignment, which is to compose an essay in persuasive genre on the topic of "Pros and cons of social media." The average percentage for the three components is approximately 85%. In the last two sections of the essay, that is, the sections of the body and conclusion, each participant’s performance rose to 86%, which, if compared to the beginning of this study prior to providing peer feedback, in the body section has been improved by 58.83%, while in the conclusion section it is 52.17%. A satisfactory result was also achieved in the composition of the introduction, where the performance increased by 60.87%.

Given that this method has only been used for three months and that students attended English lessons once a week where they were also expected to learn other things, the outcome is pretty reasonable. Nevertheless, among the various benefits this approach provided, it was noted that students' active participation in peer feedback increased. The effectiveness of the feedback was also confirmed by the statistical analysis. Evidence shows that students are learning and growing with respect to their writing skills.

Peer feedback from students is regarded as an excellent tool for professional development. Students who meet peers face-to-face have a better chance of finding information or advice that they lack. However, with face-to-face feedback, teachers may use more informal modes of communication when explaining the ideas to students. No student wants to appear unprepared in front of a class, and no teacher wants to leave impressionable students with incorrect ideas about writing. Therefore, finding the most suitable approach towards improving this skill and then sticking to it is by no means a necessity. Another crucial benefit observed by the researcher was that students whom he knew were shy and introverted created a warming link with extrovert ones and did not have problems with communication and collaboration. Peer feedback usually depends on the mood, assumptions, and a student's intention to change. It was further found that better writers engage in deeper levels of reflection when writing a narrative essay, whereas less proficient writers rely more on retrieval strategies when they write a persuasive essay.

The phrases, "You've clearly understood the steps of how to properly write the thesis statement of the introductory paragraph of a narrative essay," "Though you have produced a good argument on..., I would have suggested you use a different structure when reproducing it," "I would kindly suggest you use active voice more than passive voice," etc. can now be found in peer review worksheets.

*E. Students’ Views on Multi-Peer Feedback*

A questionnaire was administered to the 23 students who were part of this study. It was composed of six statements only and was adapted from the questionnaire designed by Lin and Chien (2009, p. 8). It took students less than two minutes to complete it. We were interested in knowing students’ perceptions toward the application of multi-peer feedback. The results are then introduced in the column chart, and they are further analysed and discussed.

**My teachers’ comments on my writing tend to have an emotional and, at the same time, motivational impact on me as I learn to write. After reading the unfavorable remarks made by my teachers, I feel apprehensive and lack confidence.**

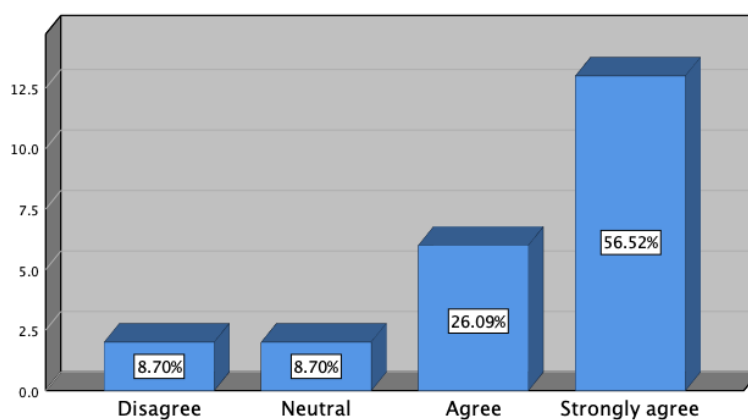


Figure 1. Teachers’ Unfavourable Remarks on Students’ Perception

The significance of teachers' feedback is not diminished. Moreover, teachers provide an invaluable source of ideas about language development, especially for writers. Since it is in human nature to seek praise, their suggestions and comments are actually very inspiring and enhance academic morale at the same time. But teachers' negative comments frequently cause anxiety and worry for certain students since they are afraid of criticism, which would only worsen their

lack of confidence and, as a result, their inefficient writing. Some students fear that teachers will mock their writing, criticize their performance in class, or say something they do not like. The vast majority (82.60%) of the students who participated in the survey claimed that they would not prefer teachers' feedback for the abovementioned reasons. Thus, the conclusion we draw from these findings is that, even if some teachers do not consider the peer-feedback approach, they are still urged to consider the feedback they give the students and come up with more effective ways to deal with critical remarks so that students do not lose confidence. Even if teachers are not actively and consciously teaching through their comments, the criticism is still critical enough to consider its long-term effects on the students' perception of their academic work and self-confidence.

**When I read my classmates' comments on my writing, I feel more at ease.**

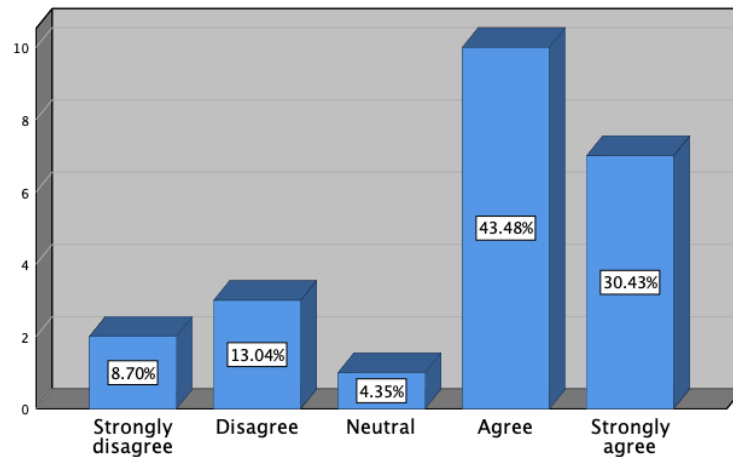


Figure 2. Students' Views on Their Classmates' Comments

Multi-peer feedback is viewed as having great value by 73.91% of the respondents. Despite the comments' framework, even if they are very negative, students' confidence is not undermined. Moreover, in such a setting, they feel relaxed, as opposed to when they receive negative comments from their teachers. Though they are in higher education, the majority of students do not complain of being insulted, humiliated, or bruised by peer comments. However, there is a contrasting viewpoint as well. Five out of 20 participants do not agree with their peers' remarks, positive or negative, possibly because they do not take their advice or criticism seriously. They consider that sometimes their peers are not experts, and sometimes they provide feedback just because they have to, though their feedback does not help at all since it contains nonsensical comments. That is why, according to some, teachers' feedback can never be replaced.

**To comments from teachers, I much prefer multi-peer feedback.**

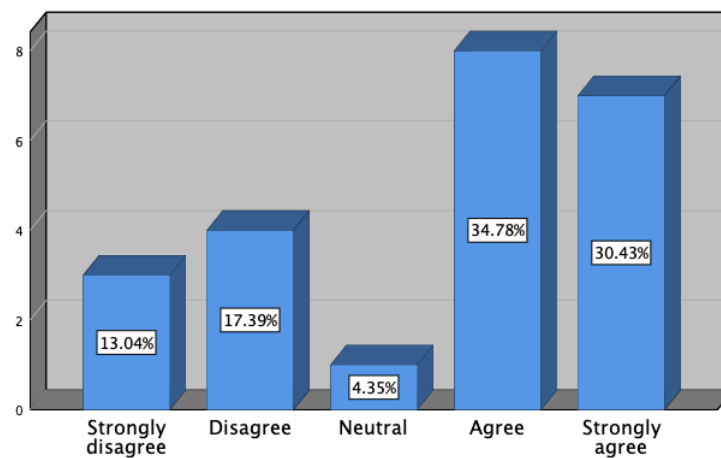


Figure 3. Students' Preference on Feedback

The figure of 65.21% is an indicator, and at the same time, it should encourage teachers, no matter the course they teach, to apply the multi-peer feedback approach. If feedback from peers helps most students develop their language skills more than feedback from teachers, then students should be provided with more competencies so that, as a result, their motivation for learning increases and, at the same time, they view themselves as contributors, particularly through

the assistance they provide to their peers. Feedback from peers not only stimulates students' development as learners but can motivate them to devote more attention to the task at hand. Given this information, the faculties and teachers should give students opportunities to demonstrate their skills and help them develop as learners. The best way to make teachers feel confident about peer feedback is to encourage students to describe the success of peer feedback by showing them practical results. However, 30.43% still give priority to teachers' feedback rather than peers' feedback, and this figure should not be overlooked at all. We must not simply measure time spent on a task but also measure whether it has contributed to the development of skills needed for future tasks. Therefore, a mixture of both is sometimes a good way towards students' enhancement. However, one thing is certain: peer feedback only works if students and teachers are convinced that students' language ability is a product of their own efforts and not a reflection of the speaker's native ability.

**I believe that receiving feedback from peers helps me learn more in a fun way.**

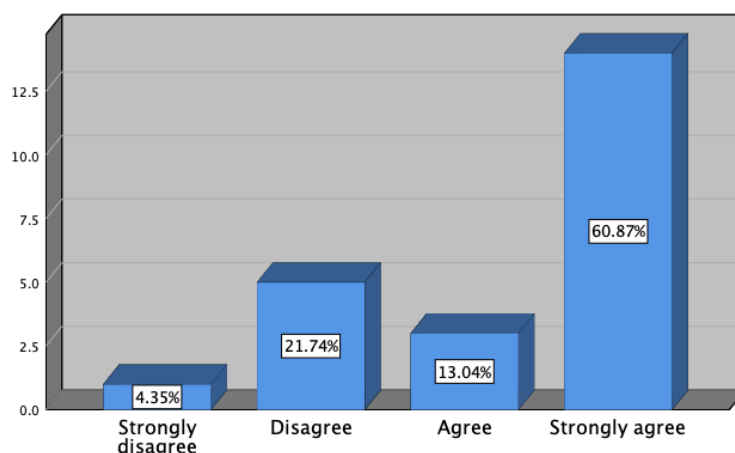


Figure 4. Students' Views on Peers' Feedback

Yet there were some students who did not positively perceive this type of feedback with regard to learning more in a fun way. For 26.08% of the students under study, this approach is not innovative and, consequently, not productive. Some students are apt to value traditional types of feedback over innovative forms because they perceive the former as supportive and not threatening to their learning. Some students simply do not enjoy feedback, but even if they do not find it "fun," teachers must be responsive and offer them alternatives to enhance their learning. Unlike for the majority of them, learning this way is fun, which makes things easier to grasp. In short, both the results from observation and the students' perceptions in the questionnaire speak much about the great benefits that multi-peer feedback has. To students, the benefits of multi-peer feedback seem to lie in the fact that it is inherently challenging, non-threatening, and enjoyable. Multi-peer feedback enables students to have their questions answered immediately, thus exposing them to knowledge more rapidly.

**I can write more assuredly and encouragingly when I collaborate and connect cognitively with my peers.**

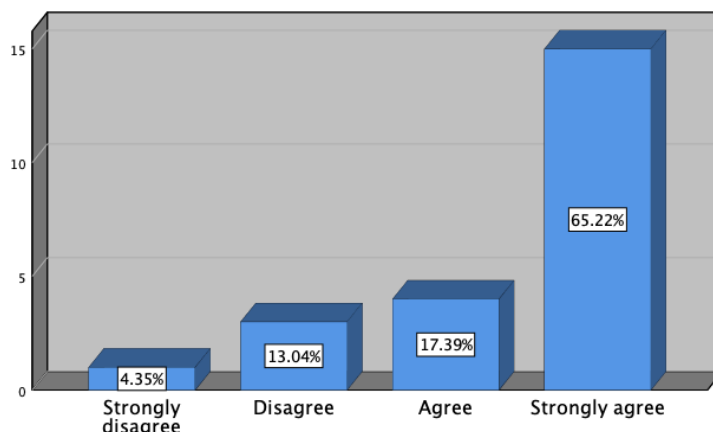


Figure 5. Students' Views on Their Performance After Collaborating With Their Peers



Perhaps the greatest advantage of peer feedback is the collaboration and interaction that occurs between students. Peer feedback encourages the development of self-concept and confidence in the abilities of students. Like other forms of formal assessment, peer feedback provides accurate and valid information about students' skills. Other forms of formal assessment do not stimulate as much conversation and collaboration, promote as much creative thinking, or promote peer learning and critical thinking as does this approach. Multi-peer feedback provided opportunities for peers to talk and work together towards meaningful goals, develop communication skills, and examine their thinking processes. Their collegial relationship had now moved to another level, which, in addition to producing healthy mutual collaboration in the context of their professional advancement, opened new windows of opinions, ideas, and discourse vocabulary for students. Thus, it is revealed that peer groups are a successful means of "self-concept enhancement." This helps students relate to classmates more effectively and enhances their social functioning, in addition to promoting students' self-esteem and sense of identity.

**If I want to teach English in the future, I believe the multi-peer feedback pedagogy should be used in the classroom.**

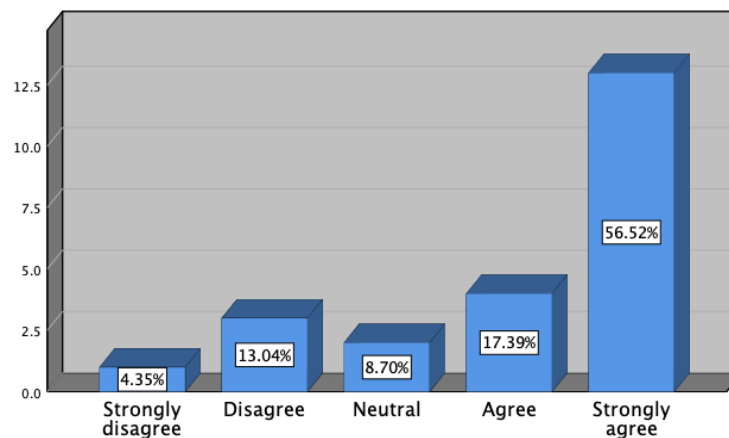


Figure 6. Students' Views on Feedback If They Teach

74% of students consider peer feedback a very helpful and attractive method of teaching and learning. They are in favour of using peer feedback if they pursue teaching as a career tomorrow. Most of them believe that given that multi-peer feedback is motivating and proven to be successful, they will apply it as a part of their classroom methods. Peer assessment is, in some sense, a more humane version of peer review, a more constructive version of instruction, and a more effective way to evaluate student learning than the traditional written form. In addition, peer feedback served these students as motivators and generators of new ideas. Here too, the opposite opinion on a percentage of 25 prevails.

The researcher's perspective on what he saw throughout these sessions is given in what follows:

#### F. Researcher's Views on Multi-Peer Feedback

Our research yielded several important results that illuminate the mechanisms that underlie peer feedback. Thanks to multi-peer feedback, students engaged in active learning and developed greater responsibility. Their roles and status were elevated, from being passive to active learners. It affected them in two ways. First, they tried to perform better because they felt some kind of pressure to meet their peers' high expectations since now they had access to a wider audience than just the teacher, giving them the ability to see how other students approached their work differently. Second, they started to become more critical of themselves and their own work. Though at first, fear of failing accompanied almost all the students, after the second session, things changed for the better and the students began to get accustomed to the new classroom situation, and the fear was significantly reduced. Basically, multi-peer feedback fosters a collaborative environment, which is actually one of the goals every teacher eventually aims to achieve. Students in such a classroom setting had the opportunity to collaborate and work as a team rather than independently. This, in fact, made writers think deeply about what was important for the essay topics and genres and work harder to ensure the quality of the writing. Working in groups means communicating with each other, which can sometimes be hard to achieve for some people. That is why some students initially shied away from engaging in multi-peer feedback because they believed that their language skills would never be good enough to get any kind of positive attention from others. In that case, it was the researcher, who was playing the role of an observer, who approached them and explained that suggestive comments should not be regarded as negative; because they might be constructive and consequently helpful.

Despite its great advantages, multi-peer feedback was observed to have some disadvantages too. It took students a lot of time to provide comments, since there were five groups with four members each and one group with three members. Each student had to give feedback on the same topic as the essays of the three other members of the group. Therefore, it is time-consuming if students are asked in such large groups to provide feedback in the classroom. Thus, the peer



feedback activities, time management, groupwork, and knowledge sharing required each student and each group to be active at the same time. Therefore, teachers who use this strategy—which they are highly encouraged to do—should recommend assigning students this task as homework.

Actually, though the class has great students, their levels obviously vary. What is worth mentioning is that the students who faced difficulties in writing and were underperforming started to improve to a great extent. So, in short, it influenced them because it served as a motivator and an encouraging tool that energized students, and somehow, they nurtured feelings that they were guiding others in the best possible way. In fact, the most interesting finding was that students' attitudes were not altered as a result of receiving peer feedback on their written assignments. To all this it should be noted that peer feedback is given by students who are on an equal footing with one another, and it can be seen as both a collaborative learning activity and a type of formative assessment (Topping, 2009; Webb, 1991; Van Gennip et al., 2010, as cited in Gielen et al., 2010).

If a student's work can be polished and finished with the help of his peer reviewers, the writing will soon become much more attractive.

## V. CONCLUSION

This empirical research provides insights into a new teaching and learning practice, explaining why all students, despite their level of English abilities, may meaningfully participate in peer feedback, namely multi-peer feedback. Multi-peer feedback is a practice in which students in a class provide suggestions and comments to one another on the quality of their performance. Twenty-three students participated in the study over a period of ten weeks. They were assigned to write four essays in four different genres as homework assignments, and then they had to bring their copies to the classroom and switch with the other three members of their groups. At first, most students were rather frustrated, and it was observed that most of them had difficulties handling the assignment. The part where students mostly outperformed was the introduction, namely the thesis statement. In order to promote their own personal growth and insight, the students tried to discover ways in which they could all help each other maximize the impact of their essays. Their efforts were then realized because they were able to identify areas of weakness in their expertise and, as a result, became more cautious writers. When working together and helping each other, it turned out that both novice and expert writers were almost equally engaged in this process. The ones who were good at writing advanced at a satisfactory level, and those who were average moved to a greater level, though much is needed to further develop. This practice is better perceived compared to teachers' feedback. It rather motivated students to learn. Actually, it was observed to be a two-way process. In addition, the multi-peer feedback connection made them better able to assess their own learning because they grew when exchanging their knowledge and solving problems. Following peer comments, students were able to enhance their spelling and increase their vocabulary too. It engaged them actively in the learning process, aided in the growth of self-management and judgment, developed the ability to self-evaluate, helped in the development of topic knowledge, allowed them to obtain feedback more quickly, and encouraged social contact.

It was further revealed that it is time-consuming, particularly when applied to multi-peers, because each student had to provide feedback to three other students, and sometimes they provide similar comments, like they were influenced by their colleagues' comments. This, however, should not serve as an obstacle, because the advantages of this practice are so evident that it can change sceptics negative views and opinions regarding peer feedback applications. Therefore, English teachers are very much encouraged to apply this practice right away since they will be highly pleased by their students' growth in writing.

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# Improving English Pronunciation by Using Instructive Musical Exercises: University Teaching Context in Serbia

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**Abstract**—The paper examines the influence of the application of instructive musical exercises on better and more correct pronunciation of certain sentences in English. In relation to the type of sentences (interrogative in form of questions, affirmative with adjuncts and if-clauses) and the intonation of the pronunciation of words and phrases within the sentences, a melody was specially composed for each sentence, and the primary criterion was matching the melodic flow with the intonation of the sentence. The training was implemented with participants (future preschool teachers) in the first year of undergraduate studies in May 2022. Students were tested before and after the training. The results of the conducted research showed that instructive musical exercises based on the common elements of language and music, aimed at solving a specific problem, contributed to a more precise pronunciation of certain words and given sentences in terms of accents, rhythm, pitch and intonation.

**Index Terms**—English pronunciation, music exercises, university teaching

## I. INTRODUCTION

Music is present in all spheres of human life since the birth of man and is one of the most significant and earliest forms of communication. The first children's singing occurs in the preverbal period (Voglar, 1997). The musical component of speech is the earliest dimension of language that children use and understand (McCormack, 2017). Numerous studies point to common features of speech/language and music, as well as common features of foreign language learning and music practice. These are primarily the temporal acoustic properties of speech and musical sound and the detection of pitch differences specific to both domains (Milovanov & Tervaniemi, 2011), where by the initial learning period plays a key role in both foreign language acquisition skills and music education (music performance). When it comes to studies that indicate an overlap of behavioral and neural resources between language and music (Milovanov & Tervaniemi, 2011), we encounter different data and interpretations. According to Milovanov and Tervaniemi (2011), specific neurocognitive functions characteristic in music are controlled by the right hemisphere of the brain, and linguistic functions by the left hemisphere. In contrast to the aforementioned findings, recent research on neurophysiological aspects related to music perception shows that music can be considered equivalent to language, the language and music components share some brain fragments, “thus excluding the theory of two independent areas: the right hemisphere for music and the left for language” (Picciotti et al., 2018). The interaction of music and language skills, however, often occurs in one direction. A small number of studies examined the influence of linguistic skills on the development of musical abilities, while at the same time there is a growing body of scientific evidence that points to the positive effects of playing music on the development of language skills on both a cognitive and a neural level (Milovanov & Tervaniemi, 2011).

In the focus of previous research (Patel & Iversen, 2007; Moreno et al., 2009; Piri, 2018; Oesch, 2019; Swaminthan & Schellenberg, 2020) is the influence of musical experience and musical training on learning a foreign language in different segments. Several studies have suggested that intensive music training already at preschool age improves children's language skills, but also that such training is not available to everyone (Linnavalli et al., 2018). In addition to influencing correct pronunciation of foreign words and enriching vocabulary, music at an early age has great importance for increasing social interaction and activity of children, creating a cheerful mood and free expression of feelings, which indirectly affects language learning (Assadilah & Barokah, 2018). A significant amount of research is focused on pitch and its use to convey linguistic information (Wong et al., 2007; Patel & Iversen, 2007). In English, as in many other languages, pitch makes a lexical distinction between words, because the same word, spoken with a different pitch pattern, would have a completely different meaning. It is believed that “because music relies on fine distinctions in pitch, timbre and duration, it might be that musical training enhances basic spectrotemporal sound-

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encoding mechanisms that are also relevant for speech” (Patel & Iversen, 2007, p. 371). Moreno and his colleagues (Moreno et al., 2009) examined the influence of musical training on language processing of pitch and reading skills, and the results showed that musical training improved the processing of pitch in speech, as well as the reading/pronunciation of irregular words.

“Foreign language learning skills are based on rhythm, singing and musical perception” and for this reason musical training contributes to the acquisition of phonological skills needed for foreign language learning (Picciotti et al., 2018). The authors Swaminthan and Schellenberg (2020) came to similar results, emphasizing that formal musical training can develop language abilities, primarily the ability to observe, and then more complex skills such as reading. However, it should be taken into consideration that musical training is not enough and that a combination of several factors, first of all, cognitive abilities is necessary (Swaminthan & Schellenberg, 2020). In addition, positive outcomes occurred when music training used melody as a basic means of musical expression (pitch relationships between tones), while musical exercises in the area of rhythm did not improve the phonological awareness of the participants.

The use of music in the teaching of a foreign language, at all levels of education, also depends on the competence of the teacher who teaches. In doing so, we mean the choice of music, methodological approach and understanding of the connection between musical activities and learning a foreign language. The benefit of applying musical content in foreign language teaching is not only the boost of students’ motivation, which is often its only function in class (Besedova et al., 2019), but the structural connection of language and music through common elements: rhythm, intonation, accents, tone and melodies (Oesch, 2019). Connecting the aforementioned common features of language and music is a basic component of musical training applied in our research and one of the theoretical starting points in designing the methodological framework.

Researching the literature background, the following musical activities were used to study correlations between language learning and music: singing songs (Christiner & Reiterer, 2013; McCormack et al., 2018), listening to music and rhythmic activities (Degrave, 2019). In both previous and current research, it is particularly emphasized that the use of song can help teach natural/correct pronunciation (McCormack et al., 2018). In this sense, the application of instructive musical exercises with text (or music-based exercises), specially designed for practicing the pronunciation of certain sentences in English, can be considered as an innovative method of working in foreign language teaching. The fact that “adequate material is not always easy to find” (Degrave, 2019, p. 412) is mentioned as one of the reasons for not enough used musical activities in foreign language teaching, especially at an older age, which is why this paper also has both scientific and practical significance.

## II. METHOD, AIMS AND PARTICIPANTS

The results of previous research are indisputable indicators that music has a positive effect on learning a foreign language, but also that it is used more often at a younger school age. In this context, the research problem of this study is the following: “Is it possible and in what way to apply music training in foreign (English) language classes in working with university students?”.

The aim of the research was to examine whether music training (in university teaching) can contribute to better pronunciation of a foreign language among students-future teachers. In accordance with the set goal, students were tested before (interview 1) and after the realization of a short musical training (interview 2). The testing consisted of reading out-loud of different types of sentences in English. The students' reading was recorded. The research was conducted with students of the first academic year of bachelor academic studies at the Faculty of Education in Jagodina (Serbia), department Preschool Teacher Education. The sample was consisted of 45 students. The training lasted three weeks as part of regular lessons. The research was divided into 3 segments: in the first segment, musical exercises were performed for the pronunciation of questions, in the second segment for the pronunciation of affirmative sentences with adjuncts, and in the third segment exercises for if-clauses. The musical exercises with lyrics used in the training were specifically designed for research purposes, in two segments. The students had the task to, after the researcher's demonstration, sing a melody with the text of the given sentence that was on the slide. The singing was repeated several times depending on the complexity of the melody and intonation. The second (more complex) task was related to the listening perception and recognition of sentences based on listening to their melodies, which the researcher sang this time in a neutral syllable, without lyrics. The goal of these exercises is to additionally focus attention on the intonation of the sentence and the common properties of spoken and musical intonation. After the training period, the students read the same sentences again (recordings of interview 2) in order to determine whether the musical exercises influenced the more accurate pronunciation of words and sentences.

Procedure (the description of the instructive musical exercises)

In relation to the type of sentences (questions, affirmative sentences with adjuncts and if-clauses) and the intonation of the pronunciation of words and phrases within the sentences (Appendix. Sentences in English), a melody was specially composed for each sentence. When composing the melody, the primary criterion was matching the flow of the melody with the intonation of the sentence.

Moreover, based on the intonation of certain syllables, we determined the pitch of the tones in the melody, that is, we tried to equalize the pitch of the given syllable; if a syllable is pronounced in a higher intonation than the previous syllable, it corresponds to a higher tone compared to the previous tone in the melody. For parts of the sentence that are

pronounced without changes in intonation, the melody consists of repeated tones (Figure 1) or it is decorated with a neighboring tones, in order to avoid the narrative character of the melody (Figure 2).



Figure 1. Melody With Repeated Tones

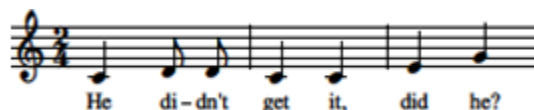


Figure 2. Melody With Neighboring Tones

In this way, the melodious of the exercises is achieved, which the examinees remember faster and easier and intonate more precisely.

Words and syllables determined the metro-rhythmic component of the melody. When it comes to accentuation of syllables and words, matches with musical accents have been achieved to a greater extent. However, literal matches would lead to a violation of the aesthetic component of both language and music (sentences and melodies). Subordinate clauses separated by a comma when the first begins with If had a melody in which both the first and second parts of the melody begin with a pause or the same tone (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Melody With a Pause at the Beginning

In this way, an analogy was established between the linguistic and musical components. Musical exercises are especially important when pronouncing certain complex syntagms or words, such as 18-year-old or magnificently. For the phrase 18-year-old, a melody was created without major jumps, with syncopation and shorter note values, so that the students could sing the phrase without interruptions and taking breaths, as in speech. In the word magnificently, which is represented in the musical exercise by an ascending melodic line, the first syllable is sung longer to highlight the accent of the next syllable and to make the pronunciation of the word easier. Another limitation of designed musical exercises with text needs to be emphasized. Instructive musical exercises were applied, which contain didactic elements and a specific goal. In music education, these are used in the function of acquiring certain musical concepts and phenomena, while other aesthetic components are subordinated to that function. From a didactic and methodological aspect, their application with the aim of improving pronunciation in foreign language learning is justified in this research as well.

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The participants' answers were analyzed qualitatively by the authors and backed up with descriptive statistics using an inductive method in which categories were extracted from the data. This method is based on content analysis of interview 1 and interview 2 and was implemented for analyses of students' recordings.

Namely, for the examination we focused on three main categories of sentences: 1) Questions, 2) Adjuncts in the affirmative sentences and 3) If-clauses. These were the categories we selected for the students to tackle during the research process. The reason we chose these categories was that the students used them the most and yet had trouble in pronouncing words and sentences in proper stress, rhythm, pitch and intonation. Therefore, the following sub-categories - stress, rhythm, pitch and intonation will be taken into account during the data analysis.

#### A. Questions

According to Carter and McCarthy (2006, p. 724), alternative questions most typically have a rising intonation on each alternative (↗ ↘) such as in the example *Could you go and work in France or Italy?* By listening to the recordings made in the interview 1, we determined that 38 students out of 45 had problems to pronounce and read the sentence fluently. The most obvious problem was to read the sentence without making pauses between words, and to read it without larger interruptions. Also, we have noticed some miscues in oral reading such as mispronunciation of vowel cluster like *-ou-* in *could* and vowel *-a-* in words *France* and *Italy*. The students also had problem with the intonation in the second alternative *or Italy* where the rise of intonation was expected in order to express equal consideration by the speaker, and the possible answer yes to both given possibilities. Word stress in this example was put in proper place by 40 students (out of 45) but the rhythm of a sentence and its pattern in time was not marked by the regulated succession of strong and weak elements, or a rising intonation on each alternative. Therefore, 38 students from our sample, showed in the interview 1 that they need help in reading and pronouncing the selected words and sentences in English as a

foreign language. After three weeks of musical exercises, we conducted interview 2 to find out if there is an improvement in intonation, rhythm, stress and pitch. The recordings showed that there was a significant improvement in intonation in 37 students out of 38 who had problems. These students managed to read the sentence with a rising intonation on each alternative, without making unnecessary discontinuation between words. Likewise, we may say that the musical exercises helped in terms of correct pronunciation of vowel cluster like *-ou-* in *could* and vowels in words *France* and *Italy*. The rhythmic beat, created by the pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables, was improved in 35 students out of 38. Word stress was already in proper place by the most students so we did not have much of a change in this category. This example sentence, in the examined sample of students, showed that the musical exercises can help in terms of English pronunciation of certain vowels, sentence stress, intonation and overall rhythm of a sentence (similar view was given by Torras-Vila (2021), but did not significantly influenced words' stress in our examination. We may suppose that the lack in words' stress improvement was due to words that appeared in this example and were easy to pronounce because 8 out of 9 words were one-syllable words.

A rise followed by a fall (↗ ↘) as in alternative question *Was it a CD-ROM or a DVD?* should have shown that both alternatives were possible, only one of them could be the right one. In the recordings made in interview 1, we detected that 35 students out of 45, had problem with the rhythm of a sentence, intonation and pitch. In this case, students had difficulties in keeping the flow of a sentence without unnecessary breaks, which led to broken rhythm pattern. Further, these 35 students could not recognize that in this question we have a rise followed by a fall in intonation. In terms of pitch, the degree of lowness and highness of tone in each syllable was a struggle especially in mentioned words *CD-ROM* and *DVD*. Also, we noticed some miscues such as substitution (*a* for *the*, *was* for *what*, or for *of*) and rereading of individual words *CD-ROM* and *DVD*. The rereading could be explained by the fact that students use these words in Serbian, their mother tongue, but with a different pronunciation. This could be explained by the fact that the examined students transferred the reading strategy from the mother tongue (one letter-one sound) and failed to read English words mainly due to the negative transfer of their MT reading skills (Cirkovic-Miladinovic & Stanojevic-Veselinovic, 2020). After the musical exercises, 34 students out of 35 (who had problems in the first recording) improved their reading and pronunciation. Namely, the recordings of the interview 2 showed that students enhanced the rhythm of a sentence, intonation and pitch. Only one student was still reading a sentence with a miscue in terms of rereading. The rhythm was considerably improved, there were no breaks and pauses in the pattern and the flow was not interrupted. The intonation was also improved in the second recording, to be precise, the students paid attention to the fall in the second part of a question (34 students out of 35 who had problems improved in this category). The pitch was improved in words *CD-ROM* and *DVD* and the pronunciation was without miscues this time.

The next question is a three-fold example, a fall-rise followed by a fall (↘ ↗ ↘) as in *Are you hungry or do you want to eat later?* In this case both alternatives are possible, there is a possible assumption that the listener is hungry and this is marked by the rise of intonation in word *hungry*. In the interview 1, we recorded that 37 students (out of 45) had problem with noticing that there should be a rise in the middle of a sentence in order to stress the word *hungry*. Consequently, students struggled with the flow of a sentence and the rhythm pattern was often interrupted. Further, the intonation, as variation in pitch used to indicate the speaker's attitudes and emotions, and to regulate the flow of discourse, was not properly performed by the students. Therefore, in this recording we registered the lack of pitch accuracy as well. Besides, 37 students expressed some miscues while reading the sentence. The most common miscue was the mispronunciation of word *hungry* and the vowel *-u-* and there was an evident problem with the ending of a word *later* /'leɪ.tər/ where the consonant *-r-* in this word was very much stressed instead of being voiceless in British English (this is the variant of English the participants learn). Hence, this could be explained by the interference of a mother tongue, Serbian, where this consonant *-r-* is voiced rather than voiceless, as in English word *later*. In this interview, we also noticed miscues such as substitutions (*do* for *to*, *you* for *too*, *want* for *went*). It was evident that our participants needed some help and support in terms of reading the given sentences. After three weeks of musical exercises, we conducted the interview 2 which showed that there was a noteworthy improvement in intonation and 34 students (out of 37 who had problems) could easily recognize the intonation and the rhythm pattern 'a fall-rise followed by a fall'. As a result, the musical exercises led to more precise pronunciation, better sentence stress and pitch accuracy. Word stress was not an issue in the first interview so we could not record the improvement in this case.

Tag questions are highly interactive in that they may ask the range of possible responses from the speaker (Carter & McCarthy, 2006, p. 725). Some patterns are more constraining than others and these demand more precisely put stress and intonation on certain words or phrases (syntagms). Type *He's gone back, has he?*, contains an affirmative statement by the speaker in the main clause, and an expectation of a yes-answer as confirmation in the tag. In the subordinate clause - tag, *has he*, we expect the rising intonation in order to imply that we expect the affirmative answer (it is supposed that the speaker has some knowledge on his departure and expects the confirmation of the expressed assumption) (ibid.). Similar type *He didn't get it, did he?*, has a negative statement by the speaker in the main clause and a more neutral possibility (both are possible as answers, yes and no) in the tag. A rising intonation in the tag should anticipate agreement with no but open to challenge with yes (ibid.). Both examples have the rising intonation (↗) in the tag but students (38 out of 45) just couldn't recognize it. They read the sentence without a pulse and with the same intonation from the beginning to the end. The rhythm was broken and there was not an expected flow in reading. The pitch was proper due to the familiar words and short sentences. The recordings also indicated that the participants'

pronunciation difficulties frequently consisted of wrong pronunciation of the abbreviation in present perfect tense *He's* and substitution with *his*. In these two examples, the running recordings indicated that there was a repetition of certain groups of words such as *He's gone, has he, and didn't get it*. In a slightly different type of question - *She never talked to anybody, did she?*, we have a negative statement by the speaker in the main clause, and an expectation of a no-answer as confirmation in the tag (ibid.). A rise (↗) in the main clause followed by a fall (↘) in the tag shows that the speaker expects agreement from his/her addressee. Somewhat different in intonation from the first two tag questions, this one showed in the recordings of interview 1 that, 38 students out of 45, could not recognize the fall in intonation in tag *did she*. Without this fall in the end, the speaker cannot express his/her expectation of an agreement from the other person. The interview 1 documented that the students in our sample, had difficulty in pronouncing of past tense affix *-ed-* and irregular past tense forms such as *gone*. These problems indicated that our students-participants needed help in reading, pronunciation and proper intonation. Therefore, musical exercises were carefully planned and conducted. Hence, the recordings of the interview 2 indicated that the musical exercises helped in terms of intonation in tag, rhythm of a sentence and pronunciation of verbs *gone* and *talked* in 36 out of 38 students who had problems in the first recording. The repetition of words was also solved and there was only one student who could not overcome this reading problem even after the musical exercises were applied. It is interesting to consider that musical exercises helped in this category not only in terms of intonation, rhythm and pronunciation but also in word stress, sentence stress and reading fluently without mentioned miscues.

### B. Adjuncts

Adjuncts in the affirmative sentences were also examined and students' recordings were analyzed. The selected sentences had two adjuncts each and these were put after the main clause. In the example *We were working in the garden all morning*, we have two adjuncts, *in the garden* and *all morning*. Both can be read with a rising intonation (↗) in order to emphasize where they worked (*in the garden*) or to emphasize the time (*in the morning*). The emphasis depends on the reader/speaker and his/her emotional attitude towards the topical links between clauses and sentences. Weak forms are also sometimes a problem (as in research conducted by Dostal, 2013). After analyzing our participants' running recordings of the interview 1, we have observed the same intonation in the main clause and in both adjuncts. The students (39 out of 45) did not recognize that at least one of these adjuncts can be emphasized and thus the sentences could have more personal meaning. As a result, students struggled with the sentence intonation and its flow, so the rhythm pattern was lost. In this example sentence we did not record miscues or pronunciation problems due to very familiar words to the examined students. In the next example sentence with adjunct, *She played magnificently the second time*, the recordings showed that students also did not recognize that they can put emphasis on one of the adjuncts and to perform more competent reading and pronunciation. The intonation with the rising tone (↗) was not recognized by 39 out of 45 students, therefore, the speaker's attitudes and emotions were not showed in 39 examined students. The biggest problem in this example was the adverb *magnificently*. Being 5-syllable word, this one was often mispronounced, i.e. in 39 students out of 45, we recorded mispronunciation of the fourth syllable, so instead of /mæg'nif.i.sənt.li/, where sound /s/ should be heard as dominant, it was often pronounced as /c/ which derives from Serbian spelling rule one letter-one sound. The variation in pitch was also not present in the example *An 18-year-old teenager was arrested in Cyprus yesterday*. The rhythm and flow were a struggle for the participants especially because of the compound syntagm *an 18-year-old teenager*. In this case, 39 students out of 45 made the one of the following miscues: 35 students mispronounced number 18 or the whole phrase, while 39 students could not overcome another obstacle i.e. the pronunciation of proper noun *Cyprus* /'saɪ.prəs/. The first syllable was mispronounced and substituted, so instead of /'saɪ.prəs/ examined students pronounced it as /'ki:prəs/. This could also be explained by the negative transfer of Serbian reading skills and pronunciation of the selected word. In the musical exercises, we have focused on the detected miscues and pronunciation problems. Therefore, these exercises tackled rising intonation in the following phrases and words: *all morning, magnificently, an 18-year-old teenager* and *was arrested* while in words *Cyprus* and *magnificently* the musical exercises were concentrated on substitutions and mispronunciation as types of miscue. After the musical exercises, we have conducted an interview 2 and recorded the participants' reading and pronunciation of the mentioned sentences. The records showed that there was a significant improvement in intonation in 39 students out of 45 in the first sentence *We were working in the garden all morning*. Specifically, 39 students managed to read the sentence with a rising intonation on the proper adjunct giving the intonation correct pitch accuracy and improving the rhythm pattern. In the second sentence *She played magnificently the second time*, 38 students out of 45 improved the pronunciation of word *magnificently* while the pronunciation of words *Cyprus* and number 18 was corrected in 39 participants. Overall, the rhythm was also enhanced in 39 students due to these corrections. In addition, the fluency, as the ability to read a text accurately, quickly, and with expression, was very much improved. Reading fluency in learning a foreign language is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension (Brown, 1990). There was also a significant improvement in rhythm and sentence stress that led to more precise pronunciation and reading flow. Therefore, we believe that the participants will benefit from these exercises in the future as well and prevent comprehension problems due to mispronunciation.

### C. If-Clauses

According to Carter and McCarthy (2006, p. 748) *if*-clauses are often known and described as the first, second and third conditionals. In the first conditional, *If Sally comes too, there will be five of us*, the speaker/writer predicts a likely result in the future if the condition is fulfilled. In this sentence, in the interview 1, participants did not experience problems with pronunciation of separate words but 38 of them struggled with the rising intonation and rhythm pattern in the sentence. Also, the stress of the certain phrases was not recognized. Hence, the musical exercises put a focus on these recorded problems and tried to tackle the rising intonation in phrases *If Sally* (↗), *will be* (↗) but to practice and signal the fall of intonation in *five of us* (↘). Stress, as the degree of force or loudness with which a syllable is pronounced, was significantly improved after the musical exercises, that is, 36 out of 38 students in the interview 2 showed improvement in this segment together with the enhanced intonation (the rising and falling intonation was applied in the proper phrases and the stress pattern was just right). In the example of the second conditional, *I would do a computer course if I had the time*, the speaker/writer responds to a possible or hypothetical situation by indicating a possible outcome (ibid.). In this case, the condition must be fulfilled in order for the future to be different. In the interview 1, students running recordings indicated that there was again the lack of rising and falling intonation in phrases *I would do* (↗) and *if I had* (↗) in 37 students-participants. There was another evident problem, 34 students mispronounced a vowel cluster *-ou-* in word *course* /kɔ:s/ so instead of /kɔ:/ the participants pronounced it as /kɔr:/ as in word *the Qur'an*. Similar results were found in research by Habibi (2016). However, these pronunciation problems did not result in comprehension problems but it was evident that the negative transfer of MT, Serbian reading skills (one-to-one letter-sound correspondences) was applied. Having in mind all previously recorded problems in our sample, the adequate musical exercises were designed for the purposes of improving the participants' pronunciation and intonation of the selected sentences. Therefore, the musical exercises were applied and in the interview 2 we have recorded an improvement in 36 students out of 37 in terms of intonation and 32 students improved their pronunciation and stress of the word *course*. It may be said, that the musical exercises helped the examined participants to overcome the intonation problem, that is, to recognize where to have a rising intonation and where not. Not only the participants improved the intonation in reading the given sentences but also they did not make unnecessary discontinuation between words, on the contrary, the rhythm pattern was appropriate and such a rhythm gave a deeper meaning to the sentence. The third example, *If I had seen you walking, I could have offered you a lift*, represented an example of the third conditional where the speaker/writer is expressing the attitude towards an imagined past situation. Here the speaker or writer is talking about a past event which did not happen, and therefore things are different from how they might have happened (ibid.). The interview 1 recordings showed the same situation as in the previous examples. Namely, the students-participants struggled with the rising intonation and rhythm pattern in the sentence. So, 38 students out of 45 could not recognize the rising intonation (↗) in phrases *If I had seen you* and *I could have offered*, on one hand, and the falling intonation in *walking* (↘) and *you a lift* (↘), on the other. No problem was noted in terms of pronunciation of certain syllables or whole words. This could be explained with the fact that all the words were familiar to students and the longest words were 2-syllable words. Again, the musical exercises were focused on the recorded problems in reading and the overall improvement of the students' sentence stress, rhythm and intonation. After some time of practice of specially designed musical exercises, students' running recordings showed that there was a significant improvement in intonation in 36 out of 38 students. In other words, students were more confident to express their emotions towards the situation in the sentence through applying the rising or falling intonation and consequently the rhythm pulse was more of a natural speech. Becoming a more confident speaker is crucial in the university classroom because only then students can make progress and improve their English language speaking skills (Ćirković-Miladinović, 2019). It may be said that, reading skills and pronunciation in the interview 2 showed that students were able to apply the gained experience in musical exercises and to improve the melody of speech. Here, music and English as a foreign language were correlated for the purpose of improving reading and pronunciation skills in students/participants and to give the prominence of speech melody.

#### IV. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The results showed that the 45 examined participants experienced pronunciation and reading out loud problems in all three main categories – *questions*, *adjuncts* and *if-clauses*. If we take into consideration 4 sub-categories, intonation, rhythm, pitch and stress, as well, we may say that after the music exercises, the results were as follows: question pronunciation and oral reading, together with intonation, rhythm and miscues, were corrected in 35 out of 38 students (92.11%) in terms of *alternative questions*; 34 students out of 37 (89.4%) improved their pronunciation, intonation, word and sentence stress in favour of tag questions; *adjuncts in the affirmative sentences* showed that 38 out of 39 students improved their intonation recognition, overall rhythm of a sentence and miscues were eliminated as they were at least 97.4% accurate in their oral reading; in case of *if-clauses*, recordings of our sample showed that 36 out of 38 students (94.7%) made an improvement in terms of intonation, pitch, rhythm pattern while miscues were still present in only 2 students. It can be deduced from these results that specially designed musical exercises may help in the English language classroom. While working on musical aspects, the participants focused on oral skills and pronunciation and gained new insight into pronunciation practice that help them acquire the foreign language (English) pronunciation more easily. “Contextualized English learning through musical activities and skills, thus, seems to contribute positively to the acquisition of vocabulary, structures and pronunciation in the TL” (Torrás-Vila, 2021). In line with the mentioned



research, on a more positive note, we believe that these exercises have proven, in our research sample, to be useful in several aspects: word and sentence stress, pitch accuracy, rising and falling intonation, rhythm pattern and overall reading fluently with a minimum of the mentioned miscues.

## V. CONCLUSION

Music has always played a big part in people's life and it has been present in the classroom and out of it. Nowadays, young language learners meet with foreign language songs and chants even before they start school. If we consider university students and their learning of the foreign language, it seemed that this study proved that musical exercises were useful and productive in terms of pronunciation and oral reading in many aspects. The participants in this study perceived music as motivating source, thus beneficial in language learning. The musical exercises brought interesting changes in the classroom and boosted learning activities. Additionally, many students-participants felt nervous in the beginning but later they were more confident and self-assured in improving their pronunciation and sentence stress. Specially designed melodies and exercises proved to be a good method of English language pronunciation activities, therefore these tunes infiltrated students' thoughts and may stay in their memory for a long time. Furthermore, what also speaks in favour of the mentioned musical exercises in language teaching are the results from the study. The outcomes of the interviews recorded after the musical exercises presented that the most students achieved better results in terms of correct pronunciation, balanced intonation, unbroken rhythm pattern and right pitch. To conclude, the authors have shown that participants in this sample benefited from specially designed musical exercises, but do not negate that pronunciation and oral reading should be seen as developmental skills that need time and proper teaching methods in order to grow. The research can be expanded in the future by using the proposed model based on common elements of language and music and their integration in search for other possible approaches in teaching English at the university level.

## APPENDIX SENTENCES IN ENGLISH

### A. QUESTIONS

1. **Could you go and work in France or Italy?**
2. **Was it a CD-ROM** or a DVD?
3. Are you **hungry or** do you want to eat later?
4. He's gone back, **has he?**
5. She never talked to anybody, did she?
6. He didn't get it, **did he?**

### B. QUESTIONS ADJUNCTS IN THE AFFIRMATIVE SENTENCES:

1. We were working in the garden **all morning.**
2. She played **magnificently** the second time.
3. **An 18-year-old teenager was arrested** in Cyprus yesterday.

### C. IF-CLAUSES

1. **If Sally comes** too, there **will be** five of us.
2. I **would do** a computer course **if I had** the time.
3. **If I had seen** you walking, **I could have offered** you a lift.

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# Family and Individual Life Conflict in *Difficult Daughters*

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**Abstract**—Family is a well-framed structure with ethics and values. Family includes everyone's desire bounded to be one and individual's freedom is barred. At the same time freedom gives the rights to lead life with an individual's own desire and welfare. Every person has freedom to think and act. Individual's freedom should be for the betterment of his/her development. Though freedom is common for all, people find it difficult to get theirs especially when they come from an orthodox family. Their freedom is restricted to a limit and they have to accommodate themselves within that circle. In certain circumstances they break those restrictions and come out to prove who they are through their inherent talents. In this attempt, they are affected mentally and their conflict mind diverts them. Mentality of people differs from one another and it affects others in one way or another. Manju Kapur in her novel *Difficult Daughters* projects how few members in the family break the restrictions and move forward by choosing the path of their own and withstand in their choice of crossing mental tortures. In this process of struggle, except few, for others the problems they face make them a stagnant pool thinking that is their world. This is dealt in the novel with the incidents showing both physical and mental challenges even after getting freedom from the family. It also enhances the importance of family as well as the solitary state in individual life.

**Index Terms**—family, identity, infidelity, conflict, individual freedom

## I. INTRODUCTION

Independence is indispensable in everyone's life. In every country's history one could note that the citizens would have struggled to get freedom for their country either from an individual ruler or from a colonial rule. Freedom is every single man's right that can not be controlled by any other man. But still many people live under the control of others like meek creatures either within the family or in working locations. Among these, family as a whole has certain orthodoxy, and set of values which keep the society healthy. Restrictions are necessary to follow the family construction and develop discipline among everyone in the family. Those restrictions were severe on women than men in those days. Women's freedom was limited at those times as most of them were submissive under the shadow of patriarchal world being innocent about the outside world. Women who try to come out of the family restrictions were compressed with mental stress to give up their desires and adapt with the family rules to lead a devoted marriage life. A few broke the anxiety to accomplish their aim facing critical circumstances pricking from all sides and a few diverted with the help of others. Women didn't get encouragement either from their family side or from others easily and hence found it much difficult to survive in the society solely. Women's fight over the family and society to live for her dream and men's liberty in setting their life are impeccably presented by Manju Kapur in her novel *Difficult Daughters*. A woman's journey towards her dream to become a teacher, woman's role as a dedicated home-maker, a man's freedom to frame his lifestyle and the psyche of each one in accepting the life are analysed in this article. It gives a clear picture of women's battle to acquire freedom to think and act personally and men's easy-going attitude as represented in the novel.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review helps to know the previous study on this work and the result found. The review shows the importance of this study and the improvement shown in this article. Manju Kapur wants to convey that the present scenario has changed with the spread of women education (Mehta, 2009). 'Deconstructive Feminism' is found throughout the novel (Baskaran, 2016). The novel portrays socio-political scenario of the era (Lata, 2006), pre-partition India, man-woman relationship (Barbuddhe, 2001), relationship parallels India's struggle for freedom (Kumar, 2007). The theme of gender representation is explored by Celly (2008). The novel has been focused on the women's transformation as modern (Jha, 2002), conflict of tradition and modernity (Singh, 2000), condition of women in complex family structure (Nayak, 2002), committed marriage life (Devi, 2011), and daughters' rebel against their

parents and the society (Suman, 2006). This study focuses on the conflict between family life and individual in both men and women. In this concept different family lives, search for identity, the psyche of major characters have been dealt with.

### III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Family life makes a person to be committed with domestic activities and to think about the family members while taking decisions. They are connected not only by blood but also by love, compassion, affection, care, etc. People connected in the family bond are safeguarded and secured than the individuals. Their unconditional love shows the true hearts and it gives inner strength. Together a person steadfast with family relationship cannot relish individual freedom copiously as his or her life is bounded with the life of family members. When a person in a family takes individual rights that shake others and the love bond among them too is detached. One cannot say that people leading individual life are happy because they may lack support in their hard times. Whether they face success or failure in life, they alone have to decide further and this may bring conflict in their mind which leads to take wrong decision often. They also find it crucial to fix their own identity. In the novel *Difficult Daughters* Manju Kapur has presented family as well as individual life of the characters and explores the difficulties in the private life and endeavors to overcome that.

### IV. FAMILY LIFE IN *DIFFICULT DAUGHTERS*

Manju Kapur's works are based on family concepts like marriage, women's life after marriage, their sacrifices, moulding children, men's role, and women's protest to reach their aim, and so on. She presents traditional conservative families focusing on women and men's role. Families are constructed with traditions and customs in which men and women play their roles reflecting the real society. Sooryamoorthy points out, "For the individual the family is the first place where one could look for everything that is needed for his/her growth and development" (2012, p. 2). The author too was brought up in a traditional background and hence she knew the restrictions for men and women in a family. Also, her experience and the people she met in her life gave her a way to present the concept of women's struggle and their progress in life among men in the family.

Manju Kapur has depicted main characters trying to achieve their aim. Each and every behaviour and decision taken are affecting one another in the family with or without their knowledge. Hence family and people's psyche are interrelated with one another. Virmati is impressed by the life style of her cousin sister Shakuntala who does her higher studies and being modern. Virmati's inborn thirst for studies becomes massive after meeting her and hence she starts to oppose her parents for her rights. This external struggle and argument, the mental turmoil of women and reaction of men are expressed by the writer. The role of men is also very important as their actions disturb women mentally and thus reflect in their life often.

In *Difficult Daughters*, two types of families have been presented, in which one is a joint family and another one is nuclear family. In the joint family of Lala Diwan Chand, he considers everyone's feelings and the family members obey his words. In the nuclear family of Harish Chandra, he takes every decision without thinking about anyone as he is the head of the family and does whatever he desires with full freedom. In both the families head (man) is the decision maker and protector of others. Sonawat mentions, "In a patriarchal family set up, all male members, that is, husband, elder brother and father, perform duties like decision making from the rest of the family, and their physical and mental protection" (2001, p. 180). Through the two families, the author has portrayed two kinds of lifestyles and explores the lives of men and women. Women roles in both families remain alike being fit to do their household duties, caring husband and children, devoted and dedicated to the family in all aspects. In the case of men, lifestyles differ. Suraj Prakash is sincere and true to his family as a son, husband and father. He is complete in performing all the roles and leading the members in the family cautiously. The couple Suraj Prakash and Kasturi has eleven children, and as an elder sister Virmati looks after the younger siblings like a second mother. "To her younger siblings she was second mother as well" (Kapur, 1998, p. 6). The family members are lovable to one another. Virmati is interested in studies and never like to be a simple illiterate family girl. Though the family is orthodox, Suraj Prakash permits his daughter Virmati to do her higher studies as she wishes. "She studies more than any other girl in this family" (Kapur, 1998, p. 5) says her brother.

On the other hand, Harish Chandra in the nuclear family does his job of earning money for the family by working as a professor in an institution. He is not pleased with his wife as she is an illiterate and also, he does not worry about his two children. He never likes to discuss anything with his wife as he thinks that she is ignorant to discuss things with. He says, "I don't want a washerwoman. I want a companion" (Kapur, 1998, p. 216). His mind distracts when he meets Virmati and from that moment he targets on grasping her attention. As he is the head of the family, not even his wife or mother can raise question on his behaviour. The author Manju Kapur connects these two families with the bond of illicit love between Virmati and Harish. In joint family, people encourage one another in doing good things as well advice when one goes in evil path. Chadda and Deb mentions, "Family members modify behaviours in themselves and others by principles of social learning" (2013, p. 300). Therefore, after knowing Virmati's love, her parents warn her saying, "A man who is already married and a traitor to his wife can never give happiness to any woman. He is worldly person caught in his own desires. Nothing solid" (Kapur, 1998, p. 93). Things happen consistent with the words of her parents

which she failed to understand when they insisted. Virmati's illicit love breaks the happiness of the family members, and affects the family's reputation. Development of a family sticks not only with the head but also with each and every member in the family. In those days, a family's reputation, peace and orthodoxy lied in the behaviour of those family women.

Manju Kapur's view on a family includes roles of both men and women. Both their responsibilities are very essential to run the family. Characters in the joint family like Suraj Prakash, Chander Prakash, Kasturi, Lajwanti, Virmati, Shakuntala as well in the nuclear family like Harish Chandra and his wife Ganga are fit to their characters and express different roles with different thoughts.

The lines of hierarchy and authority are clearly drawn, with each hierarchical strata functioning within the principal of 'Collective responsibility'. Rules of conduct are aimed at creating and maintaining family harmony and for greater readiness to cooperate with family members on decisions affecting almost all aspects of life including career choice, mate selection, and marriage. While women are expected to accept a position subservient to males, and to subordinate their personal preferences to the needs of other, males are expected to accept responsibility for meeting the needs of others. . . Psychologically, family members feel an intense emotional interdependence, empathy, closeness, and loyalty to each other (Chadda & Deb, 2013, p. 301).

In the novel *Difficult Daughters*, the author has sketched a few women characters having freedom to deliver their opinions, take decisions, and attain higher education. Lajwanti, her daughter Shakuntala and Virmati come under this category. Kasturi is humble though she can discuss anything with her husband Suraj Prakash. Ganga is good being a home-maker, voiceless to her husband Harish and admits whatever he does without opposing him. On the other hand, among men, Suraj Prakash and Chander Prakash take care of the family and give rights for their daughters to get education as they wish. Harish is absolutely a different character, not thinking about the feelings of his wife or mother and he works to fulfil his personal desires. Juxtapose characters are intelligently handled by the author through the two families.

#### V. QUEST FOR IDENTITY

Identity is a unique status of a person which reveals who he or she is to this world. It refers to their sense of self that empowers themselves and helps to turn up in their life as a special and notable person. It discloses the quality, character, appearance, experience, and relationship of a person. People's identity is very significant to express who they are and their role in the family or in society or in any organization. Finding and exposing the inner talent to this world is also a part of identity. Many writers have used the theme of quest for identity in their works and exhibit it through their women protagonists primarily. Diaspora writers have used this concept as they have encountered identity quest in the new land. Not only diaspora writers even Indian writers have used the same through their protagonist's struggle to fulfill their need and prove who they are. They may long for freedom or divert their path from others rebelling the rules set in the society to satisfy their identity quest. Vijaya Babu says,

Those women who feel proud of their ownership are revered and worshipped as the most ideal and those who feel irked and who voice out their frustration and long for liberty from such superstition are branded as 'rebels' and are even branded as 'fallen' (2016, p. 213).

Manju Kapur in the novel *Difficult Daughters*, portrayed Virmati and Shakuntala to protest the family members in order to find their identity through their education and lead the life they preferred. In this process Virmati loses her family, the family members' affection and respect among others, while Shakuntala shatters the hope her parents had on her marriage. Mishra states,

Manju Kapoor does not tarnish the image of her woman characters by treating them as tolerant, passive and docile. . . They find themselves in a conflict between tradition and modernity and eventually triumph over tradition in their way of life being influenced by modernity (2013, p. 114).

Identity in *Difficult Daughters* is presented through the characters' attempt to prove their originality and connecting with the people like them. Geetha states, "The search for identity for a woman is the first step towards her becoming human. Identity as defined by the self also encompasses gender, homeland, geography, occupation, and her role within the community" (2011, p. 79). Shakuntala finds her identity as a knowledgeable woman and so she denies marrying which is a blow on her mother who gave her full freedom and believed her so much. It is clear with the words "Shakuntala's refusal to marry had caused her enough heartache" (Kapur, 1998, p. 32). On the other hand Kasturi, in her childhood, studied and improved her knowledge which was simply vain that she could not do anything without her mother's concern. She says, "Study means developing the mind for the benefit of the family. I studied too, but my mother would have killed me if I had dared even to want to dress in anything other than was bought to me" (Kapur, 1998, p. 17). In her marriage life she is just a common home-maker doing household duties and breeding all the time. To her, "A woman's happiness lies in giving her husband happiness" (Kapur, 1998, p. 227). So she finds her identity as a dutiful wife to Suraj Prakash.

Kasturi always insists Virmati to practice household works so that she can lead her future family perfectly as a daughter-in-law and wife. "While we do not dispute the notion that the mother is the primary caregiver and the chief source of early succour for the child in the extended family..." (Roopnarine et al., 2013, p. 229). Virmati follows her mother's words along with her education as the second thought at heart until she comes across her cousin sister

Shakuntala who transforms Virmati to give priority to education. Virmati strives to prove her originality by attaining higher position through her education. She thinks, "... I'm going to be on my own, this is a new beginning" (DD, 112). Virmati's inner desire to do higher education gets stimulated by Shakuntala's words, "...times are changing, and women are moving out of the house, so why not you?" (Kapur, 1998, p. 18) and slowly she expresses it to her father and mother. Kasturi is stubborn in deciding her life to be a home-maker and not to send her anywhere for higher studies and Suraj Prakash partially grants Virmati's love for studies even though he desires her to marry at the right age. Virmati longs to expose herself as a well-educated woman in the society before getting married. "There was a life of dedication and service ahead of her, and in that she would forge her identity" (Kapur, 1998, p. 198).

Protest against the family or society or even to self is a part of searching identity. One who begins to search identity will ignore anyone or anything strikes the path. Virmati's conflict state in choosing between family life and higher studies is clear with the presence of her cousin Shakuntala. Shakuntala's attitude, behaviour and freedom induce her to be determined in taking higher studies in hand. Virmati dreams for her own space and freedom like Shakuntala. She does not have even one member in the family to support her entirely. When marriage is arranged by her family members, she tries to drown herself in water. Her adamant nature increases and finally she is sent to Lahore to do her studies where she completes her FA, then BA, BT and at last MA too. Zagade points out, "The women of India have indeed achieved their success in half a century of Independence, but if there is to be a true female, independence, much remains to be done. The fight for autonomy remains an unfinished combat" (2015, p. 2).

Harish is not contented with his adjusting, humble, illiterate wife Ganga instead he tries to persuade Virmati to identify himself with a well-read person. Later it develops into an illegitimate relationship which ruins two innocent women's lives. At a certain point in her relationship with Harish, she realizes him as a barrier to achieve her dream. She struggles a lot to move forward and concentrate on her studies. She tries to avoid him but she could not. She finds her identity as a school Principal at Nahan where she feels solace in achieving great thing in her life.

Whatever it was, she thought, she would be able to tackle her problems on her own. She had lived away from home for almost a year, she had seen women growing in power and strength, claiming responsibility for their lives, declaring that society would be better off if its females were effective and capable (Kapur, 1998, p. 163).

Virmati's fate does not lend a hand to her desire and comes as a destroyer of her identity in the form Harish at Nahan too. She loses her name and identity she finds there. She cannot utilize her education like Shakuntala. Virmati's education provides her confidence to marry the married man Harish Chandra, who used her physique in the name of love. "Virmati's life in Lahore was isolated. She was married with a husband, a co-wife and two stepchildren. She had had one abortion and one miscarriage. These barriers divided her from her fellows" (Kapur, 1998, p. 251). After her marriage and miscarriage she goes to Lahore to do her M.A. Philosophy. Her quest for identity ends at last as a mother of a girl baby Ida. Her battle in choosing between family life and individual freedom leads her to choose family life through individual freedom. She is a loser in finding her identity. Yernani says, "Virmati comes across as a loser who has not only alienated herself from her own family and society but also as one who failed to create an identity and a space for her" (2015, p. 146).

Ida, Virmati's daughter indulges in the act of searching her mother's identity through her uncle. In the words of Bala and Chandra, "... it could be argued that the whole novel is an answer to the narrator Ida's unambiguous declaration at the beginning that she would not want to be like her mother" (1999, p. 110). Ida does not want to live her life like Virmati whose was a failure in all attempts. The novel opens with the words of Ida saying, "The one thing I had wanted was not to be like my mother" (Kapur, 1998, p. 1). After Ida's divorce, she proceeds to identify herself with the birth place and relatives of her mother. She says, "Amritsar was a place I associated with my mother. Without her, I am lost. I look for ways to connect" (Kapur, 1998, p. 4).

On the other hand, Harish's identity thirst ends when he marries Virmati. Juxtapose to that, Ida ends her marriage life and finds her identity with her mother's family. Kasturi's identity ends as a house wife of Suraj Prakash. So, the journey of finding self-identity is dissimilar in all the characters. Choudhary states,

Kasturi, is the unquestioning woman accepting tradition totally, Virmati torn by conflicts resulting from the conflicts between tradition and modernity with her craving for freedom and assertion of individuality, and Ida an entirely independent woman of today without any sense of commitment (2013, p. 48).

## VI. INFIDELITY AND ITS IMPACT ON FAMILY VALUES

A good family incorporates family values, morality and ethics among the family members. They respect others, and follow honesty, fidelity, truth, and good behavior overall. Values in a family are like compass which directs the right way to protect them. Fidelity is the biggest value a man or a woman should attain which reflects their brought up and honesty. A married man or woman must be true to the spouse. If so, then their marriage life will be the happiest and the couple will receive respect from others in the society. In the traditional families, only parents will decide whom their daughter or son ought to live with. They choose their partners and the children too will accept it without any dispute. In recent days, young people start to find partners of their own. Sometimes this results in failure and unhappy marriages.

Infidelity is the cause of many break-ups and fed-ups. In the novel *Difficult Daughters* Virmati unknowingly becomes the reason for the depression and pathetic state of Harish Chandra's wife Ganga. In this novel infidelity is undergone by two persons – Virmati and Harish Chandra. Virmati's loneliness and her ambition laid way to Harish to

seduce her. Virmati is oblivious of the intention of him and falls as a prey to his thirsts. Slowly she surrenders herself completely to him both physically and mentally.

The eternal female looks into her man as her ideal, but the eternal male thinks about his own needs, his own cravings. Right since the beginning Harish's behaviour shows that Virmati is to be the means to his ends. She is his need hence her needs have to take secondary position (Choubey, 2003, p. 25).

The Professor weakens the mind of Virmati to draw her towards him and creates himself as everything for her. The lack of support from her family makes her to consider his support a boon. She blindly believes him and even after knowing him as wedded, she naively accepts him leaving all her family virtues away. When she is at Lahore hostel, she tries to meet him secretly. "Her sense of guilt, her fear of her family, her terror of being exposed, prevented her from ever taking the risk of squeezing through the bars of the hostel gate as Swarna did, though the Professor did urge it a few times" (Kapur, 1998, p. 131). Harish's sexual act results in her pregnancy and she undergoes an abortion. This act makes her strong enough to oppose him later. She decides to set a bright future for her and moves forward with her studies. After completing BT, she gets a job as a Principal in Pratiba Kanya Vidyalaya, Sirmour. She focuses on her job and withstands steadily with good name until Harish reaches her. He says, "Co-wives are part of our social traditions. If you refuse me, you will be changing nothing" (Kapur, 1998, p. 122). His compulsion to fulfil his lust leads her jobless and pushes her back to old unsettled, oscillated life. Rajput comments, "It is interesting to note that Virmati talks of her identity, her freedom but her freedom is confined only to her body and heart. She does not attempt to utilize her education as Shakuntala did" (2010, p. 113). Virmati understands the real intention of Harish on her when she knows the second pregnancy of his wife Ganga. In a letter to Harish she writes,

When I first heard, how I suffered, how I cried, I thought, this is the real punishment for what I have done. I had to be strong to bear the pain, silently, without anyone knowing. I did not want them to believe I was so stupid that no matter what you did, I would go on fighting with them over you. I had already caused enough grief by trying to be different from what was expected of me. No, it is better to do as they tell you. It is safer. Then the family protects you if things go wrong. At least I would not be as lonely as now (Kapur, 1998, p. 109).

This makes her understand the real intention of Harish on her. It is a heavy blow on her and she becomes hopeless, jobless, lacking family love and even lost the taste of freedom. She says "... I know I have failed in my duty and I will be punished one day. Nobody can escape their karma. Maybe what is happening to me now is part of it, and there is no use protesting" (Kapur, 1998, p. 92). But her illicit pregnancy drives her to marry Harish without any appeal and love. She lives in the house where his first wife lives. Her infidelity leaves her in a depressed state which she opposed once. She marries a cunning man leaving the best lives provided by her parents. Harish's infidelity does not affect him in any way as he lives with both the wives in the same house with his mother's approval without any guilt of spoiling the lives of two innocent women. On the other hand, Virmati's illicit love and marriage spoils her dreamt life, her family name and ruins the life of Ganga too. Here Virmati's freedom directs her to commit infidelity and that heads her to prison life for which she opposed her family members. Her education and modern life drown her life. Virmati says, "My mother keeps saying that all my education has achieved is the destruction of my family" (Kapur, 1998, p. 99).

## VII. PSYCHOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

Manju Kapur in *Desirable Daughters* has presented how Virmati defeats the impediments in her life and triumph over it. The adversities she overcomes in her life are huge obstacles denied her being blocks in each step. In her lifetime she tastes love, hatred, sympathy, hostility, harsh words, loving words, satisfaction, disappointments, happiness, sorrow, family, and at the same time loneliness. In her life Virmati gets true love, affection, care and protection from the side of her parents and from Harish's selfish and illicit love. Dwivedi mentions,

Love has multi-faceted characterization as the quest for love makes Virmati weak as it has to be found outside her parental home. . . The psychological aspects make the novel interesting as English Literature love laced sentences impress her and she wants to live a life described in the novels and poetry of English Literature (2016, p. 129).

Virmati never imagined that her life will be biting. Being at Lahore, she thinks, "Am I free, thought Virmati. I came here to be free, but I am not like these women. They are using their minds, organizing, participating in conferences, politically active, while my time is spent being in love. Wasting it" (Kapur, 1998, p. 14). Psyche of a person is disturbed when he or she confronts constant struggle in life. The hope, aim, and joy everything dwindles and makes that person empty. In this hollowness the person believes that whatever grace pours on them or path opens in life is good for them, which comes to rescue and to make their life flourish. In this way, Virmati believes Harish's entry in her life is to enlighten her future as she desires. On contrary his aim is to seduce her. Her critical and lonely state leads her to take wrong decision in life.

An individual's personal life emerges the unconscious desires in one or other way which lead the person to forget the outer world or live in a confused state in choosing between good and evil. Harish's hatred for his wife is reflected in the way he treats Ganga and his sense of craving is revealed when she is pregnant for the second time. Personality of people denotes their behavior, habit, emotions, stress, conflict, and so on. "In psychoanalytic theory, personality is understood as a multilayered phenomenon that consists of habitual or characteristic ways in which the individual organizes his/her



mental functioning and engagement with the world” (Kenny, 2017, p. 2). As per the Psychoanalysis theory, ‘id’ of Harish makes him to seek pleasure from Virmati too uncaring her future and family. He gives way to ‘id’ to dominate him and as a result he disregards everything around him going behind Virmati. Virmati is a good natured woman struggling to come up in life opposing her whole family. In this process she loses her family members’ affection and love. Still she does not give up her aim and takes next step with her father’s small support in the beginning and alone in the later part. She says, “... I am lonely, lonely, lonely” (Kapur, 1998, p. 103). Even she drowns when the family plans her marriage preventing her procuring higher studies. The same woman’s mind is unstable to keep her aside from Harish as he continuously pesters her. She cannot give up him as well as accept him whole heartedly. She explodes to him saying,

I break my engagement because of you, blacken my family’s name, am locked up inside my house, get sent to Lahore because no one knows what to do with me. Here I am in the position of being your secret wife, full of shame, wondering what people will say if they find out, not being able to live in peace, study in peace ... and why? Because I am an idiot” (Kapur, 1998, p. 149).

Virmati is always in a conflict state and selects wrong route being a prey to his cravings. Virmati could not decide between good and bad. Harish uses her solitude and confused state in studies and occupies her mind. Virmati was travelling between good and bad unknowing to choose one. Virmati’s ‘ego’ state induces her to do correct thing at a certain point and so she completes her higher studies and becomes a teacher in a reputed school. At the same time the same ‘ego’ forces her to marry that unworthy person leaving herself to think as a woman of morality who marries the person seduced her. While completing M.A at Lahore, Virmati denies going to Amritsar and there starts a clash between the couple. In the argument Virmati understands the real intention of Harish.

Virmati’s head was spinning. Distress enveloped her heart. She tried to think, but it was too painful. ... If Harish’s love for her wasn’t strong enough to survive an MA, it certainly wasn’t going to survive a lifetime. She thought of how often he had said he would die for her, and decided men were liars. She didn’t care if she never had a home, children, if she cut off her nose to spite her face. Right now, everything about her was aching so much, to cut off her nose would be a relief. At least the incision would be definite, sharp and localized (Kapur, 1998, p. 262).

Fate brings her to Harish again at the time of India’s freedom struggle and she renews her life in Amritsar delivering a girl baby. Until Virmati was with her family she was secured and protected by them both physically and mentally and when she moved on her own decision innocently everything becomes upside down. Jandial says, “We find in Kapur’s treatment a radical retelling which emphasizes the strength and endurance which are essential for survival in a violent world” (2001, p. 99).

#### VIII. RESPONSE TO ISSUE

In the novel *Difficult Daughters*, Virmati’s individual freedom and her struggle to achieve it is appreciable as she comes out from the society in which women are considered as a child bearing machine. In the novel, one who is fit to this society is Kasturi. In her childhood she learned reading, writing, doing household accounts and sewing too. But after her marriage everything she learned was in vain as she was tied with the household duties alone and not even with the household accounts. Her only job for the first seventeen years of marriage was child bearing. She gave birth to eleven children and became weak physically. It took her months to recover from that condition. Still, she accepts her life hopefully and thinks to settle her children. She cannot blame anyone for her condition and obeys the words of her in-laws and her husband. She is very conscious in bringing up her girl children to get good name in their future in-laws’ homes.

Virmati faces many troubles in her life. The circumstances around her are entirely different from Kasturi. Kasturi is under secured family whereas Virmati tries to protect herself within her own hope and no other base. To Kasturi, “A woman without her home and family is a woman without moorings” (Kapur, 1998, p. 111). Like Kasturi, Virmati too learns but unlike her she crosses the border of traditional conventions taking Shakuntala as her role model. Unfortunately, Virmati’s life takes diversion with the interference of Harish. He cunningly takes each and every step to get closer with Virmati. Virmati is innocent in knowing the intention of Harish. Virmati is a stubborn lady in achieving her aim. Though she is trapped by the plans of Harish, she completes her education as she desires. She is courageous in taking decision to complete her studies and find a job even after her abortion. She does not go down or keep herself in depression till her marriage. Instead with the motivation of her friend Swarnalata she overcomes the critical situation and achieves what she aims for. In her marriage life, she cannot go smoothly with Ganga, the first wife of Harish, with whom she had good conversations once. In the despair state of that family bond, she decides to take up her studies and moves forward to do her M.A. She is not a stagnant pool in her life. The biggest mistake she committed in her life was believing Harish blindly. Apart from that she tries to the core to achieve what she wants in her life.

Ida, Virmati’s daughter, is bold enough to face anything unlike her mother who has that traditional brought up at the back. Ida decides to divorce her husband when she cannot give birth to a child. She is not ready to accept the traditional condition of living with her husband hearing all the worrisome words from others. She finds her way to be one with her mother’s family. She searches her root and her mother’s past. Her decision is entirely different from her mother. It

shows, "... in *Difficult Daughters*, Manju Kapur shows that nowadays women cannot be treated as dolls or as decorative ornaments" (Mehta, 2009, p. 127).

Harish Chandra is not willing to resign his job in England and settle in Amritsar. He does it for his mother and in the mother-land he finds a job in college as Professor of English. He feels her wife's illiteracy as a big issue and neglects her for her ignorance. He tries to teach her and make her knowledgeable but nothing works out. Later he turns towards Virmati for her beauty and thirst for knowledge. Her response to Harish's cunningness spoils her precious days. Harish Chandra rectifies the issues in his life by marrying Virmati.

In the novel *Difficult Daughters* the author has put forth the problems in the life of major characters. A few find it as problem and struggle and a few accepts it as life and moves on. Mishra and Dabir say,

The novelist expresses her absorbing ideas of women relationship, women sexuality, love, infatuation, jealousy, marriage, gender roles and self-discovery. Kapur has made Virmati more vocal for her right for education and economic independence (2012, p. 100).

#### IX. OUTCOME OF THE STUDY

Through the novel *Difficult Daughters* the author has brought out the thirst in every individual in attaining freedom to think, decide, speak and lead life. Through the major characters like Virmati, Harish, Kasturi and Ida, Manju Kapur has well presented the merits and demerits in family life and individual life. In family life Virmati cannot achieve her aim carrying out the duties as a girl child. But she gets love, care and protection from her parents, brothers and sisters. In individual life she could achieve her dream but fails to get protection and true love from her family members. Through the other characters too the author has portrayed the necessity of family and the consequences to be faced when taking individual freedom in hands. The conflict arises in the mind of Virmati persists till the end of her life even after having a family of her own. The achievement she attains in her life is her only happiness yet the path is thorny.

#### X. CONCLUSION

This article has been focused on the major characters' dilemmatic life between family and individual freedom in the novel *Desirable Daughters*. The society people live in is a protection circle with certain conventions and beliefs which they have to follow to lead a moral life. In the same way family is a secured place with ethics and morality driving the members to be truthful, loyal, caring, affectionate, and supportive. Achieving dreams with the encouragement of family is blessed. Virmati's achievement with her father's support was the first success in her life. Later her thought for being liberal like her cousin brings all the disappointments and worries in her life. Even as an individual her steady mind gives her good path than the conflict mind which washes away her hope often. The major characters in the novel *Difficult Daughters* project the conflict between family and individual life with clear display of reality.

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# The Twentieth Century Politics of Neologisms and Toponyms in the Albanian Language

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**Abstract**—This study analyses the political reasons behind the introduction of neologisms and new toponyms by the two most powerful Albanian rulers during the twentieth centuries, Ahmet Zogu and Enver Hoxha. The study adopts an interdisciplinary approach which combines linguistic, political and historical analysis, with selected reference to anthropological and folkloristic research. The analysis is based on a thorough review of scientific literature and official documents and periodic publications related to new toponyms and new words in the twentieth century. Zogu imposed his will for the use of new words and toponyms in all official correspondence and publications. By the end of his rule, he requested the change of more than 50% of toponyms. Hoxha followed suit after Zogu, however, most of the neologisms introduced by them with a top-down approach did not survive their rule. The toponyms introduced by Zogu were rescinded after he fled Albania, whereas the toponyms introduced by Enver Hoxha are still officially in use, but common people use most of the old toponyms in their daily parlance. Language is almost like a living thing, that grows and changes organically by the interactions of millions of cells – the people that speak and write it.

**Index Terms**—neologisms, toponyms, the politics of language

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Albanian language is very different from languages spoken in Albania's surrounding countries – Greece, Serbia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Croatia, Bulgaria, Italy and Türkiye. According to Eqrem Çabej, the late Albanian etymologist, the Albanian language's roots can be found in ancient Illyrian tribes' languages, spoken in the lands where the modern Albanian language is currently spoken (Çabej, 1977). However, due to a very long history of domination from Romans, Byzantines, Slavic kingdoms and Ottoman Turks, there are many words in the Albanian lexicon borrowed from their languages. Many borrowed words and toponyms are still active in the Albanian language. However, since Albanian Independence in 1912, some old borrowed toponyms have been changed and new words have appeared (and disappeared) – due to changes in political currents. This political process of replacing old words and toponyms with new ones, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, started in the period after the First World War and intensified after the Second World War.

Two political strong men in Albania – Ahmet Zogu in the period between the two World Wars and Enver Hoxha after the Second World War – made enormous attempts at introducing new words and toponyms during their reign.

Zogu, made his first attempt since 1923, when he was a young Minister of Interior, requesting from prefectures under his jurisdiction to replace some old villages names with new names rooted in the Albanian language (Clayer, 2008). Although his first initiative failed, Zogu signalled early on a desire to break Albania from the past backwardness through political intervention from top to bottom (Lampe, 1989). Once Zogu became the President of Albania, he started a wide array of reforms aiming at centralizing and modernizing the country (Fischer, 1996). He fashioned himself as a modernizer in the mould of President Atatürk of Türkiye (Glenny, 2000). And after becoming The King of Albanians, Zogu followed the example of other contemporary kings in the Balkans, by adopting fierce nationalistic policy toward neighbouring countries (Castellan, 1992).

Returning to his old idea of changing toponyms, using administrative ways, Zogu created in 1927 special commissions under the umbrella of the Ministry of Interior and the General Directorate of Education (Clayer, 2008). After a ten-year period of work by the commissions created by Zogu, in 1937 a law was passed by the Albanian Parliament that officially replaced some old toponyms with new Albanized ones, with fines imposed on persons that would use the old toponyms in official documents and correspondence (Çepani & Rushiti, 2012).

In addition to changing toponyms, Ahmet Zogu imposed his will for replacing old words (mainly of Turkish and Greek origin) with new words based on Albanian roots or borrowed from western languages. For the new words, he did not create special commissions. Instead, he relied heavily on the literary works of Albanian Renaissance writers and their linguistic and anthropologic contributions (Kulla, 2019; Çabej, 2014).

Indeed, as soon as becoming the Minister of Interior in 1923, Zogu ordered all the prefectures to use new words in their official verbal and written communications and documents, and requested the help of schools and churches to spread the use of new Albanian words (Clayer, 2007). Zogu even coined a new word construct himself after becoming King of Albanians: *Naltmadhnia e Tij, Mbreti* (a creative translation of the words His Highness, The King, into his native northern dialect).

Differently from Ahmet Zogu, Enver Hoxha, who ruled Albania after the Second World War, was driven by geopolitical alliances in imposing his will on changing toponyms and using new words. Zogu tried to use new toponyms and new words as one of the tools for breaking from the cultural influence of the long Ottoman rule and the interventions of neighbouring countries. Whereas Hoxha used toponyms and neologisms as tools for forging new geopolitical alliances or for breaking old ones. The first and the most glaring example is the name he chose in December 1950 for the old town of Kuçovë: “Qyteti Stalin” – Stalin Town (Kuvendi i Shqipërisë 1950). In doing so, Hoxha was following the example of many communist strong men, who for geopolitical reasons named some towns/cities after Stalin (the powerful communist dictator of former USSR at that time).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

This study adopts an interdisciplinary approach which combines linguistic, political and historical analysis, with selected reference to anthropological and folkloristic research. The analysis is based on a thorough review of scientific literature and official documents and periodic publications related to new toponyms and new words in the twentieth century.

The literature review was not limited only on publications related to the Albanian language, but also other languages in Eastern Europe. Ion Nicolae’s scientific paper “*Changes of Romanian place names during the communist era*” (Nicolae, 2001) was very helpful for a Romanian perspective of the same phenomenon analysed in this study. Similarly like in Albania, there are two periods of Romanian modern history during which place names have been changed on a wide scale. The first was in the decades following independence up to the Second World War. The second, when the replacement of traditional place names was most widespread, was during the communist period (1948-1989).

Cătălina Iliescu-Gheorghiu’s scientific paper “*Propaganda and cultural diplomacy through translation in communist Romania. A case in Point: Romanian review*” (Iliescu-Gheorghiu, 2019) was helpful with its analysis of special words used during Ceausescu’s rule in order to further the communist propaganda abroad. In the same vein, helpful was also Tom Dickins’ scientific paper “*The Political Slogan in Communist Czechoslovakia (1948-89)*” (Dickins, 2017), which highlights examples that illuminate the development of new words and slogans used by the Czechoslovak communist government for distributing the “new communist” narrative.

Books by Chirot (eds. 1989), Castellan (1992), Fischer (1996), Glenny (2000), Abrahams (2015) and Kulla (2019) were consulted for the contextual historical, linguistic and anthropologic background of neologisms and new toponyms that were introduced in the twentieth century in Albania.

Scientific papers from Clayer (2007, 2008) were consulted for their account of political developments that brought about changes in toponyms and words during the reign of Ahmet Zogu. The scientific paper by Çepani and Rushiti (2012) was consulted for its chronologic account of changes in toponyms in the first 100 years of the Albanian state. The scientific paper by Çabej (2014) was consulted for its account of ideologically driven neologisms introduced in the Albanian language during the twentieth century.

Full collections of the daily newspaper “Zëri i Popullit” (the official mouthpiece of the Party of Labour of Albania) for years 1957 and 1970 were analysed for neologisms influenced by the close geopolitical relations of Albania with former USSR and later with communist China.

Full collections of the daily newspaper “Rilindja Demokratike” (the official newspaper of the new opposition Democratic Party of Albania) for years 1991 and 1992 were consulted for a comparison between neologisms used during the communist regime and afterwards.

## III. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Before Ahmet Zog became the Interior Minister of Albania (the most powerful post in the country at that time, even more powerful than the post of Prime Minister), Albanian Renaissance writers and thinkers had been working on creating and familiarizing new words of Albanian or western origin that would replace old words of Turkish origin in the Albanian language lexicon (Kulla, 2019). Some examples included *dritare* (window) derived from the root *drita* (light – implying an object that allows the light in), *rruga* (street), *bashki* (township), *prefekturë* (prefecture), *komunë* (commune), *kryetar bashkie* (mayor), *prefekt* (chief of prefecture), *kryetar komunë* (chief of commune), *kryeplak* (chief of the village), *gjykatës* (judge), *xhandar* (gendarme), etc. These words were intended to replace old words of Turkish origin like *penxhere*, *xhade*, *vilajet*, *sanxhak*, *m i d i r l u k*, *kaza*, *nahije*, *bejlerb e bimbash*, *kadi*, etc.

However, only after Zogu became the Minister of Interior in 1923, the use of the new Albanian words in circulations became mandatory in all official documents and correspondence (until then old words were intermittently used aside the new words). In addition, all Albanian publications of the time followed suit, although no official orders were issued for them (Fischer, 1996).

In additions to efforts for introducing new words, Zogu made his first attempt in 1923 to introduce new toponyms, requesting from prefectures under his jurisdiction to replace some old villages names with new names rooted in the Albanian language. However, the most contentious toponym was the one for the town of Gjirokastra (Clayer, 2008).

Gjirokastra was the biggest town in the south of the newly created Albanian state and it had a special historical and political significance, because it had served during the First World War as the capital of an autonomous statelet created

by Greek occupying forces with the help Greek-Albanians of the region known by Greeks as *Vorio Epir* (Northern Epir). According to the Greek-Latin etymologic interpretation the name *Gjirokastra* was derived by the Greek word *argyro* (silver-like) and the Latin word *kastro* (castle). On the other hand, Albanian activists tried to give an Albanian interpretation of the name *Gjirokastra*. In the first number of the local paper there in Albanian (March 27, 1920), its publisher Veli Harshova wrote that the real name of *Gjirokastra* is *Gjinokastra* and was derived by the Latin word *kastro* and the name of the former Albanian lord Gjin Shpata – thus *Gjino-kastra = the castle of Gjin* (Clayer, 2008).

Another interpretation for the name *Gjirokastra* was given by Teki Selenica, who cited old unverified legends which indicated that the ancient Queen Argjiro had built an old castle where today lies the current castle. Thus, *Gjirokastra = the castle of Argjiro* (Selenica, 1927).

However, Zog went with Harshova's interpretation, because it fitted with the Elbasani dialect (the official dialect at that time), in which the soft *r* in *Gji(r)okastra* turned into soft *n* and it was also different from the Greek version for the name of the town. From 1923 until 1939 (the year King Zog fled Albania), the name *Gjinokastra* was used instead of *Gjirokastra* in all official documents and correspondence, in school texts and in all publications.

In the highly sensitive region of Himara, where both Albanian and Greek languages were spoken, the commission created by Zogu for toponyms suggested that existing names of the villages should be slightly changed, to conform with the names of mountains or churches in the area. Only the name of *Dh ërmi* was completely changed into *Gjilek ë* after the name of one neighbourhood there called *GjinLek ë* named after an old family that had settled there from Kruja, after its occupation from the Ottomans in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Clayer, 2008).

As mentioned above, using administrative ways, Zogu created in 1927 special commissions under the umbrella of the Ministry of Interior and the General Directorate of Education. After a ten-year period of work by the commissions created by Zogu, in 1937 a law was passed by the Albanian Parliament that officially replaced some old toponyms with new Albanized ones, with fines imposed on persons that would use the old toponyms in official documents and correspondence. That decision appeared in the the Official Book of Laws only on 26 August 1938 and requested that local governments changed the names of more than 50% of settlements in the country, including towns, neighbourhoods and villages (Çepani & Rushiti, 2012). However, with the occupation of Albania from Italy in April 1939, that decision was rescinded. During that occupation, only one toponym was changed – the town of Saranda was briefly called "*Porto Edda*" in honour of the eldest daughter of Benito Mussolini.

As mentioned above, differently from Ahmet Zogu, Enver Hoxha, who ruled Albania after the Second World War, was driven by geopolitical alliances in imposing his will on changing toponyms and using new words. Hoxha used toponyms and neologisms as tools for forging new geopolitical alliances or for breaking old ones. The first change of toponyms was that of December 1950 for the old town of Kuçova, which became "*Qyteti Stalin*" (Stalin Town) (Kuvendi i Shqip ëris ë 1950). Hoxha was following the example of many communist strong men, who for geopolitical reasons named some towns/cities after Stalin (the powerful communist dictator of former USSR at that time).

Six cities/towns were named after Stalin in former USSR and six more were named after him in countries under the soviet umbrella at that time. Thus, in former USSR, Caricin was named Stalingrad (1925-1961) and later Volgograd, Novo Kuznetsk was named Stalinsk (1932-1961), C'hinvall was named Staliniri (1934-1961), Novo Moskovsk was named Stalino (1934-1961), Doneck was called Stalino (1924-1961), and Dushanbe was named Stalinabad (1929-1961). In other countries, Eisenh üttenstadt (former East Germany) was named Stalinstadt (1953-1961), Braşov (Romania) was named Oraşul Stalin (1950-1960), Kuçova (Albania) was named Qyteti Stalin (1950-1990), Katowice (Poland) was named Stalino (1953-1956), Varna (Bulgaria) was named Stalin (1949-1956), and Dunaujv áros (Hungary) was named Szt álnv áros (1952-1961).

On December 21, 1951, celebrating the birthday of Stalin, Hoxha's government named the state construction company "*21 dhjetori*" (21 December) and the whole neighbourhood where its headquarters were located was named the same. Even to this day, although that name doesn't officially exist any longer, in everyday parlance people still call informally that neighbourhood "*21 dhjetori*" or short *21-shi* (the 21<sup>st</sup>).

After Enver Hoxha broke relations with former USSR in 1961, the work started for changing toponyms of Slavic origin, that work was finalized with the decisions of the Parliament in 1970 for changing the names of some villages in the districts of Durr ë, Tiran ë and Kor çë (Kuvendi i Shqip ëris ë 1970), in 1971 for changing the names of some villages in the districts of Durr ë, Librazhd, Pogradec, Tiran ë Shkod ër, Kor çë, and Fier (Kuvendi i Shqip ëris ë 1971), in 1972 for changing the names of some villages in the districts of Pogradec, Shkod ër, Vlor ë dhe Tepelen ë (Kuvendi i Shqip ëris ë 1972), in 1974 for changing the names of some villages in the districts of Gramsh, Dib ër, Lushnj ë Mirdit ë Pogradec, and Tiran ë (Kuvendi i Shqip ëris ë 1974), in 1975 for changing the names of some villages in the districts of Kor çë and Sarand ë (Kuvendi i Shqip ëris ë 1975). In addition to geopolitical reason, some changes in the toponyms were driven by religious reasons, since Albania was officially declared an atheist state in 1967.

Çepani and Rushiti (2012) provide an extensive list of the toponyms changed during those years by Hoxha. Here are some examples:

Alet - Kastriot (neighbourhood in Beratit); Ymer Pash ë - Vrioni (neighbourhood in Beratit); Alibejani - Aliaj (Lushnj ë); Frakulla Abdyl Bej - Frakulla e Vog ë (Fier.); Kurtagai - Kurtaj (Diber); Krajka - Krek ëza (Diber); Sepetova - Gropaj (Diiber); Zhuraj Ndroqi - Ndroqi (Durrës.); Shehaligaj - Shesh - Lugaj (Durrës); Irratha - Hamallaj (Durrës); Karavelije - Gurabardhi (Elbasan); Samotina - Bardhaj (Librazhd); Pobregu - Bregu (Puke); Mejdan - Sheshaj (Mirdite.);

Shaban Efendis - Shabanaj (Shkoder.); Milaxhi - Malas (Dukagjin); Arez - Arsti (Puke.); Budina - Verri (Vlore.); Munushtiri - Manastiri (Permetr.) etc.

The new toponyms introduced during Enver Hoxha's reign survived officially after the fall of communism, with exception of *Qyteti Stalin*, which was changed back to its old name *Kuçova* (Kuvendi i Shqipërisë 1991). However, due to centuries-old traditions, most of the old toponyms are in use in the everyday parlance of common people. The top-down changes have not been accepted by the wide populace.

The close relation of Enver Hoxha with former USSR until 1961 and later with Communist China brought about an influx of neologisms in the official Albanian language. Unlike the nationalist-romantic ideology of the Albanian Renaissance, the communist ideology was not the dominant ideology of elites, but was imported from a limited number of individuals who had worked or studied outside Albania. Thus, it failed to become naturally the dominant ideology of society, but was imposed on it by the Communist Party, which took over the reins of the state and ran it for half a century. Notably, the writings of Albanian scholars had the tendency to glorify the contribution of Enver Hoxha as the founder of language policy (Munishi, 2018).

In order to maintain power and strengthen it, the Communist Party imposed on the whole society the recognition and embrace of communist ideology. Also, in all the activity of Albanian society, in all fields of science, literature and art, communist ideology was imposed as their compass. Communist ideology exercised its influence and intervened in the Albanian language both in terms of theoretical and some practical issues. During the half-century of communist rule, words were borrowed (adapting the spelling and grammatical norms of the Albanian Language) and a series of new words were created that were in function of state propaganda or the definition of description of specific phenomena. These words were also reflected in the dictionaries of the Albanian language, especially in the Dictionary of today's Albanian language, of 1980.

In previous dictionaries, especially in 1954, a good deal of ideologically-driven words was missing. However, like all words that enter and act in language because of the influence of a particular ideology, whether it is the ideology of elites or imposed ideology, so the words borrowed and created during the communist rule failed to survive after the fall of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the time, words and phrases were created where these words were part of the structure of the word, such as: agitprop, actionist (action spirit), face-side (fore-party), emulation (angle of emulation, table emulation), leaflet, organization-base, plan-task, city-hero, snow, etc. From the point of view of word form, most of the words created under the influence of communist ideology were compound words, because this very way of word forming is quite prolific in Albanian and with increasing tendencies and because through it are called complex notions and many new notions. These words found widespread use in languages as long as communist ideology survived. Then, with the fall of the dictatorship, their use began to fade and today they are almost no longer used, at least in daily parlance, or are used in conditional contexts.

An analysis of the full collection of the daily newspaper "Zëri i Popullit" (the official mouthpiece of the Party of Labour of Albania) for the year 1957 revealed that there were 63 words that were borrowed literally from USSR or were adopted with slight morphologic changes. Meanwhile, an analysis of the full collection of the daily newspaper "Zëri i Popullit" for the year 1970 revealed that there were 14 words that were translated literally from Communist China with slight morphologic adaptations. With the fall of Communism, the sweeping changes that were made in Albania included changes in the official and spoken language (Abrahams, 2015). An analysis of the full collection of the first year of the daily newspaper "Rilindja Demokratike" (the first opposition newspaper after 45 years of communist dictatorship) revealed that the previously imported words from former USSR and China were no longer in circulation in 1991.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

This study was narrowly focused on neologisms and new toponyms in the Albanian language in the twentieth century, driven by the politics of two strong men – Ahmet Zogu and Enver Hoxha. It did not cover the full scope of lexical, morphological and syntactical changes in the literary language due to ideological influences since the Albanian Renaissance. For an analysis of the influences of the nationalist-romantic ideology of the Albanian Renaissance see Çabej (2014). For an analysis of the influences of the communist ideology after The Second World War see Munishi (2018).

#### V. CONCLUSION

As the experience of other Eastern European countries have shown, most neologisms and toponyms forced for political reasons on the Albanian language have not survived. Two political strong men in Albania – Ahmet Zogu in the period between the two World Wars and Enver Hoxha after the Second World War – made enormous attempts at introducing new words and toponyms during their reign. However, most of the neologisms introduced by them with a top-down approach did not survive their rule. The toponyms introduced by Zogu were rescinded after he fled Albania, whereas the toponyms introduced by Enver Hoxha are still officially in use, but common people use most of the old toponyms in their daily parlance. Language is almost like a living thing, that grows and changes organically by the interactions of millions of cells – the people that speak and write it.

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# Using Smart Devices in Forming the Foreign Language Competency of Economics Students

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**Abstract**—This article presents a study on the effectiveness of using smart devices in teaching foreign languages. The research involved conducting an experiment with students (N=195), allowing for a comparison of learning outcomes between groups of those using smart devices in the process of learning a foreign language and those without them. The results demonstrate the benefits of practically using smart devices in foreign language acquisition, significantly improving the quality of instructional material presentation and its absorption by students, enriching the educational process, increasing motivation for language learning, fostering closer collaboration between teachers and students, introducing variation in homework and independent student work, and thereby creating new conditions for self-education and individual learning trajectories. The authors conclude that smart technologies eliminate the limitations inherent in traditional methods, taking teaching and learning beyond the classroom. Implementing smart technologies in students' practical activities in professionally oriented foreign language classes promotes the development of all four language skills – reading, writing, speaking, and listening, improves communicative abilities, and helps foreign language learners adapt to international testing.

**Index Terms**—smart technologies, smart society, distance learning, interactive board, smart education

## I. INTRODUCTION

In a period of continual global systemic change, the role of information communication, products, and services in the socio-economic and cultural life of people is growing. At this stage of development, the information society undergoes an evolutionary transformation, transcending to a new level – a smart society (Ardashkin, 2017).

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At the current stage of information and communications technology (ICT) development, some needs cannot be met by traditional educational technologies or even e-learning technologies. While e-learning technologies can offer some degree of personalization, they may not be able to fully address the unique learning needs, preferences, and pace of each learner. As technology continues to advance rapidly, both traditional and e-learning methods may struggle to keep up with the latest innovations and the emerging needs of learners and the job market.

At the moment, we are witnessing a transition from e-learning to smart education (Huang et al., 2012). The new smart community drives the change from the traditional learning model to e-learning and smart education (Zhu et al., 2016). Smart education allows for generating new knowledge and shaping the personality of a smart person perfectly proficient in ICT tools for information retrieval and analysis and innovation (Dneprovskaya et al., 2015). With that, recognition of the position of smart in education is faltering between the use of smartphones, tablets, iPads, and other similar devices to deliver knowledge to students and the formation of an integrated intelligent virtual learning environment, particularly using smart devices (Koper, 2014).

Following a key objective of contemporary education – forming students' consistent motivation to obtain knowledge and at the same time exploring new forms, methods, and techniques for the transmission and assimilation of this knowledge, the teacher, by using smart devices, not only enhances cognitive interest in the learning process but also improves the quality of education itself.

Analysis of the current state of the research problem suggests that although the organization of the learning process using modern technology has been under study over the past few years, the topic remains relevant. This is especially true concerning the formation of foreign language (FL) competency, which is a complex, holistic, and integrative structure that allows one to communicate effectively with native speakers of another language at a professional level and to feel confident in an FL socio-cultural environment through the mastery of different ways of using an FL. This competency characterizes the theoretical and practical readiness for FL activity of economic specialists and the development of appropriate character traits in students during their university studies.

In this connection, there is a need to substantiate the use of smart devices in forming the FL competency of economics students as part of their training.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational technologies that match the obsolete technological paradigms and industrial society rely on the so-called academic education system. It is attuned to the requirements of the job market; in it, knowledge is transferred in classrooms during lessons (classes), and the teacher simultaneously performs the functions of knowledge transmission and control/assessment of learning outcomes. This system is incapable of satisfying the demands of the knowledge economy, and the answer to this has become smart education.

The concept of smart educational technology is understood by researchers as an interactive educational complex that allows creating, redacting, and sharing multimedia learning materials both in the classroom and in distance learning (Ardashkin & Surovtsev, 2021).

A software package enables the teacher to monitor students' actions, display all students' work screens on the board, lock students' monitors, and send instructional material, such as quizzes, to all computers from the interactive whiteboard (Hwang, 2014). The use of interactive whiteboards and smart laptops in teaching practice brings improved concentration in students, faster assimilation of learning material, and, as a consequence, increased academic performance (Ardashkin et al., 2018).

Using smart technologies, teachers introduce variety in students' homework and independent work on an FL and thereby create new conditions for self-education and individual learning trajectories (Dimitriadou & Lanitis, 2023; Palanivel, 2020). Smart technologies eliminate the limitations inherent in traditional methods taking learning and teaching beyond the classroom (Tiwari, 2017) and allow learning anywhere and at any time and spending breaks and travel time more productively (Spector, 2016). Working with smart technology majorly elevates the role of the teacher (tutor) as an organizer and coordinator of the learning process who gains the ability to manage the training process with more flexibility considering the individual capabilities of each student (Borisenko & Volodina, 2015).

Thus, active implementation of smart technologies in the day-to-day learning process accelerates and improves not only the technique of knowledge transfer but the active perception and assimilation of it as well.

Technological modernization of modern education is starting to concern not only IT professionals but also teachers and methodologists, which gives rise to numerous discussions in scientific circles and raises the issue of creating a unified educational environment based on the extensive use of modern high-speed ICT (Knox, 2019).

One direction in the realization of such an educational environment together with the active development of online educational resources and technologies is the utilization of smart devices in training. Several scientific studies in this sphere note the efficiency of using smart devices in teaching (Algoufi, 2016), which allows for the formation of relevant ICT competencies in students and preparing them for future professional work (Alwraikat, 2017) while also ensuring a significant rise in the level of students' theoretical and practical training in various areas of expertise (Heflin et al., 2017).

In turn, specialists in FL teaching are also starting to actively use smart technologies in their practice, and the methods to introduce smart technology to professionally oriented FL classes have become a research topic for many

scholars. In particular, a study by Leis et al. (2015) explores the feasibility of using mobile technology for independent work in the study of professionally oriented FL.

Research findings indicate that the application of smart technologies in professionally oriented FL classes is a necessity and is motivated by the fact that it provides for the effective organization of individual and group work of students in class (Alkhezzi & Al-Dousari, 2016), improves practical skills and abilities (Vo & Vo, 2020), raises interest in FL classes (Gangaiamaran & Pasupathi, 2017), activates students' cognitive activity (Ozer & Kılıç, 2018), and modernizes practical lessons (Ta'amneh, 2020).

Employment of advanced smart technologies (webinars, blogs, Twitter accounts, and video and audio podcasts) in asynchronous and online modes in the process of teaching an FL increasingly complements traditional teaching methods that help form the communicative core (from awareness of the possibility to express thoughts in another language to the skills and abilities to solve communicative and cognitive problems independently) (Ebadi & Bashir, 2021) and allows a student take a different look at FL learning, thereby uncovering their intellectual and creative potential (Hidayati & Endayani, 2019; Li & Wang, 2023).

The analysis of relevant scientific sources evidences the lack of accumulated experience and a need for empirical research in this problem area. In this relation, we assert the need to investigate opportunities for the practical implementation of smart devices in the process of teaching an FL to economics students to raise their proficiency level to B2.

The goal of this paper is to define the degree of efficiency of using smart services in FL learning.

To achieve this goal, we set the following research objectives:

- 1) to substantiate the use of smart devices in the process of FL teaching as a pedagogical condition for the formation of FL competency;
- 2) to experimentally test the efficiency of introducing smart devices in the process of forming FL competency;
- 3) to conclude from the results of the study and establish the advantages of introducing smart devices into the formation of FL competency.

The research hypothesis put forward is that the efficiency of the formation of FL competency in economics students at a university will improve due to the introduction of smart devices in the FL teaching process.

### III. METHODS

Experimental testing of the efficiency of implementing smart devices in the formation of FL competency in economics students was conducted based on a university in the academic year 2021-2022. The study was conducted in experimental and control groups of 1st-year students with the same composition and initial level of FL competency. A total of 195 students took part in the formative experiment (97 in the experimental (EG) and 98 in the control (CG) groups).

### IV. EXPERIMENT STAGES

The experimental study was organized in three stages. Stage-by-stage implementation of the formation of the FL competency involved the actualization and enhancement of basic linguocultural and socio-cultural knowledge and skills in the FL environment using smart devices.

The first (ascertaining) stage involved initial control of the level of FL competency, which consisted of vocabulary and grammar tests.

In the second (formative) stage, students in the EG underwent training using smart devices, which took place in two sub-stages:

- stimulation-motivational (building motivation for the experimental conditions of the use of smart devices);
- activity (classroom and extracurricular work using smart devices).

In the third (control) stage, we performed the final control of the level of FL competency and compared the results to the levels recorded before the formative stage. The final control consisted of vocabulary and grammar tests (with answer options), a written essay on a topic, as well as the oral component – an interview on given questions.

### V. MATERIALS

The pedagogical condition for the formation of FL competency in economics students was defined as the use of smart devices in FL teaching. In the framework of using these devices, the learning process included authentic dialogues and tests in the FL, situational tasks for the organization of interactive interaction, and literary works from the country of the studied language. In particular, the tasks offered for better and faster learning of lexical units were: filling in the blanks, finding a match, understanding a word by definition, defining concepts, connecting words and pictures, connecting words and definitions, dividing words into groups in accordance with the topic, finding the right word by meaning, and many others. In addition, journalistic materials were used to form the FL competency of the students, justified by the fact that the materials contained information about the economic, political, and socio-cultural processes of the FL society.

In the process of applying smart devices to actualize students' knowledge, skills, and abilities, we employed such tools as an interactive whiteboard, tablets, and students' personal devices.

## VI. STATISTICAL PROCESSING

Statistical data processing was performed with Statistica 7.0 software. The nonparametric Pearson criterion ( $\chi^2$ ) was used to assess the reliability of the indicators in the groups. Criterion values and confidence intervals were calculated with the significance level set at  $\alpha = 0.05$ .

## VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The dynamics of the formation of the FL competency of economics students before and after the experiment are demonstrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
DYNAMICS OF FORMATION OF THE FL COMPETENCY OF ECONOMICS STUDENTS

Group	Stage	Proficiency level			
		A1	A2	B1	B2
EG	before the formative experiment	47.2%	32.5%	13.1%	7.2%
	after the formative experiment	21.7%	35.3%	28.2%	14.8%
CG	before the formative experiment	44.2%	37.7%	12.2%	5.9%
	after the formative experiment	40.2%	39.4%	14.1%	6.3%

Table 1 shows the indicators that attest to the effectiveness of the proposed methodology. In the EG, progress in mastering FL competency based on the results of the formative experiment is demonstrated by a higher percentage of students than in the CG.

The results of the ascertaining stage of the experiment show a low level of FL competency among the participants. Most of the students in both the EG and CG demonstrated FL proficiency at the A1 and A2 levels.

In turn, the results of the control stage indicate an increase in the levels of FL competency in the EG. Based on values observed in the CG and EG, we can conclude that the implementation of smart devices in teaching an FL to students is effective and expedient.

After the formative experiment, according to the Pearson  $\chi^2$  criterion, we mark a positive effect of smart device implementation in the work with EG students, showing a significant improvement in the level of their FL competency. This can be seen from the levels of manifestation of FL competency in EG students before and after the formative experiment, which differ sufficiently, allowing us to speak about the effectiveness of smart devices and consider the research hypothesis confirmed.

The empirical value of  $\chi^2$  (66.29) falls in the significance interval and considerably surpasses its critical value with the significance level  $p < 0.001$ . Accordingly, the validity of the hypothesis can be argued to be significant, meaning that the use of smart devices is a significant factor influencing the formation of FL competency in the EG. Thus, the value of  $\chi^2$  (66.29) confirms the statistical significance of differences between the CG and EG in the results of FL competency testing.

The value of  $\chi^2$  (43.61) suggests that the difference between before and after the formative experiment in the EG is also significant.

In contrast, the results of the calculation of  $\chi^2$  (1.18) do not confirm a statistically significant difference between the levels of CG students' FL competency before and after the formative experiment.

Thus, the introduction of smart devices in the formation of the FL competency of economics students proves to be significant and efficient, as demonstrated by our statistical results.

The language material presented via interactive technology allowed students to trace certain patterns in several linguistic phenomena, discover the common and the differences in their composition, and purposefully repeat the previously studied material and systematize and summarize it, which is necessary for a deeper perception and assimilation of new knowledge.

The research results prove the expedience and efficiency of introducing smart devices into FL teaching to form the FL competency of economics students. The implementation of these devices in the university educational process brought a positive change in the level of FL competency in the EG. The results observed in the CG show that the traditional vocational training without the application of smart devices is not contributing to the development of FL competency enough.

In the context of forming the creativity of university students, the forms and methods of modern FL classes have changed. The main goal of teaching an FL is to form students' communicative competency, i.e. to have students master the language as a means of intercultural communication and develop the ability to use language as a tool in the dialogue of cultures (Solovyova et al., 2022). The formation of FL communicative competency in FL teaching is facilitated by the use of smart technology, which improves students' concentration and the speed of absorption of learning material, resulting in better performance of each student (Alwraikat, 2017; Sergeeva et al., 2021).

The development and use of smart technologies in FL teaching bring the quality of education to a new level that corresponds to the current and future needs of society for qualified specialists (Vo & Vo, 2020). The advantages of smart technologies are that they are capable of fostering students' creative abilities, professional knowledge, communication skills, and ICT literacy. They build critical thinking and innovative approaches to professional problems and perfect the skills of effective cooperation, mutual understanding, leadership, and career development (Borodina et al., 2021; Casey et al., 2023; Ozer & Kılıç, 2018; Shishov et al., 2021; Tolmachev et al., 2022).

Thanks to the opportunities offered by smart technologies in FL teaching, the teacher can both use the available software resources and create their own interactive tasks of various types (individual and group) and levels of difficulty for students of different levels of training and specialties (Wang, 2017). Students do not simply work through FL learning material but collaborate, which ensures a lively experience for the class. For example, teachers can employ smart boards to reform the learning process, create an interactive atmosphere and communication environment, enable students to process large amounts of information, and create conditions for individual research work (Ta'amneh, 2020).

Today, it is difficult to imagine an FL class or preparation for it without the use of Internet resources that provide constant access to educational information and offer a unique opportunity to use authentic texts, listen to audio texts, and communicate with native speakers, that is, create a natural FL communicative environment.

### VIII. CONCLUSION

Owing to smart devices, the development of contemporary education enters a qualitatively new level in the training of specialists in various professions. Modern technologies of language learning make it accessible to anyone, without exception, who can master a certain level of knowledge with a small expenditure of time and material resources. For economics students, smart technologies give the opportunity to raise their language proficiency from beginner and elementary to intermediate and advanced and to improve the quality of FL skills required in the professional sphere.

Our experimental study proves the efficiency of implementing smart devices in the formation of FL competency of economics students. The use of smart devices in FL learning is found to contribute to the development of FL competency in economics students.

Among the limitations of the study, we can note the qualitative and quantitative limitations of the research sample and the duration of the experiment. The participation of only freshmen students in the experiment did not allow us to trace further dynamics of the improvement of FL competency. For this reason, prospective further research may focus on analyzing how the use of smart devices influences the formation of FL competency in senior years of study. Another prospect of further research on the use of smart devices in teaching a professionally oriented FL can be an analysis of the practice of application of professional dictionaries using smart devices in educational and translation activities to select the most effective of them.

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# Digital Storytelling and EFL Speaking Skill Improvement

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**Abstract**—The aim of this study is to investigate the role of electronic storytelling in improving students' speaking skills, as well as their motivational level of learning English as a foreign language. The research questions are: What is the role of digital storytelling in improving students' speaking skills? Does utilizing digital storytelling improve learners' motivational level of acquiring English as a foreign language? The participants of the study were 49 Junior High School students, boys and girls from an Arabic-speaking town in northern Israel. The participants were from two tenth-grades (10 A, and 10 B). Grade 10 A has 11 boys and 12 girls. Whereas, 10B has 12 boys and 14 girls. Based on the findings of the current study, it can be concluded that digital storytelling is a useful pedagogical tool. It is very effective in helping teachers in guiding pupils to increase their speaking skills, as well as to increase pupils' desire of learning English as a foreign language

**Index Terms**—digital storytelling, speaking skills, EFL

## I. INTRODUCTION

The research on Israeli education shows large discrepancies between the academic achievements of Jewish students and students from the Arab sector in Israel. These differences as reflected in data from the survey tests given to eighth-grade students beginning in the late 1950s (Blass, 2017). A nationwide achievement test called the Meitsav, an acronym in Hebrew for measurement of school growth and efficiency has been given to Israel's students since 2002 (Wolf, 2014). Reports and analyses of the Meitsav scores show that achievement scores in English and other subjects among Arab children are inferior to those among Jewish ones (Arar & Abo Asbah, 2013).

Several factors had been reported as reasons for such low achievements among Arab pupils (Blass, 2017). Ghenghesh (2010) suggested that learners' low motivation is among the factors for low achievement, especially when considering learning a second or a foreign language. Acquiring a foreign language could be a very frustrating experience for many children within the Arab school system in Israel. For example, Ghaleb (2002) points out several reasons for the difficulties of acquiring EFL including a lack of motivation for the children to learn English. Lack of exposure to English among Arab children is another reason for such difficulties. One way to overcome some of the mentioned difficulties is by enhancing children's motivation to learn English (Long et al., 2013). Learning motivation is defined as an internal state that energizes student behavior and gives it direction. In this context, Tengku-Sepora and Sepideh (2012) suggest that motivation enhances a child's academic performance. Using technology in education is a possibility to increase pupils' motivation.

According to Syafryadin et al. (2019), technology offers attractive and innovative models that increase pupils' motivation in learning English. Digital storytelling is an example of such a model. Digital storytelling is one of the alternative methods that make learning English more interesting. According to Kallinikou and Nicolaidou (2019), digital storytelling provides students with an opportunity to enhance their knowledge, skills, also the standard of education.

Based on the above-mentioned findings, it is reasonable to assume that utilizing digital storytelling might increase Arab-speaking pupils' level of motivation to learn English as a foreign language, as well as their speaking skills fluency.

The purpose of the present study is to test the role of electronic storytelling in improving students' speaking skills, as well as their motivational level of learning English as a foreign language. The main research question that the study will answer is: What is the role of digital storytelling in improving students' speaking skills? Does utilizing digital storytelling improve learners' motivational level of acquiring English as a foreign language? Acquiring a foreign language could be a very frustrating experience for many children within the Arab school system in Israel. For example, Ghaleb (2002) points out several reasons for the difficulties of acquiring EFL including a lack of motivation for the children to learn English. Lack of exposure to English among Arab children is another reason for such difficulties. One way to overcome some of the mentioned difficulties is by enhancing children's motivation to learn English (Long et al.,

2013). Learning motivation is defined as an internal state that energizes student behavior and gives it direction.

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Nair and Yunus (2021) define digital storytelling as the skill of transferring stories by the use of digital tools, such as texts, images, audio telling, and video. It is a contemporary method of utilizing several media sources to express the user's self, using stories. Furthermore, digital storytelling facilitates the ability of learners to enhance their speaking skills. According to Chambers and Yunus (2017), digital storytelling enables an interplay between context and content, thus facilitating better speaking capabilities on the part of the learner.

Kallinikou and Nicolaidou (2019) noted that digital storytelling can be used as multimedia in learning a language to assess pupils in improving their second language speaking skills. In addition, several types of research have shed light on digital storytelling as an instrument to enhance learners' motivation and engagement and as a way to improve speaking skills in second language studies.

Based on the above-mentioned findings, it is reasonable to assume that utilizing digital storytelling might increase Arab-speaking pupils' level of motivation to learn English as a foreign language, as well as their speaking skills fluency.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology had revolutionized the field of education. Language pedagogy is one of the educational fields that had been constantly changing due to technological advancement. Koroglu (2020) noted that language learners could easily access literary texts, novels, short stories, tales, poetry, and other teaching content. Kledecka (2001) suggested that learners of English as a foreign language can download stories recorded by English native speakers and thus are able to improve their pronunciation well as increase their joy of learning the language.

### A. *Digital Storytelling*

As the name might imply, digital storytelling is telling stories while using digital media, such as texts, music, video, or recorded stories. Nair and Yunus (2022) defined digital storytelling as one's skills in telling stories using digital media. Digital storytelling is a contemporary method of utilizing media sources to express one's self (the storyteller) through stories. By conveying their stories, learners might enhance their speaking skills, suggested Nair and Yunus (2021).

Gurrieri and Drenten (2018) defined the term as the manner it is used. In practice, they suggested that digital storytelling is telling a story while using digital media. The practice of conveying a self-describing story by the teller enhances his or her speaking abilities. Sintonen et al. (2018) supported such a notion and added that through digital storytelling students may significantly improve their speaking skills. The story should be a short one, anywhere between 3-10 minutes long, and presented in a digital format that is compatible with computers or any other software that is capable of playing video files (Mirza, 2020).

Badawi et al. (2022) defined the term as a short story being told through digital media. The length of the story, emphasized by Badawi et al. differently from other studies, should last between 2-3 minutes, with the teller using photos and sounds to tell his or her story. It is important that the teller used his or her own voice, giving the story a personal touch. Of importance is the fact that the teller should plan the story, write it to him or herself, modify it as needed, and clarify it in order to make communication more appealing to the teller and to the listeners.

According to Arroba and Acosta (2021), digital storytelling refers to the specific mode of spoken production using technology with textual characteristics. They relate to digital storytelling as the practice of combining personal stories with multimedia (images, audio, and text) for the sake of producing a short movie.

### B. *EFL Students*

English foreign language learners is a concept that is usually used to modify students who are non-native speakers, who are learning English in a place, in a country where English is not a tool of instruction or a language that is used (Awad et al., 2021). For Araba, English is a foreign language, because Hebrew and standard Arabic are second languages. Besides, Arab EFL students, do not have the chance to practice communicating in English since it is not commonly used within the Israeli Arabic-speaking sector.

A distinction should be made between English as a foreign language and English as a second language. Peng (2019) referred to the difference between the two phrases in terms of functionality, the learning process, the language environment, and learning methods. Foreign language according to Peng (2019) means the language that is used outside the country.

According to Saud (2019), EFL students must understand and speak the language during the English lesson, five times a week at some schools. The rest of the day, EFL students do not have to occupy themselves with the language, contrary to ESL students. Still, EFL is a required prerequisite for students entering colleges and universities, thus EFL students must ensure efficient and effective learning for achieving high academic achievement in order to meet the

requirement for enrollment in higher education institutions.

Thus, it is not surprising that most EFL students encounter a great deal of difficulty learning English as a foreign language (Rajab et al., 2020). This is despite the fact that English has been increasingly used in Israel as a principal medium of instruction in higher education programs. The fact that English had become the most popular international language does not ease the difficulties that Arabic-speaking students encounter while learning EFL. Altun and Sabah (2020) suggested that among the reasons Arabic-speaking students encounter difficulties learning EFL is the fact that the students are becoming passive due to a lack of using the language outside the classroom.

### *C. Learning EFL and Speaking Skills*

Learning a new language requires improving the four skills of reading, listening, writing, and speaking. However, in most cases, proficiency is measured, mostly, by the learners' ability to speak or write the language, however, through speaking a student can interact with other speakers. Abdel Fattah (2006; cited in Badawi, 2022) defined speaking "as the ability to develop oral skills and mastery and includes the ability to negotiate and manage dialogues" (p. 30).

Somdee and Suppasetsee (2013) noted that speaking is an important skill to learn a foreign language, this is due to its chances to practice English for further improvement. Students' skill to speak is an indicator of their command of the language; however, such a task is a very challenging skill to develop because of the lack of extensive exposure to the language, along with the difficulty to be fluent spontaneously, with grammar accuracy.

Such competency is acquired over time and through the extensive absorption of the learners in the new foreign language (Arroba & Acosta, 2021). Having pointed out the importance of speaking skills as the most effective means to increase learners' fluency in the language, it is important to develop speaking strategies because it motivates the learners to participate in the classroom actively. Digital storytelling could be one such strategy. Utilizing digital storytelling, learners could develop all four categories of speaking skills.

Burns (2009) found four classifications of speaking skills, these are correct pronunciation, the role of, interaction, including role distribution and dialogue organization, as well as the use of linguistics and nonlinguistic features. Finally, the skill of organizing the speech in terms of explanation the objectivity of the speech, and the unity of the various parts of the speech.

For the sake of improving speaking skills, teachers should ensure that learners are involved in meaningful speaking activities. Teachers should respond to learners' interests and address such interests through speaking activities. This could increase learners' motivation to participate in the speaking activities. When teachers do not respond to learners' interests, the learners could become less attentive to the activity or to taking part in the interaction.

### *D. Effects of a Digital Story on Speaking Skills Development*

As mentioned earlier, in most cases, the only exposure EFL learners to the language are inside the classroom. Based on the English curricula in the Arabic-speaking school system, very little attention, if at all is devoted to improving the speaking skills of EFL learners. Actually, there are very limited opportunities for learners to construct their knowledge of English, especially speaking skills. A significant amount of studies reported the advantages of utilizing digital storytelling in the classroom for the sake of enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills. Robinni et al. (2019) showed that the utilization of digital storytelling during English language lessons can improve students' speaking skills. According to the authors, digital storytelling contains many elements and characteristics that enhance the speaking skills of the learners, along with other elements that enhance learners' ability to speak more efficiently. They concluded that electronic storytelling makes it easy for the students to build digital stories from their own personal experience, thus enabling the learners to understand the content of the story while getting the opportunity to develop their speaking fluency.

Rubinni et al. (2019) reported another example that supports the significant improvement in learners' speaking skills while utilizing digital storytelling. Their study focused on secondary education, aiming to investigate the impact of utilizing digital storytelling on students' speaking skills in English. Their study included twenty secondary school students from Malaysia. The study found that there was an improvement in students' speaking skills after the production of their videos, and learners, moreover, had a positive point of view of digital storytelling.

Abdelmageed (2018) addressed the need to improve university students' speaking proficiency in terms of fluency and proper pronunciation and employed online digital storytelling to enhance the student's speaking skills. His findings supported the notion that digital storytelling does enhance Arabic-speaking students' (Egyptians) speaking skills.

### *E. Digital Storytelling and Students' Motivation*

#### *(a). Defining Motivation*

According to Lei (2010), students who are motivated extrinsically rely depend on rewards and desirable results for their motivation. Furthermore, those learners are at risk of performing lower academically than intrinsically motivated students. Regardless of whether the source of motivation is intrinsic or extrinsic, Gardner (2007) addressed motivation in the classroom, calling it classroom learning motivation. In such cases, it is clear, for example, that the teacher, class environment, course content, resources, and facilities, as well as the student's own characteristics, can affect the individual's classroom learning motivation (Gardner, 2007).

It is up to the teacher to fathom what factors, and how, affect students' level of motivation, in order to increase

students' interest in learning EFL (Ushioda, 2019). Considering the fact that Arabic-speaking students face significant challenges acquiring EFL, teachers ought to have a creative solution to increase students' classroom learning motivation. Digital storytelling might be an option for such a creative solution.

*(b). Digital Storytelling Enhances Students' Motivation*

As a result, very often the students become demotivated, something that encumbers their learning abilities. It is up to the teachers to change such demotivating practices for the sake of improving students' self-confidence and increasing their motivation to acquire the language. Employing digital storytelling might provide the answer to teachers' search to enhance learners' motivation.

Gheghesh (2010) reported that the implementation of digital storytelling in EFL classes increases students' motivation and helps them develop learning. That means digital storytelling had computer technologies and the ability to tell and create stories while motivating students to use higher-order thinking skills when learning a foreign language. Utilizing technology while telling their own personal stories through digital media does increase learners' willingness to become more involved in classroom activities.

Nampaktai and Suksiripakonchai (2018) investigated the impact of digital storytelling on students' level of confidence. They reported that there was a significant difference in learners' speaking skills before and after using digital storytelling. A majority of students stated that digital storytelling enhanced their English-speaking ability and English-speaking confidence

Summing up the literature review, it seems that there is a piece of convincing evidence about the effectiveness of utilizing digital storytelling for improving learners' speaking skills. Strong evidence exists regarding the effect that digital stories have on learners' level of learning motivation. Digital storytelling seems to have a positive effect on learners' motivation to learn EFL, which eventually leads to an increase in learners' interest in the language, and in using the language, at least within the classroom, which ultimately helps the learners improve their speaking skills. The present study examines the effect of digital storytelling on Arabic-speaking students' speaking skills and learners' level of learning motivation.

The research questions are

1. How does the application of digital storytelling affect students' speaking skills?
2. How does the application of digital storytelling affect learners' motivational levels of acquiring English as a foreign language?

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### *Research Design*

This study employs a quasi-experimental approach that aims to investigate the effect of digital storytelling intervention plans on learners' speaking skills as well as their learning motivation. The experimental method studies whether there is a cause-and-effect relationship between the research variables (Rahman, 2017). The researchers control or manipulate an independent variable (digital storytelling) to measure its effect on one or more dependent variables (speaking skills and level of motivation).

#### *Participants*

The participants of the study are 49 Junior High School students, boys and, girls from an Arabic-speaking town in northern Israel. The participants were two grade-10 classes (10 A, and 10 B). Grade 10 A has 11 boys and 12 girls. Whereas, 10B has 12 boys and 14 girls. The following table will show the participants of the study.

TABLE 1  
THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

Participants	Boys	Girls	total
Grade 10 A	11	12	23
Grade 10 B	12	14	26

#### *Procedure*

Once the researchers of the study got permission to carry out the study, they consulted the English teacher on how to move forward with the study. Based on the teacher's advice, two 10<sup>th</sup> graders were selected to be part of the study. 10<sup>th</sup> grade "A" would be the control group, while 10<sup>th</sup> grade "B" would constitute the experiment group. The researchers explained the objectives of the study and how the students should present their digital stories. The intervention plan would be carried out three times a week, meeting for an hour following students' daily school schedule.

In the first meeting, several digital stories were introduced to the students, examples of different content of the digital stories were suggested, and questions that the students had, were answered. Videos, presentations, mobile applications, podcasts, and iPods were suggested for the students to record their own digital stories. Students were advised to combine audio, images, animated clips, and more to tell a single story. Regarding the content of the stories, students were advised to be creative, to express their points of view, or to make up some factious story. Pre-intervention speaking skills test was administered to both groups. Tests were administered by the author of the study and the English teacher.

*Data Collection*

To answer the research questions and gather an in-depth understanding of whether the digital storytelling intervention plan influences speaking skills and level of learning motivation, a pre-test (before the intervention) and a post-test (following the intervention) were administered.

Measuring students' speaking skills was based on the Knight Rubric assessment of speaking skills (1992). The rubric includes five criteria for evaluation: fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and details (overall impression of the evaluator of the skills).

*Data Analysis*

Analysis of the data (pre and post-tests) was performed using the statistical package IBM SPSS 22. The first part of the analysis included a descriptive analysis of dependent variables. A two-sample test was used to test the significance of the differences in speaking skills, and motivation, prior to and post the intervention plan. Pearson correlation coefficient test (r) was used to test the correlation between the dependent variables (speaking skills and level of motivation).

IV. FINDINGS

The objective of the present study is to examine whether an intervention plan improves students' speaking skills and their level of motivation to acquire EFL. The intervention plan consists of digital storytelling by members of the experiment group. Tests were administered to both groups, before and after the intervention. The underlying assumption of the study is that through digital storytelling, participants increase their level of skills as well as their motivation to learn EFL. Table no. 1 presents the averages and STD of the control group in the five components of the speaking skills, pre-intervention.

TABLE 2  
SPEAKING SKILLS AVG. AND STD OF CONTROL GROUP – PRE-INTERVENTION

Descriptive Statistics – Avg. and STD Control					
	N	Mini	Maxi	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fluency	23	1.00	3.00	2.0000	.73855
Pronunciation	23	1.00	3.00	2.0870	.66831
Vocabulary	23	1.00	4.00	2.1304	.86887
Grammar	23	1.00	3.00	2.1304	.62554
Details	23	1.00	3.00	2.3478	.57277
Total	23	8.00	16.00	10.6957	1.76930

As can be seen in Table 1, the overall speaking skills of the participants show a very low skill level majority for the students. Weaknesses in their speaking skills are evident in all the different components of their speaking skills.

Table 3 presents the averages and STD of the experiment group in the five components of the speaking skills, prior to the intervention plan.

TABLE 3  
SPEAKING SKILLS AVG. AND STD OF EXPERIMENT GROUP – PRE-INTERVENTION

Descriptive Statistics: experiment with pre-test					
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fluency – experiment pre-test	26	1.00	3.00	2.2692	.66679
Pronunciation - experiment pre-test	26	1.00	4.00	2.3077	.78838
Vocabulary - experiment pre-test	26	1.00	3.00	2.2308	.58704
Grammar - experiment pre-test	26	1.00	3.00	1.9615	.66216
Details - experiment pre-test	26	2.00	4.00	2.5385	.58177
Total-experiment pre-test	26	8.00	17.00	11.3077	1.97523

As can be seen in Table 3, the overall speaking skills of the participants in the experiment group show a very low skill level among the majority of the students. Weaknesses in their speaking skills are evident in all the different components of their speaking skills.

Table 4 shows the significant level of differences between the two groups in terms of speaking skills prior to administering the intervention plan

TABLE 4  
COMPARING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONTROL GROUPS

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
The total – control group	10.6957	23	1.76930	-1.239	.228
Total – experimental group	11.4783	23	1.95098		

As can be seen in Table 4, the difference in speaking skills between the control and experiment groups, before the intervention plan, is insignificant. The averages speaking skills of both groups are low, and the difference is insignificant (P>0.005).

A. *Finding – Post-Intervention*

TABLE 5  
AVERAGES AND STD OF THE CONTROL GROUP POST-INTERVENTION

Descriptive Statistics - control group post-intervention					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Fluency control post-intervention	23	1.00	3.00	2.0870	.66831
Pronunciation control post-intervention	23	1.00	4.00	1.8696	.75705
Vocabulary control post-intervention	23	1.00	3.00	1.8261	.77765
Grammar control post-intervention	23	1.00	3.00	1.7826	.73587
Details control post-intervention	23	1.00	3.00	1.8696	.69442
Total control post-intervention	23	5.00	13.00	9.4348	1.67403
Valid N (list-wise)	23				

Considering the fact that the control group did not participate in the intervention plan, it is not surprising that the overall averages of students' speaking skills did not change significantly, as can be seen in Table 5. It should be noted that the low averages in speaking skills did not change because the control group did not participate in the intervention plan. The vocabulary component of the speaking skills seems to be the students' weakest part at an average of 1.78 out of 5.

Table 6 compares the significance of the differences between the control group in the pre and post-intervention.

TABLE 6

Paired Samples Statistics – control group pre and post-intervention						
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Control - pre	9.8261	23	1.19286	.24873	1.274	.216
Control- post	9.5217	23	1.47308	.30716		

As can be seen in Table 6,  $P > 0.005$  indicates that there is no significant difference between the total of the control group pre and post-intervention. This is to be expected since the control group did not take part in presenting digital storytelling.

TABLE 7  
COMPARING EXPERIMENT GROUP – POST AND PRE-INTERVENTION – TOTAL SPEAKING SKILLS

Paired Samples Statistics- speaking skills – pre and post -intervention						
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Total skills – experiment post-intervention	15.4231	26	1.85845	.36447	10.564	.000
Total skills – experiment pre-intervention	11.3077	26	1.97523	.38737		

The intervention plan helped the students improve their overall speaking skills from an average of 11.03 (out of 25) to an average of 15.42. The increases in students' averages were significant. Table 7 shows the significance of the difference between pre-intervention and post-intervention averages of skills ( $P < .000$ ).

There is a significant difference between averages of speaking skills during pre and post-intervention ( $P = .000$ ) indicating the success of the intervention plan. Digital storytelling is an efficient and effective method to improve students' speaking skills.

#### B. Pre-Intervention – Motivation – Control Group

TABLE 8  
AVG. AND STD OF THE LEVEL OF LEARNING MOTIVATION – CONTROL GROUP PRE-INTERVENTION

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am very interested in learning how to speak English in this course.	23	1.00	4.00	2.0435	.82453
I like the subject matter of this course (especially learning how to speak English).	22	1.00	3.00	1.8182	.66450
I like to learn.	23	1.00	3.00	2.0000	.67420
I'm trying hard enough to learn.	23	1.00	3.00	2.0000	.60302
It is important for me to learn how to speak English in this course.	23	1.00	3.00	1.8261	.65033
Understanding how to speak English is very important to me.	23	1.00	3.00	1.8696	.69442
I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in my everyday life.	23	1.00	3.00	1.8261	.57621
I think the course material in this course is useful for me to learn how to speak English	23	1.00	3.00	1.6087	.58303
I am confident I can understand English and speak English to other people.	23	1.00	3.00	1.5652	.66237
I am certain I can learn how to speak English	23	1.00	3.00	1.3913	.65638

As can be seen in table no 8, students in the control group have a very low level of motivation to learn EFL.

TABLE 9  
LEVEL OF MOTIVATION –MEANS AND STD OF THE CONTROL GROUP-POST INTERVENTION

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am very interested in learning how to speak English in this course.	23	1.00	3.00	1.7826	.73587
I like the subject matter of this course (especially learning how to speak English).	23	1.00	3.00	1.7391	.68870
I like to learn.	23	1.00	3.00	1.6087	.58303
I'm trying hard enough to learn.	23	1.00	3.00	1.5217	.66535
It is important for me to learn how to speak English in this course.	23	1.00	3.00	1.3913	.58303
Understanding how to speak English is very important to me.	23	1.00	3.00	1.5217	.66535
I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in my everyday life.	23	1.00	2.00	1.3913	.49901
I think the course material in this course is useful for me to learn how to speak English	23	1.00	2.00	1.2609	.44898
I am confident I can understand English and speak English to other people.	23	1.00	2.00	1.6522	.48698
I am certain I can learn how to speak English	23	1.00	2.00	1.3913	.49901

TABLE 10  
COMPARING PRE AND POST- LEVEL OF MOTIVATION – CONTROL GROUP

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed- p
Control – pre= intervention	1.6675	10	.16516	1.950	.083
Control – post-intervention	1.5261	10	.16956		

As can be seen in table 10 and chart 8, the changes in the level of motivation were not significant, and actually, following the intervention plan, the level of motivation decreased among the control group ( $P > 0.005$ ).

TABLE 11  
LEVEL OF MOTIVATION –THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP – PRE-INTERVENTIO

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am very interested in learning how to speak English in this course.	26	1.00	3.00	1.6538	.62880
I like the subject matter of this course (especially learning how to speak English).	25	1.00	2.00	1.5600	.50662
I like to learn.	26	1.00	3.00	1.6923	.54913
I'm trying hard enough to learn.	26	1.00	3.00	1.7692	.58704
It is important for me to learn how to speak English in this course.	26	1.00	3.00	1.4615	.58177
Understanding how to speak English is very important to me.	26	1.00	2.00	1.5000	.50990
I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in my everyday life.	26	1.00	3.00	1.5769	.57779
I think the course material in this course is useful for me to learn how to speak English	26	1.00	3.00	1.7308	.72430
I am confident I can understand English and speak English to other people.	26	1.00	2.00	1.6923	.47068
I am certain I can learn how to speak English	26	1.00	3.00	1.6538	.56159

Similar to the motivational level among the control group, participants in the experiment group, prior to the intervention, show a low level of motivation to learn EFL. Table 12 shows the level of motivation in post-intervention

TABLE 12  
EXPERIMENT GROUP – LEVEL OF MOTIVATION POST-INTERVENTION

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am very interested in learning how to speak English in this course.	26	2.00	4.00	2.9231	.68836
I like the subject matter of this course (especially learning how to speak English).	26	1.00	4.00	2.8462	.73170
I like to learn.	26	1.00	4.00	2.9615	.72004
I'm trying hard enough to learn.	26	2.00	4.00	2.8846	.65280
It is important for me to learn how to speak English in this course.	26	2.00	4.00	2.6923	.67937
Understanding how to speak English is very important to me.	26	2.00	4.00	3.1154	.58835
I think I will be able to use what I learn in this course in my everyday life.	26	2.00	4.00	2.8462	.73170
I think the course material in this course is useful for me to learn how to speak English	26	2.00	4.00	2.8846	.65280
I am confident I can understand English and speak English to other people.	26	2.00	4.00	2.7692	.65163
I am certain I can learn how to speak English	26	2.00	4.00	2.8077	.69393



TABLE 13  
COMPARING THE LEVEL OF LEARNING MOTIVATION OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP- PRE AND POST-INTERVENTION

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed- p
Exp. Pre-intervention	1.6291	10	.10079	-26.225	.000
Exp. Post-t intervention	2.8731	10	.11474		

The finding in Table 13 shows a significant difference between the control and the experiment groups, following the intervention. The finding validates the second hypothesis; as digital storytelling does improve learners' level of motivation to learn EFL.

TABLE 14  
CORRELATING MOTIVATIONAL LEVEL TO SPEAKING SKILLS

Correlations			
		Motivation post-intervention	Speaking skills post-intervention
Motivation post-intervention	Pearson Correlation	1	.993**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	10	5
Speaking skills post-intervention	Pearson Correlation	.993**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	5	5

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There is a significant correlation between motivation and speaking skills following digital storytelling. These findings validate the third hypothesis.

## V. DISCUSSION

The present research attempts to examine the role of digital storytelling in improving students' speaking abilities, as well as their motivational level of learning English as a foreign language. The main research question that the study answered was what is the role of digital storytelling in improving students' speaking skills? Does utilizing digital storytelling improve learners' motivational level of acquiring English as foreign a language?

The dependent variables were found to be significantly related ( $P < 0.05$ ), and utilizing digital storytelling proved to be an efficient and effective way to enhance learners' speaking skills and level of learning motivation.

In light of the results, it is clear that the students in the experimental group did better than the students in the control group in post-treatment, both in speaking skills and learning motivation.

According to Badawi et al. (2022), such results are to be expected. During digital storytelling, argue the authors, words are not memorized but are received through spontaneous performances and social interaction among the students. As students convey their stories, digitally, her peers in the classroom do support the narrator; the person telling the story, thus creating interactions and discussion, which ultimately enhances both the narrator; and the audience, speaking skills. The positive environment, and the encouraging climate in the classroom, create a positive experience for all the participants, something that increases the learners' interest in learning EFL. The positive interaction, the spontaneous learning, and the autonomy that students experience in telling their stories, all add up to fostering students' motivation in learning EFL, as well as improving their speaking skills.

Badawi et al. (2022) examined the impact of using a digital storytelling approach on improving the speaking skills of primary school students. Similar to the findings in the current research, they reported that using digital storytelling enhances students' speaking skills and their level of motivation to learn EFL. Sixty elementary school students took part in their study, 30 participants for the experimental group and 30 others for the control group. The findings showed that students in the experimental group did better than those in the other group in post-treatment. Having participated in various speaking activities, participants in the experiment group were motivated to participate in group discussions, made corrections, and freely expressed their thoughts about their stories. The supporting surrounding raised learners' motivation, which was reflected by the higher scores they achieved following the treatment.

Kallinikou and Nicolaidou (2019) examined the impact of students' engagement in digital storytelling and how such engagement influences their speaking skills and motivation when learning a foreign language. As is the methodology of the present study, the researchers used a pre-test; and post-test control group design with two groups of 20 Russians who recently began to learn Greek as a foreign language.

A recent study by Nair and Yunus (2022) reported similar results to the ones in this study. The findings showed that the potential advantages of digital storytelling had a positive influence on students' speaking skills. Furthermore, the findings showed that digital storytelling engaged students in the content of the book not just by enhancing motivation and curiosity but also by adding confidence in their foreign language speaking skills. This means that electronic storytelling increases students' level of motivation, in addition, it increases students' level of self-confidence to study a foreign language. In their research, students were found to be more confident, and motivated to interact in English, thus developing their speaking skills.

Rajab's (2020) research has presented that digital storytelling is an effective tool to make educational environments



more attractive and exciting. He concluded that digital storytelling could be used as a tool for students in order to develop their speaking skills, especially in terms of accuracy, vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and comprehension. Moreover, the result of this study showed that the implementation of digital storytelling can enhance students' speaking skills in the English language.

Further support for the current findings is in Viknesh and Melor's (2021) study. According to the researchers, technological software and hardware are often used in schools to foster learning class environments. For both students and teachers, digital storytelling has evolved into a useful instructional instrument that can be used in the teaching and learning process.

Reviewing forty-five articles showed that most of these articles highlight the importance of digital storytelling as a contemporary teaching methodology. Most of these research papers provided empirical evidence that substantiated the advantages of employing digital storytelling in the classroom to help students interact more efficiently.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the current study, it can be concluded that digital storytelling is a useful pedagogical tool. It is very effective in helping teachers in guiding pupils to increase their speaking skills, as well as to increase pupils' desire of learning English as a foreign language. Despite the fact that students' scores were less than encouraging prior to the intervention plan of utilizing digital storytelling, following the intervention plan a significant increase in all the components of the speaking skills was witnessed. The intervention plan helped the students improve their overall speaking skills from an average of 11.03 (out of 25) to an average of 15.42. The increase in students' averages was significant, indicating the effectiveness of the intervention plan, and the effectiveness of utilizing digital storytelling to improve students' speaking skills.

Similarly, following the intervention plan, a significant increase in students' learning motivation was also achieved. Prior to the intervention plan, students showed little desire; or little motivation to learn EFL, as is indicated by the low average (1.6291) of their motivation prior to the intervention. However, following utilizing digital storytelling, the average increased to 2.8731, indicating a significant increase in students' desire to learn EFL. The findings suggest that digital storytelling is an effective approach to enhancing students' speaking skills as well as their learning motivation in EFL.

Having proved the pedagogical merits of using technology in learning, several questions remained to be answered, such as the level of teachers' qualifications in integrating pedagogical technology to enhance pupils' learning. Very often, teachers are not qualified, since they were not properly trained, in how to integrate technology into education. Teachers are not aware of the content of the technology, the content of pedagogy, or the knowledge of didactic, for the sake of efficiently integrating technology into education.

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# In Search of Quality English Teaching in Nepal: Narratives, Reflections and Descriptors

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**Abstract**—The aim of this paper is to analyze Nepali English teachers' narrations and reflections about good English language teaching which they most enjoyed and affected their career choices. The present paper adopted narrative inquiry as a research design. The study was conducted with five participants who unfolded stories and memoirs on how they learned English. The participants shared their experiences which left indelible marks on their minds. The data were analyzed thematically in such a way that their conceptions of quality English teaching were reflected. The study indicated that teachers are instrumental in enabling learning, and they succeed most when they exhibit the behaviors that lead to the desired learning outcomes, such as excellent grades, favorable attitudes toward learning, and improved learning abilities. Good teaching is not a static, stereotyped activity that can only be accomplished by using instructional techniques. Quality English language teaching cannot be imagined without quality English teachers who are required to possess competencies like strong subject-matter expertise, pedagogical skills, contextual knowledge, passion, and the capacity to foster a friendly learning atmosphere so that they can maximize learning and are better able to accomplish increased learning. Thus, quality English language teaching places learners at the center of the learning process.

**Index Terms**—Quality English language teaching, pedagogical skills, contextual knowledge, content Knowledge

## I. INTRODUCTION

Successful English teachers are regarded as "active" educators who maximize class time, offer content in ways that fit students' needs, keep an eye on programs and progress, and provide chances for students to apply newly learned concepts and abilities (Witcher et al., 2001). According to Berliner (1992; as cited in Khojastehmehr & Takrimi, 2009), quality teachers have the following 10 traits: (a) keep track of students' work, progress, and feedback; (b) structure lessons and communicate expectations through objectives; (c) pace instruction quickly; (d) ask questions requiring analysis, synthesis, and evaluation; (e) allow waiting time for answers; (f) communicate high expectations; (g) maintain a safe and orderly classroom; (h) promote a friendly environment; and (I) make the best use of the time they have with.

The qualities of effective instructors may be divided into three categories, according to Rouche, Baker, Mullin, and Boy (as cited in Witcher et al., 2001): motivation, interpersonal skills, and cognitive skills. This categorization closely resembles Brown's list of attributes that make up successful language instructors, which includes "technical knowledge, pedagogical abilities, interpersonal skills, and personal qualities" (p. 430).

The literature on language teaching approach frequently discusses the roles that a good teacher should play (Wright, 1987; Richards & Rogers, 1986). Watkins (2005), for example, suggests twelve roles of a teacher namely, language guide, reflector, prompter, administrator, expert resource, observer, provider of input, organizer, performer, assessor, listener, and controller, while Harmer (2007) argues teachers should be able to adopt a variety of roles within the classroom to facilitate learning: controller, prompter, participant, resource, and tutor. Teacher roles have also been discussed with reference to particular facets of language teaching and learning. Voller (1997), for example, examines the role of the teacher in promoting autonomous learning (as cited in Xiang & Borg, 2014). According to Elliott et al. (2000), the key to effective teaching is for teachers to have a thorough understanding of their pupils and the flexibility to adapt their teaching methods to meet those requirements.

According to Hiebert and Grouws (2007), among others, teachers' familiarity of their pupils has a favorable influence on how well their students perform in class. As a result, it would seem that it's essential for instructors who want to succeed to remain up-to-date on the requirements and expectations of their students' learning. The behaviors that make up excellent teaching have been the subject of several researches in the West, however, there are few of these studies undertaken in the ELT environment of Nepal. This study makes an effort to address this gap by defining the qualities of ideal English language instructors by looking at Nepalese EFL teachers' perspectives in their particular academic and sociocultural settings.

## II. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The long history of identifying behaviors linked to successful teaching has been highlighted by research in different manners. According to Beishuizen et al. (2001), "Good teachers have been studied ever since Plato explained how

Socrates taught by asking his audience questions" (p. 185). Although scholars have agreed to study this highly sought-after field, there has been significant debate over the qualities that constitute the best instructors (Raymond, 2008; Stronge, 2002).

Researchers have reportedly attempted a variety of approaches to resolve this contentious issue. According to research, teaching philosophies have a considerable impact on how instructors and students view the qualities of ideal teachers, and it has been argued that

effective teachers were viewed as 'ideal teachers' in the 1950s, 'analytic teachers' in the 1960s, 'effective teachers,' 'dutiful teachers,' and 'competent teachers' in the 1970s, 'expert teachers,' and 'reflective teachers' in the 1980s, and 'satisfying teachers' and 'diversity responsive teachers' in the 1990s (Wang et al., 2007, pp. 22-23).

Based on a growing body of research, efforts to define the behaviors and qualities associated with ideal instructors have a long history, and several criteria for describing them have been created in Europe and the USA (Campbell et al., 2003). In a study conducted in 2003, study of a sizable body of research on ideal instructors, Skilbeck and Connell identified four alternative viewpoints to pinpoint the issue. Several studies have shown, in their opinion, that the first viewpoint is connected to the characteristics of the ideal instructors, as emphasized in Banner and Cannon (1997).

The second perspective views instructors with significant professional knowledge and expertise in their sector as desirable. Shulman concurs with this viewpoint (1992). The third aspect of ideal teacher research uses student performance and achievement as its primary metric. On the basis of this viewpoint, a lot of study has been done (Cole & Chan, 1986; Anderson, 1991; Borich, 1996). Instructors who possess strong subject-matter expertise, passion, and the capacity to foster a friendly learning atmosphere are better able to accomplish increased learning, which in turn motivates students to take in what is taught in the classroom. Thus, a successful teacher is one who maximizes the achievements of students.

Given that it offers insights into the particular classroom roles that effective instructors are considered to assume, the research on the good language teacher more broadly (Brosh, 1996; Mullock, 2003) is also pertinent here. Two such studies have been conducted in relation to EFL teachers in China (Cortazzi & Jin, 1996; Zhang & Watkins, 2007). While the former drew on the opinions of students, the latter included teachers of English in tertiary institutions in China. The Zhang and Watkins' (2007) study revealed that these teachers considered sound pedagogical content knowledge (i.e., the ability to teach the subject) as the most important quality of a good tertiary EFL teacher (as cited in Xiang & Borg, 2014).

Overall, the research they present here advances our knowledge of teachers' perceptions of (1) the ideal language teacher, (2) the degree to which teachers believe they can teach in a way that reflects their ideals, and (3) the variables that mediate the relationship between ideals and practice. Such insights are helpful in fostering language teacher growth in the context of college English teaching in addition to being pertinent to tertiary language teaching contexts more generally (as cited in Xiang & Borg, 2014).

Language teachers teach in many different contexts. In order to teach effectively well in a particular situation, teachers need to acquire the appropriate contextual knowledge. If a Japanese teaching English in Nepal does not know the Nepalese Classroom situations, he or she cannot teach English effectively well in Nepalese situations. The Japanese English teacher needs to have knowledge of Nepali context and so is the case for Nepali English teacher teaching English in Japan. "Teaching involves understanding the dynamics and relationships within the classroom and rules and behavior specific to a particular setting" (Richards, 2012, p. 48). The concept of good or effective teaching varies from context to context. Schools have their own way of doing things. Each school is unique in itself. In some cultures, schools and contexts, a good teacher is one good teacher one who controls and directs learners and who maintains a respectful distance between the teacher and students. Good teaching is viewed as a teacher-controlled and directed process. In some other cultures the teacher is viewed as a facilitator. The ability to maintain a good relation and work with the students is highly valued. At the same time, strong emphasis will be given to learner independence, and the teacher respects the individuality of the learners. This study looks into conceptions of good English from the perspectives of Nepalese English teachers.

### III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the determinants of quality English language teaching?
2. How were Nepalese English teachers taught English when they were students?
3. What are their preferred teaching styles?

### IV. METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The study uses a narrative inquiry approach to explore the participants' stories about their how they learned English and their experiences of good English language teaching. Narrative research gathers information about people's lives and interprets them in light of their experiences. In narrative research designs, researchers compose narratives of personal experiences, gather and share tales about people's lives, and characterize the lives of individuals (Connellly &

Clandinin, 1990). Creswell (2016, p. 502) views narrative inquiry as "a distinct form of qualitative research, a narrative typically focuses on studying a single person, gathering data through the collection of stories, reporting individual experiences, and discussing the meaning of those experiences for the individual." The interdisciplinary study of the processes used to create and analyze tales of life experiences (such as life histories, narrative interviews, journals, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, and biographies) and publish that sort of research is known as narrative inquiry (Schwandt, 2007; as cited in Pandey, 2020, p. 111). The study of people's lives as they are revealed in their own narratives, together with a consideration of the significance of those events for the person, is known as narrative research.

**Participants.** This research included five English teachers. Regarding their age, English language competence, exposure to other languages, and other sociolinguistic traits, they were similar to one another. They were all fluent in Nepali, their native language. Also, they have expertise instructing in English at various levels of Nepali education. Currently, they have been teaching English at different campuses of Tribhuvan University, either affiliated or constituent. Due to the nature of this narrative investigation, the participants were purposefully chosen. They all have earned their M.Ed. in English education from Tribhuvan University, and they are now enrolled at the same for pursuing their M. Phil. in English education.

**Instruments.** The researchers collected information through an interview with the teachers. The goal of the interview was to understand more about the teachers' viewpoints on how English is taught and learned, as well as how much aid English teachers give their students in terms of knowledge acquisition. The goal of the interview was to acquire more in-depth details about how teachers' beliefs influence the decisions they make in order to handle problems that regularly emerge throughout the teaching and learning process. The purpose of the interview was to discover more about the teachers' perspectives on how the teaching and learning of English is carried out, as well as how much assistance English instructors provide in terms of knowledge acquisition.

## V. RESULTS

The classroom is a dynamic setting that brings students from varied backgrounds and skill levels together. In order to fulfill the unique requirements of each student, effective teaching necessitates the use of creative and novel teaching techniques. It is always difficult to know which teaching strategies will work best with our students. There is no capsule-type solution to any problem that arises in our classrooms. So, there is a range of effective teaching strategies we can use to inspire our students. Traditionally, effective or ineffective teaching depends on teachers. They were taken as the most responsible component of teaching but at present teacher is one of the so many other responsible components. Richards (2001) has pointed out the following affecting factors of teaching: Institutional factor, Teaching factor, Teacher factor, and Learner factor. All these four are integrated factors of teaching. Here I will only focus on teaching factors only. Generally speaking, teaching is an art that needs to be unique or creative so that listeners may enjoy our class. Teaching should be completely student-centered or engaged or full of activities. Passive listening in the classroom may not be so effective and productive; therefore a teacher should be sensible to make his/ her class more active and interactive. A single factor or strategy does not work here to make our classroom effective. We can use various strategies to make our class creative and interactive. As I have described in the model class, she had used so many methods or strategies to make her class more productive.

**Reflections and Descriptors.** The participants were asked to describe the model English class they have come across in their life. They described English as the classes they liked. Three of the excerpts have been mentioned below. On the basis of the excerpts, I have tried to draw the characteristics of effective English teaching.

### *Excerpt 1*

When I talk about effective class, I cannot forget Tamara Schneider, a Peace Corps volunteer from the United States who came to teach us English in our high school for 2 years. She became my favorite teacher due to her innovative and child-friendly teaching methods. She was very active and enthusiastic throughout class time. The thing that I liked most was the way she got us involved in different activities in the classroom. All of us really enjoyed in taking part group and pair work which she designed for us. I found her highly devoted to the profession because she would stay at school even after school is over so that she could help the poor students. She would spend hours teaching us how to communicate in English with different activities she designed for us. She would give us interesting assignments which were for improving our English. She would talk about her experiences of life during the interval and I found them really interesting and motivating. She would often encourage us to do voluntary work whenever we had time. Every day was a new experience in her class especially the way she would bring new anecdotes was motivating. She had amazing ability to communicate with students. She knew how to make English class full of fun. Her power point presentation was well-designed and impressive to catch the attention of students. I learned from her how to be confident in sharing things among classmates. I gained different ways of thinking and processing ideas which improved me positively. She would treat us as if we were her own kids and that made us feel really comfortable in the classroom. I never felt boring and tedious in her class. She had excellent techniques to teach grammar in a way we enjoyed. We would not realize how fast her period finished. Learning was really fun for us. I vividly remember the day when she was teaching present perfect passive. In the beginning, she showed us two pictures on power point. The first picture was the scene of an old village and the other picture was the scene of the same village that had been modernized. Having shown the pictures, she asked

us to find out the changes in between the pictures. Then, she wrote a sentence like-'A new road has been built.' Based on the same structures, we were assigned to talk about the changes in the village. In no time, we learned how to write present perfect passive sentences. Then she gave us the assignment to write a paragraph about our village or town talking about the recent changes. . . . . The best thing was we never realized that she was teaching us grammar. We all would participate in classroom activities. Most of the time, she would divide the class into different groups. Each group had to do certain tasks. So, the class used to be highly interactive. She would often encourage shy students to talk in the group. The class used to be very friendly and funny.

This excerpt presents some characteristics of an ideal English class. The teacher likes his teacher because her methods of teaching are innovative and child-friendly. The focus is here is on method. He liked her (Teacher-Tamara Schneider) because she involved the students in different classroom activities. Similarly, there are many other facets the teacher mentions that characterize effective English teaching. The other characteristics that make her teaching model are the involvement of students in pair/group work, her commitment to the profession, her involvement in helping the students, her desire to help the students, her communication skills to the students, interesting assignments and project works she gave to the students, her encouragement to students to involve in voluntary activities, her communicative ability, use of technology in the classrooms, and her treatment to the students (her child-friendly nature). The excerpt also consists of some other characteristics of model English teaching such as interesting teaching and the use of visual aids such as the use of pictures in the classrooms.

*Excerpt 2*

When I think about effective teaching, I always remember my respected guru Mr. Gautam Singh. He is still an active person and teaches at different level of education, i.e. school and college. Due to his effective way of teaching, he is popular not only among his students. He has passion for teaching and loves his profession very much. I still remember the day when I was in one-year B.Ed. program at S. Campus where Mr. Singh used to teach ELT course to the students of B.Ed. It was the year when B.Ed. program at our college in 2058 B.S. There were English teachers who had master's degree in English education. Mr. Singh was an M.A. in English and B.Ed. in English from TU. He had earned a name and fame in the region for his effective teaching. I also had heard popularity of Mr. Singh in the teaching field in the region. He taught us the course entitled "ELT theories and methods". One day Mr. Singh teaching was teaching us how to make lesson plans for developing reading skills at the secondary level. He talked about pre-reading activities, while reading activities and post-reading activities that the teachers need to involve their students in reading comprehension. For this, he selected the reading comprehension lesson from class nine and started to teach us how to go through the different steps of reading comprehension for reading passages. First, he related the reading comprehension passage to our real life. He asked us many questions relating to the topic. Then he talked about teaching vocabulary. He had already said that there were many methods of teaching vocabulary. He suggested us mainly five vocabulary teaching methods. They were; presented words with visual stimuli; created context to vocabulary; built confidence with word clusters, etc. He often He used different techniques to teach us. He used demonstration and miming techniques to teach us. He focused on the development of all skills of language. But the teaching technique of his vocabulary of that day is still in my memory. I have never experienced such effective way of teaching thereafter. It takes me 12 years back when I come to hear about or someone talks about teaching words meaning to learners. From that very day or from Mr. Bhatt's teaching of the word "shatter", I learned that teaching any language or topic basically depends on how a teacher can create a learning environment in the classroom for his learners. Methods and techniques applied by the teacher can make one's teaching effective or ineffective. The effectiveness of teaching is affected by the teacher's techniques.

Excerpt 2 enlists some of the characteristics of a model English class. Teachers' experiences of teaching English at different levels of education also play a pivotal role in making teaching effective. One of the reasons why the participant liked his teacher is that he is a very active person. He also loves his profession. He has a passion for teaching. The participants focused on the teachers' pedagogical skills which made him popular among his students. He often teaches his students to create context. The use of a pragmatic approach to teaching, that is, a context-sensitive approach makes English language teaching effective. The teacher also used different techniques to teach English. The participant does mention the techniques he used while teaching. Effective English teacher updated their professional knowledge so that they can develop their professional competence. To enhance the quality of their teaching and learning, "they take part in workshops, seminars and conferences. They also become members of different professional organizations (Pandey, 2020, p. 15).

*Excerpt 3*

Generally, he begins his class with brief introduction of the topic. He asked the students to present the slides that are assigned in earlier class. Before that he provides ample materials to prepare on the topic. When somebody presents the slides, he listens and comments them very carefully. He adds whatever is missed during the presentation. It seems that the teacher has come to class being fully prepared. I have noticed he does ask questions to the participants. I have never seen him sitting idle in 2 hours class even for some minutes. Everyone has to present the class turn by turn. The topics are selected by us. He never enforces us to do this and that for presentation. . . . . We, students, keep on snapping the slides while he presents them. The slides are really comprehensible. However, we are afraid he may not provide the slides. When he teaches, he keeps on moving from one corner to another paying attention to all. He also scrolls the slides frequently. We sometimes have the problem of snapping the slides.

Excerpt three focuses on the teachers' role. The teacher provides them (students) with the materials and asks them to present. This is how the teacher engages the students. Students are made to present the tasks assigned.

**Student engagement.** Teachers always should show a genuine interest in individual children in their classrooms to find out about their lives outside of the classroom, and use that information in their instruction. Teachers should ask about their out-of-school activities. While describing a model class T1 stated:

For teaching a story she had brought so many materials into the classroom. She had hung the list of characters on the cardboard on the wall with their specific roles. With the introduction of the characters of the story, she asked students to scan and note down the difficult words from the text/ story. Students were glancing at the story to find out difficult words which they do not know. After five minutes, she asked everybody to stop searching words and said them what they have to do now. She said that everyone has to share their words which they have noted down and he/she will tell them in loud voice so that everyone can listen and first she asked to the whole class if anybody knows the word that particular students have said otherwise she could tell the meaning of the words. She spent nearly 8 to 10 minutes in this activity and asked students to guess what could be the message of the story. This excerpt describes how a participant's (T1) model teacher involved his students in classroom activities.

**Learning is fun.** The effective English class is often enjoyable. Having fun in the class while teaching helps students retain the lesson taught the delivery process is enjoyable. The model English class makes leaning fun and enjoyable. If a teacher asks students why students participate in the activities, he or she probably hear "It's a fun". In the classroom where leaning is fun, students' motivation towards learning will also higher. If we want to keep students motivated, we have to engage them. Engaging students in activities is a problem for many ELL/ESL teachers. Good teachers optimize students' motivation and engage them in activities as they know how to make classroom a fun. T1 stated: "she had amazing ability to communicate with student. Her class used to full of fun. I never felt boring in her class." An effective classroom arouses interest on the part of students. This is one of the model classes described by a participant. So, effective English class is often full of fun.

**Visualization.** It is through the visual aids we make our classroom lively and interactive. T1 said "dealing academic concepts in the classroom without visual aids is boring". The concepts can be taught effectively well with help of materials. He further said "let our students be out of their seats in the classroom and make them feel to be the part of the society." Visual aid brings the outside world into the classroom so that we can make our classroom unique. The effective classroom teaching entails the use of visual aids. While describing the model class T1 further stated:

As we can see in Deborah's class she has visualized the real scenario of our society how marriage is taken in the society. She has used so many visual materials in the class rooms and practiced text- based activities in the classroom. So let our students be out of their seat in the classroom and make them feel to be the part of the society.

For T1 this Deborah's class is effective as she has brought so many visual aids in classrooms.

**Use of child- friendly method.** Effective language teaching uses child friendly techniques in the classroom. The techniques arouse interest among the students. The techniques also motivate the learner to learn and engage them in the classroom activities which ultimately develops positive attitude towards English. Talking about child friendly technique T2 stated:

When I talk about effective class; I cannot forget Tamara Schneider, a Peace Corps volunteer from the United States who came to teach us English in our high school for 2 years. She became my favorite teacher due to her innovative and child-friendly teaching methods.

**Cooperative learning.** Cooperative learning activities encourage students of mixed abilities to work together. For the effective implementation of cooperative learning we can promote small group or whole class activities. T1 reported that "cooperative learning will develop their self-confidence as well as enhance their communication and critical thinking skills which are vital throughout life." Solving mathematical puzzles, conducting scientific experiments and acting out short drama sketches are just a few examples of how cooperative learning can be incorporated into classroom lessons.

**Effective use of teaching learning materials.** According to Tomlinson (1998), these resources might be regarded as helpful if they assist learners learn what they want and need to learn while enhancing their knowledge, experience, and comprehension of the target language. Nepalese classroom houses of students of different backgrounds namely; educational, economic, cultural, and social. In this sense Nepalese classroom is largely heterogeneous. The use of appropriate materials in this diversity plays a pivotal role. T2 (Nani) said; the materials we use in the classroom should be related to their needs and interests. I use those materials which promote cooperative learning activities. I use materials in the classroom they make the students which the prime aim of the entire teaching learning process. The appropriate materials also help in classroom management. In this context, Murray (1991) outlined that the teacher appears to play a major role in promoting the students' learning through the use of teaching-learning resources, and these teacher traits may have a significant impact on the students' learning process. Such a practice improves the students' ability to utilise instructional materials effectively, which improves the effectiveness of English language instruction.

**Use of modern information technology (ICT).** The use of technology has revolutionized the way we teach. The use of ICT tools has become an integral part of our personal and social lives. The use of modern gadgets has influenced people's future professional careers. Every sector including the classroom has come under the influence of ICT. In the same way, English language teaching is also affected by the rapid growth in the use of ICT in Nepal. Without using ICT we cannot imagine teaching of English. Wang (2007, p. 1) explained the importance of technology in learning as;

Technology, as a powerful and convenient tool that can provide learners with a rich resource, a visual environment as well as an instructional platform, plays a vital role in language learning. Technology stimulates learning motivation through collaborative learning and it also improves learning efficiency by integrating classroom learning.

Likewise, talking about the significance of ICT in language learning, Mohammadi, Ghorbani, and Hamidi (2011, p. 467) concluded, "As the world progresses, the use of e-learning, electronic devices, internet, computers in teaching and learning process increases too and we have to synchronize ourselves with it and increase our abilities to be able to work with technologies to increase our knowledge". Online social networks are popular with students nowadays, and they may be utilized to help pupils learn the English language. The use of technology improves student autonomy, fosters connection, enables instant feedback, and mimics real-life scenarios and experiences using video, audio, and graphics. "The use of digital tools in English classrooms has recently gained groundswell of interest. The new tools have changed the face of English language teaching over the last few decades. Thus, "the use of digital tools in English classrooms today is inevitable" (Pandey, 2021, p. 67). The responsibilities of students and instructors have altered as a result of ICT use in the classroom. The teacher's job shifts from being only one of the information transmitters to one of a facilitator who actively participates in the learning process alongside the pupil. In the same vein, students should be more responsible for their own learning as they seek, find, synthesize, and share their knowledge with other peers.

**Inquiry-based instruction.** Inquiry-based instruction helps to make the classroom student-centered. To make students learn and make the learning happen T1 said; "I Pose thought-provoking questions which inspire your students to think for themselves and become more independent learners." Developing independence on the part of learners is one of the facets of a learner-centred approach to teaching. Encouraging students to ask questions and investigate their own ideas helps improve their problem-solving skills as well as gain a deeper understanding of academic concepts.

**Use of pictures.** The use of visual aids makes the lively and interesting. It also enhances retention. Pictures are easy to understand and use. This is one of the reasons why students like their teachers to use pictures in their classes. In his model class, T3 states: "I vividly remember the day when she was teaching present perfect passive. In the beginning, she showed us two pictures on PowerPoint. The first picture was the scene of an old village and the other picture was the scene of the same village that had been modernized. Having shown the pictures, she asked us to find out the changes in between the pictures." The use of pictures can make ELT classrooms effective as students these days live predominantly in a visual world. They are habituated to see and use visual things. The picture involves them in classroom activities through which they can talk, do, create, and reflect. The easiest way to explain the meaning of a word is to show a picture. Pictures and other visual materials are very powerful retention aids that increase understanding and motivation and the part of learners. When students understand the lesson taught, they will be motivated to learn. Moreover, today's learners have become visual learners.

**Self-motivation.** The most recent developments in education and the teaching of foreign languages should be followed by teachers. To stay current with the ongoing advancements in the field of education, they must continue their education. Since it strives to increase the teachers' professional competence and effectiveness, this sort of learning is sometimes referred to as professional development. The participants liked their teachers and their classes as they found them updated, and professionally competent. The teachers love the job they have undertaken. They are intrinsically motivated to teach. The lesson taught by committed and dedicated teachers will always be effective. The participant said that they liked the teachers who are honest and dedicated. The informants in this study said that the model teachers were very professional. They looked forward to trying at new things in their teaching and were positive and eager to attain new knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and dispositions. In this connection, T1 said, "I found her highly devoted towards the profession because she would stay at school even after school finished so that she could help the poor students".

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

Good English language teaching is gauged by teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and skills they make use of in their practices. It is not always easy to define what good teaching is as it differs from place to place and culture to culture. Effective English language teaching and effective English teachers are characterized differently in different places. In the good language classroom, teachers are viewed as midwives and facilitators. Students are valued, and they are at the center of the whole learning process. Teachers should form close interpersonal relationships with the students, and the classroom process should foster independence and creativity in students. Students want their teachers to be encouraging, enthusiastic, and available. Although they are frequently disregarded, fairness and harmony in the classroom can be essential for good instruction. Again, awareness is all that is necessary for these procedures, not training. Thus, quality teaching germinates from quality teachers who need to possess the competencies namely content



knowledge expertise, pedagogical skills, digital competence, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, and other personal qualities.

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# Role of Multimedia-Aided EFL Classrooms in Promoting Learners' Interaction and Participation in Tertiary-Level Bangladeshi Students

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**Abstract**—With the expansion of technology, multimedia has now reached every periphery of human life. The teaching-learning scenario in Bangladesh is no exception. There is hardly any higher educational institution that is devoid of multimedia. Technology is deemed a powerful tool for aiding EFL classroom instruction, as Joshi (2012) mentions how multimedia classrooms enhance “students’ chances for interacting with diverse texts, which further provide them a firm background in the tasks and contents of mainstream courses.” The intended study will, therefore, investigate technology’s role in promoting EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners’ classroom interaction and participation in Bangladesh’s public and private universities. This study explores whether EFL students can concentrate and learn better when multimedia is used in the learning process. This study will further investigate EFL learners’ attitudes toward multimedia-based classrooms. A survey questionnaire and focus group discussions (FGDs) will be used as part of a mixed-method design. The thematic analysis technique will be used to look at the qualitative data, while MS Excel will be used to look at the quantitative data. The outcome indicates positive attitudes among students towards multimedia-infused lectures in EFL classrooms in terms of participation, interaction, and understanding of the content.

**Index Terms**—multimedia, e-learning, interaction, participation, EFL

## I. INTRODUCTION

How people learn in the 21st century is almost entirely different from how people learned in the 20th century. Students and teachers are both expected and comfortable to learn and teach with the help of multimedia. Especially in language learning instructions, the use of multimedia has opened a whole new pathway of possibilities. During the pandemic, students became more tech-dependent. However, in Bangladesh, the presence of multimedia at the school and college levels is little to none. Therefore, when students start their undergraduate-level studies, the sudden shift from a traditional classroom environment to a multimedia classroom environment can be overwhelming. By the time they finish their graduation, students are expected to be ready for the job market, which requires a steady grasp of the international language. Therefore, the EFL classrooms and lessons are designed to equip them for what is coming next. Multimedia is used in EFL classrooms to make learning easier and more fun for the students. Lin and Wu (2020) say that students can learn complete and organized information from multimedia sources than they can from learning information that is unrelated and does not fit together without multimedia. To understand how multimedia works, Gilakjani (2012) pointed out that multimedia is “any computer-mediated program or interactive application which combines color, information, pictures, animation, audio, and full-motion video in a single application”. Furthermore, Mayer (2001) says that using text, graphics, images, audio, and video to show information makes for a complex, multisensory learning experience. There is evidence that mixing words and images facilitates comprehension of vast amounts of information.

This material aids students to engage in their studies more than they used to in traditional classrooms. With the availability of multimedia in EFL classrooms, learners are interacting and participating more. Warschauer (1997) wrote that using multimedia in education can create a calm and non-threatening learning environment that can boost students’ motivation and self-esteem and reduce their anxiety in the classroom. So, it is safe to say that students are more eager to attend multimedia classes and take part in them. With the help of multimedia, students can engage with texts that are more real and true to life. This rapid use of multimedia in EFL classrooms can have negative effects as well. The goal of this study is to find out how much EFL students participate and communicate with each other in the classroom, with or without technology. Students need a good teacher with much potential if they are going to learn a new language in a multimedia setting. If the teacher has enough experience, he or she can try out different ways to teach and make the classroom experience better for the students. The purpose of the study is to identify whether and to what extent the use of multimedia promotes students’ interaction and participation in the EFL classroom.

## II. RESEARCH QUESTION

1. Do students in their first year of college find it helpful that EFL classrooms have multimedia?

2. Does the presence of multimedia in the classroom help students better grasp the language?
3. Does multimedia in the EFL classroom motivate students more than in traditional language classrooms?

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to know about the benefits of multimedia, it is crucial to explore the definition and evolution of multimedia in the education sector. Schwartz and Beichner (1998) say multimedia is "the use of different kinds of media in a presentation". Singh (2003) says that the definition of multimedia is the use of text, graphics, animation, pictures, video, and sound to present information in a logical way. Woodward (2000) similarly says that multimedia is the integration of media like text, sound, graphics, animation, video, and images into a computer system. Therefore, it is safe to say that multimedia uses almost all of our senses, so it can be said that multimedia is a tool that stimulates the senses of the audience in more than one way at the same time. Multimedia classrooms are interactive; teachers can control what the information is and how it is given (Shah & Khan, 2015). Gilakjani (2012) mentioned that using multimedia in the classroom not only makes students interested in the lesson but also helps them understand and remember more. As individual students have different learning styles and paces, multimedia can provide a variety of learning styles at the same time to meet the needs of different students and address individual differences. Even though there are some possible drawbacks to teaching with multimedia, the benefits of teaching and learning have been seen over the years. Multimedia is the best way to create the meaningful learning environment that cognitivism and constructivism call for. Studies conducted by Mantei (2000) and Szabo and Hastings (2000) found that students can perceive and apprehend information better when lectures are given with PowerPoint. Using multimedia in education ensures learners' attention and piques their interest by creating a non-threatening and interactive learning environment.

Mayer (2001) stated in his book titled *Multimedia Learning* that giving students narration for the ears and visuals for the eyes allows them to use dual channels simultaneously, which can benefit students in receiving and remembering information longer than usual as it does not overwhelm one channel and allows them to partake in active cognitive processing by making connections between audio lectures and visual presentations. Therefore, if the information is given through two or more of these channels, it will be reinforced more, and people will remember it better and learn more (Ellis, 2004). Most people forget the complicated plot of a fairytale, but when it is shown in a movie, people rarely forget it. This is because a movie engages the audience's mind, eyes, and ears, while a book only engages the audience's mind. "People only recall 15% of what they hear and 25% of what they see, but they remember 60% of what they interact with," as per Wolfram (1994).

In the field of EFL education, the constructivist theory has shifted the focus of learning English from the teacher to the students. This means that English language learners can take charge of their own learning by developing their communicative skills instead of relying on the teacher in traditional English language classrooms (Jeong, 2018). Yang and Fang (2008, p. 137) said that using multimedia to teach emphasizes the students' role and makes "interaction" between teachers and students more important. Sharma (2013) found that the multimedia method worked better for low achievers than for high achievers. Not only that, but they also found that this method made the class lively and interesting, as well as optimized its organization.

Wu and Lin (2020) did a study with 31 Taiwanese students and found that pictures and videos make it easier for people to learn new words. They also mentioned that multimedia allows students to absorb more information. Similarly, Jeong (2018) found that freshmen in Korean universities found that learning materials with multimedia were interesting, entertaining, and helpful.

Studies have shown that computer-based multimedia can help people learn and remember better than traditional lectures or study materials without multimedia (Fletcher & Tobias, 2005; Kozma, 1991; Mayer, 2001). Lastly, studies conducted by Astleitner and Wiesner (2004) have also suggested that student satisfaction and motivation are higher in courses that use multimedia materials.

### IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is designed using Mayer's book on *Multimedia Learning*, which focuses on the use of multimedia materials in order to boost the learning process. The cognitive theory of multimedia learning is a set of 12 rules that came out of his extensive and exploratory research. According to his study, three assumptions were made to pinpoint how humans process information.

The first way is the dual-channel assumption. The first channel is the visual-pictorial channel, which looks at visual information like words on a screen. The second channel, the auditory-verbal channel, processes spoken words.

He also shows that people can only remember a certain amount of information at any given time. Mayer (p. 67) says that the average person can hold between five and seven "chunks" of information in their working memory at the same time, but this number is hard to figure out.

The third assumption he made is called the active-processing assumption. It says that people do not learn by passively taking in information but by actively taking part in cognitive processes. He says that students are not "empty vessels" waiting to be filled with information. Instead, he says, they must combine words and pictures into information

that makes sense and can be stored in long-term memory. Mayer advocates a constructivist perspective on learning in which multimedia is not merely information delivery systems but cognitive supports for knowledge building.

Therefore, this research aims to pinpoint how delivering information using dual channels can contribute to learners' learning outcomes.

V. METHODOLOGY

The focus of this study is to identify the effectiveness of multimedia learning at tertiary levels in Bangladesh and whether or not it has a positive impact on student participation and interaction. The study was conducted using a mixed method. Quantitative data was collected using a questionnaire first to gather a general impression of students' perception of multimedia classrooms, followed by a focus group discussion. Students who expressed their interest in participating in the follow-up discussion were asked to participate in the focus group discussion. In total, 50 students participated in this study and are currently in their first year of undergraduate studies, coming from both public and private universities. First-year students were chosen because they do not usually get enough exposure to multimedia learning in their secondary and higher secondary levels in Bangladesh. Therefore, it is easier for them to distinguish the difference and compare their feelings regarding the methods used at their school-college level to those at university when they are exposed to multimedia-based learning in their first year of university. Students from different departments answered the same questions about how they felt about getting lectures that included multimedia in their basic English classes. The students' majors varied by design to maintain authenticity and impartiality.

Following the questionnaire, some students were later asked to participate in the focus group discussion (FGD) to get a deeper insight into the topic. A focus group discussion is "a group of people chosen and gathered by researchers to discuss and remark, from personal experience, on the topic that is the subject of the research" (Powell & Single, 1996, p. 499). The discussion went on for an hour and a half, following five basic questions regarding students' experience with the use of multimedia in the classroom. Responses were further facilitated with some follow-up questions appropriate to the context.

Instruments

This mixed-methods research was conducted for the purpose of studying the learners' level of interaction. Fourteen close-ended and one open-ended question (see Appendix) were provided. A few questions were on a five-point Likert scale, and others included options. This five-point Likert scale represents- 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree.

VI. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

In the first step of gathering information, students filled out a 15-question survey about how they liked to learn in multimedia and lecture-based classes. All participants have at least some sort of multimedia device in their classroom. The majority of the students mentioned that they have overhead projectors, routers, and computers. Because the participants came from both public and private universities, some students claimed to have advanced technological devices. After that, students were asked questions to understand their initial perception of multimedia classrooms, which may or may not aid their learning. It was crucial to set a baseline of how many students have solely lecture-based classes to determine if they consider multimedia classrooms effective. Approximately 51% of students responded as having solely lecture classes. However, while asking the same question later, during the FGD, they stated that these classes are limited to specific courses and not limited to EFL classrooms.

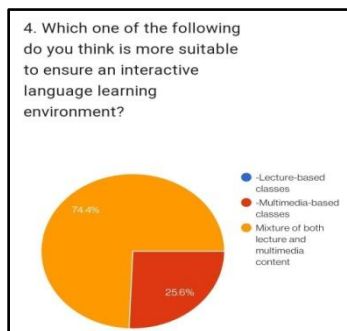


Figure 1. Students Preference Regarding Multimedia-Based Classroom

Nevertheless, it needs to be figured out how much they are used, how they fit into the lecture, and if it helps the students. According to the survey, 74% of people like classes where teachers use multimedia to teach course material, which is made easier by lectures (see Figure 1). Around 71% of students said that they can use multimedia equipment in class; however, more than 50% said that they do not think multimedia is distracting in any way from their learning.

It was important to understand to what extent they were exposed to multimedia-based learning to understand the effect of multimedia on their learning process. More than 85% of students responded that multimedia is somewhat

integrated into their regular EFL classes to some extent. Also, about 84% of students said that multimedia is an important part of how they talk to their peers and teachers in class (see Figures 2 & 3). On the other hand, most students agreed that traditional lecture-based classrooms make it hard for them to talk to each other. Even though they believe that multimedia classrooms allow for more interaction than classes that are solely based on lectures, they ever denied the benefits of traditional classrooms. Around 70% of the students believe a mixture of lectures and multimedia is the best way to learn.

Besides, around 32 out of 50 students answered that they believe multimedia classrooms make their language learning experience more interesting (see Figure 4).

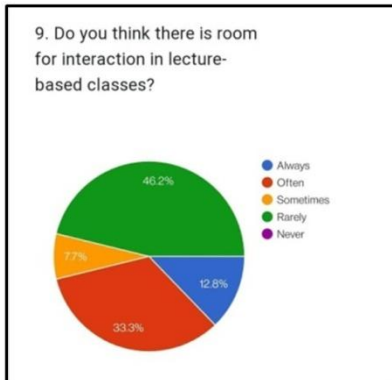


Figure 2. Students' Response Regarding Lecture Based Classroom

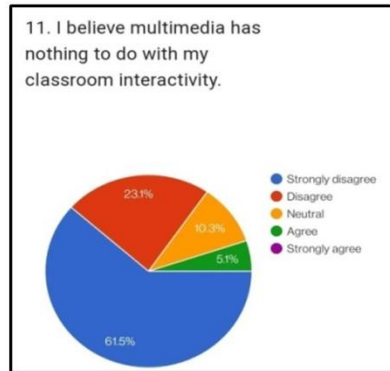


Figure 3. Students' Response Regarding Interaction in Multimedia Classroom

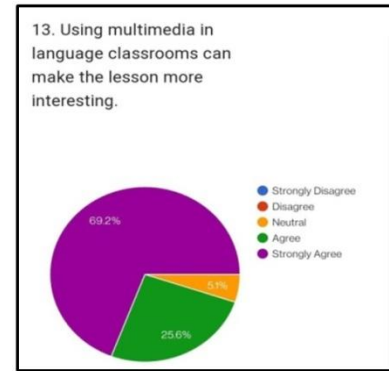


Figure 4. Students' Response Regarding Lessons Taught Using Multimedia

After their response, nine students were called in for a focus group discussion. Most of the students responded in favor of multimedia classrooms when they were asked. Even though students ranged from multiple departments, they all preferred to have multimedia-infused language classrooms as they all took fundamental English courses in their first year of undergraduate. The following questions were asked to facilitate the focus group discussion:

1. How does multimedia help in mastering English for your undergraduate-level study?
2. To what extent is multimedia used in your language classroom?
3. Does it improve your overall learning experience compared to solely lecture-based classes?
4. What are some benefits of multimedia in the language classroom?
5. Do you think multimedia in your language courses affect in-class interaction and participation?

To answer the first question, most participants focused on a key aspect of language learning: losing motivation after a while. All participants had received 12 years of basic education before joining the undergraduate program. As a result, because their majors were engineering, law, or pharmacy, many expressed their skepticism about taking additional language courses. "When I was given a noncredit English course, I almost decided to take readmission as I felt I was wasting my time there. After a week or two, I realized that things I had learned could be taught better. In my school, teachers never used multimedia to deliver or facilitate lectures," stated Ipshta. Another student Labonno who is doing her undergraduate in a renowned public university stated that it was so much easier when my teacher showed us a courtroom picture and discussed necessary vocabulary rather than just handing out a list of vocabulary to the students. Having a visual in front of me helped me remember the words almost immediately.

Two students, Akash and Jerin (pseudonyms), mentioned that their performance improved when they could give presentations using PowerPoint slides. Even though they had nothing written on their slides, they still felt confident having a visual presentation. They also added that the multimedia aid took some attention away from them, which benefits them greatly. This may also be considered from the teacher's perspective. When a teacher is solely responsible for giving a lecture for an eighty-minute class, it is challenging for the teacher and the students, as it only allows them to be receptive and not productive, which can be very monotonous. As stated by Mayer (2001) stated, students are not empty vessels ready to be filled with information. They need to be allowed to use other channels to process the information.

Similarly, Asif, a first-year CSE student, mentioned that "it is not like I hate lecture-based classes, but some courses require audiovisual aid. In my ENG101 course, my faculty showed me diagrams of brainstorming and outlining that helped me remember the components I need to incorporate in my outline".

According to Paivio (1986), basic comprehension and reasoning processes are reflected in mental representation. When information is processed through multiple sensory channels, such as hearing, seeing, and touching, the ability to make sense of what has been seen and heard, or the mental image of the outside world, grows. This proves that Asif better grasped his course content as it involved his multiple sensory channels. The visual aid facilitated by the lecture allowed him to remember the information using multiple channels.

Another student, Farah, pointed out that audiovisual materials can greatly enhance the schema they need in their creative writing lesson. For example, she mentioned a short film their teacher played before they were instructed to write their understanding of that particular video. All students unanimously and unintentionally identified the same concept. She believes that showing the short film made the concept of "empathy" clearer, and it would not have been possible without the help of the video. Similarly, empirical studies have found that sensory curiosity can be induced by changes in light, sound, or other sensory stimuli, for example, through multimedia like videos, music, or audio (Liu et al., 2009). Cognitive curiosity among students can easily be generated by telling a simple short story, whereas triggering sensory curiosity might require the help of multimedia equipment in class.

Students were asked if the inclusion of multimedia affected their in-class interaction with peers and teachers. All students instantly agreed and stated that it facilitated their discussion greatly. In their Fundamental English course, teachers often collected responses using Mentimeter, triggering some interesting discussion among peers and the teacher.

"My teacher used Mentimeter to generate topics for one of our journal tasks. Students came up with topics like dystopian novels, Marlon Brando, or Jeff Dahmer, which are fairly new to me. Upon starting the discussion, I got to know about many people and ideas, as well as share my idea of writing a blog with my peers" said Esha. Based on this answer, they were asked if the room for interaction is less in classes that offer lectures only. Students' responses were remarkable, as they stated that most lecture classes do not require us to participate in a discussion, and if at any point they lose focus due to any external factor, it is so hard to get back on track. Besides, some teachers even find it distracting when they are giving lectures, and students interact with each other, let alone start a discussion. In a multimedia-induced lecture, teachers mostly elicit responses from the students using multisensory channels, allowing them to develop their critical thinking skills.

Ahnaf, a first-year pharmacy student, focused on an exciting point. He said that even if the topic was somewhat less interesting, he did not feel bored as there were a lot of interactive tasks followed by audio-visual inputs in which he could participate even without being actively involved. This proves Mayers' third finding, which states that combining words and pictures into information that makes sense can be stored in long-term memory. As mentioned by Ahnaf, even though he was not actively participating in the lecture, he still got some of the information as it involved more than one medium in delivering the information.

Another student, Rakib, while discussing the regular lecture-based classes, mentioned that it is interesting how just incorporating a single multimedia element, e.g., a short audio track or a video, can very easily and without much effort initiate discussion. These small in-class peer discussions also helped me improve my listening skill. While our teachers focused on the formal aspect of listening, in-class discussions in English initiated with the use of multimedia helped my listening and immediately comprehending the meaning and responding to such a great level.

One challenge that most students identified is that they started to rely too much on multimedia equipment and often forgot the existence of booklets and copies. However, this case is not limited to multimedia-based EFL classrooms only, as in other courses as well; they rely heavily on taking photographs of the instruction written on the board or taking notes on their phones rather than in their copies.

Last but not least, all participants identified that the shift in multimedia classrooms is more than inevitable nowadays, as they were exposed to online learning for a longer during the pandemic. This habit enabled them to learn, understand, interact, and perform better with the help of multimedia devices both in the classroom and at home.

## VII. CONCLUSION

To conclude, it can be said that multimedia has an inevitable effect on student interaction and participation. Students feel enthusiastic about attending classes with lectures interwoven with a multimedia element that allows them to process the information better and faster. As already shown here, moving the focus from a traditional classroom environment to a multimedia-aided one requires a different way of thinking about classroom dynamics and the roles of teachers as well as learners. Successfully incorporating multimedia into language content to make the lesson even more effective requires a certain level of digital literacy from teachers and students. Since this study is limited to only students' perspectives on the effectiveness of multimedia in language classrooms to boost their participation and interaction, further studies can be conducted by collecting teachers' feedback on multimedia classrooms and whether they feel it positively facilitates their lectures. In response to the research questions asked at the start, more than half of the students said they felt more at ease when lectures included multimedia content. As a result of a better understanding of the content, they also perform better in the long run. Besides, students mentioned that multimedia-integrated classroom discussions allowed them to have more fruitful interactions with peers. Incorporating multimedia into lectures gives learners more opportunities to participate and perform, resulting in a faster learning rate. Gilakjani (2012) says, "Multimedia that works well for learning and teaching does not just use different media together. Instead, it combines media in a way that takes advantage of the strengths of each medium and makes the learning and teaching experiences longer".

## APPENDIX

**Survey Questionnaire**

The survey should take no more than 10 minutes of your time. Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the survey at any time. Any information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and used only for statistical analysis.

Please provide the following information.

**Personal Information**

Email:

Name of your institution:

Class/year/semester:

Gender:

-Male

-Female

Name of your institution:

1. Do you have multimedia in your classroom?

-Yes

-No (If the answer is "no" then please skip question no 2)

2. What are the available technologies in your classroom? (You can choose more than one option)

-Over Head Projector (OHP)

-Projector

-Router

-Electronic Board

-Sound system

-Laptop/Computer

-Other

3. Do you have lecture-based classes that do not include multimedia??

-Yes

-No

4. Which one of the following do you think is more suitable to ensure an interactive language learning environment?

-Lecture-based classes

-Multimedia-based classes

-Mixture of both lecture and multimedia content

5. Are you allowed to use the available multimedia equipment in your classroom?

-yes

-no

6. Do you think access to that equipment can cause distraction in the classroom?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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7. How often do your teachers use multimedia in English courses?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
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8. Do you enjoy solely lecture-based classes?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
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9. Do you think there is room for interaction in lecture-based classes?

Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
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10. I prefer classes that integrate both multimedia and lecture.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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11. I believe multimedia has nothing to do with my classroom interactivity.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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12. Using technology can improve the classroom experience.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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13. Do you think using multimedia in language classrooms can make the lesson more interesting?



Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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14. Do you think using visual aids like pictures, videos, diagrams and charts helps you learn better?

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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15. Would you like to add any problems that you may have faced regarding the availability/unavailability of multimedia?

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# Challenges Faced by Libyan English Instructors in Using E-Communication Tools

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**Abstract**—The popularity of online teaching has increased significantly due to the outbreak of Covid-19 which prompted a sudden shift of educational activities to the online environment. In Libya, the government imposed online teaching and television learning programs as “emergency online education”. However, while online education offers numerous benefits as a flexible mode of knowledge delivery, both instructors and students tend to face various obstacles in the teaching and learning process. This study aimed to ascertain the challenges of using e-communication tools and their correlation with teaching experience among EFL instructors in Libyan universities. A total of 100 EFL instructors were examined using a cross-sectional survey method. The data were gathered through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using the mean, frequency, standard deviation, and Pearson correlation. The findings showed that major challenges faced by Libyan EFL instructors in using e-communication tools result from inadequate technical skills and lack of institutional support, followed by lack of student engagement and poor internet connection. The study also revealed a weak correlation between challenges of using e-communication tools and teaching experience among the instructors. This study was envisaged to provide information that can be useful to the Libyan government and higher learning institutions in the process of e-teaching implementation in the EFL context.

**Index Terms**—cross-sectional survey, EFL instructors, e-communication tools, technology acceptance

## I. INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus outbreak in 2019 prompted a sudden shift of educational activities to the online environment to ensure a smooth continuity of the teaching and learning process (Langford & Damsa, 2020). This phenomenon has increased the popularity of online teaching at all levels of education across the globe. Accordingly, the Libyan Ministry of Education, in particular, took relevant measures by imposing online teaching and television learning programs (Atia & Ganoun, 2020), which are adopted as “emergency online education” (Marinoni et al., 2020). As a result, most Libyan higher education institutions embraced online learning (Abrik & Jawber, 2021). However, online educational facilities and courses could be difficult to design or adapt within a short time (Langford & Damsa, 2020).

Additionally, while online education offers numerous benefits as a flexible mode of knowledge delivery, both instructors and students tend to face various challenges that can be significant obstacles to the implementation of e-education. The unexpected change brought by the Covid-19 pandemic has posed several challenges to instructors as many of them experienced online teaching for the first time and may find it difficult to adjust to the new method (Carolan et al., 2020). This situation provides researchers with chances to investigate the challenges and benefits of online education (e.g. Hassan et al., 2021; Li, 2022; Paudel, 2021; Sengupta, 2022). In particular, research indicates the need to further “investigate the challenges of online teaching faced by English instructors” (Nugroho et al., 2021, p. 277).

In Libya, English a Foreign Language (EFL) is gaining popularity and increasingly used for business and educational purposes, especially by young generation. Nevertheless, despite the significance of EFL education, previous studies have not focused on the challenges of online teaching among Libyan English instructors. Also, in the Libyan context, the relationship between online instruction and teaching experience was not established but has been hinted in previous research (Bosaninh & Al-bazar, 2021). In addition, none of the previous studies focused on e-teaching challenges among Libyan EFL instructors. As such, there is a need for systematic investigations into the challenges faced by Libyan EFL instructors to inform educators about changes that are necessary to improve the quality of EFL education. Therefore, the current study sought to investigate the challenges faced by Libyan EFL instructors and their correlation with teaching experience. The study aimed to achieve the following objectives.

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1. To ascertain the major challenges faced by Libyan university EFL instructors in using e-communication tools?
2. To determine whether there is a statistically significant correlation between challenges of using e-communication tools and teaching experience among Libyan university EFL instructors?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Online Instruction and E-Communication Tools*

Online instruction refers to teaching activity that is accompanied typically online (Baran et al., 2011). Several terms are used to refer to online instruction, such as online teaching, e-instruction, and online tutoring. The three popular components of online instruction entail blended, synchronous, and asynchronous teaching (Juhary, 2020; Şener et al., 2020). Blended instruction is a combination of face-to-face and online instructional methods using suitable e-communication tools (Oh & Park, 2009; Saliba et al., 2013). Synchronous teaching is described as an instructional method that occurs online without delay in the delivery of information, such as “audio and video transmitted “live” between instructors and students via TV, Internet, or radio” (Vasquez & Straub, 2012, p. 33). On the other hand, asynchronous communication is described as a text-based computer-mediated interaction that allows people to connect with one another “without the constraint of time and place” (Hew et al., 2010, p. 572) using platforms such as emails, websites, discussion boards, and voice mails.

Whereas, the Covid-19 outbreak possibly resulted in “emergency remote teaching” which is viewed as “a temporary and unplanned teaching solution due to a sudden change of the teaching environment” (Juhary, 2020, p. 188). This instructional approach is commonly conducted using Learning Management System (LMS) tools (e.g. Blackboard, Moodle), social networking tools (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Skype), or synchronized tools such as Google Apps, Dropbox, and Zoho Apps (Alias & Zainuddin, 2005; Al-Samarraie & Saeed, 2018). E-communication tools are popularly and flexibly utilized by English teachers. This is because both teachers and students can freely access useful language materials and interact directly through e-communication tools (Abdullahi et al., 2020; Abdullah et al., 2022).

### B. *Challenges of Online Teaching*

The educational system has witnessed tremendous changes due to the proliferation of new media and the recent Covid-19 outbreak. Specifically, the unanticipated “shift of English language teaching from face-to-face classroom interaction to online learning activities using digital platforms has resulted in a number of challenges for English teachers and students” (Nugroho et al., 2021, p. 277). As such, previous studies investigated challenges of online instruction faced by English teachers in different contexts. For instance, a study of online teaching conducted by Langford and Damsa (2020) reported that the most significant obstacles faced by instructors in Norway include inadequate facilities, limited technical skills, as well as a low level of students’ engagement. According to the study, instructors with adequate technical skills in using e-communication tools tend to perform their teaching tasks effectively.

Additionally, Şener et al. (2020) used a cross-sectional survey method to investigate online teaching experiences among 39 English instructors at a Turkish private university. According to the findings, English instructors experience various challenges, including shortage of technical facilities for e-classes, increased workload, and inadequate funding from the university. The study also pointed to some critical aspects, such as inability to create virtual interaction prospects, low level of motivation and lack of autonomy among students, and unreliable internet connectivity. In addition, Cutri and Mena (2020) revealed that many traditional faculty members “are new to online teaching and lack formal education in how to successfully teach online” (p. 361). According to Hakim (2020), challenges faced by EFL instructors have increased due to the integration of technology into EFL education. However, this significant change can eventually “lead to improved teaching and learning with a positive impact on language learners’ proficiency level” (p. 33). Therefore, some previous studies have investigated such aspects of challenges and benefits as well as the readiness of online education (Abdullah et al., 2022; Alwaheebi & Al-Qahtani, 2022; Cutri & Mena, 2020; Hassan et al., 2021; Li, 2022; Sengupta, 2022).

Moreover, Atmojo and Nugroho (2020) used interviews to investigate online teaching activities and challenges faced by EFL instructors in Indonesian institutions. According to the study, EFL instructors employed several e-platforms, for example, Learning Management System (LMS), video conference, and Google Classroom. However, they encounter challenges such as difficulty in creating online teaching materials, inadequate online facilities, limited interaction with students, and limited online teaching experience. In the same context, Nugroho et al. (2021) investigated university EFL instructors’ challenges of online teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. The findings revealed that major challenges facing EFL instructors are associated with e-learning platforms, students’ enthusiasm and engagement, as well as time for the preparation of online learning materials.

Similarly, Gustine (2021) employed focus group interviews to explore the anticipations and online teaching challenges encountered by pre-service English instructors during the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. According to the findings, challenges faced by pre-service English instructors include lack of technical skills and pedagogical knowledge to conduct online tests and evaluate students’ performance. Also, a study conducted by Mouchantaf (2020) demonstrated that the main challenges faced by English language instructors in Lebanon are related to internet access, online pedagogical training, institutional support, and the use of technology among students. Another study conducted

by Zou et al. (2021) employed a survey method to examine the readiness for online instruction among 149 English instructors in China. The study demonstrated that the major concern among English instructors relates to students' low level of engagement, followed by troubles in tracing the students' learning outcomes. Also, a large number of instructors faced technical challenges, for example, poor internet connection, difficulty in software management, and poor configuration of teaching devices.

Furthermore, Hakim (2020) used questionnaires and interviews to investigate the influence of technology integration in virtual EFL classrooms and the challenges faced by EFL instructors at a university in Saudi Arabia during Covid-19. The findings showed that despite having access to several virtual teaching platforms, Saudi EFL instructors encounter many challenges, such as weak network connection, lack of suitable assessment tools, and learners' low level of motivation. Likewise, Hamad et al. (2021) used a survey method to determine the challenges of online teaching among EFL instructors at a university in Saudi Arabia during the Covid-19 pandemic. The findings revealed that Saudi EFL instructors face challenges associated with the evaluation of students' learning outcomes and online interaction with students. Also, Lukas and Yunus (2021) used an interview technique to explore e-learning challenges faced by English instructors during Covid-19 in Malaysia. According to the study, English instructors face e-learning challenges such as poor internet connectivity, students' low level of participation and readiness to adopt e-learning.

Some studies were conducted to determine whether instructors' teaching experience is associated with instructional challenges (Abrik & Jawber, 2021; Bosaninh & Al-bazar, 2021; Hashemi, 2021; Langford & Damsa, 2020). For instance, Hashemi (2021) investigated the opportunities, teaching experience, and challenges of e-teaching among Afghanistan university lecturers. According to the study, there is no a statistically significant correlation between teaching experience challenges faced by instructors. However, very few studies generally focused on Libyan instructors (Abrik & Jawber, 2021; Bosaninh & Al-bazar, 2021). These studies, nevertheless, have not paid particular attention to the use of e-communication tools among EFL instructors. A case study of a Libyan university conducted by Abrik and Jawber (2021) showed that instructors with less teaching experience are likely to face difficulties during online teaching. Bosaninh and Al-bazar (2021) reported that lecturers with PhD degrees and high levels of teaching experience (7 years and above) tend to face more challenges during the pandemic compared with those who have masters' degrees with less than 6 years. Therefore, this study focuses on challenges faced by Libyan English instructors and their correlation with teaching experience.

### *C. Theoretical Facet*

This study utilizes the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989) in a study comprising 152 technology users. According to the study, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness of technology considerably define users' acceptance of technology. In addition, both perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness were reported to relate with "self-reported current usage and self-predicted future usage" (p. 319). Nevertheless, perceived usefulness had a substantially greater relationship with user behavior when compared with ease of use. Recently, TAM has been successfully employed in prior studies to investigate user acceptance of technology in different contexts (Caratiquit & Caratiquit, 2022; Girish et al., 2022; Sun, 2022). For example, Sun (2022) revealed that perceived usefulness turned to be a significant predictor of instructors' actual usage of online instruction during the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on TAM's presumptions, the current investigation sought to investigate the challenges of online instruction faced by Libyan EFL teachers and their correlation with teaching experience. Understanding the challenges of online instruction among EFL instructors is paramount as the accomplishment of online teaching depends on the level of technology integration.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### *A. Design*

The current research used a cross-sectional survey method to investigate online teaching challenges faced by EFL instructors in Libyan universities. The survey method is beneficial due to its ability to help researchers examine large samples of population. This approach, according to Allen et al. (2008), occurs in representative settings that allow researchers to draw general inferences. In addition, Wimmer and Dominick (2009) mentioned that surveys allow researchers to competently classify variables and quantity people's usage of communication media.

### *B. Data Collection*

The data were gathered from a random sample of 100 Libyan English language instructors from six universities: Dernah University, Benghazi University, Sabha University, Zawia University, Al-Margab University, and Sabratha University. A self-administered questionnaire instrument, adopted from previous research (Hashemi, 2021), was used to collect data. The questionnaire consists of two sections. The first section contains the respondents' demographic information, including gender, academic qualification, and years of teaching experience. Whereas, the second section entails 15 items concerning the respondents' challenges of using e-communication tools in teaching the English language. The items were designed using the five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

### C. Validity, Reliability, and Data Analysis

To guarantee validity, the items were evaluated by experts in communication technology and language education. The experts' comments were carefully considered, and necessary changes were made. Subsequently, the reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's (1951) Alpha test. The result revealed a reliability level of .844 for the questionnaire items. According to Moore and Benbasat (1991), Cronbach's reliability levels are acceptable at 0.7 and above. The analysis was performed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The mean, frequency, and standard deviation were performed to analyze the challenges of using e-communication tools among the instructors and their teaching experience. Whereas, Pearson's correlation was employed to determine the correlation between the two variables. The data were coded and computed via the SPSS software Version 23.0 at an alpha of  $\leq 0.05$ .

## IV. FINDINGS

All copies of questionnaires were completed, returned, and found valid for analysis, representing a 100% response rate. The demographic data shows that most of the instructors (58.0%) are females, whereas 42% are males. Also, more than half (52.0%) of the instructors hold Master's degree, 41.0% hold PhDs, whereas very few of them (7.0%) are professors. The respondents' years of teaching experience are represented in Table 1 as follows.

TABLE 1  
INSTRUCTORS' TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Years of Experience	N	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percent
Less than 1 year	100	8	8.00	8.00
1-5 years	100	22	22.00	30.00
5-10 years	100	20	20.00	50.00
10-15 years	100	18	18.00	68.00
15-20 years	100	24	24.00	92.00
20 and above	100	8	8.00	100
Total		100	100	100

As shown in Table 1, most instructors (24.0%) have 15-20 years of teaching experience, while 22.0% of them have 1-5 years of experience. Also, 20 of the instructors have 5-10 years of experience, while 18.0% have 10-15 years. Eight of the instructors, representing 8.0%, have 0-1 and 20-above years of teaching experience respectively. These outcomes indicate that a large majority (70.0%) of the respondents have 5-above years of teaching experience. Additionally, about half (50.0%) of the respondents have 10-above years of experience. Conversely, almost one-third (30.0%) of them have less than five years of experience.

### A. Challenges Faced by EFL Instructors in Using E-Communication Tools

The first objective of this study aims to investigate the challenges faced by English instructors in selected Libyan universities. The outcome related to this objective is depicted in Table 2. The "Agree and Strongly Agree" option is represented as A+SA. Also, the "Disagree and Strongly Disagree" option is denoted as D+SD. Whereas, the "Neutral" option is represented as N. Since the five-points Likert scale was used, 5.00 represents the highest mean value.

TABLE 2  
CHALLENGES FACED BY EFL INSTRUCTORS

SN	Items	Mean	SD	Total (F/%)		
				A+SA	D+SD	N
1	I find it difficult to use e-tools in teaching English due to a lack of technical skills	4.8333	.38925	61.00	34.30	4.70
2	A lack of institutional support affects my use of e-tools in teaching of English	4.8333	.38925	61.01	29.99	9.00
3	A lack of e-teaching training affects my use of e-tools in teaching of English	4.0000	.60302	52.10	40.30	7.60
4	A lack of constant power supply disrupts my use of e-tools in teaching of English	4.5000	.52223	46.40	26.20	27.40
5	A lack of access to ICT facilities at home disrupts my use of e-tools in teaching of English	3.1667	.93744	39.70	36.50	23.80
6	A lack of face-to-face interaction with students makes my e-teaching challenging	4.0000	.85280	52.10	39.00	8.90
7	I experience difficulty in receiving meaningful feedback while teaching English using e-tools	2.8333	1.26730	38.40	15.50	46.10
8	I face difficulty in time management while teaching English using e-tools	4.1667	.38925	39.60	14.40	46.00
9	I have concerns about academic honesty in using e-tools to teach English	3.3333	1.15470	48.60	5.10	46.30
10	I have difficulty preparing for English instruction using e-tools	4.1667	.38925	39.80	7.60	52.60
11	I find it difficult to perform my English teaching tasks using e-tools	3.5000	1.00000	40.50	38.83	20.67
12	I find it difficult to use e-tools in teaching English due to a lack of experience	4.0000	1.20605	52.10	42.20	5.70
13	Poor internet connection disrupts my teaching of English using of e-tools	4.6667	.49237	47.50	33.42	19.08
14	The teaching of English using e-tools is challenging due to students' lack of engagement	3.6667	1.15470	47.10	41.40	11.50
15	The use of e-tools in teaching English has caused a reduction in my monthly income	4.3333	.77850	48.54	41.50	9.96
	Total	3.9999	1.00196	47.63	29.75	22.52

Note: "Level indicator: low=0.1-2.99, moderate=3.0-3.49, high=3.5-5"

As depicted in Table 2, inadequate technical skills (Mean=4.83; SD=0.389) and lack of institutional support (Mean=4.83; SD=0.389) represent the major challenges faced by English instructors in using e-communication tools in Libyan universities. Also, poor internet connection and lack of student engagement represent the second most significant challenges with a mean value of 4.67 respectively. Whereas, a lack of constant power supply represents the third most significant challenge faced by the instructors (Mean=4.50; SD=0.522), followed by a reduction in monthly income (Mean=4.33; SD=0.779), poor time management (Mean=4.17; SD=0.389), and difficulty in preparation (Mean=4.17; SD=0.389). Additionally, lack of e-teaching training, inadequate teaching experience, and lack of face-to-face interaction with students were significant challenges with a mean value of 4.00 respectively. Other challenges faced by Libyan English instructors in using e-communication tools were difficulty in performing teaching tasks (Mean=3.50; SD=1.000), concerns about academic honesty (Mean=3.33; SD=1.155), and lack of access to ICT facilities at home (Mean=3.17; SD=.937). Conversely, difficulty in receiving meaningful feedback represents the least challenge faced by the instructors (Mean=2.83; SD=1.267). Overall, English instructors in the selected Libyan universities face challenges in using e-communication tools to a high extent (Mean=3.99; SD=1.002).

**B. Correlation Between Teaching Experience and Challenges in Using E-Communication Tools**

The second objective of this research aims to determine whether there is a statistically significant correlation between teaching experience and challenges in using e-communication tools among Libyan English language instructors. As stated previously in the methodology part, the correlation between challenges in using e-tools and teaching experience among English language instructors is examined using Pearson's correlation test. The outcome is represented in Table 3 as follows.

TABLE 3  
CORRELATION BETWEEN CHALLENGES AND TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Variables	Challenges	Teaching experience
Challenges	Pearson Correlation	.438**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.352
	N	100
Teaching experience	Pearson Correlation	.438**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.352
	N	100

Note: "Inferences set at an alpha of  $\leq 0.05$ "

Table 3 reveals a p-value of 0.352, which is somewhat above 0.05. This result signifies that the correlation between challenges of using e-communication tools and teaching experience among the instructors is weak ( $p=0.352 > 0.05$ ). Therefore, can be inferred that instructors' teaching experience slightly predict their challenges of using e-communication tools in teaching the English language. This outcome indicates that Libyan English instructors with teaching experience may face challenges in using e-tools.

## V. DISCUSSION

The current research revealed several important findings. First, major challenges faced by Libyan EFL instructors in using e-communication tools result from inadequate technical skills and lack of institutional support, followed by lack of student engagement and poor internet connection. These findings are consistent with most previous studies on e-teaching challenges in different countries (Hakim, 2020; Lukas & Yunus, 2021; Şener et al., 2020; Zou et al., 2021). For example, Langford and Damsa (2020) found that limited technical skills and low level of students' engagement are major obstacles faced by English instructors in Norway. Instructors' technical skills and students' engagement are critical in determining the success of e-teaching. These findings are consistency with the presumption of TAM that when users consider technology to be complex, they are likely to form a low level of engagement with the technology (Davis, 1989). Based on this supposition, Libyan EFL instructors' difficulty in using e-communication tools, including poor internet connectivity, may affect their engagement in e-teaching, which can affect their performance. Likewise, the low level of engagement among students could be due to a lack of motivation or inadequate technical skills.

Moreover, the lack of institutional support concurs with the findings of some previous studies (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020; Mouchantaf, 2020; Şener et al., 2020). The lack of institutional support is a critical aspect of e-teaching as moving from conventional (face-to-face) to online teaching practicum requires extra instructional facilities and financial support from the institution to create a team of skillful instructors with adequate technical skills and expertise. Instructors tend to succeed in e-teaching based on institutional support and their attitudes toward the usage of technology, which could help them to from positive thoughts about teaching purpose and conduct teaching tasks effectively. Therefore, a more strategic approach to e-teaching is required by the Libyan government and higher learning institutions by providing support to instructors.

In addition, the current research found that the correlation between challenges of using e-communication tools and teaching experience among Libyan EFL instructors is weak, which suggests that instructors' teaching experience may not predict their challenges of using e-communication tools in teaching the English language. This outcome seems to support the findings of Bosaninh and Al-bazar (2021) which revealed that Libyan instructors with high levels of teaching experience tend to face more instructional challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic compared with those who have a few years of experience. This is, perhaps, because young instructors, who are conversant with new technology, tend to effectively employ the alternative teaching approach (online strategy) during the crisis. This outcome, however, contradicts the findings of Abrik and Jawber (2021) that instructors with less teaching experience are likely to face difficulties during online teaching, most likely because the research focused on a case study of an institution.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This research investigated the challenges of using e-communication tools and their correlation with teaching experience among EFL instructors in selected Libyan universities. According to the findings, major challenges faced by Libyan EFL instructors in using e-communication tools result from inadequate technical skills and lack of institutional support, followed by lack of student engagement and poor internet connection. Accordingly, TAM considers technical competency as a significant predictor of use engagement with technology. Additionally, this study found a weak correlation between challenges of using e-communication tools and teaching experience among the instructors. For the successful integration of e-teaching into EFL education, the Libyan government and higher learning institutions have to consider developing technical competency among instructors and providing them with adequate support.

The findings of this study were envisaged to provide useful information to the Libyan government, higher institutions, instructors, policymakers, and relevant authorities in the process of e-teaching implementation, especially in the EFL context. Moreover, the present study could increase our understanding of challenges faced by EFL instructors in using e-communication tools and their association with teaching experience. This is because, in the Libyan context, research into e-teaching problems tends to focus merely on instructors with no particular attention to the EFL context. However,



the present study is limited to a cross-section survey with a small sample of respondents. Therefore, further research may consider a larger sample you yield more generalizable conclusions. Likewise, a longitudinal method can be employed to determine the phenomenon changes with time. Also, this research can be replication from the students' perspective.

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# An Exploratory Study of Learners' Perceptions About the Effectiveness of Active Learning Approaches

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**Abstract**—This study reports on the results of a mixed-methods study conducted at Sultan Qaboos University, Oman, which aimed at exploring students' overall perspectives and their perceptions of the benefits and challenges involved in active learning approaches, namely flipped instruction, problem-based learning, Socratic questioning and critical thinking, and reflective writing, employed in an English language and skills course. Results revealed that overall students valued the active learning strategies adopted in the course. More specifically, developing learners' language, academic, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (analysis, critical thinking and evaluation, problem solving, and synthesis), fostering learners' autonomy and metacognitive skills, and enhancing learners' motivation and engagement in the learning process were considered the main benefits of these active learning strategies. The study also indicated that novelty of active learning strategies to learners, the heavy workload, learners' inadequate academic skills, poor collaboration and communication skills in team-based tasks, and limited linguistic and technological abilities constituted the major challenges associated with these strategies. The study contributes to the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) knowledge base and has implications for the teaching and learning of EFL in the context of Oman and similar educational settings.

**Index Terms**—active learning, flipped learning, problem-based learning, reflective writing, critical thinking

## I. INTRODUCTION

Active learning (AL), which is conceptualized as a teaching-learning approach through which learners take part in the learning process by constructing understanding and knowledge (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2020), has recently gained momentum in educational settings worldwide. Unlike traditional teaching-learning approaches centered on knowledge transmission, AL focuses on facilitating student learning and it is participatory in nature (Kane, 2004), as under this approach, learners are not viewed as passive recipients of the teacher's knowledge but rather as active participants in the learning process (Ertmer & Newby, 2013), and the teacher is a guide and facilitator (Oros, 2007).

AL approaches are grounded in constructivist and social constructivist learning theories (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2020). Constructivists perceive learning as a socially situated and context-specific process of meaning creation (Leondari, 2007; Stevenson & Clegg, 2011) which is sculpted through “dialogue, collaborative learning and cooperative learning” (Merriam et al., 2007, p. 292). Simultaneously, constructivists emphasize the learner's agency in this process where knowledge is constructed in the learner's mind while interacting with the environment (Perkins, 2006; Smith, 2009) and memory evolves constantly as new learning contexts are introduced (Ertmer & Newby, 2013). Constructivist principles have several implications for the design of AL activities since the learning environment is vital for learning to take place.

Researchers argue that the implementation of AL strategies in any study subject brings about several personal and academic gains. Academically, Nelson and Crow (2014) believe that AL strategies enhance the learners' higher-order thinking abilities including analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, which are considered essential 21<sup>st</sup> century skills (Al-Busaidi & Tuzlukova, 2021; Neisler et al., 2016). In addition to enhancing learners' comprehension and knowledge retention, development of life-long learning skills is also considered a major benefit of AL (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2020). This is achieved through learner autonomy which is facilitated by the increased engagement and control over one's own learning. The utilization of higher-order thinking skills and development of life-long learning capacities positively influence learners' overall academic performance. AL also helps learners develop their oral and written communication and research skills (Oros, 2007) and improves their examination performance (Freeman et al., 2014).

Flipped learning (FL), problem-based learning (PBL), Socratic questioning (SQ) and critical thinking (CT), and reflective writing (RW) are instances of AL strategies that can positively influence students' overall learning experience. FL is used to refer to a blended learning environment where digital technologies are systematically integrated to support

traditional face-to-face instruction and the order of traditional classroom activities is reversed (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Gasmi, 2018). Along with the flexible and individualized learning experience it provides to students (Akçayır & Akçayır, 2018; Kвашnina & Martynko, 2016), this classroom design frees up class time for interactive and communicative learner-centered activities that engage learners in the learning process and enhance their higher-order thinking skills (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2020), which ultimately enhances the learners' academic performance (Webb & Doman, 2016).

PBL has roots in constructivism and social learning theories that emphasize the role of social interaction and construction of meaningful learning experiences in cognitive development. Yew and Goh (2016) state that PBL enables learners to engage actively in meaningful problems to collaboratively problem-solve and develop self-direction. PBL supports the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as innovation, technology, and life and career skills (Berkson, 1993; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Other researchers argue that PBL enhances critical thinking and communication skills along with cooperative learning and information synthesis (Al-Busaidi et al., 2021; Tuzlukova & Singh, 2018), and increases student motivation (Michel et al., 2002).

Paul and Elder (2007) describe SQ and CT as a disciplined, systematic, and deep questioning used to pursue thought for various purposes such as analyzing concepts, exploring complex ideas, and uncovering assumptions. They believe that students learn this type of questioning to critically understand and assess their own thinking and that of others and its implications, and to reason complex issues. With the development of questioning minds, deep learning can be cultivated as both SQ and CT share a common end which is pursuing meaning and truth.

Reflection is generally defined as a "process or means by which an experience, in the form of thought, feeling, or action, is brought into consideration while it is happening or subsequently" (Brockbank & McGill, 1998, p. 56). More specifically, this study conceives of reflection as "the deliberate and purposeful act of thinking which centers on ways of responding to problem situations" (Khemlani & Kochappan, 2006, p. 1). Engaging learners in RW practice boosts their thinking abilities (Beed et al., 2005) and their writing skills, specifically content, organization, grammar, vocabulary, and writing mechanics (Sani et al., 2017).

In the Omani educational context, AL is still in its infancy as a learning-teaching approach, and consequently, research investigating the possible applications and implications of AL strategies for various study fields in higher education institutions including English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is relatively scarce. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap and to explore students' viewpoints about the implementation of AL strategies, specifically FL, PBL, CT, and RW in the teaching of an English Language and Skills course at Sultan Qaboos University, Oman. The study also seeks to examine the benefits and challenges the students associate with the afore-mentioned AL techniques.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. Participants

The study participants were recruited using purposive sampling, a technique that is widely used in EFL research. Purposive sampling is considered an effective means of obtaining rich data that helps address the study's research questions (Gray, 2014). Consequently, only prospective Master's students who have taken the English Language and Skills course were approached. An invitation letter explaining the research purpose and assuring the confidentiality of the collected data was sent to all potential participants (n = 116). Forty-four students (38%) agreed to take part in the study.

### B. Research Design

The study collected both quantitative and qualitative data in a mixed-methods approach to achieve breadth and depth of understanding and corroborate the results (Johnson et al., 2007). This particular design helps to obtain substantial data that result in well-validated findings (Creswell, 2009). The study adopted a concurrent triangulation design where quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently, and the findings were mixed in the interpretation stage. The sources of data were a questionnaire, students' reflections, and focus group interviews.

First, the study utilized a self-report questionnaire to collect data about the participants' overall impressions about the course and the perceived gains related to the afore-mentioned AL strategies. The questionnaire consisted of six main sections with eight questions each. While the first section aimed to collect data about the students' views about the course in general, the next four sections aimed to gather data about students' perceptions of the learning gains associated with the four AL strategies. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'Strongly Agree' to 'Strongly Disagree' was used to measure the questionnaire items in the first five main sections. The last section of the questionnaire comprised of demographic questions about gender, age, nationality, study mode, study field, employment status, social obligations, and English language proficiency. Along with the self-report questionnaire, students' written reflections were used to collect data about the course, the perceived benefits, and the challenges of using FL, CT, and PBL as major learning strategies. The reflections were written at two different stages in the semester, specifically in the middle (Week 8) and in the end of the academic semester (Week 15). In order to obtain a comprehensive overview of students' opinions and an in-depth understanding of their perspectives and the reasons behind them, the study utilized focus group interviews where the questions focused on the benefits, challenges, and preferred AL strategies.

### III. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The first question the study posed related to students' overall impressions about the English Language and Skills course. Results from the quantitative data analysis showed that the mean score of items in the subscale ranged from 4.00 (SD=1.03) to 4.36 (SD=.94). See Appendix A for all descriptive statistics. Analysis of the item mean scores and standard deviations indicated that students perceived the course positively and reported CT writing as the most useful AL strategy the course employed (M=4.36, SD=.94). FL and PBL were reported as the next two AL strategies that influenced students' learning positively (M=4.32, SD=.77; M=4.32, SD=.83). The qualitative data analysis of the participants' interview responses and student reflections indicated similar results, as all the participants valued their course learning experience. They described the course as "good", "useful", "helpful", and "beneficial" and considered it a great "learning opportunity". In the reflections, students described it as a "valuable", "exciting", and "interesting" course. Some of the interviewees viewed it as "different" from any other courses they took at the undergraduate level and considered it "the most enjoyable course" they have ever taken (NRF159). Some of the interviewees also perceived it as an extremely useful course for students who have been away from college for a long time and described it as a "bridge" and a "refreshment station" (AHF7) that equips them with the language and skills required to pursue their Master's studies. The students' reflections emphasized several skills the course helped them develop including "confidence", "self-reliance", and "independence" among others that will be discussed in the next sections in relation to each AL strategy the study focuses on. When asked about their most preferred AL strategy, and although some students preferred certain strategies to others, the majority reported that each technique was valuable and equally important for their learning. One interviewee emphasized this saying, "I believe every component had its advantage...I believe that every component helped us in something. They were all great and useful for me" (NBF2).

The second question this study addressed related to the perceived benefits and challenges associated with the AL strategies, specifically FL, PBL, CT, and RW. As far as FL is concerned, the quantitative data analysis showed that the mean score of the items in the subscale were between 4.07 (SD=.93) and 4.25 (SD=.84). Data analysis revealed that development of analysis and evaluation skills was considered the most important benefit students gained from the FL approach (M=4.25, SD=.84), while enhancement of students' study skills and communication skills were respectively reported as the second and third most important benefits (M=4.23, SD=.86; M=4.20, SD=.93). In contrast, helping students to plan and manage their time effectively was not perceived as a primary benefit of FL (M=4.07, SD=.93). The qualitative data analysis showed comparable results. The qualitative data analysis showed that many participants viewed FL as a novel approach that "was different from other courses [taken] before at the Bachelor's degree level", as stated by one interviewee (AHF7). In the reflection, a student compared flipping to traditional approaches saying, "During my experience in the past years, my college was following the traditional way of teaching. They gave students hand-outs only, and the student attended the class without any preparation" (ZMF3).

One of the perceived benefits is the opportunity FL provided to prepare prior to class by reviewing the various printed and audio/video resources available on the Moodle LMS. According to many interviewees, pre-class preparation enabled them to have a good understanding of the topic (SYF2) by analyzing and evaluating the presented material and searching for additional information (MSM4), and enhanced their active engagement in class discussions (NBF2).

FL enabled the utilization of other AL techniques like questioning, discussion and peer instruction through which learners were engaged in the learning process. The students reported that engagement in class discussions involved asking and answering questions, explaining ideas and communicating with each other and with the instructor. One interviewee stated, "Everyone had a chance to present what they understood" (NBF2), which led some students to feel that class was "more attractive and interesting" (ZMF3).

Second, although the questionnaire respondents did not report developing an ability to learn independently as a major benefit of FL, many students highlighted it as an immediate benefit in the interviews and reflections alike. One of the interview participants emphasized that FL "did develop a sense of self-learning, which is so important, especially when you are a postgraduate student" (MMM5). Another interviewee added, "It was a good idea to use with Master's students... You should not wait for the instructor to teach you" (AHF7). Another student further explained writing, "I think it is an excellent way for postgraduate students to teach them how to be self-reliant by researching and investigating new terms found in the course" (SYF2).

Alternatively, the analysis showed that FL involved several challenges. Most of the participants reported time constraints as a major hindrance. They stressed that pre-class preparation was not always possible due to family and work commitments, which negatively influenced their class engagement. One student explained the effect of coming to class unprepared saying, "When I attended the first class, I did not read the text and I felt difficulties understanding and collaborating with my teacher" (ZMF3). While this approach constituted a challenge for students taking many courses concurrently, others found the requirements manageable and clarified in the reflection that they got familiar with this learning approach as time passed (SYF2).

Another challenge students reported in the interviews and reflections related to technology limitations. For example, a student complained that the LMS was not user-friendly and accessing the learning materials was difficult, which had a negative impact on their involvement (AMM5). Furthermore, one interviewee emphasized that having a good bandwidth and regular access to the Internet is essential if FL is to be adopted in any course. She said, "The flipped approach is bad for me when Internet accessibility fluctuates. A flipped classroom requires Internet access outside of

the classroom. The Internet is not always easily accessible for me” (ZMF3). Limited access to the Internet might negatively affect students’ engagement with the learning materials and with class discussions.

The PBL component also had benefits and challenges. The quantitative data analysis indicated that the mean item scores of the PBL subscale ranged from 4.32 (SD=.80) to 3.91 (SD=.80). These results show that whereas the questionnaire respondents perceived development of critical thinking skills as a primary PBL benefit, life skills development (e.g., flexibility) was considered the least important benefit. Developing communication and problem-solving skills and enhancing research and study skills were reported as the second and third most important benefits respectively (M=4.27, SD=.79; M=4.23, SD=.83; M=4.23, SD=.71). Findings from the qualitative data analysis were comparable. The study participants considered PBL a beneficial course component as it provided an opportunity to develop a number of key 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. For instance, one interviewee explained that the PBL tasks helped them develop “communication skills, solving problems skills, [and] the ability to think in a critical way” (AKF1). Another interviewee stressed that “It helped learn to make presentations, communication, give information and discuss it, also help us give the presentation in a creative way” (AKF1). In the reflection, a student (SSF107) wrote, “... One of the positive things that happened during cooperation was brainstorming and thinking from multiple perspectives and allowing each person to speak and be heard”.

Developing teamwork skills was also reported as another gain from PBL. One participant reported, “It developed our teamwork, how to share our ideas, how to contact with each other...and at the end how to manage everyone, what she should do” (NBF2). Actually, many participants believed that differences of team members’ backgrounds helped develop their communication and collaboration skills. For example, KAM108 explained, “An additional skill that I found helpful was communication with team members and learning from them and their ideas... Studying PBL was interesting and fun and working in a team had implications for everyone”. Many interviewees also claimed that this component enabled them to engage in collaboration, relationship, creativity, project management, task management, and team members’ management by following their progress and empowering them (AHF7). This was facilitated by some members’ qualities as described in the reflections such as “intelligence, helpfulness, collaboration, and respect” (ZHF110).

Moreover, many participants reported developing time-management, life and coping skills, multitasking, and prioritizing tasks to juggle through life and academic hoops as benefits of PBL. In the reflections, one student emphasized that hard work, respect, and readiness to work on any task and handing it in time despite other commitments were the reasons for their success as a team (ZAM106). One interviewee (MSM4) also stressed the importance of time management and prioritization with “positive thinking” and “positive attitude”.

For some participants, enhancing leadership skills constituted another gain. For instance, one interviewee stated that the PBL component enabled them to engage in “leadership, flexibility when discussing specific conditions, supervisions, monitoring and follow-up of the project progress” (AMM5). ZHF110 clarified that through PBL they learned how to take on a leadership role, take ownership of their contribution, work as a key team player, and distribute roles equally to ensure the team’s success.

Alternatively, the study revealed four main challenges related to PBL. First, most of the interviewees believed the workload was the major challenge “because it was group work” (NBF2). The reflections stressed the idea that life and work responsibilities were a challenge for some team members (TMF103). Lack of time-management skills during the COVID-19 pandemic when learning was online could also be a reason for this challenge, as one student stated in the reflection that “time management was poor... [and it] was a bit difficult for us to work in a group for research” (ZAM106).

The second challenge reported by the majority of the participants was lack of leadership and disputes among team members due to the unequal distribution of roles and differences in opinions. In the reflection, a student explained, “We did not correctly distribute roles among the members at the start of work, and we did not designate a leader to manage the members, which caused the work to progress in the opposite direction” (SSF107). Similarly, one interviewee reported, “lack of commitment from the other participants in the group; this is because of lack of leadership... It could result to adverse outcomes...” (AMM5).

The third challenge related to the team members’ individual differences such as “language level”, “learning speed” and other “individual differences in terms of habits, commitments, and delivery of results” (KAM108). This was heightened by some members’ rigidity in accepting others’ viewpoints, as one interviewee reported, “There was a member who imposed her opinion, did not accept any other opinion, and did not cooperate with us” (MGF109). In the reflection, a student described a member who “obstructed the flow of work” (SSF107), which had a negative effect on the output.

Lack of topic familiarity among some team members coming from diverse academic backgrounds was reported as the fourth PBL challenge. One interviewee clarified, “Team members weren’t in the same college; one from medicine, another from agriculture...so different ideas different perspectives... To choose a topic out of our interest so all of us should work ... It was a challenge” (MSM4).

The current study also highlighted several learning gains and challenges linked to the CT course component. The quantitative data analysis revealed that the mean item scores in the CT subscale were between 4.23 (SD=.80) and 3.95 (SD=.75) indicating that the participants considered writing skills’ improvement the most important benefit of the CT

writing. The enhancement of reading skills was reported as the second most important benefit ( $M=4.20$ ,  $SD=.82$ ), while the third reported benefit was students' active engagement in course content ( $M=4.09$ ,  $SD=.80$ ). Alternatively, helping students to question perspectives was not perceived as a primary benefit of CT ( $M=3.95$ ,  $SD=.75$ ).

The reflections and interviews' analysis showed slightly different results as most of the participants emphasized the enhancement of reasoning skills, particularly the development of deep thinking, analysis and evaluation skills, and the ability to question ideas and perspectives as the major benefits of CT writing. In the reflections, one participant wrote, "The CT questions have strengths like determine the importance and relevance of arguments and ideas; identify inconsistencies and errors in reasoning, and approach problems in a consistent and systematic way" (ZHF46). Likewise, one interviewee described how the CT component helped them develop the ability to "analyze; thinking on the topic critically; ability to identify the argument..." (AMM5). Another interviewee reported that CT "makes us think clearly, systematically, also learn how to express ideas...and we can criticize systematically, so it's useful" (AKF1). Another student wrote, "Critical thinking is not just learning, but an experience for life.... I can say that CT improves my skills to accept the fact that I am not always right. Most of us do not accept this fact, which holds us back from thinking critically" (OKM37).

Another benefit the study participants highlighted was developing autonomous thinking and self-confidence. One student wrote, "By answering critical thinking questions, I gained independence in my thinking...I trusted myself when I write about critical thinking questions" (YHF44). This was achieved by reading more on the given topics and thinking deeply about the CT questions, as one student explained in the reflection, "This course has improved my experience of writing responses to critical thinking questions by encouraging me to read more about the topics, so I gather enough information before starting to solve the questions" (RSF39).

Many participants also reported that the CT component helped them develop their reading and writing skills. This was explained in the reflection, "One of the positive aspects of this experience was that I learnt a new skill...it helped me to improve my skills in writing and reading" (SSF40). Similarly, one interviewee (MSM4) clarified that engaging with the CT task improved their writing skills based on the input ideas in the reading articles.

Many students equally valued transferability of the developed CT skills to other academic, workplace, and personal situations. One reflection shed light on this, "One of the good things that went well during this experience that I learned a new skill that will help me in my Master's studies which require such activities to read large articles" (ZHF46). Likewise, one interviewee stated, "CT is essential for the workplace setting...in analyzing contractual proposals received at the workplace...It did provide me with a proper strategy on how to reflect on the argument... frame up a strategy that will help both parties" (AMM5).

Along with the benefits, the study identified three major challenges associated with CT writing. The first challenge relates to task complexity and the required linguistic proficiency to complete it successfully, especially given the novelty of this type of task for students. One interviewee complained, "It's complex and requires a lot of practice and my challenge is the language, it must be a high level to be able to criticize and to convince and do thinking in a critical way" (AKF1). Others added, "... the problem is how to write the ideas, how to get the ideas" (AKF1) and "it was challenging how to write it because... it was for us for the first time" (NBF2).

Similarly, many students stressed the unfamiliar topics as another challenge, as some were considered irrelevant to students' specialization fields and consequently were difficult to comprehend. One interviewee explained that CT requires "perfect understanding of the topic itself. Some of the topics were not related to my field, which was a challenge for me to understand especially the new terminology" (AMM5). The reflections also emphasized this challenge, as one student wrote, "I faced some problems.... One [is understanding] topics that are far from my scientific specialization. I can consider it as one of the weaknesses. Therefore, I had to read the article more than 3 times to know the general idea" (ZHF46).

The last challenge linked with CT writing is time management. One student wrote, "One of the challenges we faced was that solving questions required me to read a lot about the topics, and this meant that we needed to spend time on this course, sometimes more than other courses I have had this semester" (RSF39). ZBM45 also clarified in the reflection that doing CT tasks required "a lot of time to understand and to read" to be able to write.

Compared to FL and the other AL strategies the study focuses on, the quantitative data analysis revealed that RW was reported as the least beneficial strategy ( $M=4.16$ ,  $SD=.78$ ). The most important perceived benefits of RW were the improvement of students' writing skills ( $M=4.36$ ,  $SD=.81$ ) and the development of critical thinking skills ( $M=4.14$ ,  $SD=.91$ ). The study participants reported less impact on their capacity to apply reflective skills in their current studies, to express their opinions and feelings, and to address their learning weaknesses ( $M=3.89$ ,  $SD=.84$ ;  $M=3.93$ ,  $SD=.82$ ;  $M=3.98$ ,  $SD=.88$ ). The qualitative data analysis; however, showed slightly different results as most of the interviewed students highlighted the ability to identify weaknesses and to overcome them through deep thinking about past actions and events, analyzing and evaluating them, and drawing conclusions accordingly as the major benefits of RW. One interviewee described this saying, "Several skills were developed; for example, the ability to identify problems, ability to analyze the problem and evaluate it critically, and you synthesize after the evaluation step, and then write conclusions based on your analysis" (AMM5). Another interviewee considered it the most challenging but most rewarding course component since it taught them how to "think critically about past experiences and actions" (NBF2). This benefit was equally emphasized in the reflections. For instance, one student wrote, "I am taught how to think about past

circumstances and processes to understand them and do good plan for the future” (KBF145). Another student stated “it strengthens my [ability] to reflect on my past situations or experiences, then how to react in a better way if such a situation arises again in the future” (GGM137). In fact, few students stressed the value of these skills beyond their academic life, as one student wrote, “Sometimes in our life, we have to think critically about our actions, to analyze them and learn lessons from our mistakes” (MNM153).

Like the quantitative data analysis, the qualitative analysis indicated that the development of writing skills was one of the positive impacts of RW. These skills include the ability to clearly identify ideas to include in each part of the reflection (AHF7), to order ideas and link them in a creative way (AKF1), and to use a better writing style (MSFF155). One of the interviewees explained that developing one’s writing capacities is essential to succeed as a postgraduate student. For this reason, they considered the RW tasks a valuable opportunity to enhance their writing skills (MSM4). Another student stated in the reflection, “It helped me to reflect my thoughts and ideas in an organized and structured manner, so I can learn the best from every experience I go through” (ABF114). Another student (MSF155) claimed becoming “a more efficient writer” thanks to the regular writing practice in the course.

In addition to enhancing their thinking processes and writing skills, the study showed that RW improved the participants’ ability to express their opinions and feelings. In fact, one interviewee stated that this learning strategy was “helpful and enjoyable” and enriched their personality, and clarified, “I learned new important skills, for example, how to express feelings, which is important not only for academic writing, but also for our own life” (AHF7).

RW resulted in several learning gains but was also linked with two major challenges. The most important challenge was the initial difficulty the students faced to clearly describe events, actions, and experiences, since most of them had no experience with this AL strategy. One interviewee clarified, “I did not know how to start. It was the most difficult thing for me” (NBF2). Another interviewee further explained that the difficulty was to differentiate between the various stages in the Gibbs’ reflective cycle and to include relevant ideas in each part of the reflection, as stages like analysis, evaluation, and synthesis were quite similar for them (AHF3).

The second challenge of RW related to the topics. One interviewee emphasized that understanding the topic well is essential to write a good reflection; therefore, the topics should be selected carefully to ensure students perform well (NRM6). Another interviewee suggested providing students with a list of topics to choose from in order to overcome these challenges, and eventually enhance students’ performance (AKF1).

#### IV. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study revealed that several academic skills are gained through the four AL strategies implemented in the course, namely FL, PBL, CT and RW. First, AL strategies enhance students’ language skills such as reading and writing. This finding is similar to that reported by Sani et al. (2017) and can be explained by the extensive writing practice that students are involved in through FL, PBL, CT and RW tasks. Second, similar to results from Oros (2007), this study showed that the above-mentioned AL strategies improved students’ oral communication, presentation, and research and study skills, especially through their involvement in the PBL component, pre-class preparation, and in-class discussions. Furthermore, students’ thinking capacities, specifically higher-order thinking skills including analysis, critical thinking, problem solving, and creation are enhanced by engaging in FL, PBL, CT and RW practice. This study result aligns with findings from Al-Busaidi et al. (2021), Beed et al. (2005), Neisler et al. (2016), and Trilling and Fadel (2009) who indicated that AL approaches, particularly PBL, foster the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills or employment readiness skills (Berkson, 1993). A key implication of this finding is the significance of carefully designing tasks that bring together a package of skills under one umbrella task like a PBL project component.

Another major finding of the current study is that, at a personal level, students developed autonomy, self-reliance, independence, and metacognitive skills when completing FL, PBL, CT and RW tasks. In fact, the positive impact of PBL in fostering learner autonomy has been emphasized in the literature especially that which focuses on the Omani context (Tuzlukova & Singh, 2018). Likewise, other studies including Al-Busaidi and Tuzlukova (2021) have stressed the value of developing metacognitive skills through explicit instruction and elicitation of learning strategies to promote students’ problem-solving and critical thinking skills. A major implication of this finding for the language classroom is to assign learning tasks that require learners to work independently and be responsible for their contributions to teamwork, to reflect on their learning processes, and to devise action plans to improve their performance.

This study also showed that these four AL strategies enhanced student engagement in the learning process, as they were involved in class oral discussions and out-of-class written tasks that promoted their motivation and increased student-student interaction in the AL environment. This finding is congruent with that of Michel et al. (2002) who argue that student motivation increases, especially through FL and PBL projects. Several other researchers including Ertmer and Newby (2013) and Oros (2007) have also emphasized engagement as a key feature of learner-centered AL approaches where learners participate actively in the learning process. Thus, it is essential for EFL academicians to create similar learning opportunities that promote student engagement, which is considered a prerequisite for learning (Reeve, 2012).

Along with the benefits discussed above, this study highlighted five major challenges that should be overcome to benefit from the AL strategies of FL, PBL, CT and RW in the current context. First, the novel aspect of these teaching-learning techniques was initially considered a major challenge that negatively affected students’ performance, as most



of the participants described the difficulties they faced when writing their first RW assignments, which reflected their limited ability to engage in deep thinking and resulted in superficial descriptive accounts of their experiences. Furthermore, the complexity of the CT component was equally challenging since it required students to reconsider their long-held beliefs and revisit their preconceived ideas to make sound judgments. The unfamiliar topics added to the challenge since identifying relevant ideas to argue for or against a certain topic presented a challenge. FL was also considered a novel technique that raised several issues, especially in terms of pre-class preparation which was unfamiliar to many of the participants who were used to traditional teaching methods. Likewise, although some students were accustomed to the PBL approach, the kind of project topics they needed to explore and the stages they had to go through to complete the project were considered a challenge. This study result aligns with findings from previous studies which showed that any novel teaching technique may cause learners to feel “apprehensive” and anxious unless they have a “clear enough sense of the purpose behind [it]” (Kane, 2004, p. 283). Furthermore, according to Lane-Kelso (2014) and Nguyena et al. (2006), the implementation of AL approaches in a traditional educational context could initially be challenging due to cultural conflicts and mismatches. Thus, instructors should thoroughly explain to students the reasons behind employing a certain instructional method and the outcomes they are expected to achieve not only to ensure they buy-in to the method, but also to benefit from it (Garver & Roberts, 2013). This study also showed that as students progressed in the course, they were able to overcome initial challenges and dealt with the course components more comfortably, which is congruent with results from Garver and Roberts (2013) who concluded that getting accustomed to a new teaching pattern is required in order to enjoy it. Crouch and Mazur (2001) and Strayer (2012) added that learners need a period of adjustment before they become familiar with a novel instructional method and benefit from it. Consequently, instructors should be patient when they implement a new non-traditional instructional approach in their respective classrooms.

The second challenge the study identified was the heavy workload involved in the implementation of the AL strategies of FL, PBL, CT and RW. Considering the fact that 63% of the participants were employed and had social obligations, coping with the demands of the four course components in terms of pre-class preparation, teamwork involvement, and post-class assignments was difficult and put the participants under pressure. This result is similar to that reported by Oros (2007) who pointed out that AL involves “greater activity on the part of the student” (p. 295). This characteristic of AL could be counterproductive if learners are incapable of self-regulating their learning, which is indispensable for students’ academic success (Evseeva & Solozhenka, 2015). Furthermore, according to Oros (2007), the systematic movement from the traditional lecture to an AL approach requires careful planning and monitoring. Consequently, the type, number, and frequency of weekly assigned AL tasks should be carefully considered to ensure learners both complete and benefit from them while maintaining a degree of flexibility (Cambridge Assessment International Education, 2020).

Lack of appropriate academic skills to cope with the course demands also constituted a major challenge. First, students’ lack of awareness of various cognitive thinking processes limits their ability to analyse, evaluate, and synthesize information to successfully complete CT and RW assignments. A pertinent study carried out in the same context by Tuzlukova and Prabhukanth (2018) indicated that only 55% of the students they surveyed were positive about their ability to use the afore-mentioned skills to make value judgments. This finding can be attributed to the possibility that higher-order thinking skills are not taught explicitly in the Omani educational context considering their inherent complexity (Abasaid & Ferreira, 2022). Therefore, explicit CT instruction is required to enable students to develop these essential 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and use them confidently. Furthermore, lack of time management and planning skills added to the difficulty students faced. This finding could be explained by the fact that many learners in this course were not only adult working people with social commitments, but also had stopped studying for a while before they decided to pursue their postgraduate studies, which indicates that they started the course with limited self-regulatory strategies. Therefore, there is a need to teach students to use such self-regulatory strategies to help them approach their learning better (Zimmerman, 1990).

The fourth challenge identified by the study was poor communication and limited collaboration skills, which negatively influenced students’ performance in the PBL component and led to “disputes”, “conflicts”, and “tension” as described by some study participants. This finding aligns with results from Al-Busaidi et al. (2021) who argued that several factors might interfere with the success of PBL in the current educational setting such as lack of collaborative learning skills, inability to take responsibility of one’s own learning, and lack of contribution and participation in the group work. Consequently, enhancing students’ positive attitudes towards collaborative learning and developing a classroom culture that encourages inquiry, collaboration and independence can help address this issue.

Finally, the study revealed that limited linguistic and technology skills were a challenge. Although about 89% of the participants claimed that their English language proficiency was either good or very good, they emphasized the difficulties they faced understanding the reading articles and writing their CT responses. This finding could be attributed to the fact that students had different study backgrounds and might have their own reading preferences, so it is advisable to vary the reading and discussion topics to elevate students’ interest and address the challenge. Moreover, accessing learning materials, submitting assignments, and receiving feedback and grades through the LMS was initially considered a challenge. Hence, as recommended in Kim et al. (2014), it is essential to help students navigate the course page and give them sufficient practice especially during the first weeks to familiarise them with the LMS.

## V. CONCLUSION

This study examined students' overall perspectives on the benefits and challenges of four active learning strategies implemented in their English Language Skills course, namely flipped learning, problem-based learning, Socratic questioning and critical thinking, and reflective writing. The study revealed several benefits as well as challenges associated with the implementation of these strategies. This study's findings contribute knowledge to the EFL field and to the wider educational context, and they have implications for the teaching and learning of English in the context of Oman and similar educational settings.

It is recommended that future research thoroughly examine the implementation of the afore-mentioned strategies in other educational settings with different age groups. An overall framework for implementing active learning strategies should also be developed considering the outcomes of relevant evidence-based research, and practical propositions concerning the implementation challenges should be offered for practitioners to help overcome such challenges.

## APPENDIX. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Descriptive Statistics			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Overall Impressions about the Course</b>			
The CT writings were useful	44	4.36	.94
The flipped approach was effective	44	4.32	.77
The PBL project was engaging	44	4.32	.83
Course enhanced my learning experience	44	4.20	.85
Course involved me in learning	44	4.18	.84
The reflective assignments were helpful	44	4.16	.78
Course is useful for the future studies	44	4.05	.99
Course prepared me for the current studies	44	4.00	1.03
<b>Flipped Learning</b>			
Flipping helped analyze and evaluate info	44	4.25	.84
Flipping enhanced study skills (annotation...)	44	4.23	.86
Flipping helped improve communication skills	44	4.20	.93
Flipping helped learn independently	44	4.18	.87
Flipping helped develop language skills (read, writing)	44	4.16	.86
Flipping helped engagement in class discussions	44	4.11	.75
Flipping helped think more deeply about topics	44	4.09	.86
Flipping helped manage time to learn effectively	44	4.07	.93
<b>Reflective Writing</b>			
Reflections helped improve writing skills	44	4.36	.81
Reflections helped develop CT skills	44	4.14	.91
Reflections helped be more engaged	44	4.11	.81
Reflections helped develop evaluation and analysis skills	44	4.07	.90
Reflections helped reflect on strengths and weaknesses	44	4.02	.93
Reflections helped address learning weaknesses	44	3.98	.88
Reflections helped express opinions and feelings	44	3.93	.82
Reflections helped apply reflective skills in current studies	44	3.89	.84
<b>Critical Thinking</b>			
CT helped improve writing skills	44	4.23	.80
CT helped improve reading skills	44	4.20	.82
CT helped engage actively in course content	44	4.09	.80
CT helped express thoughts and views	44	4.05	.83
CT helped analyze and evaluate issues critically	44	4.02	.79
CT helped apply CT in studies	44	4.02	.88
CT helped develop argumentative skills	44	4.00	.92
CT helped question ideas and perspectives	44	3.95	.75
<b>Problem-Based Learning</b>			
PBL helped develop CT skills	44	4.32	.80
PBL helped develop communication	44	4.27	.79
PBL helped develop problem solving skills	44	4.23	.83
PBL helped enhance research and study skills	44	4.23	.71
PBL helped become self-directed and independent	44	4.20	.77
PBL helped develop creativity and innovation	44	4.07	.76
PBL helped develop technology skills	44	4.02	.73
PBL helped develop life skills (flexibility, etc.)	44	3.91	.80

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# Teaching English to Students With Special Needs: A Case Study in Jordan

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**Abstract**—Students with special needs usually encounter difficulties in learning English because of their physical, health, or psychosocial challenges. English Teachers' attitudes to the students' special needs play a significant role in facilitating the students' learning process or hindering their learning of English. When a teacher has a negative attitude to the special needs students, this may lead to the teacher not fully covering the planned English syllabus, thus impeding the educational development process of all students. However, an English teacher's positive attitudes to their profession can certainly influence their students' attitudes and desire for learning. This study investigates the attitudes of English teachers of special needs students to their profession in schools in Jordan. A quantitative research method was used to collect data from a randomly chosen sample of 155 English teachers. The results of the study revealed that English teachers' attitudes to their profession were positive and above average, and there was a difference in their attitudes to their profession in general according to the "experience" variable. However, there were no differences in the teachers' attitudes to their profession according to the "academic qualification." The findings can contribute to identifying the most important factors that influence the decision-making of newly appointed teachers whether to enter the profession of teaching English to students with special needs.

**Index Terms**—language learning, language teaching, students with special needs, teachers' attitudes

## I. INTRODUCTION

Students with special needs usually encounter learning difficulties because of their physical or sensory special needs, illnesses, or psychosocial problems. Besides, there are some other important individual educational differences between disabled students. Students with special needs require different methods of education corresponding to their needs and abilities. Moreover, to succeed in training and educating students with special needs, there must be special educational programs and special equipment. Furthermore, students need to learn how to use different educational means that can unleash their talents and abilities and develop their creativity. Education aims to help students with special needs take care of themselves, succeed in their educational path, and engage in all of the activities in the community (Reyes & Meneses, 2022). The process of educating students with special needs is a difficult and complex process since it requires the teacher to choose the appropriate methods of teaching their students according to the following variables: the degree of disability, the severity of the disability, and the mental age of the child. Teaching methods in special education vary depending on the diagnosis of the child's condition and the treatment plan. It includes several domains, including students' evaluations and teaching effectiveness (Mapou, 2022).

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Teachers of English to students with special needs face a number of obstacles and difficulties, such as the lack of adequate infrastructure to support this type of education, the weak ability of a number of teachers to use modern technological means, and the familiarity of both the student and the teacher with traditional means of education. The significant development that has occurred in public life has led to modern societies placing increasing importance on English as an effective means to prepare individuals to face the requirements and challenges of the present era. Teaching is a professional duty that the teacher commits to through planning, implementation, and evaluation to assist learners in achieving teaching and learning outcomes (Salah, 2021; Wright et al., 2020). Teaching is a human process that seeks to achieve the pre-planned goals as it plays an active role in the formation of the learner's balanced personality in varied aspects, whether physically, psychologically, mentally, or socially (Mufron et al., 2021). It is also an organized scientific effort based on a partnership between the teacher and the learner in acquiring meaningful and diverse educational experiences through active interaction with the surrounding environment and its problems (Wright et al., 2020). Obviously, teaching is not only linked to achieving educational goals; it should also ensure happiness and enjoyment of the lessons and achieve practical results (Rababah et al., 2019). As such, English teachers and their attitude towards their profession play an important role in developing and improving students' educational skills.

Attitudes are one of the most important factors that contribute significantly to an individual's success in their quest to reach their various goals. Examining attitudes is an important means to educate teachers and identify their tendencies, as this can contribute to attracting teachers to enter the field of teaching (Karacabey et al., 2019). One of the main factors in effective teaching is the presence of a successful teacher who has a positive attitude towards their profession and their students and is warm, passionate, and enthusiastic about the teaching profession. This leads them to deepen their professional skills and develop themselves, as well as promote their profession by highlighting its role within the school, society, and country.

Teachers' attitudes toward their profession are related to their academic preparation in teachers' colleges, which provides them with the necessary theoretical and practical experiences to practice the profession after graduation (Al-Zoubi, 2010; Karacabey et al., 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize raising the level of preparation of teachers in schools. This will not only help them to form positive educational attitudes towards the teaching profession but also equip them to bear the pressures of the role, which may negatively affect their physical, psychological health and professional performance. Evidently, this calls for the study of the attitudes of people working in the educational field, especially English teachers, because of their influential role.

Although attitudes are characterized by relative stability, an individual's opinions on topics and issues related to their interests are not fixed. Therefore, attitudes can be studied and used in predicting behavior, which helps to change the various programs and develop them to attain the desired attitudes (Koç, 2013). Modern educational attitudes emerging in teachers' rehabilitation focus on the characteristics of a good teacher represented in the teaching behavior, the verbal and nonverbal interaction between the teacher and the students, and the organization of the educational process (Rababah et al., 2019). English is a manifestation and component of modern education. It is an applied field that aims to foster individuals' well-rounded development through the practice of a variety of activities chosen based on researched scientific foundations. Consequently, it is necessary for teachers to keep pace with successive developments to continually progress their skills using modern teaching methods (Rababah et al., 2021).

People always strive to advance their energies and potentials to achieve development (Nagovitsyn, 2018). Investment in the English language is one of the most important resources in a society in which the capabilities and mental energies of its members are invested to achieve the greatest return on comprehensive development in all fields (Alazzam et al., 2021). Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to preparing English teachers to contribute to upgrading their abilities due to the influential role they play in preparing students for school and community life. Jenkins (2004) stated that English teachers' preparation programs must provide integrated curricula to teach future teachers to teach different models of curricula related to English. Rorimpandey and Midun (2021) stated that English teachers in schools tend to be very close to students as they are able to employ the latter's tendency to move towards satisfaction and enhance their social needs through English lessons. In addition, the teachers' role in developing students' different skills and abilities in reading, speaking, and writing is notably important.

The development that has occurred in the teaching profession in Jordan and the various challenges this sector has faced have affected, to some extent, teachers' satisfaction in general and the English teachers' satisfaction in particular with their profession and their sense of its value. However, teachers reflected positively on their role in achieving a balanced development of the students' knowledge and feeling of self-confidence when interacting with tourists and foreigners. It is natural for English teachers to face some professional problems that negatively affect the degree of their effectiveness, performance, and satisfaction with their profession.

#### *A. The Problem of the Study*

Attitudes are one of the main components of the teachers' personality, as they constitute a realistic component that directs and activates the teachers' behavior in educational situations that require them to respond with acceptance or rejection (Karacabey et al., 2019). When teachers meet their students, they bring a broad background of tendencies and attitudes that affect their role. Undoubtedly, the teacher's lack of satisfaction with what they do, and their negative attitudes towards their profession would make the teaching profession a means of earning a living rather than developing individuals and preparing the future generation. The feelings and visions that English teachers have towards

their profession and their attitudes are represented in their actions and practices of the profession and the extent to which they adhere to them. Also, insight into English teachers' attitudes towards their profession explains the nature of the current situation experienced by the profession of English language teaching (Kirk, 2019).

An English teacher's positive attitude towards the profession plays an important role in its advancement, as it represents the forces that motivate the teacher to perform and practice his profession with enthusiasm. Negative attitudes of the teacher toward the profession, on the other hand, may become discouraging forces for his activity and enthusiasm (Karacabey et al., 2019). These roles include developing the required attitudes of teachers towards their activities, improving their skills and their daily programs, and contributing to spreading awareness of the importance of the English language in the era of globalization. Therefore, in order to achieve the goals of English sought by the Jordanian Ministry of Education in all educational stages and implement the curricula successfully, it is necessary to have successful English teachers who are positively oriented towards their profession, believe in it, and possess sufficient qualification and training. The current study aims to investigate English teachers' attitudes toward their profession in special needs schools, as well as to identify the relationship between these attitudes and the following variables: academic qualification and experience. This domain has been rarely studied in the Arab world, and particularly in Jordan. The study attempted to answer the following question:

1. What are the attitudes of English teachers toward their profession?
2. How different are the attitudes of English teachers towards the profession according to their academic qualifications and experiences?

### *B. Significance of the Study*

An English teacher's belief in the importance of their profession and their satisfaction and positive attitudes towards it can positively influence their students' attitudes and motivate them to engage with the activities. These are the fruits of a teacher's positive attitude towards their profession. Teacher's negative attitudes are the main problems that impede the implementation of the curriculum and the development of the educational and teaching processes. The current study is significant as it may benefit officials and decision-makers in the Ministry of Education by presenting a clear picture of the nature of the English profession in schools for students with special needs. The findings can contribute to the development of appropriate solutions and recommendations for good practice.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Likewise, Li et al. (2014) studied the attitudes of female university students towards teaching English to students with special needs. The findings revealed a link between high self-confidence and more positive attitudes toward teaching English. According to the aforementioned literature, Jordanian English teachers' perspectives on teaching English to students with special needs have not been thoroughly examined in order to understand their perspectives and thus meet the students' needs and requirements for learning English. This calls for more studies to deal with this issue for the benefit of both parties—the teacher and the students with special needs.

Similarly, Bajis (2021) aimed to measure teachers' attitudes toward teaching students with special needs in Yemen. The study sample included 162 students chosen purposefully from four classrooms. The results of the study showed that there were statistically significant differences between the items and the total sum of the domains, as well as statistically significant differences in the teachers' attitudes toward teaching the basic stage in favor of the sixth grade.

Likewise, Yassin et al. (2022) investigated the attitudes of teachers of English in Egypt towards teaching students with special needs according to the following variables: study level, specialization, practice, and level of academic achievement. The study's sample size was 345 students (100 in the first year, 120 in the second year, 50 in the third year, and 55 in the fourth year). A questionnaire was used to collect data from a randomly chosen sample. A questionnaire was used to collect the data. It consisted of 39 items distributed over four domains: the student's view towards the profession of teaching English, the Egyptian society's view towards the profession of teaching English, the trade-off between the profession of teaching English and other fields of work, and factors affecting the choice of the profession of teaching English. The findings revealed that the majority of people have positive attitudes toward the profession of teaching English. It also showed that there were differences according to the study level, specialization in secondary school, practice, and academic achievement.

Kamal (2022) studied the attitudes of English teachers in Korea towards English levels in public schools according to the following variables: study level and gender. The sample of the study consisted of 1,293 teachers. The researcher used a questionnaire to obtain the participants' attitudes towards the English language. The results showed that there were positive attitudes among teachers towards teaching English. In the same vein, Al-Deek (2022) studied the attitudes of outstanding and other students in English in the Jordanian universities towards the teaching profession. The sample of the study consisted of 486 male and female students. The results showed that outstanding students in the English language had higher attitudes than the normal ones and showed no statistically significant differences due to the change in gender.

### III. METHODS

The study population

The study population included 155 English teachers of students with special needs in Amman schools. The study sample was chosen randomly from Amman schools for students with special needs in the academic year 2021–2022. The study sample was divided into three groups according to qualification, namely, bachelor degree, higher diploma, and master's degree, as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
SAMPLE MEMBERS/ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION

Qualification	Number	Percentage
Bachelor's Degree	115	74.1%
Higher Diploma	15	9.8%
Masters' Degree	25	16.1%
Total	155	100%

Also, the study sample was divided according to the length of teaching experience: 5 years and less, 8 years, 9-13 years, 14 years and over as illustrated in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
SAMPLE'S EXPERIENCE

Years of Experience	Number	Percentage
4 years and less	13	8.3%
4-8 years	65	41.9%
9-13 years	40	25.8%
14 years and over	35	22.6%
Total	155	100%

### IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are presented below in relation to the two research questions.

#### A. English Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching Students With Special Needs

The means and standard deviations of their attitudes towards their profession were calculated as illustrated in Table 3.

TABLE 3  
ENGLISH TEACHERS' RATINGS ON EACH DOMAIN OF THE ATTITUDE SCALE TOWARD THEIR PROFESSION

No.	Domain	Rank	Mean	SD
2	Specialization	1	3.82	0.72
3	Social and Psychological	2	3.72	0.69
4	Applied	3	3.72	0.70
1	Profession	4	3.60	0.78
	All Items		3.71	0.63

Table 3 shows that the attitudes of English teachers towards their profession as a whole were positive, with a mean of (3.71) and a standard deviation of (0.63), where the specialization domain is ranked the highest with a mean of (3.82) in a positive direction, followed by the "social and psychological domain" and the "applied domain" with a mean of (3.72) in a positive direction, while the "profession domain" was ranked the lowest with a mean of (3.60) in a neutral direction.

#### B. Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching Students With Special Needs According to "Qualification, Experience" Variables

The means and standard deviations of their attitudes towards their profession were calculated according to the variables qualification and experience as shown in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4  
TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR PROFESSION ACCORDING TO QUALIFICATION, EXPERIENCE VARIABLES

Experience	Qualification	Mean	SD	N
Less than 8 years	Bachelor	3.72	0.61	55
	Higher diploma	3.51	0.59	37
	Total	3.65	0.61	92
8 years and more	Bachelor	4.03	0.63	32
	Higher diploma	3.57	0.65	29
	Total	3.82	0.67	61
Total	Bachelor	3.83	0.63	87
	Higher diploma	3.54	0.61	66
	Total	3.71	0.63	155



Table 4 shows an apparent discrepancy in the means of English teachers' attitudes towards their profession due to the different items of qualification and experience variables. To indicate the significance of the statistical differences between the means, the Two Way ANOVA was used, and the results of which are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 5  
QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE EFFECT ON TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THEIR PROFESSION

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Qualification	1.194	1	1.195	3.154	0.079
Experience	3.885	1	3.885	10.245*	0.002
Qualification*Experience	0.637	1	0.637	1.685	0.196
Error	56.495	149	0.378		
Corrected Total	61.691	152			

Table 5 shows that the statistical significance value of the qualification variable amounted to (0.079), which was greater than ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). This showed that there was no statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for the qualification variable whereas the value of the statistical significance of the variable experience amounted to (0.002), which was less than ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). This indicated that there was a statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) for the variable experience in favor of teachers who have experience of "8 years and more." Also, the table showed that the statistical significance value of the interaction between "qualification" and "experience" was (0.196), which was greater than ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). This showed that there were no statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) due to the interaction between "qualification" and "experience." The means and standard deviations of English teachers' ratings on each domain of the English teachers' attitude scale towards their profession were also calculated according to the variables "qualification" and "experience" as shown in Table 6 below.

TABLE 6  
TEACHERS' RATINGS TOWARDS TEACHING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ACCORDING TO QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

Experience	Qualification	Professional		Scientific		Social and Psychological		Applied	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Less than 8 years	Bachelor	3.65	0.74	3.79	0.71	3.72	0.67	3.75	0.59
	Higher diploma	3.36	0.78	3.62	0.77	3.55	0.67	3.60	0.61
	Total	3.53	0.77	3.72	0.73	3.65	0.67	3.71	0.61
8 years and more	Bachelor	3.98	0.71	4.08	0.71	4.03	0.67	4.03	0.76
	Higher diploma	3.45	0.81	3.75	0.63	3.63	0.67	3.48	0.85
	Total	3.72	0.80	3.93	0.69	3.85	0.70	3.77	0.84
Total	Bachelor	3.78	0.75	3.88	0.72	3.84	0.69	3.86	0.67
	Higher diploma	3.39	0.78	3.68	0.71	3.58	0.67	3.56	0.72
	Total	3.60	0.78	3.82	0.72	3.72	0.69	3.72	0.70

Table 6 shows that there were apparent differences between the means of the estimates of English teachers on each domain of the scale of English teachers' attitudes towards their profession according to the variables "qualification" and "experience." To determine the statistical significance of these apparent differences, the two-way analysis of variance with multiple explanations (MANOVA) was used, as shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7  
TEACHERS' RATINGS TOWARDS THEIR PROFESSION ACCORDING TO QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

Source		Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Qualification Hotelling's Trace=0.046	Professional	1.648	1	1.648	2.842	0.094
	Scientific	1.701	1	1.701	3.359	0.069
	Social and psychological	1.476	1	1.476	3.250	0.073
	Applied	0.187	1	0.187	0.399	0.529
Experience Hotelling's Trace=0.081*	Professional	6.198	1	6.198	10.677*	0.001
	Scientific	2.087	1	2.087	4.121*	0.044
	Social and psychological	3.102	1	3.102	6.831*	0.010
	Applied	4.308	1	4.308	9.170*	0.003
Qualification * Experience Wilks' Lambda=0.977	Professional	0.660	1	0.660	1.140	0.288
	Scientific	0.194	1	0.194	0.383	0.537
	Social and psychological	0.537	1	0.537	1.182	0.279
	Applied	1.483	1	1.483	3.157	0.079
Error	Professional	86.408	149	0.580		
	Scientific	75.446	149	0.506		
	Social and psychological	67.662	149	0.454		
	Applied	70.009	149	0.470		
Corrected Total	Professional	94.202	152			
	Scientific	79.159	152			
	Social and psychological	72.341	152			
	Applied	75.225	152			

\*Statistically significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ )

It is noted from Table 7 that the value of Hotelling's trace according to the qualification variable reached (0.046), which is not statistically significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). This indicated that there was no statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between the two means of the English teachers' estimates on the domains of the English teachers' attitudes scale towards their profession due to the qualification variable. And, according to the variable experience level, the value of Hotelling's trace test was (0.081), which is statistically significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). Because of the variable experience, there was a statistically significant difference at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). According to the means, it is clear that the difference was statistically significant in favor of teachers who have "8 years and more." It also appears from the table that the value of Wilks' Lambda test for the interaction between qualification and experience was (0.977), which was not statistically significant at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ). This meant that the interaction between qualification and experience had no statistically significant differences at ( $\alpha=0.05$ ).

The frequencies and percentages were determined according to the gradation of the answers between absolute disagreement and complete agreement for each of the scale items, and the weight of the items through the average score, as shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8  
TEACHERS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THEIR PROFESSION

no.	Item	Domain	Mean	SD
1	Teaching English to students with special needs is a science in itself.	2	4.43	0.76
2	The teaching profession is very popular with me.	3	4.17	0.88
3	The pros of teaching students with special needs outweigh its cons.	1	3.86	1.02
4	Teaching students with special needs is based on scientific principles.	2	3.78	1.07
5	I do not think I will continue in the profession of teaching students with special needs for long.	3	2.98	1.35
6	The facilities available in schools, such as tools and devices, enable the teacher to apply the curriculum well.	4	4.32	0.97
7	The environment of teaching students with special needs affects the teacher's profession.	1	4.05	1.27
8	I avoid attending scientific seminars in the field of teaching students with special needs.	2	3.90	1.000
9	Teaching students with special needs is very interesting.	3	4.08	0.96
10	The time allotted for the English class is not enough for the teacher to present his educational skills and creativity.	4	3.55	1.27
11	I love listening to specialists in the field of English through the media.	2	4.23	0.84
12	Satisfying the students' desire in the skills they choose makes me likeable to	4	1.85	.095

	them.			
13	The English teacher makes a great effort during the lesson	1	4.32	0.74
14	English is a basic educational subject.	2	0.80	0.47
15	Teaching English to students with special needs makes me respected and appreciated by all students.	3	4.03	1.01
16	The number of English classes per week is enough to achieve the desired goals.	4	3.30	1.40
17	The English teacher relies on his efforts to develop the subject.	1	3.95	0.98
18	The English class means that students only practice learning.	2	3.84	1.19
19	I feel proud when I am asked about my specialty.	3	3.85	1.36
20	The teacher's lack of participation in setting the units of the English curriculum makes me feel frustrated and neglected.	4	3.51	1.17
21	The English major occupies a good place among other disciplines within the school.	1	3.31	1.22
22	English teachers are culturally and scientifically different from the teachers of other disciplines.	2	4.21	0.89
23	I gain positive attitudes from members of the community when they learn that I am an English teacher for students with special needs.	.	.	.
24	Neglecting learning English contributes to reducing the importance of the subject for students in general.	4	3.49	1.20
25	The specialization of teaching English to students with special needs occupies a prominent position and draws interest from officials in the education sector.	1	3.03	1.30
26	There are many books and scientific references that an English specialist needs when teaching students with special needs.	2	3.56	1.12
27	My schoolmates always compliment my presence.	3	3.38	1.16
28	Indoor and outdoor activities provide opportunities to highlight the role and capabilities of the English teacher.	4	4.28	0.82
29	A non-specialist cannot teach English to students with special needs.	1	4.23	1.05
30	I feel proud when I hear of scientific success in the field of English.	2	4.46	0.77
31	The profession of teaching English to students with special needs provides opportunities to establish distinguished social relations with members of the population.	3	3.88	1.12
32	Teaching English to students with special needs is a profession respected by society.	3	3.51	1.13
33	The lack of educational clarification means English lessons increase the teacher's effort when delivering information to the student.	4	4.07	0.99
34	I feel that the profession of teaching English to students with special needs is suitable for my abilities and potential.		4.11	0.98
35	Some English teachers work in the field of teaching at private institutions to boost their social status.	3	2.19	1.17
36	In addition to education, I prefer working in other professions within the field of English.	1	3.88	1.07
37	I wish I had chosen a profession other than teaching students with special needs.	1	3.51	1.34
38	English occupies an advanced rank among other disciplines within society.	3	0.91	..
39	Teaching students with special needs is very useful and appropriate for the community.	3	4.03	0.86
40	I turned to the teaching profession for students with special needs because its system is suitable for me, especially in regards to the time limits for daily work, vacation, and promotions.	1	3.51	1.25
41	I feel completely ignored by the students' parents.	3	.	.
42	The future of the English teacher who teaches students with special needs is less important than the future of any other profession.	1	3.60	1.17
43	My colleagues appreciate me when they know that my major is English and I teach students with special needs .	3	3.44	1.08
44	Assigning English to a non-specialized teacher has contributed to underestimating the specialization and not paying attention to it.	1	4.31	0.89
45	Seeing me interact with foreign people makes me happy.	3	2.70	1.37
46	The lack of clear coordination between the English supervision units and English teachers in the special education schools and departments to cooperate in discovering and caring for talented students underestimates English specialists and their role.	1	4.20	0.91
47	Being an English teacher of students with special needs gives me confidence.	3	3.74	1.24
48	Some teachers stay away from participating in English events because of their poor level, and it is one of the teacher's difficulties during education.	1	4.00	1.10

The results showed that item 30 (which states, "I feel proud when I hear of achieving scientific success in the field of teaching students with special needs") has achieved the highest mean score, which is 4.46. This indicated a high positive tendency for teachers to express their interest in what contributes to the progress and development of the English language. Thus, this in turn contributes to the development and advancement of the profession of teaching the English language. This shows that its role is becoming more prominent within society. Then it was followed by item (1), which states that "teaching students with special needs English is a science in itself," with a mean of (4.43). This indicated the positive attitude of teachers towards the specialization of English as a science in itself, and that it is not less important than other disciplines or sciences. This may be due to teachers' feeling of the enormity of their

preparation program, the importance of English in colleges or institutes, and the fact that it comprises many specialized and common sciences and knowledge.

Item 6, which states, "The facilities available in schools, such as tools and devices, enable the teacher to apply the curriculum well," came in third with an average of 4.32. This indicated that teachers have a sense of the importance of schools' capabilities in helping them apply the curriculum well and that the lack of these capabilities appears to be a problem for a large number of them. On the other hand, the lowest degree of English teachers' attitudes went for item (12), which states that satisfying the students' desire for the skills they choose makes me likeable to them, with an average of 85. This indicated a conviction among a large number of teachers that the entire curriculum can be applied in other ways to win the love of students. While item 35, which states that "some English teachers work in the field of teaching at private institutions to boost their social status," came in second with an average of (19). This indicated that many English teachers do not agree that working in the field of training is motivated by the desire to increase social status, but they may have other goals. Teachers might want to prove that their social status is not low and try to raise it through their work in training. Item (41)—which states, "I feel completely ignored by the students' parents"—came in third with an average of (30). This indicated that there is an agreement among a large number of English teachers that parents should not ignore them. To determine the attitudes of English teachers towards the profession, it is necessary for the researchers to recognize their attitudes according to the four main domains by calculating the mean and the standard deviation of their attitudes towards each domain separately as well as on the scale as a whole, as illustrated in Table 8.

## V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers play a vital role in raising a healthy society and competent individuals. To be successful in the teaching profession, teachers need to love their profession and perform it eagerly. The present study found that the majority of English teachers with an average degree have adopted a positive attitude towards their profession of teaching students with special needs. The most important domain in teachers' positive attitudes towards the profession was the scientific aspect, followed by the professional aspect, the applied aspect, and at last the social and psychological aspect. This indicated that there was a discrepancy in the average of teachers' attitudes towards the four domains.

In light of the results, the study recommends enhancing the positive attitudes of English teachers towards the profession to become more positive and improving negative attitudes through using appropriate means and mechanisms, dealing with school teachers equally. This requires the Ministry of Education to set standardized tests and measures to ascertain the attitudes of those wishing to join the teaching profession in general and those wishing to teach students with special needs in particular. These tests can focus on English at the secondary school stage and its role in the lives and personalities of students through the media and paying attention to school courses and competitions.

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# Textual Metafunction of Cynicism in *Srimad Bhagavatam* and Its Translation Into Indonesian

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**Abstract**—This descriptive study focuses on the analysis of the types of the figure of speech of cynicism used in the text of *Srimad Bhagavatam* and its translation into Indonesian. It is inspired by the paradigm that the translation of the text of *Srimad Bhagavatam* is a product. The study also analyses its grammatical packaging using the analysis of the language metafunction, namely, the textual metafunction. The sentences containing cynicism, as the textual metafunction implies, are analysed from the viewpoint of Theme and Rheme (clause as message). The data were collected using the qualitative technique in which the meaning of cynicism is determined and explained based on how relevant it is to the Theme of the text. The result of the analysis shows that the meaning of the figure of speech of cynicism is closely related to the Theme of the text in which the Theme functions as the motivating force. The grammatical packaging is analysed based on the result of the analysis of the sentences with cynicism, totalling twenty and representing the textual metafunction with six groups of Themes dominated by the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group with one constituent. Additionally, there are eight data of this type. The other data, totalling twelve, are the sentences with cynicism with the other types of Theme, namely, the simple Theme in the form of four adverbial groups and the simple Theme in the form of one prepositional phrase.

**Index Terms**—textual metafunction, translation, cynicism, *Srimad Bhagavatam*

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the study of translation and interlingual communication, there are three types of orientation as described by Sorvali (1996), namely, (1) function orientation, (2) product orientation, and (3) process orientation. Function-oriented research focuses on the function of translation in sociocultural situations related to the target language text. In other words, the object of study refers to the context that underlies the existence of the translation work. Therefore, such research pays attention to the history of translation. Product-oriented research focuses on translation work. Process-oriented research seeks to uncover the cognitive processes of translators. Because cognitive processes cannot be observed directly, researchers in this field utilize the TAP (think-aloud protocol) technique (Krings, 1986) and interviews to obtain data. Research with a process orientation focuses on the genetic aspect (translator), the objective aspect (translation work), and the affective aspect, which is the attitude or response it causes in the target reader. Product-oriented research focuses only on the translation work that has been done and its effect on the target audience. Descriptive translation studies are not seen as discrete because in actual translation research activities, the three, namely, function orientation, product orientation, and process orientation, are interrelated with each other.

Translation of figurative language and stylistic aspects becomes a very interesting study. Regarding its data source, this study involves stylistics that is an inseparable part of the process of translating a text. Figures of speech are analysed to explore the creative use of language. The uniqueness of figures of speech that is believed to enrich views about language and its correlation with translation is the main reason for choosing this research topic, in addition to various phenomena found in translation studies. Research on stylistics is meant to explain the function of beauty regarding the use of specific linguistic forms that include aspects of sound, lexicon, structure, and figurative language. Besides, the forms also range from rhetorical means to graphology (Yulianti & Marhaeni, 2020). Stylistic studies are intended to investigate how far, in what ways and how linguistic signs to gain special effects are used (Nurgiyantoro, 2014).

The figure of speech, as part of the language style, plays an important role in translation. It is used to explore language in general and describe language use creativity in particular (Jayantini et al., 2020; Permana & Winarta, 2019; Rahmani, 2020). The studies on figure of speech can enrich the view that it can beautify texts that are intended to convey specific messages (Keraf, 2006). In the religious text *Srimad Bhagavatam*, figure of speech also is utilized to raise expression in the efforts of beautifying the text. It is very interesting to analyse cynicism, as one of the figures of speech, in the translation of any text. The English text used as the data source in the current study explains the existence and characteristic of the soul in general and human life in particular, which is actually intended to comprehend who God is, the relation between the living being to God, and what is done to serve God. Therefore, it is necessary to



analyse this text as an attempt to support the success of national education in Indonesia. *Srimad Bhagavatam* is the highest source of knowledge and the highest literary work. It can describe the relation between God's pure worshipper and the one Almighty God's personality, meaning that the words used in the text are highly beautiful.

The *Srimad Bhagavatam* also contains different symbols used to explain spiritual things. It will be very precise if the symbols are analysed using the theory of language style. The language style expressed using different types of figures of speech in religious texts shows that life in the material world is opposed to that in the spiritual world. Everything in the material world is opposed to that in the spiritual world, causing the text to contain more cynicism than others do. The theory of functional grammar can be precisely used to identify the meaning of the sentence structure with figurative expressions for two reasons. The first reason is that it views language as the meaning-giving source, describes the real language use and focuses more on text and context. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) realized three metafunction systems used to identify the meaning of the sentence structure. They are ideational meaning, interpersonal meaning, and textual meaning. The meanings of the sentence structures in the text explored in the current study are certainly closely related to the Theme of the text, namely, the existence and characteristic of the soul trapped within the body. The problems of the study can be formulated in the form of two questions. They are (1) how are the types of cynicism in the text of *Srimad Bhagavatam* translated into the Indonesian language, and (2) what are the textual metafunctions of the sentences with cynicism in the text of *Srimad Bhagavatam* and its Indonesian translation?

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

Although the focus of this study is translation studies, this research also relates to the study of stylistics. Stylistics is the study of the way meaning is created through language in literary texts and other types of texts. To interpret certain texts, linguistic models, theories and frameworks are used as a means of analysis to explain how and why the text is the way it is and how to make words meaningful (Norgaard et al., 2010). Stylistics is often thought of as a linguistic approach to the literature and is understood as such because most stylistic attention is given to the texts of literary works. In fact, stylistics has been used in nonfiction texts such as advertisements, academic writings, and news. Verdonk (2002) explains that stylistics is the science of language style. The term style has actually been used in everyday life. This certainly makes it easier for us to understand the style in language.

The design of this study focuses on the style of language and its translation. Style in language can be interpreted as expressing linguistically in different ways an analysis of different expressions and explanations of their goals and consequences. Stylistics is the science of language style, the interdisciplinary science of linguistics and literature, the science that investigates the use of language in literary works, the science of applying linguistic rules in linguistic research, and the science that investigates the use of language in literary works, considering aspects of its beauty as well as its social background. By understanding the description above, it is clear that in analysing the tuning of speech (stylistics) in a discourse/text, linguistic rules will be studied at the same time (Nurgiyantoro, 2014; Ratna, 2009). The data were collected using the unidirectional parallel corpus method in which the close-reading and note-taking techniques were applied (Olohan, 2004).

The qualitative data used in the study were collected from Chapter 25 of the English text of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, entitled 'The Description of the Characteristics of King Puranjana' and published in Los Angeles by The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust (Prabhupada, 1993), and its Indonesian translation (Prabhupada, 2011). The data are in the form of sentences containing the figure of speech of cynicism and their grammatical packaging. The data were collected using the unidirectional parallel corpus method in which the close-reading and note-taking techniques were applied. The data were collected using the technique of content analysis, which was applied to collect the data in the form of sentences with a figure of speech taken from the source text (ST), which was then matched to the target text (TT). After the data in the form of the sentences with a figure of speech were collected, their structures were analysed to identify the information packaging in the ST and TT. In the data analysis, the ST was compared to the TT, and the data were described, classified and then labelled. The result of the data analysis is presented informally using words, sentences and paragraphs, meaning that the result of the data analysis is descriptively narrated to feature the study as a qualitative one.

## III. DISCUSSION

The discussion of the study starts with what is meant by the cynicism completed with the sentences containing it and their Indonesian translations. Cynicism is a language style used to satirize a situation (Waridah, 2014). That used in the text of *Srimad Bhagavatam* has its own language structure. Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) realize the metafunction system using the textual function, ideational function, and interpersonal function, which can be used to determine the meaning of the language structure. However, this current study focuses only on the textual function related to the clause as message, realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme. The meaning of the language structure of the text used as the data source in the study is closely related to the Theme of the text, that is, the existence and characteristics of the soul trapped within the body. The meaning of each cynicism used in the text cannot be separated from the Theme of the text and is analysed based on the textual metafunction. The textual metafunction of a clause is related to the clause as message, realized using the pattern Theme and Rheme. According to Halliday (1985), there are five types of Theme;

they are the Theme in the declarative clause, the Theme in the exclamative clause, the Theme in the WH-interrogative, the Theme in the yes/no interrogative, and the Theme in the imperative clause. In the current study, all (twenty) data in the form of sentences with cynicism were found in declarative sentences.

In the English language, the clause as message is formed by referring to one of its elements as the Theme and the other element as the remainder. They form what is referred to as the message. Theme is the element functioning as the point of departure of the message, and the other element (the remainder) where the Theme is constructed is referred to as the Rheme. As the structure of the message, the clause structure is made up of the Theme and followed by the Rheme. The element chosen as the Theme initiates the clause (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The Theme in the declarative clause can be classified into the following: the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group with one constituent, the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group with more than one constituent, the simple Theme in the form of the adverbial group, the simple Theme in the form of the prepositional phrase, the multiple Theme and clause as Theme. The appearance of each Theme type can be seen in the following table. Then, grammatical packaging, as the stylistic aspect, is analysed based on the result of the analysis of sentences with cynicism, totalling twenty. The textual metafunction is represented in six groups of Theme; they are the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group made up of one constituent, the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group made up of more than one constituent, the simple Theme in the form of the adverbial group, the simple Theme in the form of the prepositional phrase, the multiple Theme, and clause as Theme. The discussion of the Theme and Rheme of the sentences with cynicism in the text of *Srimad Bhagavatam* and their Indonesian translations is as follows.

Simple theme in the form of the nominal group with one constituent

The simple Theme with the nominal group made of one constituent is the Theme consisting of one constituent in the form of a noun or noun phrase expressing a unit. The sentences containing cynicism representing clause as passage with the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group made up of one constituent in the study were found to amount to eight. Each is explained as follows.

**Datum 1**

- ST “Those who are too much attached to family life—which consists of entanglement with wife, children, wealth and home—are engaged in *kūta-dharma*, pseudo duties” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 429).
- TT “*Orang yang terlalu terikat dengan kehidupan keluarga—yang meliputi keterikatan terhadap istri, anak-anak, kekayaan dan rumah—sedang sibuk dalam kūta-dharma, yakni tugas kewajiban yang keliru*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 11).

The sentence with cynicism above shows the thematic equative structure consisting of two constituents connected with the verb ‘be’ (are). The grammatical packaging can be explained using the textual metafunction related to the clause as message and is realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as presented in the following table.

TABLE 1  
THEME AND RHEME

Those who are too much attached to family life—which consists of entanglement with wife, children, wealth and home—	are engaged in <i>kūta-dharma</i> , pseudo duties
<i>Orang yang terlalu terikat dengan kehidupan keluarga—yang meliputi keterikatan terhadap istri, anak-anak, kekayaan dan rumah—</i>	<i>sedang sibuk dalam kūta-dharma, yakni tugas kewajiban yang keliru.</i>
Theme	Rheme

Viewed from the textual metafunction, the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The simple Theme in the form of the nominal group made up of one constituent in ST is translated into the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group made up of one constituent in the TT as well.

**Datum 2**

- ST “One who has no inner knowledge, who does not know that he is actually the spirit soul living within the body, who is simply enamored by the dictation of the senses, is called a materialist” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 435).
- TT “*Orang yang tidak memiliki pengetahuan bathin, yang tidak mengetahui bahwa sebenarnya ia adalah roh yang tinggal di dalam badan, yang hanya terpicat oleh perintah indria-indria, disebut orang yang materialistic*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 18).

The sentence with cynicism above shows the passive sentence structure. The analysis of its textual metafunction grammatical packaging is realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme as follows.

TABLE 2  
THEME AND RHEME

One who has no inner knowledge, who does not know that he is actually the spirit soul living within the body, who is simply enamored by the dictation of the senses,  <i>Orang yang tidak memiliki pengetahuan bathin, yang tidak mengetahui bahwa sebenarnya ia adalah roh yang tinggal di dalam badan, yang hanya terpicat oleh perintah indria-indria,</i>	is called a materialist  <i>disebut orang yang materialistik.</i>
Theme	Rheme

Viewed from the translation of ST into TT, the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The simple Theme in the form of the nominal group with one constituent in the ST is translated into the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group with one constituent as well.

**Datum 3**

ST “A beautiful woman is useless unless protected by the proper husband” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 451).

TT *Seorang wanita cantik tidak akan berguna kecuali ia dilindungi oleh suami yang pantas* (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 38).

The grammatical packaging of the sentence with cynicism above can be explained using the textual metafunction related to the clause as message and is realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme as follows.

TABLE 3  
THEME AND RHEME

A beautiful woman  <i>Seorang wanita cantik</i>	is useless unless protected by the proper husband.  <i>tidak akan berguna kecuali ia dilindungi oleh suami yang pantas.</i>
Theme	Rheme

Viewed from the textual metafunction, the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT.

**Datum 4**

ST “They are agents of m $\ddot{a}$ y $\ddot{a}$  meant to victimize the opposite sex” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 454).

TT *“Semua itu adalah agen m $\ddot{a}$ y $\ddot{a}$  yang dimaksudkan untuk menaklukkan lawan jenisnya”* (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 41).

The grammatical packaging of the sentence with cynicism above can be explained using the textual metafunction realized using the pattern of Rheme and Rheme, as presented in the following table.

TABLE 4  
THEME AND RHEME

<i>They</i>	<i>are agents of m<math>\ddot{a}</math>y<math>\ddot{a}</math> meant to victimize the opposite sex.</i>
Semua itu	adalah agen <i>m<math>\ddot{a}</math>y<math>\ddot{a}</math></i> yang dimaksudkan untuk menaklukkan lawan jenisnya.
Theme	Rheme

Viewed from the textual metafunction, the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT.

**Datum 5**

ST “The sex impulse remains in an old man's heart also, even up to the point of death” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 454).

TT *“Hasrat seks masih terpendam di hati orang yang sudah tua renta sekalipun, bahkan hingga menjelang detik-detik kematiannya”* (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 41).

The grammatical packaging of the sentence containing cynicism above can be explained using the textual metafunction realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as presented in the following table.

TABLE 5  
THEME AND RHEME

The sex impulse  <i>Hasrat seks</i>	remains in an old man's heart also, even up to the point of death.  <i>masih terpendam di hati orang yang sudah tua renta sekalipun, bahkan hingga menjelang detik-detik kematiannya.</i>
Theme	Rheme

The textual metafunction shows that the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT.

**Datum 6**

ST “Everyone thinks that his intelligence is perfect” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 460).

TT *“Semua orang berpikir bahwa kecerdasan yang dia miliki adalah*

*sempurna*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 49).

The grammatical packaging of the sentence with cynicism above can be explained using the textual metafunction realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as presented in the following table.

TABLE 6  
THEME AND RHYME

Everyone	thinks that his intelligence is perfect.
<i>Semua orang</i>	<i>berpikir bahwa kecerdasan yang dia miliki adalah sempurna.</i>
Theme	Rheme

The textual metafunction of the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The simple Theme in the form of the nominal group with one constituent also is translated into the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group with one constituent in the TT.

**Datum 7**

ST “These attractive sense objects oblige one to come under the control of a woman” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 464).

TT “*Objek-objek indera yang memikat ini memaksa seseorang untuk takluk di bawah kendali seorang wanita*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 53).

The grammatical packaging of the sentence with cynicism above can be explained using the textual metafunction realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as presented in the following table.

TABLE 7  
THEME AND RHYME

These attractive sense objects	oblige one to come under the control of a woman.
<i>Objek-objek indera yang memikat ini</i>	<i>memaksa seseorang untuk takluk di bawah kendali seorang wanita.</i>
Theme	Rheme

The textual metafunction shows that the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The simple Theme in the form of the nominal group with one constituent in the ST is also translated into the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group with one constituent in the TT.

**Datum 8**

ST “This conditional life, the platform of material sense enjoyment, is the cause of forgetfulness of spiritual life” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 466).

TT “*Kehidupan terikat ini, landasan kenikmatan indera material, adalah penyebab keadaan lupa terhadap kehidupan spiritual*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 56).

The textual metafunction shows that the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The simple Theme in the form of the nominal group with one constituent in the ST is translated into the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group with one constituent in the TT.

**2. Simple Theme in the Form of the Nominal Group with More than One Constituent**

Only one datum of the sentence containing cynicism with the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group made up of more than one constituent was found in the current study.

**Datum 9**

ST “These representatives of attachment and envy are very much unfavourable for advancement in spiritual life” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 454).

TT “*Wujud-wujud keterikatan dan rasa iri ini sangat tidak menguntungkan bagi kemajuan dalam kehidupan spiritual*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 41).

The grammatical packaging of the sentence with cynicism above can be explained using the textual metafunction representing clause as message, realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as presented in the following table.

TABLE 8  
THEME AND RHYME

These representatives of attachment and envy.	are very much unfavorable for advancement in spiritual life.
<i>Wujud-wujud keterikatan dan rasa iri ini</i>	<i>sangat tidak menguntungkan bagi kemajuan dalam kehidupan spiritual.</i>
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>

The textual metafunction shows that the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The simple Theme in the form of the nominal group made up of more than one constituent is also translated into the simple Theme in the form of the nominal group consisting of more than one constituent in the TT.

**3. Simple Theme in the Form of the Adverbial Group**

Theme is not only in the form of the nominal group; it can also be in the form of the adverbial group (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). In the current study, four pieces of data on the grammatical packaging of sentences with cynicism representing the clause as message and whose theme is in the form of the adverbial group were found. Each is explained as follows:

**Datum 10**

- ST “Consequently, everything in this material world is called *m äy ä*” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 463).
- TT “*Karena itu, segala sesuatu di dunia material ini disebut m äy ä*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 52).

The grammatical packaging of the sentence containing cynicism above can be explained using the textual metafunction, which is related to the clause as a message and realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as illustrated in the following table.

TABLE 9  
THEME AND RHYME

Consequently	everything in this material world is called <i>m äy ä</i>
<i>Karena itu,</i>	<i>segala sesuatu di dunia material ini disebut m äy ä</i>
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>

The textual metafunction shows that the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The simple theme in the form of the adverbial group in the ST is also translated into the simple Theme in the form of the adverbial group in the TT.

**Datum 11**

- ST “Thus the sex impulse is the platform of material engagement” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 466).
- TT “*Dengan demikian, hasrat seks adalah landasan bagi kesibukan material*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 56).

The grammatical packaging of the sentence with cynicism above can be explained using the textual function, which is related to the clause as message and realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as illustrated in the following table.

TABLE 10  
THEME AND RHYME

Thus	the sex impulse is the platform of material engagement.
<i>Dengan demikian,</i>	<i>hasrat seks adalah landasan bagi kesibukan material.</i>
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>

The Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The simple Theme in the form of the adverbial group is also translated into the simple Theme in the form of the adverbial group in the TT.

**Datum 12**

- ST “Thus, so-called love within this material world is nothing but sexual satisfaction” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 480).
- TT “*Dengan demikian, apa yang disebut-sebut cinta di dunia material ini tak lain hanyalah kepuasan seksual*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 73).

The sentence with cynicism above shows the equative structure; it is in the form of an identifying clause with the verb "be" (is). The analysis of its grammatical packaging, viewed from the textual function of representing clause as message, is realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as illustrated in the following table.

TABLE 11  
THEME AND RHYME

Thus	so-called love within this material world is nothing but sexual satisfaction.
<i>Dengan demikian,</i>	<i>apa yang disebut-sebut cinta di dunia material ini tak lain hanyalah kepuasan seksual.</i>
Theme	Rheme

The above translation analysis, viewed from the textual metafunction, shows that the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The Theme in the form of an adverbial group in the ST is also translated into the simple Theme in the form of an adverbial group in the TT.

#### Datum 13

- ST “Generally, a man's tendency is to enjoy many women, and even at the very end of life the sex impulse is so strong that even though one is very old he still wants to enjoy the company of young girls” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 482).
- TT “*Umumnya kecenderungan seorang laki-laki ialah menikmati banyak wanita, dan bahkan pada akhir kehidupan hasrat seks begitu kuat sehingga meskipun seseorang sudah tua renta ia masih ingin menikmati pergaulan gadis-gadis muda*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 75).

The grammatical packaging of the sentence with cynicism above can be explained using the textual metafunction, representing clause as message, and realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as presented in the following table.

TABLE 12  
THEME AND RHYME

Generally	a man's tendency is to enjoy many women, and even at the very end of life the sex impulse is so strong that even though one is very old he still wants to enjoy the company of young girls.
<i>Umumnya</i>	<i>kecenderungan seorang laki-laki ialah menikmati banyak wanita, dan bahkan pada akhir kehidupan hasrat seks begitu kuat sehingga meskipun seseorang sudah tua renta ia masih ingin menikmati pergaulan gadis-gadis muda.</i>
Theme	Rheme

The textual metafunction shows that the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The simple Theme in the form of an adverbial group is translated into the simple Theme in the form of an adverbial group in the TT.

#### 4. Simple Theme in the Form of Prepositional Phrase

The theme is not always in the form of a nominal group; it can also be in the form of a prepositional phrase (Halliday, 1985; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The grammatical packaging of cynicism in the sentence above represents a message. Only one instance of the simple Theme in the form of a prepositional phrase was found in the current study. The data is as follows:

#### Datum 14

- ST “In this way the woman is the center of all material enjoyment” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 478).
- TT “*Dengan cara demikian wanita adalah pusat bagi segala kenikmatan material*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 71).

The Theme of the sentence with cynicism above is in the form of prepositional phrase. Its grammatical packaging can be explained using the language metafunction system, namely the metafunction representing clause as message and realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as shown in the following table.

TABLE 13  
THEME AND RHYME

In this way	the woman is the center of all material enjoyment.
<i>Dengan cara demikian</i>	<i>wanita adalah pusat bagi segala kenikmatan material.</i>
Theme	Rheme

The Theme-Rheme of the ST above is accurately translated into the TT. The simple Theme in the form of prepositional phrase is translated into the simple Theme in the form of prepositional phrase in the TT.

#### 5. Multiple Theme

Halliday (1985) states that Multiple Theme is where the part of the clause that has the function as a Theme. Here, the Theme has its own internal structure (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). The grammatical packaging of the sentence with cynicism and multiple Theme representing clause as message were found to amount to three in the current study. Each is explained as follows.

#### Datum 15

- ST “He usually engages his body for sense gratification, because one

who is in the bodily conception of life feels that the ultimate goal of life is to serve the senses” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 435).  
 TT “*Biasanya ia menggunakan badannya untuk kepuasan indera, sebab orang yang berada dalam konsep hidup badaniah merasakan bahwa tujuan tertinggi kehidupan ialah untuk melayani indera-indera*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 18).

It can be seen that the sentence above is the sentence with cynicism and multiple Theme. Its grammatical packaging can be explained using the language metafunction system, namely the textual metafunction representing clause as message and realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as illustrated in the following table.

TABLE 14  
THEME AND RHYME

He usually engages his body for sense gratification, <i>Biasanya ia menggunakan badannya untuk kepuasan indera,</i>	because one who is in the bodily conception of life feels that the ultimate goal of life is to serve the senses. <i>sebab orang yang berada dalam konsep hidup badaniah merasakan bahwa tujuan tertinggi kehidupan ialah untuk melayani indera-indera.</i>
Theme	Rheme

Viewed from the textual metafunction, the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The multiple Theme is translated into the multiple Theme in the TT as well.

**Datum 16**

ST “A man wants to enjoy a beautiful woman, and a woman wants to enjoy a powerful, opulent man” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 463).  
 TT “*Seorang laki-laki ingin menikmati wanita cantik, dan seorang wanita ingin menikmati laki-laki yang perkasa dan kaya*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 52).

The sentence containing cynicism above constitutes a sentence with multiple Theme. Its grammatical packaging can be explained using the language metafunction system, namely the textual metafunction representing clause as message and realized using the pattern of Rheme and Rheme, as presented in the following table.

TABLE 15  
THEME AND RHYME

A man wants to enjoy a beautiful woman, <i>Seorang laki-laki ingin menikmati wanita cantik,</i>	and a woman wants to enjoy a powerful, opulent man. <i>dan seorang wanita ingin menikmati laki-laki yang perkasa dan kaya.</i>
Theme	Rheme

If analyzed from the perspective of textual metafunction, the Theme and Rheme of the sentence above are accurately translated into the TT. The sentence with multiple themes is translated into one with multiple themes in the TT as well.

**Datum 17**

ST “Everything is functioning in order, but people foolishly think that they are produced by chance in this material world and that after death they will become zero” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 468).  
 TT “*Segala sesuatu berfungsi dengan baik, namun orang-orang secara bodoh berpikir bahwa semua itu dihasilkan secara kebetulan di dunia material ini dan bahwa setelah kematian mereka akan menjadi kosong*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 58).

The sentence with cynicism above constitutes a sentence with multiple Theme. Its grammatical packaging can be explained using the language metafunction system, namely the textual function representing clause as message, and realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as illustrated in the following table.

TABLE 16  
THEME AND RHYME

Everything is functioning in order, <i>Segala sesuatu berfungsi dengan baik,</i>	but people foolishly think that they are produced by chance in this material world and that after death they will become zero. <i>namun orang-orang secara bodoh berpikir bahwa semua itu dihasilkan secara kebetulan di dunia material ini dan bahwa setelah kematian mereka akan menjadi kosong.</i>
Theme	Rheme

Viewed from the textual metafunction, the Theme and Rheme of the above sentence is accurately translated into the TT, in which the multiple Theme is translated into the multiple Theme in the TT.

**6. Clause as Theme**

The grammatical packaging of the sentence with cynicism and the clause as theme was found to amount to three in the current study. Each is explained as follows:

**Datum 18**

ST “Thus the living entity, under the bodily conception of life, utilizes his intelligence to his best capacity in order to satisfy his senses” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 471).

TT “*Dengan demikian, di bawah paham hidup jasmani, sang makhluk hidup menggunakan kecerdasannya sebaik mungkin untuk memuaskan indera-inderanya*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 73).

The sentence with cynicism above constitutes a sentence with clause as Theme. Its grammatical packaging can be explained using the language metafunction system, namely the textual metafunction representing clause as message, and realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as illustrated in the following table.

TABLE 17  
THEME AND RHYME

Thus the living entity, under the bodily conception of life,	utilizes his intelligence to his best capacity in order to satisfy his senses.
<i>Dengan demikian, di bawah paham hidup jasmani, sang makhluk hidup</i>	<i>menggunakan kecerdasannya sebaik mungkin untuk memuaskan indera-inderanya.</i>
Theme	Rheme

Viewed from the translation of the ST into the TT, the textual metafunction shows that the Theme and Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The sentence where clause is used as Theme is translated into the sentence in which clause is used as Theme.

**Datum 19**

ST “Although rape is not legally allowed, it is a fact that a woman likes a man who is very expert at rape” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 478).

TT “*Meskipun tindakan memperkosa tidak diijinkan menurut hukum, merupakan sebuah kenyataan bahwa seorang wanita menyukai laki-laki yang sangat ahli dalam memperkosa*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 71).

The sentence with cynicism above shows a sentence structure in which a clause is used as the Theme. Its grammatical packaging can be explained using the language metafunction system, namely the textual metafunction representing clause as message, and realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as presented in the following table.

TABLE 18  
THEME AND RHYME

Although rape is not legally allowed,	it is a fact that a woman likes a man who is very expert at rape.
<i>Meskipun tindakan memperkosa tidak diijinkan menurut hukum,</i>	<i>merupakan sebuah kenyataan bahwa seorang wanita menyukai laki-laki yang sangat ahli dalam memperkosa.</i>
Theme	Rheme

Viewed from the textual metafunction, the Theme-Rheme of the ST is accurately translated into the TT. The sentence in the ST in which a clause is used as the Theme is translated into the one in the TT in which a clause is used as the Theme.

**Datum 20**

ST “As soon as a woman attains the age of puberty, she immediately becomes very much agitated by sexual desire” (Prabhupada, 1993, p. 479).

TT “*Begitu seorang wanita mencapai masa puber, ia segera menjadi sangat tergoda oleh hasrat seksual*” (Prabhupada, 2011, p. 72).

The sentence with cynicism above constitutes a sentence structure in which a clause is used as the Theme. Its grammatical packaging can be explained using the language metafunction system, namely the textual metafunction representing clause as a message, and realized using the pattern of Theme and Rheme, as presented in the following table.



TABLE 19  
THEME AND RHYME

As soon as a woman attains the age of puberty, <i>Begitu seorang wanita mencapai masa puber,</i>	she immediately becomes very much agitated by sexual desire. <i>ia segera menjadi sangat tergoda oleh hasrat seksual.</i>
<i>Theme</i>	<i>Rheme</i>

The Theme and Rheme of the ST with cynicism are accurately translated into the TT when viewed through the textual metafunction. The sentence in which a clause is used as the theme in the ST is also translated into the one in which a clause is used as the theme in the TT as well. Cynicism was found in all of the types of themes discussed previously.

IV. CONCLUSION

The cynicism in the text of *Srimad Bhagavatam* has its own structure. The meaning implied in the language structure can be realized using three metafunction systems: textual function, ideational function, and interpersonal function. The meaning implied in the language structure used in the text of *Srimad Bhagayatam* is closely related to the theme of the text, namely the existence and characteristics of the soul trapped within the body. The meaning of every type of cynicism used cannot be separated from the theme of the text. The meaning implied in such a language style is analyzed based on the textual metafunction. The grammatical packaging, as the stylistic aspect, is analysed based on the result of the analysis of the sentence, with cynicism representing textual metafunction, which, in this current study, was found to amount to six types with twenty data. They are (1) the simple Theme with the nominal group consisting of one constituent, which is supported by eight data; (2) the simple Theme with the nominal group made up of more than one constituent, which is supported by one datum; (3) the simple Theme with an adverbial group, which is supported by four data; (4) the simple Theme with a prepositional phrase, which is supported by one data; (5) the multiple Theme, which is supported by three data; and (6) the simple Theme with a clause as the Theme, which is supported by three data.

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# Ideational Metaphor in Saudi EFL Students' Academic Writing: A Systemic-Functional Linguistic Analysis

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**Abstract**—Over the past decade, there has been an upsurge in studies on the quality of EFL students' English academic writing. However, research on grammatical metaphors in academic writing by EFL students is limited. As such, the purpose of this research is to identify the occurrences of ideational metaphors in students' academic writing essays. In this research, the qualitative descriptive approach was applied. This study included 20 undergraduate students from the English Language and Literature Department at the College of Science and Humanities in Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia, Essay Writing course in the fourth level. Students were to write 350-word essay on the subject of "Learning Difficulties During the Coronavirus Pandemic". The data corpus for the study totals 8,482 words. According to the findings, the students' essays include 408 sentences that comprise the ideational metaphor. It is considered insignificant in contrast to the corpus's full data set of 8,482 words. The occurrence of ideational metaphors is dominated by material processes, followed by mental processes, relational processes, behavioral processes, and existential processes. This conclusion shows that EFL students' essay structures are unlikely to have a high number of good grammatical metaphor clauses. For EFL students, lecturers, teachers, and other educational professionals involved in instructing English academic writing, this study has pedagogical implications; it sheds light on how grammatical metaphors in writing texts can serve as a stand-in for the caliber of writing used in academic and scientific literature.

**Index Terms**—academic writing, ideational metaphor, SFL, students' essay, writing skill

## I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a common pastime among individuals all around the globe. Consciously or not, individuals engage in writing almost every day. People may engage in normal business writing or social media communication using a variety of channels, such as Twitter, Facebook, or WhatsApp. Writing activities on social media are often conducted for amusement or everyday communication. Writing is also a career for journalists, book authors, and blog writers, among others. In other words, writing may be a pastime or a job, depending on how well it is practiced.

Writing skills may be taught independently or via school or university courses. Writing abilities are very difficult for language students to acquire. Since word choice, grammar, and the ability to properly and rationally communicate ideas in writing are all aspects of writing skills, mastering writing skills requires patience, perseverance, and dedication. In reality, EFL students face various obstacles while attempting to enhance their academic writing skills. When writing academic papers or course tasks, students often make multiple errors. When composing a thesis, students typically make writing errors. This led to the thesis poor quality, substance, and language. The poor quality of academic writing produced by students is a consequence of interference with the language, followed by translation and neglect (Pasaribu, 2021).

In addition, Lestari (2020) investigated the barriers that students in undergraduate levels confront while writing essays. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. It was found that students limited English proficiency contributes to the difficulty of writing essays, along with poor time management, ignorance of research methodology, and students' motivation and commitment to essay writing.

Özkayran and Yilmaz (2020) found writing errors in the English writing assignments of Turkish EFL students. This research indicates that students make mistakes in academic writing concerning prepositions, the verb "to be," single and plural nouns, spelling, articles, and tenses. This error is typically the result of a lack of academic English writing expertise. Therefore, professional educators such as lecturers and professors should establish a nice, favorable, and engaging atmosphere for writing and urge students not to be frightened of making mistakes while writing.

Khatler (2019) and Nuruzzaman et al. (2018) conducted further study on academic writing errors (2019). They performed study on the writing faults made by university students in Saudi Arabia. According to these two studies, the bulk of errors in academic writing are related to English grammar. This blunder happened as a consequence of interlingual and intralingual transfer, as well as weaknesses in grammatical understanding and comprehension, inadequate experience, and educational background. Prior research suggests that the bulk of mistakes in academic

writing at universities are in the area of grammatical mastery, as a consequence of students' lack of knowledge and competence with their language (Casal & Lee, 2019).

In addition to studies on academic writing errors, Zhang et al. (2021) and Al-Saadi (2020) conducted research on a wide range of topics associated with students' academic writing (2020). They explored the influence of author gender on writing quality. In addition, Kim and Kessler (2021), Casal and Lee (2019), Xuan and Chen (2019), and To (2018) examined the influence of lexical bundles and linguistic complexity on the quality of writing. In the meanwhile, Naghdipour (2021), Thipatdee (2019), and Chanyoo (2018) endeavored to examine the quality of writing in connection to writing pedagogy and other factors.

Based on the above descriptions of earlier research, it can be argued that academic writing research attempts to discover students' writing faults. Intriguingly, the elements that lead to writing mistakes are extensively explored by educators and educational researchers. The section that follows provides research demonstrating the relationship between teaching methods or approaches, gender inequities, and environmental studies and the writing skill or quality of pupils.

Zang (2018) and Liardé (2018) use Systemic Functional Linguistics grammatical metaphors to evaluate students writing quality in Chinese universities. They emphasized the significance of students' knowledge of employing linguistic metaphors in academic essays. To (2018) also reviews a collection of English textbooks in Vietnam based on their lexical difficulty. According to this research, as students' proficiency increased, the texts they read grew more complex. Marr applied the study on grammatical metaphor to paraphrase the mechanical text (2019). She observed that grammatical metaphor was beneficial in paraphrasing the mechanical text directly.

In contrast, Tavernier (2018) examines the link between grammaticalization and grammatical Metaphor within the framework of SFL theory. This investigation uncovered a correlation between grammatical metaphors and text grammaticalization. Yang (2018) examined a number of grammatical metaphors in SFL in an effort to test the idea of textual metaphors. Theoretically and practically, ideational metaphors are believed to be more substantial and durable than textual metaphors.

Suhadi (2018) conducted research on grammatical metaphors in Indonesian contexts to assess the degree to which the theory of grammatical metaphors applies to the analysis of sentences in Arabic, Indonesian, and English. This study demonstrated that grammatical metaphor theory, which combines ideational metaphor and interpersonal metaphor of mood, was effective and applicable to evaluating a range of discourses in the three languages studied. In addition, Mahmuda et al. (2018) aimed to clarify the form and lexical alterations connected with grammatical metaphors used in student essays. Their work revealed that student essays were composed of nominalization, a collection of nouns, or brief phrases.

Research on academic writing quality based on grammatical metaphors is still rather seldom, despite the wealth of studies on the subject. University-level educational researchers in Saudi Arabia are still doing little research on writing quality. The ability of students to use grammatical metaphors, especially ideational metaphors, into their writing is thus evaluated in this research as a measure of their writing quality. Based on research, this study will provide an extra perspective on the linguistic metaphors used in students' writings.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A linguistic theory known as Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) views grammar as a tool for achieving communication objectives and language as a process of meaning formation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Eggins, 2004). The meaning of a language is a crucial component of both oral and written communication. There are now more meaning possibilities in language than only congruent and precise sentences. Grammatical metaphors are mostly used to employ language forms in an illogical and abstract way. The transition of expression from one congruent representation to another incongruent reality involves changes in the level of sentences, groups, words, and morphemes (Suhadi, 2018).

An integral component of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory is the grammatical metaphor hypothesis (Yang, 2018). A lexico-grammatical structural shift that includes incongruent coding is known as a grammatical metaphor. The two categories of grammatical metaphor are conceptual and interpersonal. Ideational metaphor and the kind of clauses are terms used to describe incongruent coding including changes in transitivity structures. In addition, as essays are seen as a kind of communication, the ideational metaphor is appropriate for studying students' writings (Eggins, 2004; Suhadi, 2018). The two categories of interpersonal metaphor are mood interpersonal metaphor and modality interpersonal metaphor. Interpersonal metaphor of mood refers to the inconsistent use of the speech function in terms of mood altering or transference. Although this subject is not covered in this research, changes in the modality used in interpersonal metaphor imply changes in the modality employed (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Suhadi, 2018).

In the transitivity construction, the ideational metaphor is the incongruent form of sentences, phrases, and words (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). SFL identifies six types of transitivity: material, mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, and existential processes. Examples of metaphors in the material process are "the making" and "the use of." Examples of the mental process include "thinking," "feeling," "seeing," etc. In the relational process, the instances are "being" or "appearance." In the behavioral process, "smiling" and "laughing" are examples. The verbal process is found in instances like "saying instead of say" and "words instead of say." Existential process is expressed in words of "being" or

"existence". Table 1 below summarizes the process types in English with category meanings and examples adopted from Martin et al. (1997, p. 228).

TABLE 1  
PROCESS TYPE IN ENGLISH

Process types	Category meanings	Example
<b>Material</b> Action  Event	'doing' 'doing'  'happening'	<i>The monarch had the power to dissolve the parliament.</i> <i>The communists were ousted from power.</i>
<b>Behavioral</b>	'behaving'	<i>She shrieked in agony.</i>
<b>Mental</b> Perception Affection Cognition	'feeling' 'sensing' 'emotive' 'thinking'	<i>I heard a noise outside.</i> <i>The boy loved the girl.</i> <i>You can visualize meeting her again.</i>
<b>Verbal</b>	'saying'	<i>Police described the attack as particularly violent.</i>
<b>Relational</b> Attribution Identification	'being' 'attributing' 'identifying'	<i>This milk is sour.</i> <i>Jen is her brother.</i>
<b>Existential</b>	'existing'	<i>Maybe there's some other darker pattern.</i>

### III. METHOD

The aim of this research is to identify which sentences students utilize as grammatical metaphors in their essays on their educational experiences during the coronavirus epidemic. This research employs a descriptive qualitative methodology. The study data set consists of essays submitted by 20 undergraduate students who took Essay Writing course in the fourth level in the English Language and Literature Department at the College of Science and Humanities in Shaqra University, Saudi Arabia. A 350-word essay on the subject of "Learning Difficulties During the Coronavirus Pandemic" was required of the students. The writings were part of their Essay Writing course assignments. The writings were retrieved from Shaqra University E-learning Platforms, which employs MOODLE, a platform for online learning that was first designed to help teachers build courses that would promote dialogue and group creation of learning materials. A total of 8,482 words comprise the corpus of the present study.

Halliday's SFL ideational metaphors are used in the data analysis. The focus of this study is on ideational metaphor because writing is viewed as a kind of communication that is applicable to ideational Metaphor analysis (Eggins, 2004; Suhadi, 2018). The stages involved in data analysis are as follows: (1) each phrase is recognized and grouped into ideational metaphors, such as material, mental, relational, behavioral, linguistic, and existential processes, based on how transitivity is constructed into the phrase; (2) grammatical metaphors like nominalization, noun grouping, and sentence simplification are all accumulated; (3) in order to classify ideational metaphor phrases correctly, the data analysis is explained in terms of the linguistic context; and (4) the findings were then presented in tables or written form. The type of data used in this study is qualitative data, but it is also supported by quantitative data in order to give more explanation of the qualitative analysis.

### IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research is to look at the ideational metaphors that EFL students employ when they write essays. During the early 2020 covid-19 epidemic, the pupils made an effort to express their emotions. Twenty writings totaling 8,482 words were examined for the ideational metaphor. It makes reference to the transitivity topic in a specific way via the use of linguistic metaphor. The data analysis showed that there were 402 ideational metaphors in all of the pieces. The material process is the kind of ideational metaphor that occurs the most often (197 times), followed by the mental process (112 times), the relational process (45 times), the behavioral process (39 times), and the existential process (9 times). Notably, writings lacked verbal communication. The usage of conceptual metaphors in the students' essays is broken down in the table below.

TABLE 2  
TYPES OF METAPHORS DEPICTED IN STUDENTS' ESSAYS

Types of Ideational Metaphor	Number of occurrences	Percentage
Material Process	197	49%
Mental Process	112	27.86%
Relational Process	45	11.19%
Behavioral Process	39	9.70%
Verbal Process	0	0%
Existential Process	9	2.32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>100%</b>

The 281 ideational metaphor occurrences are first seen as inconsequential in light of the 8,482 words in the data corpus. Only 3.79 percent of all phrases in essays use incongruent expressions. Thus, the student essays are categorized as non-scientific literature (Zhang, 2018; Suhadi, 2018). Second, the material process type accounts for the majority of ideational metaphors, 49 percent of all discovered ideational metaphors, followed by the mental process, which accounts for 27.86 percent. These results imply that students are better familiar with metaphorical expressions used to describe physical and mental processes. In the meanwhile, there is a sharp drop in the use of metaphor in interpersonal and behavioral processes. Surprisingly, the verbal process had no metaphorical language, whereas the existential process had only one.

The significant findings of the study, their similarities and differences with past studies, and their pedagogical implications are covered in the discussion that follows. Additionally, instructions are provided on how to use the ideational Metaphor for each kind of transitivity in the students' writings. The material process is discussed firstly, followed by mental, relational, behavioral, linguistic, and existential processes respectively.

#### A. Materials Process

The subcategory of transitivity that corresponds to activity is the material process. It refers to the notion of one entity acting on another. In other words, the actor (participant 1) is responsible for achieving the aim (participant 2). Even though it is not explicitly stated in the clause, every material process clause contains an action taker. The topic of the activity is the goal (participant 2). The following text provides a metaphorical illustration of a physical process. The material process verb has the ability to be transformed into the present participle. Verbs such as "make," "observe," and "write" are indicative of the material process. The data of this study reveals good use of this process when students describe their daily routine, as in Excerpts 1 and 2 below.

##### Excerpt 1

*'Taking better care of one's health and **keeping** the house cleanness'.*

The incongruent expression of the statement is seen in Extract 1. The verb "take" is the root of the gerund "taking." The word "cleanness" is derived from the adjective "clean," whereas the verb "keeping" is derived from the verb "keep." The congruent expression of this clause can be rephrase as "It is better to take care of one's health and maintain the house clean." The verbs "take" and "keep" are regarded as examples of material process since they are categorized as action verbs in the text.

##### Excerpt 2

*'After **attending** my online classes and **doing** my assignments, I checked my answers with my classmates'.*

In Excerpt 2, the use of the gerunds "attending" and "doing" in the sentence is also emphasized. Both expressions were formed from the roots of the verbs "attend" and "do". The data shows that the gerund derivation is the most metaphorically realized phrase in the literature. This result indicates that the students were knowledgeable about the gerund derivation process. This result supports the findings of Mahmuda et al. (2018), who discovered that the most prevalent grammatical metaphor in their research was nominalization.

#### B. Mental Processes

Seeing, liking, desiring, thinking (of something), and imagining are only a few examples of the type of processes that take place in the mind's internal reality. Similarly, the three different types of mental processes are Affection (liking, disliking, loving, etc.), Cognition (deciding, understanding, knowing, etc.), and Perception (seeing, hearing, etc.). There is always a participant in mental processes that can feel, think, or sense. The term 'senser' is used to refer to this participant. The other participant in the phenomena is the thing that is perceived, felt, thought about, or seen.

##### Excerpt 3

*Online classes can be sometime very **boring**, and **missing** my friends was the worst feeling.*

The sentence in Excerpt 3 is classified as a mental process because it depicts a meaning of 'feeling'. The word 'boring' in the first clause belongs to Affection process and the clause is congruent with the sentence '*Online classes make me feels bored*'. Similarly, 'missing' in the second clause is classified as belonging to Affection process. It is also in the gerund form derived from the verb 'miss'. The clause is congruent with the sentence '*I feel missing my friends*'.

#### C. Relational Processes

The relational process tries to create connections between two entities and is classified into two modes: attribution and identification. The former is used to characterize an entity by assigning various adjectives, whilst the latter refers to an entity by asserting his/her identify explicitly. The three different types of relational processes that make up the English system, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2014), are as follows: (1) Intensive, as in *Sam is a dentist*. (2) Circumstantial refers to place, time, and organization. For instance, *Sam was at the clinic yesterday*. (3) Possessive describes a circumstance in which the individual has control over someone or something. There are two distinct ways for each of these: attribute-based and identity-based.

##### Excerpt 4

***Being** in a lockdown, we had to spend more hours on the computers.*

The clause is categorized as a relational process in Excerpt 5 as it encodes Intensive identification of the situation. The phrase 'being in a lockdown' is an incongruent variation of the phrase 'we were in a lockdown'. The gerund form of the linguistic metaphor indicates the transition from 'be' to 'being'.

#### **Excerpt 5**

*Having the family gathered most of the time is warm and fun.*

This sentence illustrates the use of the verb 'having' as a linguistic metaphor. Again, 'having' is the gerund derived from the verb 'have'. The type of relational process expressed in Excerpt 5 is the possessive process category.

#### *D. Behavioral Process*

The behavioral process is focused on the person's physiological or psychological processes. These include bodily and psychological activities such as breathing, coughing, smiling, sleeping, and seeing. Behavioral processes are hard to distinguish from other processes because they lack definite features. They, in other words, can be posited halfway material and mental processes. This type of process denotes just one participant, and that participant is usually a conscious individual. In certain situations, there may be an extra player: the Range, who only contributes specialized action to the process and is not a true participant in it (Zhang, 2018).

#### **Excerpt 6**

*Sometimes there were **laughters** and **shouts** during online classes.*

In Excerpt 6, the clause's participant is the words 'laughters and shouts'. The phrase is incoherent since the meaning of 'laughter and shouts' has changed from a process to a participant status. This statement may be congruently expressed as 'We sometimes laugh and shout during online classes.' This sentence illustrates the psychological state of the original participant or action-taker.

#### *E. Verbal Process*

The phrase "verbal process" refers to the act of speaking. Therefore, something or someone must take on the role of the "sayer" who communicates the message. Any exchange of symbolic significance is included. The Receiver, the person who will hear the speech, is another participant. There are two other elements, namely language and what is spoken. The data analysis showed that there was no ideational metaphor in the language process of the student writings. During the verbal procedure, the pupils' ideational metaphor construction skills seemed to be lacking. All phrases that make use of linguistic processes were therefore written in congruent forms.

#### *F. Existential Process*

Existential process conveys an entity's existence without speculating on its other characteristics. Existential statements often start with the word 'be', and the 'there be' clause is the typical clause construction that conveys this type of process; examples are '*There is a cat on the mat.*' and '*Is there any message for me?*' Other verbs employed in existential processes are different from either attributive or identifying verbs, despite the word 'be' sharing similarities with relational processes (Zhang, 2018). *Exist, take place, persist, and occur* are all verbs that denote 'to exist' or 'to occur'.

#### **Excerpt 6**

***There wasn't** so much fun in distance studying.*

The expression 'there wasn't' is used incongruently in this instance. A congruent statement would be: '*When we had distance learning, little fun took place.*' The word 'being,' which is suggested in the phrase, is created by the verb 'was.' This phrase is thus categorized as a metaphorical statement in the existential process.

## V. CONCLUSION

The goal of the study was to identify ideational metaphoric structures in student essays from an academic writing course. The students' use of linguistic metaphors in their academic writing is one of its outstanding features. Students' academic writing may be of greater quality if they use grammatical metaphors. To put it another way, academic writing should look formal, organized, and concise. This study found that ideational metaphor clauses are used sparingly in students' essay writing. As a consequence, this effect worsens the subpar academic writing that students generate. Another surprising finding was how often a material process was linked to the ideational Metaphor. Additionally, the pupils had the greatest experience with the gerund construction method, which turns infinitive verbs into nouns.

The expressions of ideational metaphors included five different forms of transitivity. On the other hand, the data analysis hid the verbal process. The most prevalent kind of ideational metaphor was realized via a mental process. This conclusion is supported by the results from Mahmuda et al. (2018) and Suhadi's (2018) research. They emphasized how EFL students often misuse linguistic metaphors in their writing. Additionally, there are a few grammatical mistakes in the writings, which reveals a lack of academic writing proficiency on the part of the pupils. Due to the pupils' weak grammatical knowledge and academic writing abilities, this issue developed (Pasaribu et al., 2021; Pasaribu, 2021).

Academic writing in EFL classrooms has pedagogical consequences as a result of the study results. Students should first be more aware of the value of using grammatical metaphors to strengthen and condense their writing. Second, instructors should develop a method of instruction that helps students become more adept at using grammatical

metaphors in their academic writing. To guarantee that students' writing is of the greatest caliber, appropriate teaching resources must be employed, such as EFL practice books in academic writing that clarify grammatical metaphors.

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# The Usefulness of Uselessness: Short Stories by José Eduardo Agualusa

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**Abstract**—*Estranhões & Bizarrocos: Stories for angels to sleep* is a children’s and young adult book authored in Portuguese by Angolan writer José Eduardo Agualusa. This paper posits that the book’s constituent short stories, initially intended for children, bear potential appeal to readers across all age brackets, situating themselves within the realm of ‘crossover fiction’. The book’s title resonates with the semantic sphere of the strange or peculiar. Within the narratives, ‘the stranger’ correlates with the child’s fantastical world, but also aligns with the ‘foreigner’ inherent within these short stories. To unpack the representations of this ‘bizarre’ Other depicted in the stories, we employ literary imagology. This approach reveals the role of images curated by the narrators in constructing the implicit theme shared across the book’s 10 short stories. Lastly, the work provokes readers to ponder the value of seemingly usefulness things and situations—a reflection that carries its own meta-literary significance.

**Index Terms**—*Estranhões & Bizarrocos*, José Eduardo Agualusa, literary imagology, crossover literature

## I. INTRODUCTION

José Eduardo Agualusa (born 1960, Angola), an internationally acclaimed and awarded Angolan author of Portuguese and Brazilian descent, is one of the preeminent figures in African literature in the Portuguese language. His portfolio encompasses an array of genres, including novels, short stories, poems, chronicles, and theater pieces targeted at both children and adults. His literary contributions have been translated into 25 languages, marking his global footprint.

In the year 2000, he published *Estranhões & Bizarrocos: Estórias para adormecer anjos* (translated for the purpose of this paper as ‘Estranhões & Bizarrocos<sup>1</sup>: Stories for angels to sleep’), a compilation of ten distinct short stories: “Estranhões, Bizarrocos e outros seres sem exemplo” [Estranhões, Bizarrocos, and other beings without example]; “Sábios como camelos” [Wise as camels]; “A menina de peluche” [The plush girl]; “O peixinho que descobriu o mar” [The little fish that discovered the sea]; “O primeiro pirilampo do mundo” [The first firefly in the world]; “O país dos contrários” [The land of contraries]; “O caçador de borboletas” [The butterfly catcher]; “O pai que se tornou mãe” [The father who became a mother]; “O sonhador” [The dreamer]; “A menina que queria ser maçã” [The girl who wanted to be an apple].

Featuring illustrations by Portuguese artist Henrique Cayatte (born 1957), this anthology was honored with the prestigious Gulbenkian Grand Prize for Literature for Children and Young Adults in 2002. Additionally, the book is endorsed by Portugal’s National Reading Plan (PNL)<sup>2</sup> for children between the ages of 6 and 8. It is worth mentioning that in the same year, the author also published two other works: *Um estranho em Goa* [A stranger in Goa], a novel set in former Portuguese colony in India, and *A substância do amor e outras crónicas* [The substance of love and other stories], a collection of short essays. According to Pinheiro (2021), it is the simultaneous appearance of these different works that confirms that José Eduardo Agualusa is a writer capable of traversing different literary paths.

Of significant note, the author demonstrated considerable literary versatility within the same year through the publication of two further works: *Um estranho em Goa* [A stranger in Goa], a novel with its narrative rooted in the historical Portuguese colony in India, and *A substância do amor e outras crónicas* [The substance of love and other stories], a compilation of brief yet impactful essays. Pinheiro (2021) underlines that the concurrent emergence of these distinct works affirms José Eduardo Agualusa’s capabilities as a writer who can adeptly navigate divergent literary paths.

<sup>1</sup> Also translated as: *Oddballs and oddities* (see: <https://mertinwitt-litag.de/portfolio-items/jose-eduardo-agualusa/>).

<sup>2</sup> The National Reading Plan (Plano Nacional de Leitura, abbreviated as PNL) is an initiative of Portugal, inaugurated in 2006, with the primary ambition of enhancing reading habits and augmenting literacy levels within the Portuguese populace. The initial decade-long phase of this program, spanning from 2006 to 2016, has been successfully concluded, with the subsequent phase (2017-2027) presently in progress. For more detailed information, refer to the program’s official website: <https://www.pnl2027.gov.pt/np4/home>.

Our discussion will pivot on the thematic unity embedded within ten short narratives of *Estranhões & Bizarrocos: Stories for angels to sleep*, as well as the relevance of applying imagology to a selection of these stories, as a case study.

## II. LITERARY IMAGOLGY: AN APPROACH

The field of comparative literature has given birth to literary imagology, or “image studies”. As Dyserinck (2016) asserts, this approach primarily examines the depiction, origin, and function of images of the Other – the foreigner – in national literatures. Machado and Pageaux (2002) define the term “image” as “the representation of a foreign cultural reality, through which the individual or group producing/sharing/spreading it uncovers and translates the ideological space in which they are situated” (p. 51).

From our perspective, the term “foreign” should not be limited to those originating from another country, nation, or geographic region. Instead, it should extend to those who belong to another ethnic group, gender, age, social status, etc. (Leersen, 2016), and even to those identified as different, unfamiliar, and unknown. In relation to the imagological object proposed by Nora Moll, Simões (2011) argues that, in addition to seeking “relations between different cultural systems” (p. 24) and deconstructing representations of alterity and the Other outside the border, space should be created for studying the “stranger” from within, as long as this is felt or perceived as dissimilar. As Bauman (2017) contends, “strangers symbolize everything elusive, fragile, unstable, and unpredictable in life” (p. 61). Tomé (2013) investigates, for instance, the representation of overweight, gay, and physically or cognitively disabled Others in Portuguese juvenile literature in the new millennium. D’Alte (2019), through a “robotic imagology,” discusses the representations of artificial intelligence in narratives for children and young adults.

In essence, as a tool intending to examine auto- and hetero-images and the traits of their conflicts, ambiguities, and differences embodied in them (Simões, 2011), imagology can assist in interpreting the modes of representing the Self and the Other in literary works when differences or clashes arise.

Methodologically, O’Sullivan and Immel (2017) condense the steps of imagological study into four questions:

i) Who is observing? A central principle of imagology is that images reveal as much, if not more, about the observer as about the observed. The question of who the “spectator” is must be asked on two levels: the cultural and temporal context of text production and the narrative perspective.

ii) Who (or what) is being observed? The underlying objective of this question is to identify the reasons for selecting the observation object, that is, the “spectated”.

iii) How are the images portrayed? The focus of the analysis will be on the similarities or differences between depictions, along with the intertextuality of these characterizations across various texts.

iv) Why are such images portrayed in this way? The term “audience” of the literary work should be utilized and scrutinized to explain why the world of the “stranger” is crafted for potential readers.

The self and heteroimage of certain characters in this book by Agualusa are tied to a sense of unbelonging within their surrounding universe. We revisit here the concept of “insile” as introduced by Can (2020) in *O campo literário moçambicano* [The Mozambican literary field]. The researcher begins with Bernard Mouralis’ dual definition of exile in African literature, described as: “[i]) an autobiographical account of an individual living in another country; [ii]) the literary depiction of a hero compelled to leave his homeland and venture abroad” (Can, 2020, p. 28). Focusing on the Mozambican novel, Can (2020) suggests two novel categories, one pertaining to the institutional field, the other to the text’s nature, specifically, to the “novelistic heroes who, for various reasons, are acquainted with the reality of internal exile” (p. 28). Our interest lies in this latter category: characters who either feel exiled or are viewed as such within their confines. To portray this phenomenon, Can (2020) introduces the idea of “exile within the home, or insile, a term referring to the alienation experienced in one’s own country” (pp. 28-29).

In the anthology’s opening short story, “Strangers, Bizarrocos, and other beings without example,” Jácome is depicted as the “inventor of the impossible” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 11), perceived distinctively by adult and child observers. Adults find Jácome’s work bewildering and potentially frightening to children, whereas children, driven by curiosity, perceive his inventions as natural. The omniscient narrator juxtaposes these perspectives, underscoring the children’s embrace of novelty and the adults’ rigidity, viewing Jácome as an alien, an intramural outsider. Jácome, a hero whose identity is dismissed by adults, responds in silence. According to Can (2020), such cessation or absence of sounds is a defining characteristic of “insile”.

The representation of silence continues to appear in subsequent texts. The grand vizier’s fear in “Wise as camels” emanates from the muteness of history and memory, signified by the potential loss of his entire library transported by 400 camels. Similarly, “The plush girl” is punished for being unable to make a sound, when transformed into a stuffed doll: “She wanted to scream, but she was not able to, she wanted to move but her body did not obey her” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 21). This silence signifies her internal exile, being relocated to a world of stuffed animals, observed by the dolls in her room who felt vindicated. The omniscient narrator through Manuela’s thoughts communicates this self-perception: “it seemed to her that everyone was laughing at her condition” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 21). The spell breaks only upon her crying, symbolic of her remorse. Metaphorically, this story underlines the importance of otherness: “Manuela started to look differently at those stuffed animals. After all, for a few minutes, she had been just like them” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 24). The image of the Other metamorphoses through her own metamorphosis.

José Eduardo Agualusa employs objects and animals as conduits for transmitting values. In “The little fish that discovered the sea,” the protagonist, Cristóbal, experiences a sense of exile within his aquarium. It is this sensation of “insile” that compels him to search for a route to the sea, even at the risk of his own life: “Afflicted, unable to articulate the burgeoning desire for escape he felt within him, he was driven daily against the walls of his aquarium, straining to glimpse another world. Ultimately, he took a leap of faith” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 27). This activating curiosity permeates many of these short stories. It prompts a dialogue between the familiar and the audacious, challenging the character or observer to confront divergent and occasionally unconventional images, as seen in “The land of contraries.” Initially unusual associations, like those between the fly and butterfly in “The first firefly in the world” or the birthing seahorse in “The father who became a mother,” are normalized through a storyteller-narrator who contextualizes these anomalies within a reality that transcends fiction: “From that sunny morning onwards, a father giving birth became a part of our world” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 52).

Fiction and dreams, integral to children’s literature, intertwine with reality, leading characters to question their circumstances, as seen in “The butterfly catcher.” Upon realizing that his captive butterfly can speak, the young protagonist, Vladimir, exclaims: “My God! Am I dreaming?” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 45). More poignant is the butterfly’s retort: “That doesn’t matter” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 45). Their exchange subtly echoes, for instance, the dialogue between the Little Prince and the fox in Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s 1943 work, revolving around the act of enchantment.

Consequently, in the realm of the possible, the boundary between reality and dreams becomes immaterial. This notion is echoed in “The dreamer,” where dreams and fictional reality are so intertwined that distinguishing between them becomes challenging. In conclusion, the bizarre comfortably occupies this realm of possibility, perceived differently by different observers. Through his work, Agualusa appears to extend an invitation to adults to dream, encouraging them to approach the Other with intellectual flexibility and tolerance.

### III. THE “BIZARRE” OTHER: REFLECTION ON “USELESSNESS”

Fantasy, flexibility, and tolerance are needed to read “Estranhões, Bizarros, and other beings without example”. In this story, Jácome is shunned due to his futile inventions. One day, the peculiar creatures he crafted for company, “estranhões” and “bizarros,” disperse throughout the city, agitating the adult inhabitants. Consequently, Jácome is imprisoned. Despite initial resistance, children’s protests prompt their parents to liberate him. However, upon reaching his cell, they find that Jácome has vanished, having used his sole practical invention—a device for passing through walls—to escape.

The final short story in the book, “The girl who wanted to be an apple,” centers on Joaquina, a young girl who dreams of becoming a “green, bright, fragrant apple like a spring morning” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 59). This aspiration baffles her mother, teacher, and classmates, but remains steadfast in Joaquina’s heart. After dying, in Heaven, she laments for not realizing her dream. In response, God fulfills her wish: “You have to grow a lot to become an apple. You did. Now, indeed, you will be an apple” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 60).

Although neither story employs first-person narration, their protagonists unequivocally command attention. The short story about Jácome presents an adult (opponent)/child (adjuvant) dichotomy, with adults opposing his inventions and children admiring them. The adults, preferring pragmatic utility, regard Jácome as harmless but unhinged. The evaluation about the “inutensils” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 8) comes from the main character’s neighbors and friends: the adults defend the use of products with pragmatic functions and think that Jácome “doesn’t hurt anyone, but he’s a little crazy” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 8). From the parents’ point of view, “these things cannot exist. They scare our children” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 9). The narrator, aligning with the children’s perspective, counters that this “wasn’t true” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 9): the children relish novelty and divergence. Here, a conflict arises between two groups harboring disparate values. Jácome—the eccentric and “bizarre” Other—receives the approval and even the “filia” (Machado & Pageaux, 2002, p. 62), that is, the children’s empathy, while the adult public feels contempt and repugnance for such weirdness. While children remain untroubled by the unfamiliar, the characters representing sensible adults throughout the book exhibit a horror for anything deviating from normality, because “older people are afraid of anything that’s new” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 9).

A similar tension between the protagonist and their surrounding community surfaces in Joaquina’s narrative. Compared to practical ambitions such as becoming an “astronaut, Formula 1 driver, singer, footballer” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 58), aspiring to be a piece of fruit seems unusually whimsical. Just as with Jácome’s inventions, this oddity is deemed useless. Joaquina’s dream and Jácome’s inventions yield no apparent benefits in the eyes of the adults. Joaquina’s choice puzzles everyone around her: her mother “got scared: Apple? (...) Joaquina, my love, why an apple?” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 59), while her classmates ridicule her: “—Russet apple! Russet apple!” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 59). Direct speech underscores the contrast between the main and secondary characters, spotlighting Joaquina’s bizarre and unusual, i.e., different, nature.

This concept of the bizarre features prominently in several short stories in the collection, such as “Wise as camels,” where animals transform into ambulatory libraries and storytellers; “The plush girl,” in which the protagonist briefly becomes a stuffed toy; and “The land of contraries,” where all animals alter in size. The theme of metamorphosis—a shared element with Kafka’s eponymous short story—permeates other stories as well. “The father who became a mother,” as the title implies, is one such example.

Representations of the “bizarre” Other serve as a key interpretive lens for Agualusa’s stories. The term “bizarre” implies divergence, likening the subject to a foreigner navigating boundaries. In this book, the “foreigner” is depicted from the standpoint of abnormality and incomprehensibility. In “The land of contraries,” this notion is discussed in a conversation between the elephant and Felini, a cat as big as a bovine: “You seem like an inhabitant of the Land of Contraries, but you speak like a foreigner” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 41). Felini experiences alienation on two levels: seen as a “monster” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 41) in his hometown and as a foreigner in the Land of Contraries, where he wasn’t born. In the end, Felini, who harbors unrequited love for a cow back home, adjusts to bovine-size in the new land and falls for another cow that’s “so small that it didn’t even reach his hooves” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 42). This suggests that understanding the “stranger” is elusive. The irony permeating this story doesn’t create space for a constructive dialogue between the oddball and those who are socially accepted. Nevertheless, it is these bizarre elements that permit fantasy, which propels the narratives and appeals to the collection’s target readership.

People adhering to societal norms and “useful” deeds risk becoming subservient to mainstream thought, and these dominant viewpoints/standards/dictates can be detrimental to individuals whose internal standards deviate from mass culture (Morin, 2002). In this regard, these short stories challenge the stereotypical and even prejudiced values of the collective adult world, offering a counterpoint to the cliché of creating/becoming something “useful” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 8).

The narrator frequently engages in postmodern-style narrative interventions, employing explanatory or critical sentences that resume the Angolan storytelling tradition (Silva, 2006). This narrator-reader dynamic fosters a sense of complicity and intimacy (Albuquerque, 2003), whether the reader is a child, teenager, or adult. These stories exhibit an oscillation and diverse usage between heterodiegetic (in six of the stories) and homodiegetic narrators. Regardless of the form, the narrator expresses opinions, provides commentary, and/or directly addresses the reader-listener (in eight of the stories). Essentially, this is a storyteller-narrator steeped in oral tradition, which fits the nature of these narratives that rely on traditional storytelling and target young readers. The postmodern narrator consistently communicates with the reader-listener across various texts “This is the story I want to tell you” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 32) and “This is the story I want to tell you today” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 48), expressing doubts and empathy “poor thing, today she only eats vegetables” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 30, about the cat Veronica in “The little fish that discovered the sea”) or engaging in meta-reflection on the stories being told “there is always a day when an adult asks us this question” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 58), “Maybe earlier I was wrong. It seems to me now that this story has a happy ending” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 52).

In addition to the aforementioned colloquialism, the stories possess other traits of oral narratives, such as the indeterminate temporal phrases like “formerly” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 32), “many years ago,” and “one day” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 14; see also, for example, “Wise as camels,” “The father who became a mother,” “The dreamer,” and “The plush girl”). This temporal indeterminacy renders the time atemporal, caters to the reader’s imagination, and guides them into a dreamlike realm, hinted at in titles such as “The dreamer”.

Through the narrator’s words, the subversion and creation of a world that accepts “beings without example” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 8) is lauded throughout the stories. What “never served for anything” can be “very important” (Agualusa, 2013, p. 12). This final aphoristic statement from the first story acts as a mantra for all the other stories in the collection. It establishes an intertextual relationship with the lines “As coisas que não levam a nada/têm grande importância [Things that lead to nothing/are of great importance]” by Brazilian poet Manoel de Barros (2010, p. 145), who suggests valuing the uselessness of things in his poetry. Thematically, a connection can also be drawn between these stories and a certain Taoist parable:

Woodworker Shi was on his way to Qi. As he came to Quyuan he saw an oak planted as the village altar tree. It was so huge that a herd of several thousand cattle could have stood in its shade [...] the woodworker did not so much as glance at it and walked right past without stopping. His apprentice, however, stood and gazed his fill before running to catch up. “Master, [...] I have never seen lumber of such fine quality! Yet you were unwilling to look at it and walked right past without stopping. Why?”

“Enough!” said Woodworker Shi. “Say no more about it. It’s waste wood! Make a boat from it and it will sink; make a coffin from it and it will rot; make a utensil from it and it will break; make a gate from it and it will run sap; make a pillar from it and insects will infest it. You can’t make lumber from such a tree; it’s useless!”

After Woodworker Shi returned home, the altar oak appeared to him in a dream. “What were you comparing me to? Did you mean to compare me to those lovely trees [...]—fruit bearing trees that are ripped apart once their fruit ripens? [...] I have sought to be useless for a very long time, and though I came close to death I have now reached my goal—for me that is of great use indeed!” (Zhuangzi, 2019, pp. 35-36).

The parable by Zhuangzi, a fourth-century BC Chinese philosopher, demonstrates the relativity and mutual convertibility of usefulness and uselessness. The sage cautions against adhering to a conservative and shortsighted perspective when assessing the value of things, underscoring the significance of individual uniqueness. Consequently, this lesson aligns with the moral sense found in Agualusa’s stories. These short narratives broadly emphasize the challenge of accepting the Other, guiding the listener-reader toward accepting this difference. Values such as solidarity and truth are also reflected in stories like “Wise as camels,” “The little fish that discovered the sea,” “The first Firefly in the world,” “The land of contraries,” and “The girl who wanted to be an apple”.

These and other stories in the collection demonstrate the crucial role that anthropomorphized animals play within these narratives. Six of these stories feature animals as protagonists (camels; fish; fly and butterfly; cat; butterfly; seahorses), while the remaining four highlight a distinct object (mechanical inventions, stuffed toys, pumpkins, apple). The invocation of these non-human elements serves as a metaphor for the characters' responses of either revulsion or empathy, humanizing (through antithesis) the stories by accentuating the beauty and diversity of nature.

May (1995) highlights that many authors, particularly those focusing on children's literature, write with the intent to assist their readers in managing scenarios similar to those encountered by the characters. The scholar underscores that authors aspire for their readers to comprehend the challenges experienced by another individual or culture through their narratives. Exceptional writers aim for the narrative voice to resonate with readers sufficiently to elicit renewed interpretation or rereading of the queries presented by their literary work (May, 1995). Considering Agualusa's stories as literature intended for children between 6 and 8 years old, in line with the categorization by the National Reading Plan (PNL) of Portugal, it is straightforward to pinpoint a range of topics discussed, encompassing friendship, surpassing limitations, the fulfillment of dreams, and death. However, comprehending the theme of "usefulness of uselessness," emanating from the portrayal of the "bizarre" Other, may pose a challenge to younger children. This broad thematic scope prompts reconsideration of the categorization of the collection's ten stories and whether they are exclusively intended for children and young readers.

While investigating Agualusa's books targeted at children and young adults and attempting to categorize them as either "ambivalent text" or "crossover fiction," Pinheiro (2021) opts for the former one. In Pinheiro's perspective, Agualusa's writing approach anticipates catering to two distinct reader groups: children and adults. Consequently, Pinheiro (2021) argues that Agualusa's works do not qualify as crossover literature, which he defines as "texts that transcend boundaries post-publication, independent of the author's intent" (p. 96). However, this assessment is disputable, given the inherent challenges in retrospectively determining an author's cognitive stance during the writing process. Even though Agualusa's work exhibits a "dual address"—a communication mode where the author simultaneously targets both child and adult audiences (Shavit, 1986; Wall, 1991)—the problem remains. This viewpoint exclusively attributes the crossover trajectory to the author, neglecting the reader's proactive role (Harju, 2012).

Agualusa dedicates the collection "Estranhões & Bizarrocos: Stories for angels to sleep" to his son Carlos (Agualusa, 2013). He discloses in two interviews that "I began writing the stories of *Estranhões e Bizarrocos* for a magazine called *Pais & Filhos* [Parents & Children], as I had a young son and had started reading and writing for him" (Cunha, 2017, para. 19), and that "I have two children (...) I always keep them in mind when I write" (David & Caldeira, n.d., para. 20). Taking into account these considerations and the potential for multiple interpretations afforded by the texts, we advocate for classifying Agualusa's stories as crossover literature, potentially appealing to readers across all age groups.

#### IV. CROSSOVER STORIES: SHORT NARRATIVES FOR ALL AGES

The global acclaim of the Harry Potter series across readers of diverse age groups has aided in mainstreaming the term "crossover literature." This term pertains to texts initially targeted at children or adults, but are embraced by a diverse readership without any revisions or modifications (Grenby, 2008). Although this blurring of age-based boundaries can occur in either direction (adults perusing children's literature and children engrossed in adult literature), the most prominent trend of crossover, as per Falconer (2004), is currently from children's to adult audiences.

Crossover literature is not a recent phenomenon. Classic works like *The Little Prince* and *Alice's adventure in Wonderland*, appreciated universally, are typical examples of texts whose readership isn't rigid and which can be read literally by a child or interpreted at a more intricate level by an adult (Shavit, 1986). Nodelman (2008) posits that an ostensibly simple text embodies a more subtle and "complex repertoire that culminates into a second, concealed text," a notion he terms as a "shadow text." This text—both verbal and visual—permeates the main narrative and is discernible only to those who can decipher its code. The complexity of a story is inversely correlated with its implied meaning. The simpler a text, the more it demands of its reader to possess a deeper understanding of its content. Naturally, this demand isn't tailored to children, who are presumed to have limited capabilities (Nodelman, 2008).

The role of adults in children's and youth literature as covert and even active recipients has been acknowledged and explored. The concept underpinning crossover literature raises questions about justifying the existence of books that provide dual gratification to both child and adult readers, defying the roles traditionally assigned to them. Falconer (2009) credits the emergence and popularity of crossover literature to the evolving tastes and reading habits of contemporary readers, indicative of shifting perspectives about childhood, adulthood, and the ambiguous realm in between. Beckett (2009) associates this trend of co-reading with the dissolution of age boundaries, facilitated by print and digital advancements in the technological era. He further observes that publishers have recognized the commercial viability of works that are universally appealing across all age groups. Instead of allocating specific content to particular age groups, there is now an understanding that diverse audiences across various age brackets can enjoy the same work (Beckett, 2009).

In this regard, as Shi (2019) indicates, crossover literature is not a novel concept. Rather, it emerges from the cultural, economic, and technological transformations in society that necessitate a new term to encapsulate the phenomenon of diverse audiences engaging with literary works. Santos (2015) articulates that by facilitating an intergenerational dialogue, the term "crossover" assists in blurring the boundaries between adults and children. This

allows for the understanding that literature for children, despite retaining the preposition ‘for,’ is indeed universally accessible (p. 210).

From a cognitive literary studies standpoint, Shi (2019) underlines the variance in the interpretative abilities of readers of differing ages when engaging with texts that exhibit a range of mental modeling hierarchies. The capacity to accommodate child, youth, and adult readers who operate at different cognitive-affective levels is integral to crossover literature. In another article, wherein Shi (2016) contrasts the original and translated versions of the same picture book, the scholar demonstrates how differences in thematic representation, even when the theme remains consistent, can dramatically impact the crossover potential of the work. Shi concludes that it’s not the theme itself, but rather how the theme is portrayed, that influences a text’s crossover nature (Shi, 2016).

From this viewpoint, the ten stories and the anthology discussed in this paper possess a considerable crossover potential, given the fluidity of boundaries among the various levels of thematic representations. When engaging with the same text, readers of varying ages generate distinct interpretations. Certain inherent elements in Agualusa’s stories, such as the symbolic and metaphorical richness, the dialogical structure, the frequent aphorisms, among others, resonate with audiences of all ages in multiple ways. The appeal of these elements to the adult readership can transition them from solely acting as reading mediators between the child and the book, to genuine enthusiasts and regular consumers of these literary works.

It is worth underscoring that the paratextual material, particularly the titles and illustrations, also augment the crossover appeal of the book. In the subtitle, *Stories for angels to sleep*, “angels” symbolizes not only children but also those capable of dreaming (Xavier, 2021), while “sleep stories” can specifically captivate adult readers, triggering their childhood memories of listening to stories. Additionally, the dual illustrations accompanying each story can stir the imagination of diverse readers. These visual images engage with the text and supplement what the words do not explicitly convey: a steam bird, the components of a wall-crossing device (watch and spring), a shelf teeming with plush toys, an empty butterfly-catching bottle, a green apple, and so forth. These animals and objects take center stage in an expansive but uncluttered background. Static moments from the story are captured in detail, enticing an active response from the reader to observe and ponder.

The utilization of pure, flat, saturated, and bright colors and a two-dimensional graphic language evokes Matisse; the depiction of a sizeable green apple incites a hypertextual effect akin to Magritte’s pipe because, as Albuquerque (2003) asserts, “in this artistic world, fruits, animals, and people hold equal significance and are indistinguishable from one another” (p. 124). The “mini-cow” in “Land of contraries” is reminiscent of Sanyu’s “Elephant”; interestingly, these two artworks share analogous themes: loss, loneliness, and a search for one’s place. In this respect, Agualusa’s short stories collection attests that illustration can not only facilitate the transition from adult literature to children’s literature (Falconer, 2009) but also accomplish the reverse: the parallel visual images presented by illustrations in a book intended for children and young adults can incite adults’ reflections on artistic intertextuality.

Whether it’s the theme of the “usefulness of uselessness” manifested through the creation of the peculiar “Other,” or the verbal and visual elements that incite expansive intertextuality, it may challenge readers lacking in reading and life experiences. The comprehensive knowledge these narratives demand, the depth of reflection they impose, and the creativity and originality they display (Xavier, 2021, p. 439), could engage even adults in deciphering the covert ideas embedded within these short stories. Consequently, these narratives resist the conventional dichotomous categorization of adult/non-adult literature, and can be appreciated by audiences spanning various ages.

## V. CONCLUSION

To conclude, as Lewis (2017) astutely observed, “a children’s story which is enjoyed only by children is a bad children’s story” (p. 44). Agualusa’s narratives in *Estranhões & Bizarros* are brimming with multi-layered meanings and invite varied levels of interpretation from readers of all ages.

The construction of the “bizarre” Other reveals the recurring and understated theme of the majority of the stories in this collection, which is “the usefulness of uselessness.” Through the tension between the protagonists (the “specter”) and the secondary characters (the “spectant”), these narratives underscore the significance of expressing unique individuality within a community and stimulate the reader’s reflection on the value of perceived “useless” qualities. The manner in which the themes are conveyed, and the intertextuality created with other literary and artistic works, is more likely to be discerned by readers with a broad range of knowledge. This feature, which allows for multiple levels of creative interpretation, demonstrates their substantial potential as “crossover fiction”.

José Eduardo Agualusa’s stories could serve as an emblematic starting point for the exploration of “texts for all ages in African literatures in Portuguese language” (Xavier, 2021, p. 439). Short stories, like those examined in this discussion, transcend boundaries in more than one sense, not just age but also socio-cultural barriers. One of their multidimensional themes aligns with an ancient Eastern philosophical classic that might resonate with readers from diverse cultures. In this respect, compelling “crossover fiction” should be enduring and able to break down barriers between age, time, space, and culture.

Agualusa’s book is an homage to the conception of the impossible, a theme that is highlighted right from the opening story, which sets the tone for the entire collection. It also aims to deconstruct the notion that beauty, creativity, imagination, literature itself, and/or anything that seems devoid of inherent utility, is of vital importance.

To appreciate this usefulness, one must be open to empathizing with the Other, which could be the foreigner, inside or outside the wall, necessitating the questioning and deconstruction of their image as bizarre. This journey is the challenge that the studies of imagery and the relationship between Center and Periphery (it is noteworthy that Agualusa writes from the South, considered peripheral) seek to address.

Ordine (2016) posits that literature, along with other fields of humanistic and scientific knowledge lacking “an immediate utilitarian objective” (p. 15), can play a critical and significant role in pushing back against a consumerist society. As Lima (2015) also indicates, drawing from recent neuroscience research, “imagination, including the literary one, appears to be crucial for the advancement of scientific knowledge.” It creates, through contemplation, “places for breaks, spaces typically deemed useless,” but that are “useful” for the “fatigued, depressed, and emptied society in which we find ourselves” (p. 13).

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# Employers' Perspectives of English-Major Students' Weaknesses During Their Industrial Practicum

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**Abstract**—In the 21st century, graduates are expected to have many employability skills to become successful employees in real-world settings. Before graduating, the industrial practicum is an excellent chance for employers to measure university students' readiness for real jobs through their performances. Even though some studies have been conducted in this field, the topic is little studied from employers' perceptions. This current study focused on employers' reports on what English-major students lacked during their industrial practicum in the Vietnamese context. The study was conducted as qualitative research using three focus-group interviews, and each included five employers in the fields of education, business, interpretation and translation, and tour and travel. The results revealed that the students lacked several skills to become successful employees: communication skills, information retrieval and handling skills, planning and problem-solving skills, teamwork skills, self-confidence, critical thinking skills, devotion, and specialized skills/ identities. Based on the findings, this current study suggested several practical implications to help improve the students' employability skills. During their time at university, English-major students need more practical experiences to understand their strengths and weaknesses and develop themselves. Teaching is expected to make a positive correlation with practical experiences in real-world settings. The findings of this study significantly contributed to enriching the field of vocational education.

**Index Terms**—employers' perspectives, English-major students, industrial practicum, weaknesses

## I. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, graduates need many more skills and attributes to become successful employees. According to Suarta et al. (2017), occupation-specific certificates are not enough for graduates to meet the requirements of national and international labor markets anymore. In other words, employees are expected to have primary and specific knowledge and skills; they, moreover, need an additional set of employability skills to meet the needs of their appropriate graduate jobs. According to Nydegger and Enides (2017), the current work environment is different from what happened in the past. Rapid change and development remarkably affect the global job market and increase job competition. Degree classifications are not as important as knowledge and awareness of how the world runs (Bathmaker, 2013). Job seekers will encounter many challenges if they think they can become successful employees based on their good or excellent degrees.

According to Carlgren (2013), graduates' three most important skills are critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication. Regarding a different perspective, Saunders and Zuzel (2010) indicated that rapid technological development requires students to have the skills and abilities to work in various working environments. In other words, adaptabilities are essential for graduates to be successful. Nonetheless, the mismatch between job skills and the employability skills needed in real-world settings is often the main barrier to university students after graduating. The main reason is that there has been a significant gap between education, training, and workplace requirements (Cattaneo & Aprea, 2018). Mason et al. (2009) suggested increasing students' employability skills during days of learning at their

higher educational institutions. One of the critical events to help students' employability skills is industrial practicum which provides the students with an excellent chance to experience real-working settings. During the internship, students are expected to enhance their work readiness and apply the knowledge learned in university to practical situations (Shariff & Muhamad, 2010).

Additionally, through the interns' weaknesses, employers and stakeholders can evaluate to what extent higher education institutions complete their missions and goals to develop the future workforce for national and international job markets. In Vietnam, English Studies students are not trained to specify a particular professional. Mostly, these students learn about linguistics and cultures in English-speaking countries. Unlike the Teaching English as a Foreign Language program, which trains its students to become English teachers, English studies majors fail to specify their professional identities. The program's outcomes are to provide the labor market with a workforce strong in English to work in different areas, such as education, tour and travel, interpretation and translation, and the like. However, these graduates lack technical or specialized skills as the program mainly focuses on English linguistics and cultures. Therefore, doing an industrial practicum in the final year is even more critical as it is an excellent chance to select the areas they will work for after graduating. In other words, these bachelors would have a perfect chance to experience real-world settings as well as (re)construct their future aims. Accordingly, this current qualitative study aims to determine the English major students' weaknesses observed by their employers during the industrial practicum. As so, the curriculum can then backfill these skills into the curriculum.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Industrial Practicum*

Studies have indicated the positive impact of the industrial practicum on interns' communication skills, personal growth, self-awareness of context, and organizational culture in real-world settings (Klink & Streumer, 2002; Knemeyer & Murphy, 2002; Maistre & Pare, 2004). There are three main parties in an industrial practicum: the trainees, the facilitators from the host companies/organizations, and the schools. Host organizations are companies/institutions that voluntarily provide students with training on their job skills and work experience through on-job training. During the training, the trainees can apply theory learned in their universities to practical institutions, gain more work experience and improve their job skills. The third party is the schools/universities of the trainees that expect their learners will have sufficient training on their employability skills. Industrial practicum is essential for students' employability skills as it provides fundamental tasks in authentic contexts.

### B. *Essential Attributes for Graduates*

Due to the changing world of work, many graduates' attributes, including employability skills and characteristics, have received much attention from stakeholders and employers. Generally, graduates' attributes and employability skills are necessary to compete with others in the job market and promote employment (Phuong & Huynh, 2020). Without sufficient attributes, employees cannot meet their employers' requirements. Australian Department of Education, Science, and Training (2001) enlisted the eight core skills for Australian employees: communication, teamwork, problem-solving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organizing, self-management, learning, and technology skills. Yorke and Knight (2006) proposed a set of employability skills consisting of personal qualities, core skills, and process skills. In Indonesia, Nugroho and Nizam (2013) specified 11 essential skills for graduates: communication, teamwork, integrity, intellectual capacity, self-confidence, personality/individual character, planning, writing, computing, analytical and problem-solving, and other additional skills. Suarta (2012) also contributed to the framework for Indonesian graduates with six employability skills: workplace health and safety, self-management, teamwork, learning, technology, and problem-solving. Sirat et al. (2012) indicated that Malaysian graduates must have the following skills to become successful employees in this era. The graduates are expected to have critical thinking and creativity, preparedness to serve others, personal transferable skills, cognitive, emotional, and moral development, and practical competence. In a nutshell, graduates are expected to have a wide range of attributes and competencies. Specifically, communication skills, logical, analytical, problem-solving, personal qualities (characteristics, self-confidence, and integrity), flexibility and adaptability, critical thinking and creativity, and teamwork skills are essential (Bilsland, 2014; Tran, 2017).

### C. *Related Studies*

Regarding the negative impact of graduates' skill shortage on the growth of the Indian economy, Blom and Saeki (2011) conducted their survey to determine what skills are essential to new employees, to what extent employers satisfy with their employees' core skills, and what skills the employees need more improvements. The results showed that more than half of 157 employers (64%) participating in the study were somewhat satisfied with the new employees because these employees lacked higher-order thinking skills. On the other hand, employers were satisfied with employees' English-speaking skills. Soft skills, including communication and core employability skills, were also perceived to be the most important.

Gagalang (2020) employed a mixed-methods approach to collect data from 21 employers in various career sectors in the Philippines. The data collected by a questionnaire and 21 interviews indicated the employers' satisfaction with

English major graduates' personal qualities, consisting of determination, persistence, self-discipline, and specified skills, such as fluency and accuracy in English speaking, creativity, and writing skills. However, according to the employers, the students needed to improve their abilities in using English in different contexts, planning and organizing, leadership skills, and communicative competencies.

Matsouka and Mihail (2016) investigated the perspectives of university graduates and human resource managers on graduates' employability skills, especially soft skills. In the study, data collected from 178 graduates from a university and 29 human resource managers in Greece indicated a mismatch between these participants' views. Specifically, the graduates were over-confident, but the human resource managers were not satisfied with the graduates' soft skills.

Graduates' employability skills are undoubtedly essential for evaluating a higher educational institution's quality of teaching and learning, especially those in the service of the economy and labor market. However, it still lacks research on this issue in the Vietnamese context. Besides, previous studies mainly highlighted the employers' perceptions of graduates' employability skills but not those of undergraduates during their industrial practicum. Therefore, this study addressed the gap in Vietnamese employers' perspectives on English major undergraduates' employability skills during their industrial internship. Accordingly, this current study aims to answer the following research question: "What weaknesses, according to employers, do English-major undergraduates have during the industrial practicum?"

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Research Design

This study was conducted qualitatively. According to Maxwell (1998), a qualitative study can help researchers profoundly gauge their participants' thoughts. Consequently, the present qualitative study would help gain an in-depth understanding of employers' perspectives on what English-major students lack during their practicum in real-world settings. Besides, it promisingly provided readers with a profound understanding of what mistakes English-major undergraduates usually make and cause their employers' disappointment. As so, the study would help many stakeholders, such as teachers, curriculum developers, and tertiary students, to adjust their work and become fitter with the requirements of employers.

#### B. Participants

Three focus-group interviews were conducted to collect data. Each group included five employers in different areas: education, tourism, translation and interpretation, business, and tour and travel. These fifteen employers are managers or team leaders in real-world settings where nearly 500 English-major students had their very first work experiences in their careers during the industrial practicum. At first, the research team sent invitation letters to thirty leaders/managers of the host organizations providing training for the students. However, half had personal reasons and decided to reject the invitation. Therefore, fifteen out of thirty became the actual participants of this study. The information of the participants is displayed in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
PARTICIPANTS

No.	Pseudonyms	Gender	Age	Professional areas	Group
1	Oliver	Male	<30	Business Administration	1
2	Olivia	Female	>30 & <40	Translation and Interpretation	1
3	Emma	Female	>30 & <40	Education	1
4	William	Male	<30	Business Administration	1
5	Charlotte	Female	>30 & <40	Education	1
6	James	Male	>40	Education	2
7	Lucas	Male	>30 & <40	Tour and Travel	2
8	Amelia	Female	>30 & <40	Education	2
9	Sophia	Female	>30 & <40	Education	2
10	Isabella	Female	<30	Business Administration	2
11	Mia	Female	>30 & <40	Education	3
12	Liam	Male	<30	Translation and Interpretation	3
13	Noah	Male	>30 & <40	Translation and Interpretation	3
14	David	Male	>30 & <40	Tour and Travel	3
15	Ava	Female	>30 & <40	Education	3

During the practicum, the students were expected to use English as much as possible. Accordingly, the students were sent to potential companies or organizations guaranteeing students an English-using environment. Many English-major students chose to experience their practicum in educational institutions, such as schools or language centers. Accordingly, the participants mostly worked in education (N=7). Similarly, the participants showed the percentage of students at internship units during the practicum (50% in education, 20% in business administration, 20% in translation and interpretation, and 10% in others). Notably, four participants worked in business administration, one in translation and interpretation, and one in tour and travel. To ensure the students' experiences in real-world settings where they could use English, the school of the students chose two practicum coordinators to get in touch with the students during the event. No report was collected from the coordinators about students lacking an English-using environment. Therefore, the research team was confident that the students were given enough chances to use their English and other

employability skills during the practicum. As a consequence, employers could observe and evaluate the students' performances as well as their employability skills.

The researchers used pseudonyms to quote their excerpts in the following sections to keep the participants' information confidential. Before analyzing the data, the employers were asked for permission to use their words in the interviews as primary data for this study. The transcripts were also sent to them to check whether there were any make-up stories in the report. Besides, the participants could withdraw from the study if they found the data unreliable or damaging to their identities.

### C. Data Collection Instrument

This current study employed two focus group interviews to collect data. According to Vaughn et al. (1996), using focus group interviews allows researchers to group people with a common issue. Accordingly, they have something to discuss during the interview. The focus group interviews would give the participants with an excellent chance to listen to others and reflect on their own experiences (Krueger, 2006). Accordingly, they would have more ideas to discuss the problems in their practice as well as compare theirs to others' issues.

### D. Data Analysis

Content analysis was used to analyze the collected data. The researchers followed these steps. First, all members read through the data to get familiar with them. Then, they reread and coded the data in groups with content related to what employability skills students lacked during the practicum. Specifically, they include communication skills, information retrieval and handling skills, planning and problem-solving skills, teamwork skills, critical thinking and creativity, professional skills, and some attributes preventing them from success. Remarkably, they coded the contents in different colors. Later, the research team scheduled a meeting to discuss the results that each member analyzed. The discussion lasted two hours to determine the differences and similarities in these analyses. The similarities were then kept, but the differences would be reviewed and discussed to decide whether they should be edited or deleted.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings would be presented based on the frequency of primary coded responses. More specifically, the more frequently mentioned ideas in the interviews would be presented before those less mentioned.

### A. Lack of Communication Skills

Most employers highlighted the lack of communication skills as a significant weakness of their English-major interns during practicum. Charlotte and Mia said,

I noticed that they [interns] did not have sufficient communication skills. Sometimes, I felt a bit uncomfortable as they chose inappropriate words to talk to others, especially my full-time employees.... (Charlotte).

I do not think the interns experiencing their practicum at my company are good at communication skills... Instead of talking to others, they mostly use mobile phones to chat or surf the internet. I do not think it is appropriate behavior (Mia).

According to the excerpts, Charlotte and Isabella underestimated their interns' oral communication skills. Unlike the employers, as mentioned earlier, Lucas was disappointed with the written communication skills of the interns. He stated, Interns' abilities to write e-mails or e-messages were a big problem preventing them from succeeding in their practicum. They even did not know how to write a well-formatted e-mail to me as their employer.... (Lucas).

Communication skills are always the top-tier ones for a successful employee in the 21st century (Blom & Saeki, 2011; Nugroho & Nizam, 2013; Sirat et al., 2012; Suarta, 2012; Yorke & Knight, 2006). The employers' complaints about their interns' oral and written communication skills expressed their disappointment in the future workforce. Concerning Vietnamese graduates' lack of communication skills, Tuan (2021) emphasized the negative impact of internet overuse. Notably, the rapid development of technology attracts Vietnamese students' attention, but it also prevents them from real-life interactions with others. Mostly, they use their communication devices, such as laptops, smartphones, or tablets, to surf the internet and read the news. Isabella's excerpt was a piece of evidence. Besides, students' inadequate e-mail writing skills were noticed by employers. The results differed from Gagalang's (2020) study as this author indicated employers' satisfaction with Pilipino English-major students' writing skills. In the Vietnamese context, e-mail writing is a genre that English-major students have learned in their mainstream programs (Vu & Peters, 2021). Therefore, English-major students' lack of e-mail writing skills required Vietnamese educators to recheck the quality of teaching and learning in higher education programs. Phan (2020) indicated that teaching and learning quality in higher education in Vietnam needs many things to develop and help its graduates be qualified enough to compete with citizens from other countries.

### B. Lack of Information Retrieval and Handling Skills

According to Ava and Olivier, while doing industrial practicum, English-major students failed to identify information needs to support their tasks or independently use appropriate information technology tools. They said,

When I assigned them a task, they asked me to explain everything without any self-explorations about what should be done for the task. Instead of perceiving the task as a great chance to develop their abilities, they thought I was giving them a hard time... (Ava).

They can easily find out the information needed on the internet for the tasks I assigned them to do. However, they kept asking all the time without searching... (Olivier).

Vietnamese students use the internet to search for the information they need as they spend the most time using communication devices to surf the internet (Tuan, 2021). However, according to William's and Olivier's excerpts, the student's internet use for needed information was under-expected while working in real-life settings. The information on the internet varies from sports, entertainment, education, and more. Moreover, not every piece of news on the internet is reliable or useful for its users (Schintler & Kulkarni, 2014). Therefore, it is difficult to determine what information is needed if the users are unaware of their concerns or problems. That might be why the students had asked their employers to explain their assigned tasks. However, the passiveness influenced by the Vietnamese culture was also displayed in the students' demands (Tran, 2013). The mismatch between the students' wants and employers' expectations was somehow apparent. While the employers aimed to help the students develop their information retrieval and handling skills, they focused on completing their assigned tasks without making mistakes. Fear of making mistakes and losing face have been positively correlated in the Vietnamese context for a long time (Brower, 1980). In other words, Vietnamese people tend to save their face by considering everything carefully before doing something, although consideration is not very much necessary. It was accurate to the current study since the students were perceived as passive in self-exploring information needed for their tasks when they asked their employers to explain the tasks even though the students could do it independently.

### C. *Lack of Planning and Problem-Solving Skills*

Lack of action plans for an unexpected problem was another noticeable weakness of English-major students during the practicum. Emma and Isabella stated,

Once my company organized a sudden meeting, and I wanted the interns to be there to join hands to complete an urgent task. However, they refused to come because the meeting was not organized during their working hours and they had to study an extra class... I think they should focus on their practicum only and prepare for unexpected situations like this during the practicum. Moreover, they do not know how harmful it is to their images in others' thinking (Emma).

Nowhere does not have problems, and my company, of course, is not an exception. Some problems happen suddenly that I cannot manage even though I play the role of a manager. Therefore, I always prepare for the bad situations that may come in the morning, afternoon, evening, or even at night... However, the students seemed not ready for that. When an unexpected problem occurred, I could easily recognize their puzzlement. Therefore, it will be very beneficial for them if they have some pretending bad situations when learning in universities to visualize what should be done in these situations (Isabella).

Similar to other employability skills, such as communication, teamwork, and the like, problem-solving is essential for graduates to succeed in real-life settings (Nugroho & Nizam, 2013; Sirat et al., 2012; Suarta, 2012; Yorke & Knight, 2006). Based on the excerpts, the students seemed to overlook the impact of the practicum on their images as well as future jobs since they might think this occasion is simply a subject in their program. However, the lack of action plans for unexpected problems during the practicum caused the employers' bad impressions of the interns. According to Shariff and Muhamad (2010), the practicum is a great chance for employers to evaluate whether the graduates are suitable for their requirements in a real-world setting or not. Therefore, it is also an excellent opportunity for students to show off the qualities to become full-time employees in their workplace during the practicum. The bad impressions might close the door for students to have excellent jobs in an era when the unemployment rate has significantly increased (Nguyen et al., 2021). However, Isabella's excerpt also pointed out an existing problem related to higher education in the Vietnamese context. Specifically, it is the mismatch between education and training and the practical needs of a graduate student (Le et al., 2020). In other words, the students lacked chances to encounter real-world situations requiring them to use their problem-solving skills to deal with while they were in school. Additionally, the findings also determined the need of informing students and employers about what they should do in the practicum. For instance, the students should mentally and physically prepare for their challenges, while the employers should not have too high expectations about their trainees' capacities. In fact, the nature of an internship and a practicum is to offer students a safe space during which to experience what real-world working situations are like and to have mentorship, guidance and support in this (Shariff & Muhamad, 2010).

### D. *Lack of Teamwork Skills*

According to the employers, the interns could not work effectively as team members, but observing their effectiveness while working individually was surprising. Sophia and James remarked,

I did not understand why they did not want to work with others. When working as a team, their products were so much under-expected. However, if required to do tasks individually, they would complete them with high quality.... (Sophia).

They worked in a team ineffectively. I used to assign them to work with others to complete a difficult task, but I was disappointed with the outcomes... Some students could complete their tasks well if they worked alone (James).

Social development and interaction skills are the most critical skills for a successful workforce in the 21st century (Nugroho & Nizam, 2013; Sirat et al., 2012; Suarta, 2012; Yorke & Knight, 2006). However, there is an existing paradox that the students as Gen Z-ers, who were born in the late 1990s, were good at independent working instead of teamwork skills (Schwieger & Ladwig, 2018). Otherwise, the employers demanded the interns to have sufficient teamwork skills as many projects required them to work in a team (Nugroho & Nizam, 2013; Sirat et al., 2012; Suarta, 2012; Yorke & Knight, 2006). The mismatch between the student's strengths and the employers' requirements seemed to cause several problems at work.

#### *E. Lack of Self-Confidence*

In the interviews, many employers highlighted the negative impact of students' lack of self-confidence on their productivity at work. Noah and William said,

It was very disadvantageous to the students who were not confident in themselves during the practicum. This was a good chance for them to try new things and experiences. However, lacking self-confidence prevented them from having a try.... (Noah).

It was bad for some students who did not dare to try new things during the practicum. I found that they were not confident... Sometimes, I did not understand why English-major students were not confident in themselves. I used to think that they must be more confident than others.... (William).

Self-confidence is an essential personal attribute directly affecting students' success in their practicum and future jobs. According to William's excerpt, English-major students were often perceived to be more confident than those who studied other social majors. The excerpt was understandable as the English-major students learned about linguistics and English-speaking countries' cultures. Usually, Western people are more sociable than Eastern ones (Nisbett & Masuda, 2003). Particularly, Greek students' over self-confidence was observed in the study by Matsouka and Mihail (2016). Accordingly, the exposure to Western cultural patterns was expected to positively affect Vietnamese students' self-confidence. However, the employers in this study seemed disappointed with their English-major interns' self-confidence during the practicum. It could be explained that even though the students had exposure to Western cultures, the cultural features of the Confucian heritage culture still shaped the Vietnamese students' passiveness in learning and working (Tran, 2013). Particularly, Vietnamese students are usually influenced by themselves, their families, the educational management system, policymakers, and university lecturers. As a result, they could not show their self-confidence in real-world settings.

#### *F. Lack of Critical Thinking*

Most employers were not satisfied with their interns' critical thinking. Particularly, David and Olivia said,

The students lacked critical thinking. I noticed that they just followed their mentors' instructions without any evaluations or considerations. Once I asked my employers as the students' mentors to give them a challenge. Particularly, the mentor would ask the students to talk behind a lecturer's back to make some fun. It was a terrible request. However, they did it because it was their mentor's request.... (David).

The interns said whatever they wanted without considering whether the information was correct or not. They usually used "I think this..." or, "I think that..." to start an argument. In these cases, I felt completely frustrated... (Olivia).

The finding results were in line with the study by Blom and Saeki (2011), which found that Indian employers felt disappointed with their new employees' critical thinking skills. In addition to communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, a successful employee must have critical thinking to analyze and evaluate the receiving information to reaffirm whether it is accurate or not (Nugroho & Nizam, 2013; Sirat et al., 2012; Suarta, 2012; Yorke & Knight, 2006). However, the employers' excerpts indicated that the English-major students failed to demonstrate critical thinking during the practicum. Olivia's excerpt highlighted that the students usually worked on their emotions and feelings but not on evidence. Moreover, based on Lucas's excerpt, the interns seemed to follow their mentor's request tightly even though the request was not appropriate. In the Vietnamese context, employees are often afraid of being clumsy or failing to satisfy others, especially their superiors (Tran, 2013). Accordingly, Vietnamese employees rarely say "No" to their superiors' requests. That might be why the students accepted their mentor's request.

#### *G. Lack of Devotion*

Due to the nature of an industrial practicum, the students were perceived to lack devotion and sacrifice for their jobs. That was what Charlotte and Olivier said as follows,

The practicum would be over in a short period, and the students would not be our full-time employees. They were aware of these facts. Therefore, they did not work with all their potential and efforts. What a pity! It was a good chance for them to show everything they have.... (Charlotte).

The students did not want to make full efforts to complete their work because they were not full-time employees. It was definitely wrong perception... (Olivier).

Like the explanations of the students' lack of problem-solving skills, the students might overlook the impact of the industrial practicum on their future. Instead of showing good attitudes toward the chance of experiencing a real-world setting in the practicum, some students refused to sacrifice themselves for their current job as they perceived not to stick with the company in the future. However, the wrong perception would cause several circumstances in their social development. For instance, the current employers and those in their dream workplaces are in a good relationship, and the bad impressions during the practicum on the students could cause some disadvantages in their future job applications. The first impression is essential for seeking a chance in life (Yamamura et al., 2010). Compared to those obtaining good impressions from trustworthy people, future employers may have a wrong first impression of those failing to display a good image during the practicum. Accordingly, they have no reason to consider recruiting those students.

#### *H. Lack of Specialized Skills/ Identities*

Interestingly, the employers remarked on the students' lack of identities or specialized skills while comparing the English-major students to other students who learned other majors, such as business, information, and technology communication, or the like. Amelia and Liam stated,

Compared to other majors students, the English-major ones were most unqualified for the real-world settings. The main reason was their lack of specialized skills. English is just a tool, not a specialized skill. The English-major students needed more skills to work in a real-world setting... They absolutely lacked job-related identities (Amelia).

After the practicum, I could not find a convincing reason to recruit English-major students as full-time employees in my company. It is accurate to say that their English was better than that of others. However, language is not the only requirement for a good employee. The students learning other majors outperformed the English-major ones in essential technical skills, such as computing or entrepreneurship skills.... (Liam).

The results were in line with the study by Pham (2021), which indicated that most universities in Vietnam have failed to provide sufficient professional knowledge and work-related skills for English-major graduates in this context. Regarding the belief that graduates with sufficient English can only compete with others, the imbalance between theoretical and practical components in the curriculum design of the program may prevent the English-major students from succeeding in their practicum and future jobs.

### V. IMPLICATIONS

Based on the findings of this current study, some following practical implications are suggested to help develop English-major students' employability skills. First and foremost, the rapid development of technology has brought many advantages to human lives, especially education. However, raising students' awareness of its negative impact on their communication skills is essential if they only focus on using communication devices but reject face-to-face interactions with others. Sufficient workshops on these issues must be organized with the participation of the students and their guardians, such as their parents or relatives. The connection between school and home may help increase students' awareness of these issues more profoundly than in the current period. Besides, in these workshops, it is necessary to help improve students' practical laboratory knowledge and skills. As a result, they can efficiently self-explore the information needed for their assigned tasks.

Next, education and training should be designed to meet social requirements. In other words, during their time at university, English-major students need more practical experiences to understand their strengths and weaknesses and develop themselves. To do so, one practicum seems to be insufficient for the students. Accordingly, intensifying the chances for the students to experience different jobs in different real-world workplaces will help them better understand themselves. The length of the practicum is also essential for the students to understand the organizational culture of their practicum units. Besides, the academic workforce in the university needs to be aware of their role in their student's development of employability skills. Teaching is expected to make a positive correlation with practical experiences in real-world settings. Academics must be aware of society's requirements for their students. They will design appropriate activities to help increase students' knowledge and skills for future jobs.

Students' transition from Gen Y to Gen Z is a big concern for this era. Accordingly, educators, policymakers, and employers must understand the new generation's unique characteristics to maximize their strengths and minimize their weaknesses. For that, these people must communicate with and learn more about this community. It is expected that the more they talk to the new generation, the better they provide this community of the new world owners with sound advice and sufficient training on their employability skills. Consequently, a win-win relationship will be established. The employers have a high-quality workforce with sufficient employability skills, and the Gen Z-ers have a good world to live in and develop.

### VI. CONCLUSION

The study was conducted qualitatively with three focus-group interviews to collect data from fifteen employers about their perspectives of what English-major students needed to improve based on their observations in the students'



practicum. The results showed that the students lacked many skills and attributes to become successful employees in the 21st century, such as communication, information retrieval, handling, planning, problem-solving, teamwork, self-confidence, critical thinking, devotion, and specialized skills/ identities. The employers' reports contributed to enriching the literature and suggested having some practical implications for supporting English-major students to have sufficient employability skills.

## VII. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The number of participants in this current study was small; therefore, this study could not generalize the results. Besides, looking at the employers' perspectives only did not provide the study with a profound understanding of the issues related to the implementation of the curriculum. Further studies should intensify and vary their participants. In other words, researchers should listen to a more significant number of employers, graduates, university lecturers, and human resource managers. It is also worth exploring what kinds of practicum units provide their interns more benefits during the industrial practicum. Besides, the challenges that graduates encounter during practicum should be more well-presented in future research.

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# Occurrence Frequency of Rhetorical Moves in Introductions of Linguistics Research Articles From Non-Scopus and Scopus Journals

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**Abstract**—Serving as a fundamental opening section, the research article introduction (RAI) provides an entrance to a certain topic in the exploration of the unknown content of the research. It is a manifestation of rhetorical maneuver and establishes the context, identifies the challenges, and outlines the rationale for the study. Therefore, it is vital to make a well-crafted RAI to catch readers' attention. However, the disparities in rhetorical moves employed in English linguistics RAIs between non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals have received less scrutiny. The present study aims to investigate the rhetorical move structures in both types of corpora. The non-Scopus and Scopus corpus each contained 50 RAIs. Based on the adapted Swales' (1990) Create-A-Research-Space (CARS) model, the occurrence frequency of moves and steps was first analyzed, and the relationship between the frequency of moves and steps and the indexing of journals was then explored. The findings showed that the most frequent move in both corpora was Move 1, followed by Move 3 and Move 2. However, the higher number of overall moves in the non-Scopus corpus suggested that there was an overuse of moves by the less experienced writers, and through Chi-square, Move 3 Step 1B (announcing present research) was detected to have a significant relationship with the indexing of journals. The findings of this study pave the way for writers to construct well-organized RAIs and get their papers published in the field of linguistics.

**Index Terms**—rhetorical moves, occurrence frequency, research article introductions, Scopus-indexed-journals, non-Scopus-indexed journals

## I. INTRODUCTION

The significance of publishing research articles in journals with high impact has long been recognized within the academic circle. As a bibliographic database, Scopus facilitates the exploration of academic works and empowers scholars to assert authorship of their contributions, thus ensuring appropriate recognition and promoting professional advancement. In terms of coverage, it has been demonstrated that Scopus has exhibited superior performance compared to Web of Science (WoS) across a majority of disciplines (Marina & Sterligov, 2021; Singh et al., 2021). In the area of linguistics and language, the Scopus list of 2023 included 1085 journals, of which 229 were open access, and a total of 222 journals were comprised in the list of Q1, Q2, Q3, and Q4. Due to the stringent selection procedure and positive reputation, research articles featured in Scopus-indexed journals are generally held in higher esteem by peer researchers compared to those published in non-Scopus-indexed journals. Therefore, it is essential to create a well-organized research article by following the Scopus-indexed conventions. Following the hourglass diagram IMRD (Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion) proposed by Hill et al. (1982), the introduction is the first section of a research article, and the purpose of it is to spark the reader's interest in the rest of the research piece in a short amount of time. When composing this section, writers are usually faced with numerous choices regarding the type and amount of background information to incorporate (Alsharif, 2023). Thus, adhering to the generic features and applying appropriate moves of RAIs in Scopus journals will inevitably assist writers in writing and publishing. The use of rhetorical move is one of the most important linguistic aspects, and according to Swales (2004, pp. 228-229), the rhetorical move is "a discursal or rhetorical unit that performs a coherent communicative function in a written or spoken discourse". Nevertheless, previous research has analyzed the moves of RAIs in the field of linguistics (Jalilifar, 2010; Oztürk, 2018), but none has considered whether various indexing sources will influence the use of moves and steps, especially the occurrence

frequency of moves and steps. Therefore, the current study tends to fill this gap and assist writers in crafting an RAI that follows rhetorical move conventions in Scopus-indexed linguistics journals.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The introduction section of research articles typically serves as the initial segment, providing a foundation for the context, scope, and significance of the research. According to Feak and Swales (2011), it should establish a clear setting that highlights the value of the topic being explored and conveys the rationale for pursuing it. Despite being the briefest section of an article, it plays a crucial role in determining the readers' interest in continuing to read the article (Grant & Pollack, 2011). This section accounts for around 5-7 paragraphs (initial two to three pages) of the study and serves as a road map. From the perspective of editors and reviewers, if they do not quite understand what the research article is about in their initial reading of the opening paragraphs, they are more inclined to look for reasons to reject an article to be published (Ahlstrom, 2017). Therefore, crafting a robust and effectively structured opening section holds immense importance. This section's readability and the likelihood of rejection are attributed to framing and organizational issues, as noted by Konrad (2008) and Ahlstrom (2010). Consequently, it is necessary to carry out an in-depth analysis of the introduction sections of research articles, and the application of rhetorical moves as fundamental building blocks warrants further consideration.

A rhetorical move is a schematic, discursual and rhetorical unit, performing the communicative or social function of a particular part of a text. Nwogu (1997) stated that it is a text segment consisting of a set of linguistic features (lexical meanings, propositional meanings, illocutionary forces, etc.) that provide the segment with a homogeneous orientation and signal the substance of the discourse. Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) noted that a move is a unit in relation to both writers' purpose and the extent they prefer to communicate, and the step is a lower-level unit in the text, bestowing a detailed perspective to help writers designate certain moves in the introduction. The length of a move may vary between a single finite clause and several paragraphs because the move is shaped in a functional category. Through move analysis, the organizational pattern of a text can be described. The CARS model, which pertains to one of the frameworks of moves, was introduced by Swales in 1981, 1990, and 2004. Among these, the 1990 version has gained the most widespread acceptance and was deemed the most popular for analyzing moves. Though certain studies have utilized Swales' frameworks to discern the rhetorical structure of introductions, their attention has been directed toward various academic fields, such as computer science (Ebrahimi & Weisi, 2019), law (Afrizon & Arsyad, 2018), economics (Slaim & Mostari, 2019), forestry (Joseph et al., 2014), etc. Rarely has the study of move analysis in RAIs been conducted in the area of applied linguistics.

Moreover, regarding move analysis, previous studies have investigated the essentiality of moves (Can et al., 2016), which is about the covering range of moves and refers to the percentage of texts that contain a certain move at least once (Lu et al., 2021). However, less attention has been paid to the frequency of moves, which is about the number of moves and refers to the occurrence of a certain move in all the texts of a corpus. Hence, in the current study, the researchers aimed to fill this gap and explore how many times a target move or step is used and whether there is a significant relationship between the frequency of moves or steps and the indexing of journals. The objectives of this study include the identification of rhetorical moves and the investigation of the occurrence frequency of moves and steps in both corpora. The relationship between the frequency of moves and steps and the indexing of journals was also tested.

## III. METHODS

### A. Corpus Establishment

In the present study, the peer-reviewed non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed research articles published between 2019 and 2021 were first randomly collected from four English linguistics journals. The two non-Scopus journals were the *Journal of Applied Language Studies* and the *International Journal of English Linguistics*, and the two Scopus journals were the *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics* and *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature*. Then, to balance the length of the introduction sections and minimize the variations in corpus size, purposive sampling was utilized in selecting the 50 RAIs from each type of journal. Altogether, there were 40327 words in the 50 RAIs from the non-Scopus corpus and 41124 words in another 50 RAIs from the Scopus corpus. Meanwhile, the paragraph numbers of each RAI in both corpora should not exceed 6 paragraphs (Nwogu, 1997).

### B. Analytical Framework

In this study, Swales' (1990) CARS model was adapted in analyzing the rhetorical moves of a total of 100 English linguistics RAIs from the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora. The CARS model renders the rhetorical structure of introductions as three moves: establishing a territory, establishing a niche, and occupying the niche. The purpose of the first move is to describe the general terrain or layout of the research area using one or more of the steps. The second move presents the niche on the topic, asserting the need for new research by emphasizing existing gaps. The third move then reveals the solutions, demonstrating how they help to address a given gap. According to the communicative sub-functions in constructing the introductions, 12 steps were contained in Swales' (1990) original model. However, in our

pilot study, a new step Move 3 Step 5 was detected in another 10 introductions from each corpus. For the purpose of ensuring inter-rater reliability, two inter-coders in applied linguistics were included, and an agreement was reached (Cohen’s Kappa = 0.814) with the researcher on the identification of the rhetorical structures. Table 1 shows the adapted Swales’ (1990) CARS model.

TABLE 1  
THE ADAPTED SWALES’ (1990) CREATE A RESEARCH SPACE (CARS) MODEL

Moves	Steps	Examples
<b>Move 1 Establishing a territory</b>	Step 1 Claiming centrality and/or	<i>a large body of data, important aspect of, a central issue, wide interest in</i>
	Step 2 Making topic generalization(s) and/or	<i>is known to, are believed to be, tend to consist of, are often criticized for</i>
	Step 3 Reviewing items of previous research	<i>Smith found that, in the literature, Peterson argued that...</i>
<b>Move 2 Establishing a niche</b>	Step 1A Counter-claiming or	<i>is challenged by, become increasingly unreliable</i>
	Step 1B Indicating a gap or	<i>but little research, a limited range of, were restricted to</i>
	Step 1C Question-raising or	<i>it is not clear whether, the question remains, has remained unclear</i>
	Step 1D Continuing a tradition	<i>need to be analyzed, it is of interest to, it is desirable to</i>
<b>Move 3 Occupying the niche</b>	Step 1A Outlining purposes or	<i>the aim of this paper is, our purpose was</i>
	Step 1B Announcing present research	<i>this paper evaluates the effect on, this research presents, this study focuses on</i>
	Step 2 Announcing principal findings	<i>this approach provides, our results indicate</i>
	Step 3 Indicating research article structure	<i>we have organized, this paper is structured as follows</i>
	Step 4 Evaluation of findings	<i>close to the optimum achievable bound</i>
	Step 5 Expectation from findings	<i>it is hoped that</i>

C. Data Analysis

The 100 English linguistics RAIs in both corpora were identified into hierarchical schematic structures (or Moves and Steps). The term “Move” was defined as a chunk of text consisting of at least one complete sentence that fulfilled a distinct communicative purpose (Zhang & Wannaruk, 2016). Therefore, regardless of length, the text coding chunk could be a single complete sentence or multiple sentences with consistent orientation signifying moves or steps. Based on the adapted Swales’ (1990) model, the coding was performed in a table template by manually tagging and highlighting the typical expressions that indicated the linguistic elements of each move (or step).

Meanwhile, in the coding process, if various steps of the same move were frequently found to cluster together without being interrupted by a different move or sub-heading, they would be considered as one move. However, if a certain move recurred after an intervening one, each occurrence of that move would be considered an individual instance of the move.

Similarly, within a move, if certain steps cluster together without being broken by another different step, they were counted as one instance of the step. However, if certain steps were broken by another different step, each occurrence of that step was counted as an individual instance of the step.

After identifying the occurrences of moves and steps in both corpora, the frequency and the distribution (percentage) of each move and step were generated by using the method of descriptive statistics and the auxiliary software SPSS. Then the method of inferential statistics Chi-square was used to test the correlation in the occurrence frequency of rhetorical moves between the non-Scopus and Scopus corpus.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Occurrences of Moves and Steps in Both Corpora

The occurrences of moves and steps refer to the total instances or the total number of moves and steps used in English linguistics RAIs from both corpora. Table 2 shows the occurrences of moves in a total of 100 English linguistics RAIs from both corpora.

TABLE 2  
THE OCCURRENCES OF MOVES IN THE NON-SCOPUS AND SCOPUS CORPUS

Non-Scopus Corpus (N=50 introductions)	Moves	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3	Overall
	<b>Occurrences of Moves</b>	98	61	88	247
<b>Percentage of Frequency</b>	39.7%	24.7%	35.6%	100.0%	
Scopus Corpus (N=50 introductions)	Moves	Move 1	Move 2	Move 3	Overall
	<b>Occurrences of Moves</b>	95	68	72	235
	<b>Percentage of Frequency</b>	40.4%	28.9%	30.6%	100.0%

In the non-Scopus corpus, a total number of 247 moves were noticed. While in the Scopus corpus, the overall move patterns were 235. In the non-Scopus corpus, the results showed that there were 39.7% (98 occurrences) of Move 1, 35.6% (88 occurrences) of Move 3, and 24.7% (61 occurrences) of Move 2. As for the Scopus corpus, there were 40.4%

(95 occurrences) of Move 1, 30.6% (72 occurrences) of Move 3, and 28.9% (68 occurrences) of Move 2. In order of high to low frequency, the moves employed by writers from both corpora were Move 1, Move 3 and Move 2.

Among the three moves in both the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora, the proportion in the occurring frequency of Move 1 is relatively higher than the other two moves used in the linguistics RAIs. This is mainly because Move 1 (Establishing a Territory) is not only considered as an opening move to set an orientation for a general area of the research but also as a recurring move to add relevant information about the phenomenon. The cyclicity of this move is evident. It is a topic-related move that serves as a common tactic for writers in stating and describing the theme, for example, whether the research is important, critical, interesting, problematic, relevant, or otherwise worthy of investigation. Concerning linguistics corpora, the current finding is in line with Qian's (2005) study, which investigated 200 English RAIs in the field of linguistics. Her results showed that by L2 writers, the occurrence of Move 1 was 36%, followed by Move 3 (33%) and Move 2 (31%). Meanwhile, Sheldon's (2011) study also summarized that the total occurrences of Move 1 were 48 and its percentage of distribution was 40.33% in the linguistics Scopus corpus. Compared with the other two moves, Move 1 was used quite often. One likely reason for the dominant instance of this move is that by establishing a territory, the writer can situate his or her research in a certain research domain to obtain a sense of affiliation hoping to get accepted by his or her peer readers (Qian, 2005).

Followed by Move 1, the next dominant move that frequently appeared in both corpora is Move 3 (Occupying the Niche). This result is also consistent with Qian's (2005) study, which indicated that Move 3 was closely followed by the frequency of Move 1 in the area of applied linguistics. Meanwhile, in the Scopus corpus of medical RAIs, about 35% of Move 3 was discovered (Sheldon, 2011), and this result was quite close to 30.6% of Move 3 in the linguistics Scopus corpus in the current study. As a final move to announce how the research will answer the specific research questions or bring new insight in comparison to previous research, most writers can point out the objectives of a particular issue.

Concerning Move 2 (Establishing a Niche), writers from both corpora used it less frequently compared to Move 1 and Move 3. It suggested that Move 1 and Move 3 were used repeatedly and cyclically while Move 2 was seldom used multiple times, and this resulted in a lower percentage of their occurrences. Lindeberg (2004) asserted that the "niche" serves as a solid background that highlights the relevance or the magnitude of the present contribution. A compelling "niche" needs to be developed by analyzing, rejecting, or pointing out gaps in prior relevant work. As Move 2 was always closely linked to the past studies inserted in Move 1 rather than current studies that were involved in Move 3, the recurrence of it became less frequent.

After discussing each move, the smaller textual segments which were named steps were also investigated. Table 3 demonstrates the occurrences of steps in a total of 100 English linguistics RAIs from both corpora.

TABLE 3  
THE OCCURRENCES OF STEPS IN THE NON-SCOPUS AND SCOPUS CORPUS  
(N=50 IN EACH CORPUS)

Moves	Steps	Non-Scopus		Scopus	
		f	P	f	P
<b>Move 1</b> <b>Establishing a territory</b>	<b>Overall Steps</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>48.4%</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>47.4%</b>
	Step 1: Claiming centrality	23	5.8%	14	4.1%
	Step 2: Making topic generalization	71	17.8%	55	16.0%
	Step 3: Reviewing items of previous research	99	24.8%	94	27.3%
<b>Move 2</b> <b>Establishing a niche</b>	<b>Overall Steps</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>17.2%</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>21.2%</b>
	Step 1A: Counter-claiming	11	2.8%	11	3.2%
	Step 1B: Indicating a gap	41	10.3%	41	11.9%
	Step 1C: Raising a question	5	1.3%	2	0.6%
	Step 1D: Continuing a tradition	11	2.8%	19	5.5%
<b>Move 3</b> <b>Occupying a niche</b>	<b>Overall Steps</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>34.9%</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>31.3%</b>
	Step 1A: Outlining purposes	40	10.0%	38	11.0%
	Step 1B: Announcing present research	71	17.8%	44	12.8%
	Step 2: Announcing main findings	0	0%	2	0.6%
	Step 3: Indicating structure of the paper	11	2.8%	6	1.7%
	Step 4: Evaluation of findings	10	2.5%	7	2.0%
	Step 5: Expectation from findings	7	1.8%	11	3.2%
<b>Total</b>		<b>400</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>100%</b>

In terms of the use of steps in each move, there were overall 400 steps embedded in the three moves from the non-Scopus corpus. The steps used in Move 1 dominantly accounted for about 48.4%, followed by the steps in Move 3 and Move 2, accounting for 34.9% and 17.2% respectively.

There were various distinguishing characteristics in the utilization of steps in each move from the Scopus corpus. A total of 344 steps were embedded in the three moves, in which steps in Move 1 accounted for 47.4% of the total, followed by steps in Move 3 and Move 2, accounting for 31.3% and 21.2% respectively.

Table 4 shows the distribution of steps in Move 1 from the linguistics RAIs in non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals. In order of high to low frequency, the steps in Move 1 were Step 3, Step 2 and Step 1 in these two corpora.

TABLE 4  
STEPS IN MOVE 1 FROM BOTH CORPORA

Move	Steps	Non-Scopus		Scopus	
		f	P	f	P
Move 1 Establishing a territory	Overall Steps	193	48.4%	163	47.4%
	Step 1: Claiming centrality	23	5.8%	14	4.1%
	Step 2: Making topic generalization	71	17.8%	55	16.0%
	Step 3: Reviewing items of previous research	99	24.8%	94	27.3%

**Move 1 Step 1 (Claiming Centrality)**

In the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora, Move 1 Step 1 was the least frequent strategy used by academic writers. This step occurred only 23 times and had a 5.8% distribution in the non-Scopus corpus, and occurred 14 times with a 4.1% proportion in the Scopus corpus. The results are different from previous results which showed that Step 1 occurred 15 times but had a proportion of 16.7% from the non-Scopus linguistics RAIs (Kheryadi, 2016). The reason could be that when considering how a certain step was distributed, its proportion would be influenced by how other steps were distributed in the overall three moves.

Example 1: The notion of autonomy has received increasing attention in educational research, especially in foreign language education.

Move 1 Step 1 was found in Example 1. The underlined “has received increasing attention” is an expression that makes a centrality claim, stating that the topic of the research is useful, important and worth investigating since it forms a lively, significant and well-established area. As a result, it serves as a topic sentence by claiming centrality to establish a territory.

**Move 1 Step 2 (Making Topic Generalization)**

To establish a territory, Move 1 Step 2 was sometimes used by academic writers in the non-Scopus corpus, accounting for 17.8%. The instances of this step were 71 in the non-Scopus corpus. This result accords with the earlier observations from Kheryadi (2016) who pointed out that this step had a proportion of 18.9% in the non-Scopus linguistics RAIs. In the Scopus corpus, this step accounted for 16.0% with a total number of 55 occurrences. The total instances of it were a bit lower than those used in the non-Scopus corpus. The reason could be that writers always used this step without the intervention of other steps in the Scopus corpus.

Example 2: Considering the ever-growing number of non-native speakers (NNSs) and learners of English, it is natural that the majority of English teachers are non-native English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) and the ESL and EFL speakers would have been taught mainly by indigenous NNESTs.

Move 1 Step 2 usually consists of statements concerning the current state of either knowledge, consensus, practice, or description of phenomena. As can be seen in Example 2, the writer establishes a territory about “non-native English-speaking teachers’ professional identity” by describing the evolution and the number to make topic generalizations.

**Move 1 Step 3 (Reviewing Items of Previous Research)**

To establish a territory, Move 1 Step 3 was the most frequently used step by academic writers in the non-Scopus corpus, accounting for 24.8%. This step was used 99 times in the non-Scopus corpus. A possible reason for its recurrence could be that most of the writers preferred a closer connection with the work of others (Badib & Sutopo, 2012) to get acknowledge the current state of certain research. To create a research space, one has to compete for research space, primarily knowing what others’ opinions are and then going a step further (Kobayashi, 2003). Hence, the writers need to relate what has been found or claimed with who has found it or claimed it. Similar to the result found from the non-Scopus corpus, Move 1 Step 3 was the most dominant step by academic writers in Move 1 in the Scopus corpus, and this step has been used 94 times. This reflects the fact that the reviews of prior studies served as the main generators of content elaboration by arranging the definitions of terminologies, exemplifications of complex concepts, and assessments of the research provided (Samraj, 2002). As a result, the readers will get a clearer picture and explanation of the main background and aims of the research. This finding is indicative of the fact that more justifications are needed in addressing a situation of social science discipline - by providing potential readers with a wide and varied explanation- whereby the writers manipulate the introduction section to provide a plausible context for the subsequent findings to attract as many readers’ attention as possible to their perspective (Swales & Najjar, 1987).

Example 3: McGrath (2000) highlights the importance of teacher autonomy in teacher professionalism.

Move 1 Step 3 was used in Example 3. As shown in the expression “McGrath (2000) highlights the importance of”, the writer relates what has been found (or claimed) with who has found it (or claimed it) to describe a layout of the topic “teacher autonomy”.

Table 5 shows the distribution of steps in Move 2 from the linguistics RAIs in non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals. In order of high to low frequency, the steps in Move 2 were Step 1B, Step 1D, Step 1A, and Step 1C in these two corpora.



TABLE 5  
STEPS IN MOVE 2 FROM BOTH CORPORA

Move	Steps	Non-Scopus		Scopus	
		f	P	f	P
Move 2 Establishing a niche	Overall Steps	68	17.2%	73	21.2%
	Step 1A: Counter-claiming	11	2.8%	11	3.2%
	Step 1B: Indicating a gap	41	10.3%	41	11.9%
	Step 1C: Raising a question	5	1.3%	2	0.6%
	Step 1D: Continuing a tradition	11	2.8%	19	5.5%

### Move 2 Step 1A (Counter-Claiming)

Move 2 Step 1A was the parallel favored step of Move 2 Step 1D that the writers applied in the non-Scopus. It accounted for 2.8% with a total of 11 instances. However, the results of the proportion of this step in the current study differ from Kheryadi's (2016) study, in which the proportion of Move 2 Step 1A was much higher in the RAIs in *Cultural and English Language Teaching (CELT)* and *Teaching of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia (TEFLIN)* journals. While in the Scopus corpus, this step was the next frequent step followed by Move 2 Step 1D. It accounted for 3.2% with a number of 11 instances. Regarding Move 2 Step 1A, a possible explanation for its comparatively lower frequency might be that in some situations, gaps are not detected by the writers, and instead, they are described as being generally known or discovered by other researchers (Shehzad, 2008). Instead of highlighting the flaws, the writer "merely reports them second hand, relying on previous authorities, presumably a less face-threatening act" (Lindeberg, 2004, p. 92). This is done to avoid "treading on the toes of other citizens of the academic universe" (Lewin et al., 2001, p. 43).

Example 4: However, the juxtaposition of identity's two perspectives, namely, personal voice and social voice, has been the subject of controversy.

Move 2 Step 1A was used in Example 4. The signal "has been the subject of controversy" expresses a contrast or negative evaluation to show that the previous study is not complete, or that there are aspects of the research field which still need further investigation.

### Move 2 Step 1B (Indicating a Gap)

To establish a niche, Move 2 Step 1B was the most common move that the writers employed in linguistics RAIs in both types of journals. It occurred 41 times and accounted for 10.3% in the non-Scopus corpus, and occurred 41 times and accounted for 11.9% in the Scopus corpus. It indicates that in both corpora, the frequency of the usage of this step was the same, but due to the distribution of the overall steps in three moves, the percentages or the proportions of this step were different in both corpora. These findings further support the idea that the dominant step used in justifying the research gap in linguistics RAIs is Move 2 Step 1B, which shows the obvious absence, major limitation, and distinctness of certain research in the field (Samanhudi, 2017). Moreover, this result is consistent with Lim's (2012) study on the corpus of introductions of management research articles. Writers vastly applied Move 2 Step 1B could be a result of various alternative ways to indicate a gap. The four ways were widely taken by academic writers to indicate a gap. They are (i) "highlighting the complete absence of research bearing a specific characteristic", (ii) "stressing insufficient research in a specific aspect", (iii) "revealing a limitation in previous research" and (iv) "contrasting conflicting previous research findings" (Lim, 2012, pp. 229-245).

Example 5: While learner autonomy has been extensively investigated, teacher autonomy has not gained as much attention until relatively recently.

Move 2 Step 1B was used in Example 5. It frequently follows Move 1 Step 2. In this case, the expression "has not gained as much attention" is taken by the writer to make topic generalizations from another perspective, showing that the previous studies of "autonomy" are not complete and that there is another aspect of the research field "teacher autonomy" which still needs further investigation.

### Move 2 Step 1C (Raising a Question)

Move 2 Step 1C was the least frequent step in both corpora. The writers were not so inclined to pose a question mark in a sentence or use a questioning tone about previous research to establish a niche. It only occurred 5 times, accounting for 1.3% in the non-Scopus corpus. This result is broadly congruent with Kheryadi (2016), who found that the recurrent frequency of this step is comparatively lower, accounting for 5.5% in the non-Scopus corpus. In the Scopus corpus, Move 2 Step 1C merely had 2 instances with a percentage of 0.6%. The possible reason for the rare usage of this step could be that the writers were not willing to pick on previous studies or pose questions that prior research had failed to answer. They seldom posed direct or indirect queries.

Example 6: Will the findings of studies carried out in ESL settings also be applicable in the EFL contexts considering the fact that the expanding societies bring to English an entirely different dimension in almost all aspects of ELT?

Move 2 Step 1C was used in Example 6. After reviewing the previous literature on the findings in ESL settings, the writer raises a question about if the findings are applicable in EFL contexts. By using "will the findings of studies...", the niche is pointed out in a questioning tone.

### Move 2 Step 1D (Continuing a Tradition)

In Move 2, Move 2 Step 1D was the next preferred step followed by Move 2 Step 1B that the writers applied in the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora. It had a distribution of 2.8% with 11 occurrences in the non-Scopus corpus and a



proportion of 5.5% with 19 occurrences in the Scopus corpus. Inconsistent with what Kheryadi (2016) has found, this step was only scattered in the current study. This rather contradictory result may be due to the previous research’s small sample size (eight articles). As for this step, continuing a tradition is more like adding to what is known and what is unknown, and it is frequently signaled by logical connectors (Swales, 1990). This step may be driven by the notion that the present body of information is insufficient and hence requires more investigation through new studies.

Example 7: Therefore, there is a need to revisit the individual dimensions of what it means to be an autonomous teacher.

Move 2 Step 1D was used in Example 7. Logical connectors such as therefore, hence, consequently, and thus are frequently shown in this move. Here, the causative connector is “therefore”, followed by the lexical bundle “there is a need to” to indicate the requirement of further research.

Table 6 shows the distribution of steps in Move 3 from the linguistics RAIs in non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals. In order of high to low frequency, the steps in Move 3 were Step 1B, Step 1A, Step 3, Step 4, Step 5, and Step 2 from the non-Scopus corpus, and Step 1B, Step 1A, Step 5, Step 4, Step 3 and Step 2 from the Scopus corpus. Regarding the similarities, Steps 1B and 1A were used as the most and second most frequent steps in both corpora, while Step 2 was the least frequent in both corpora.

TABLE 6  
STEPS IN MOVE 3 FROM BOTH CORPORA

Move	Steps	Non-Scopus		Scopus	
		f	P	f	P
Move 3 Occupying a niche	<b>Overall Steps</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>34.9%</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>31.3%</b>
	Step 1A: Outlining purposes	40	10.0%	38	11.0%
	Step 1B: Announcing present research	71	17.8%	44	12.8%
	Step 2: Announcing main findings	0	0%	2	0.6%
	Step 3: Indicating structure of the paper	11	2.8%	6	1.7%
	Step 4: Evaluation of findings	10	2.5%	7	2.0%
	Step 5: Expectation from findings	7	1.8%	11	3.2%

**Move 3 Step 1A (Outlining Purposes)**

Move 3 Step 1A, which accounted for 10% with a total instance of 40, was the second frequent step in this move that was used in the non-Scopus corpus. It was also the second most frequent step that occurred 38 times with a proportion of 11% in the Scopus corpus. The “aim” or “goal” of a study was highlighted and this step was usually identified by standard or collapsed structure, choice of the present tense, the absence of references to previous research, and the use of deictic references to the present text, such as “this, the present, we, here, now, I, and herein”, and the verb tenses employed vary depending on whether the writer is referring to a physical or abstract concept (Swale, 1990).

Example 8: This paper is an attempt to fill this research gap and thus aims to address the following question.

Move 3 Step 1A was used in Example 8. The writer introduces the solution to the problem described in Move 2 by stating the main purpose or aim of the study. In this case, the lexical bundle “an attempt to” clearly leads to the main purpose of the current study.

**Move 3 Step 1B (Announcing Present Research)**

To occupy a niche (Move 3), announcing present research (Move 3 Step 1B) was mostly used in the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora. With 71 occurrences, this step accounted for 17.8% of the use of all the steps of three moves in the non-Scopus corpus, and with 44 occurrences, it had a proportion of 12.8% in the Scopus corpus. Making announcements is typical in any research article. To provide a clear outcome of the paper, either human or inanimate agents were used as the subject.

Example 9: To this end, we conducted a study to investigate 14 College English teachers at a public university located in Wuhan, China.

Move 3 Step 1B was used in Example 9. Here, to occupy the niche, the writer announces the present research by using the human agent “we” as a subject. The phrase “we conduct a study to investigate” directly links the research objectives with the current study.

**Move 3 Step 2 (Announcing Main Findings)**

Move 3 Step 2 was the least frequently utilized in both corpora. In the non-Scopus corpus, none of the writers choose this step to state results. In the Scopus corpus, only 2 occurrences with a 0.6% of proportion could be detected. This could be because this step is not suitable to use in all disciplines. The result is in congruence with Abdullah (2016), who explained that this step was the most unfavorable one and it only occurred 3 times from the overall results in both the English Language Teaching (ELT) and Civil Engineering (CE) areas. Moreover, in a result-oriented discipline such as computer science, the introduction points out to the reader in various ways about the writer’s contribution, which is divergent from the discipline of social sciences (Shehzad, 2010).

Example 10: One of the main findings was that the positive group appeared to be more autonomous than the negative group in their teaching practices.

Move 3 Step 2 was used in Example 10. “One of the main findings was” shows that the writer considers the result to be an important aspect of the research. Therefore, it reports the findings.

**Move 3 Step 3 (Indicating Structure of the Paper)**

Move 3 Step 3 was the third most frequent step in the non-Scopus corpus, while the second least frequent step was in the Scopus corpus. It took up 2.8% with 11 occurrences in the use of all the steps in three moves from the non-Scopus corpus but 1.7% with 6 occurrences from the Scopus corpus. These findings suggest that there is a difference between the frequency of using this step in the non-Scopus and Scopus RAIs in the area of linguistics. More experienced writers mentioned the structure of their papers less frequently.

Example 11: The remainder of the paper is organized as follows.

Move 3 Step 3 was used in Example 11. The structure of the paper is introduced by the writer through the sentence “the paper is organized as follows”.

#### Move 3 Step 4 (Evaluation of Findings)

Move 3 Step 4 was the third least frequent step in Move 3 that was used in both the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora. It accounted for 2.5% with total instances of 10 in the non-Scopus corpus and took up 2.0% with total occurrences of 7 in the Scopus corpus. Typically, this step is the opposite of Move 2 in that it requires a positive evaluation of some aspect of the solution. According to Swales (1990), this step is often found in research that aims to develop new methods, such as chemistry and engineering. Hence, the result in the current study confirms the idea that this step was seldom applied in language and linguistics RAIs and it was usually left until the discussion section.

Example 12: The findings have pedagogical implications for L2 academic writing instruction.

Move 3 Step 4 was used in example 12, and “the findings have pedagogical implications for” is the marker to show the pedagogical significance of the current study.

#### Move 3 Step 5 (Expectation from Findings)

Move 3 Step 5 was the new step found in the pilot study of the present study. In the non-Scopus corpus, this step was the second least frequently utilized step. It occurred 7 times with a proportion of 1.8% in the total number of steps of the three moves. However, in the Scopus corpus, this step was the third most frequently chosen step. It had 11 occurrences with a 3.2% proportion in the use of all the steps. As it was a novel rhetorical strategy detected in the linguistics RAIs, previous studies had not focused on this step and no results had been mentioned. Different from Step 4, this step mostly shows the prediction of future studies or aspirations based on the findings. The results indicated that the more seasoned writers within the Scopus corpus preferred to view the future with optimism.

Example 12: It is hoped that this research can shed light on a deeper understanding of the teacher identity construction of female English learners from rural China.

Move 3 Step 5 was used in Example 12. The writer proposes the potential achievement and advantage of the research by drawing the blueprint “it is hoped that this research can shed light on... and can also help improve...”. This is a kind of expectation that aims to show achievable results. The lexical bundle used here is “it is hoped that”.

### B. The Relationships Between the Frequency of Moves and Steps and the Indexing of Journals

Table 7 shows relationships in the occurrence frequency of moves and steps in English linguistics RAIs between the non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals.

TABLE 7  
CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS IN THE RELATIONSHIPS OF MOVES AND STEPS OCCURRENCE FREQUENCY BETWEEN NON-SCOPUS AND SCOPUS CORPUS

Moves and Steps	N		Chi-Square Value	df	Asymp. Sig.
	Non-Scopus	Scopus			
Move 1	193	163	1.835 <sup>a</sup>	2	.399
Move 1 Step 1	23	14	2.189 <sup>a</sup>	1	.139
Move 1 Step 2	71	55	2.032 <sup>a</sup>	1	.154
Move 1 Step 3	99	94	.130 <sup>a</sup>	1	.719
Move 2	68	73	3.246 <sup>a</sup>	3	.355
Move 2 Step 1A	11	11	.000 <sup>a</sup>	1	1.000
Move 2 Step 1B	41	41	.000 <sup>a</sup>	1	1.000
Move 2 Step 1C	5	2	1.286 <sup>a</sup>	1	.257
Move 2 Step 1D	11	19	2.133 <sup>a</sup>	1	.144
Move 3	139	108	7.507 <sup>a</sup>	5	.186
Move 3 Step 1A	40	38	.051 <sup>a</sup>	1	.821
Move 3 Step 1B	71	44	6.339 <sup>a</sup>	1	.012
Move 3 Step 2	0	2	/	/	/
Move 3 Step 3	11	6	1.471 <sup>a</sup>	1	.225
Move 3 Step 4	10	7	.529 <sup>a</sup>	1	.467
Move 3 Step 5	7	11	.889 <sup>a</sup>	1	.346

Based on the results of the test of independence Chi-square, as the significant values (p) of the three moves all exceeded alpha ( $\alpha = .05$ ), there was no sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. That is, the occurrence of each move did not turn out to be significantly dependent on the indexing types of journals.

However, from a narrow sense, based on the results of the Chi-Square goodness of fit test, as the significant value (p) of Move 3 Step 1B was smaller than alpha ( $\alpha = .05$ ), this step (announcing present research) was found to be significantly dependent on the indexing types of journals. This result corroborates the idea that at the step level, there was a relationship in the occurrence of steps of Move 3 between the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora. However,

concerning the specific step, the current results have not been previously described. In Soodmand Afshar and Ranjbar's (2017) research, they did not report the distinct finding in Move 3 Step 1B but they found that the associations significantly lay in the occurrences of Move 3 Step 3 (definitional clarifications), Move 3 Step 5 (announcing principal outcomes), Move 3 Step 6 (stating the value of the present research) and Move 3 Step 7 (outlining the structure of the paper) in linguistics RAIs between the four Scopus-indexed journals and four non-Scopus-indexed journals. Therefore, writers from the non-Scopus corpus seemed to overuse the announcement of their research and it would be better to reduce this repetition.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper investigated the occurrence frequency of rhetorical moves in introductions of linguistics research articles from non-Scopus-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals. Based on the findings on move identification, Move 3 Step 5, which pertains to the expectation from findings, is a novel step that enriches Swales' (1990) CARS framework from a theoretical standpoint. In the Scopus corpus, this step was the third most commonly selected step regarding Move 3. As prior investigations have not placed emphasis on this particular aspect and have not yielded any results in this regard, the current findings indicated that proficient writers exhibited a predilection for envisioning the future with assurance. Regarding the occurrence of moves, the writers from both corpora utilized Move 1, Move 3 and Move 2 in descending order of frequency, and there was no significant relationship between the frequency of moves and indexing types of journals. However, as for the steps, Move 3 Step 1B was found to be significantly dependent on the indexing types of journals. Overuse of this step may limit the possibility of publishing RAIs in Scopus-indexed journals.

The limitation of this research was the relatively small size of the corpora. More texts may be incorporated into both the non-Scopus and Scopus corpora in the future. This would allow for a more evident correlation between the frequency of each step of moves and the indexing of journals. Meanwhile, it is feasible to undertake interdisciplinary investigations aimed at move frequency in various sections, disciplines, and academic genres.

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# Motivation, Strategy Use, and Comprehension in Foreign Language Reading: The Case of Saudi EFL Learners at the Preparatory Year

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**Abstract**—This study explored the relationships among reading motivation, reading strategy use and, reading comprehension in EFL reading. A cohort of 308 male and female EFL students at the preparatory year of an emerging Saudi university completed a reading motivation questionnaire, a reading strategy questionnaire, and a reading comprehension test. Independent samples t-test results revealed that students with high reading motivation (extrinsic, intrinsic, and efficacy) used three reading strategy categories (pre, while, and post-reading strategies) more frequently than students with moderate reading motivation. Similarly, students with high reading motivation were found to have better reading comprehension. Reading strategy use was also found to induce significant differences in students' reading comprehension. Results of multiple regression revealed that extrinsic motivation was the best predictor of students' reading strategy use and reading comprehension. Of all strategy categories, while-reading strategies were the best predictor of students' reading comprehension. Of all motivation and strategy factors, while-reading strategies, reading efficacy and extrinsic motivation significantly predicted reading comprehension, with while-reading strategies being the strongest predictor. Implications for reading instruction and suggestions for further research are offered.

**Index Terms**—reading motivation, reading strategy use, reading comprehension, EFL reading, Saudi preparatory year students

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reading proficiency is indispensable for FL learners because it is their primary source of language input. Becoming proficient readers of English is a determinant of success for students intending to study medicine, engineering, and computer science (the population of the current study). The programs offered to these students in any country, including Saudi Arabia use English as the medium of instruction. The content of study courses in these disciplines is written basically in English. Thus, good reading proficiency will benefit these students in their university study. Furthermore, graduates of these programs need to keep in touch with their disciplines for professional development. A physician for instance needs to get updated on innovations in the medical field. In an EFL setting, reading can be the only means to this end. Thus, investigating these students' EFL reading and the factors affecting it is a topic that deserves to be researched. Reading is affected by a number of factors, at the top of which are reading motivation and self-regulated reading strategy use. Several studies revealed a positive relationship between EFL reading motivation and reading comprehension (e.g., Dhanapala, 2008; Lin et al., 2012; Han, 2021; Li & Gan, 2022). However, there are studies that reported no positive correlation between them (e.g., Ölmez, 2015; Meniado, 2016). Similarly, in several studies conducted in various EFL settings, reading strategy use correlated positively with reading comprehension (Phakiti, 2003; Zhang & Seepho, 2013; Abbasian & Hartoonian, 2014; Islam, 2018; Zarei, 2018; Han, 2021; Mohammed, 2022; Oranpattanachai, 2023). However, in other studies, no correlation was found between them (Shang, 2010; Meniado, 2016; Sari, 2016; Zhang & Sukying, 2022). The mixed research findings provide a rationale for further examination of the relationships among motivation, strategy use, and comprehension in FL reading. Furthermore, the relationship among the three variables has not been sufficiently researched in the Saudi context. Thus, this study aimed to explore Saudi EFL preparatory year students' reading comprehension and its relation to their reading motivation and reading strategy use. This investigation is expected to offer important implications for EFL reading instruction in Saudi Arabia. More specifically, the study addressed the following questions:

1. What is the profile of Saudi EFL students' reading motivation, strategy use and comprehension?
2. Are there significant differences in students' reading strategy use and comprehension by reading motivation?
3. Are there significant differences in students' reading comprehension by reading strategy use?
4. What are the contributions of students' reading motivation to their reading strategy use and comprehension?
5. What are the contributions of students' reading strategy use to their reading comprehension?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *The Reading Motivation Construct*

Motivation is essential for successful FL learning because it “provides the primary impetus to initiate FL learning and later the driving force to sustain language and often tedious learning process” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 65). Reading motivation according to Guthrie and Wigfield (2000) refers to people’s purposes, values and thoughts in relation to the themes, procedures, and outputs of reading. Similarly, Schiefele et al. (2012) define reading motivation as people’s subjective reasons for reading. A student may be motivated to read due to a personal interest in a particular topic or due to an external incentive like obtaining good grades or gaining recognition. Still, a student may be motivated to read for both personal interest and external incentives. That is, there is no one single incentive for reading that is true for all people. Researchers thus suggest that reading motivation is multidimensional in that it is a construct encompassing several interrelated dimensions. Mori (2002) examined the construct of reading motivation among Japanese EFL university students and could establish that Japanese EFL university students’ reading motivation comprises four dimensions, namely, the intrinsic value of reading, the extrinsic utility value of reading, the importance of reading, and reading efficacy. Starting from an assumption that a motivational construct developed for L1 reading may not work for FL reading, Erten et al. (2010) developed a model of reading motivation for Turkish EFL university students without drawing upon any previous theories of motivation. Instead they pooled students’ incentives for EFL reading through five open-ended questions. Students’ opinions were then included in a scale they named The Foreign Language Reading Motivation and Attitudes Scale. EFA produced a four factor structure comprising the intrinsic value of reading, reading efficacy, the extrinsic utility value of reading, and foreign language linguistic utility. Investigating the reading motivation of university English language learners in China, Han (2021) identified three scales comprising students’ reading motivation: one for intrinsic motivation (efficacy and engagement) and two for extrinsic motivation (utility value and academic value). Wang and Gan (2021) also offered a research-based reading motivation model for Chinese EFL learners comprising five dimensions: efficacy, enjoyment, recognition, involvement, and compliance.

There seems to be common constituents in the reading motivation models developed by researchers in different contexts. These are intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and reading efficacy. Intrinsic motivation refers to “motivation to engage in an activity for its own sake”, while extrinsic motivation refers to “motivation to engage in an activity as a means to an end” (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002, p. 245). Students who find reading interesting and challenging are intrinsically motivated to read. In contrast, students who read for external factors like obtaining recognition are extrinsically motivated to read. Researchers mention a number of differences between students with intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation. Students with intrinsic motivation are involved in reading, use effective reading strategies, invest effort to promote their reading, share reading experiences with others, read for pleasure and knowledge, and have positive attitudes towards reading. Students with extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, read because they must, use less reading learning strategies, do not invest effort to promote their reading, do not like to talk about reading, read for external rewards, and have less positive attitudes towards reading. However, intrinsic motivation is not necessarily correlated with better reading in all cultures. The relative impact of both types of motivation is culture-bound. In several FL reading studies, only extrinsic motivation correlated positively with reading achievement and in other studies reading achievement correlated positively with both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. This gives a rationale for investigating the impact of both types of motivation on students’ reading performance in different cultures. Efficacy refers to “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Bandura (1986) attributes poor performance in any kind of learning not to lack of ability, but to lack of confidence in own ability to perform successfully.

### B. *The Relationship Between Reading Motivation and Reading Comprehension*

Mixed research findings were reported regarding the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on EFL reading achievement, with neither, either, or both of them reported to be positively (and even negatively in the case of extrinsic motivation) correlated with reading achievement. For example, in Han’s (2021) study, the reading proficiency of 186 Chinese university English language learners positively correlated with an intrinsic reading scale comprising efficacy and engagement, while it did not correlate with two extrinsic motivation scales comprising utility value and academic value. In a study conducted with 114 Turkish EFL university freshmen, Ölmez (2015) found no correlations between reading comprehension and intrinsic motivation (intrinsic value of reading and reading efficacy) or extrinsic motivation (utility value of reading and language linguistic utility). In a study conducted on Hong Kong EFL primary students by Lin et al. (2012), instrumentalism (i.e., extrinsic motivation) correlated positively with reading comprehension. Using a sample of 247 Sri Lankan and Japanese EFL students, Dhanapala (2008) found that the reading comprehension of Sri Lankan students strongly and positively correlated with all intrinsic (curiosity, involvement, and challenge) and extrinsic motivation (recognition, grades, competition and compliance) scales except for social reading.

Dhanapala and Hirakawa (2016) found that extrinsic motivation negatively linked with the English reading comprehension of 406 EFL Sri Lankan university students. Using a single composite measure of reading motivation comprising intrinsic and extrinsic motivation with 60 Saudi EFL university students, Meniado (2016) found no relation between motivation and reading comprehension. Fauzi et al. (2022) found a significant correlation between reading motivation and the reading comprehension of 36 Indonesian EFL university students. The motivation questionnaire

employed in the study included intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (drive to excel, academic compliance, test compliance, and social sharing). However, the last two studies (Meniado, 2016; Fauzi et al., 2022) used a single composite score of motivation. This, according to Wang et al. (2020), is inappropriate because a single composite measure of motivation blurs or neutralizes the relative effect of each motivational orientation. Reading efficacy has been generally found to correlate positively with reading comprehension in several EFL settings, e.g., Iran (Ghabdian & Ghafournia, 2016; Zarei, 2018), Turkey (Tercanlioglu, 2002), Indonesia (Fitri et al., 2019), Malaysia (Habibian & Roslan, 2014), Saudi Arabia (Mohammed, 2022), and Thai (Oranpattanachai, 2023).

### *C. The Relationship Between Reading Motivation and Reading Strategy Use*

Studies generally found a positive relationship between motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation and reading strategy use. Han (2021) investigated the relationship between motivation and reading strategies of 168 Chinese university English language learners. Intrinsic motivation (efficacy and engagement) and extrinsic motivation (utility value and academic value) positively correlated with metacognitive strategies and cognitive strategies, with correlations between intrinsic motivation and reading strategies being stronger. Dison and Shah (2020) reported a positive relationship between the reading motivation of 81 Malaysian secondary school students and their global, problem and support reading strategies. No distinction was made in this study between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Meniado (2016) reported a positive correlation between reading motivation and metacognitive reading strategies among 60 Saudi college-level EFL students. However, a single composite score of motivation was used without reference to specific types of reading motivation. The relationship between EFL reading motivation and reading strategies still needs to be researched. Reading efficacy has also been found to correlate positively with strategy use in EFL reading (Shang, 2010; Mohammed, 2022). That is, students with high reading efficacy use reading strategies more frequently than students with low reading efficacy.

### *D. Reading Strategies*

Reading strategies are deliberate and goal-oriented processes that enable learners to construct meaning out of text (Afflerbach et al., 2008). Sheorey and Mokhtari (2001) suggest that reading strategies are “deliberate, conscious procedures used by readers to enhance text comprehension” (p. 433). Various classifications of reading strategies have been offered elsewhere. According to the most widespread classification, reading strategies are classified into cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Cognitive strategies operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it in ways that enhance learning (Mokhtari & Reichard, 2002). In other words, cognitive strategies include actions readers take to manipulate the reading material, e.g., predicting, elaborating, inferencing, summarizing, and note-taking (Phakiti, 2003). Metacognitive strategies are tactics used by readers to manage their reading. They are not directly related to the language being read. They include actions taken to plan, monitor and regulate reading (Pintrich, 1999). Examples of planning strategies are setting goals for reading; skimming the text before in-depth reading; and self-questioning before reading. Monitoring strategies include checking comprehension; tracking attention; and reflecting on the reading task. Regulatory strategies include such strategies as slowing the pace of reading with difficult parts of the text, rereading difficult parts of the text; and getting back on track when losing concentration. Another widely cited classification of reading strategies is the classification offered by Mokhtari and Reichard (2002). They classified reading strategies into global reading strategies, problem-solving reading strategies, and support reading strategies. Global strategies are tactics used by readers to monitor or manage their reading. Problem-solving strategies are tactics used by readers to solve problems in understanding what is being read. Finally, support strategies are mechanisms that aid the reader in comprehending the text, e.g., using a dictionary, taking notes, or underlining or highlighting important information. Reading strategies are also classified based on the stage of reading into pre, while, and post-reading strategies (Paris et al., 1996). Researchers who use this classification aim to identify if students prepare for the reading act and reflect on it when it is over.

### *E. The Relationship Between Reading Strategy Use and Reading Comprehension*

Studies reported mixed findings regarding the relationship between reading strategies and reading comprehension of FL learners, with some studies reporting a positive relationship (Phakiti, 2003; Zhang & Seepho, 2013; Abbasian & Hartoonian, 2014; Islam, 2018; Zarei, 2018; Han, 2021; Mohammed, 2022; Oranpattanachai, 2023) and others reporting no correlation (Shang, 2010; Meniado, 2016; Sari, 2016; Zhang & Sukying, 2022) between them. For instance, one, some, or all of cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, global, problem-solving, and support reading strategies correlated positively with the reading performance of 183 Saudi university EFL learners (Mohammed, 2022), 186 Chinese university EFL learners (Han, 2022), 119 Iranian undergraduate and postgraduate EFL learners (Zarei, 2018), 113 Indonesian high school students (Islam, 2018), 115 Iranian university EFL learners (Abbasian & Hartoonian, 2014), 80 Iranian EFL university learners (Zare, 2013), 33 Chinese university EFL learners (Zhang & Seepho, 2013), and 384 Thai university EFL learners (Phakiti, 2003). On the other hand, none of cognitive, metacognitive, compensation, global, problem-solving, and support reading strategies correlated positively with the reading performance of 199 Thai university EFL learners (Zhang & Sukying, 2022), 74 Indonesian secondary school students (Aini & Akhiriyah, 2022), 60 Saudi EFL university students (Meniado, 2016), 132 Indonesian EFL pre-service teachers (Sari, 2016), 53



Taiwanese learners (Shang, 2010), and 290 Chinese EFL university learners (Li & Kaur, 2014). Further research is thus required regarding the effect of reading strategy use on EFL learners' reading performance.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. Participants

Participants in this study were Preparatory Year Program (PYP) students ( $n = 308$ ) at an emerging Saudi University. Upon successful completion of the PYP, students initiate their main university study in medicine ( $n = 145$ , 41.1%), nursing ( $n = 81$ , 26.3%), and engineering and computer science ( $n = 82$ , 26.6%). Admission to any of these tracks depends on the GPA in the PYP and the IELTS score. Of the 308 participants, 186 (60.4%) were females and 122 (39.6%) were males. Students are admitted to the PYP program after they graduate from high school (the science stream) and satisfy the admission criteria for the PYP. They are native speakers of Arabic and have the same English language experience in terms of years of study and exposure to the English language.

#### B. Instruments

##### (a). *The Reading Motivation Questionnaire*

A 23-item questionnaire was used to assess students' reading motivation. The items were adapted or developed making use of frequently cited EFL reading motivation questionnaires (Wigfield & Guthrie, 1997; Mori, 2002; Erten et al., 2010). Originally, the questionnaire had 30 items representing four components of EFL reading motivation: the intrinsic value of reading, the extrinsic value utility of reading, reading efficacy, and the importance of reading. EFA with Varimax rotation, eigenvalues of  $\geq 1$  and a loading of 0.40 was then conducted on the data of the participants' completed questionnaires to decide on the items to be included in data analysis. To establish the factorability of the data, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity were computed. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's measure of sampling adequacy was 0.925, which was acceptable. Bartlett's test of Sphericity was 3601.339 ( $p < .000$ ), which was significant. Seven items were excluded because they either cross-loaded on more than one factor (five items) or did not load significantly on any factor (two items) and the correlation matrix was reanalyzed. A three factor solution including 23 items was found, which accounted for 57% of the total variance. The first factor had ten items and accounted for 38.62% of the variance. The major theme in this factor was *extrinsic motivation*. This factor included in addition to items relating to the extrinsic value of reading items that came under separate factors in other samples, namely the importance of reading (Mori, 2002) and the linguistic utility of reading (Erten et al., 2010). That is, it included items that came in other samples under the two separate factors of the extrinsic value and the importance or linguistic utility of reading. Examples of this factor's items are "Reading in English is beneficial for self-development" and "Good reading ability in English will help me in my future career". The second factor with seven items accounted for 11.40% of the variance. Items in this factor related to beliefs about *reading efficacy*. Examples of this factor's items are "I know what to do when I don't understand what I am reading" and "I can handle challenging reading materials". The third factor with six items accounted for 6.6% of the variance and related to the *intrinsic motivation*. Example items under this factor are "Reading in English is self-fulfilling", "The more I read in English, the more I want to read" and "I tend to get deeply engaged when I read in English". The extrinsic motivation factor, the reading efficacy factor, the intrinsic motivation factor, and the total questionnaire yielded high alpha reliability estimates: 0.90, 0.85, 0.84 and 0.92 respectively, indicating that the questionnaire was quite reliable. To control for the participants' English linguistic competence compromising their ability to respond to the items, the questionnaire was administered in Arabic. Participants responded to items by indicating how far they agreed to the statements on a five-point rating scale ranging from 1 "Strongly Disagree" to 5 "Strongly Agree". Items with negative statement were reverse coded so that higher means indicated higher motivation.

##### (b). *The Reading Strategy Questionnaire*

Based on a survey of relevant questionnaires in previous studies (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002; Phakiti, 2003; Zhang et al., 2014), items incorporating 37 strategies were adapted. EFA was then conducted to decide on the items to be included in data analysis. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's measure of sampling adequacy was 0.873, which was acceptable. Bartlett's test of Sphericity was 3043.149 ( $p < .000$ ), which was significant. Five items were excluded because they either cross-loaded on more than one factor (four items) or did not load significantly on any factor (one item) and the correlation matrix was reanalyzed. An eight factor solution including 32 items was generated, which accounted for 58.80% of the total variance. The first factor had six items and accounted for 21.06% of the variance. Items in this factor related to *regulating* reading (e.g., "I try to get back on track when I lose concentration" and "If I come at difficult parts in the text, I reread to understand them better"). The second factor with five items pertained to *predicting* (e.g., "I ask myself questions I predict to have answered in the text" and "I try to predict incoming content using the information being read") and accounted for 10.72 of the variance. The third factor related to *elaborating* (e.g., "I compare what I read with what I know about the topic" and "I use my background knowledge and common sense to understand what I'm reading"). It had five items and accounted for 8.53 of the variance. The fourth factor with five items relating to *inferencing* (e.g., "I use the words I know to guess the meaning of the words I don't know" and "I use

linguistic clues such as prefixes and suffixes to figure out the meaning of difficult words”) accounted for 6.471 of the variance. The fifth factor accounting for 3.92 of the variance consisted of three items whose main theme was *reflecting* on reading (e.g., “I reflect on my problems or difficulties and how to overcome them the next time” and “I think back to how I read and about what I might do differently the next time”). The sixth factor pertained to *monitoring* (e.g., “I stop from time to time to think about what I’m reading” and “If the text becomes difficult, I read aloud to understand what I’m reading”). With its four items, it accounted for 3.53 of the variance. The seventh factor with its two items (e.g., “I take notes in the margin to help me understand what I’m reading”) related to *note-taking* and accounted for 2.38 of the variance. Finally, the eighth factor had two items relating to *initial reading* (e.g. “I skim the text to see what it is about”) and accounted for 2.17 of the variance. The final version of the questionnaire thus included three metacognitive strategy categories: regulating (six items), monitoring (four items), and reflecting (three items). Meanwhile, it had five cognitive categories: predicting (five items), elaborating (five items), inferencing (five items), note-taking (two items), and initial reading (two items). However, the classification of strategies based on the stages of reading, i.e., pre, while, and post-reading was adopted in this study to check if students used strategies before and after reading. There were six pre-reading, twenty-two while-reading, and four post-reading strategies. The three types included cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The pre-reading, while-reading, post-reading, and total strategies yielded acceptable alpha estimates: 0.65, 0.85, 0.68, and 0.89 respectively, indicating that the questionnaire was quite reliable. The participants responded to items in Arabic based on a scale of five anchors ranging from 1 “Strongly Disagree” to 5 “Strongly Agree”.

### (c). *The Reading Comprehension Test*

The students’ reading comprehension was assessed by a composite score of their scores in the reading sections in four formal exams they took before they participated in the study: the midterm and final exams of course ENGL109 (The English Language 1) and course ENGL 110 (The English Language 2) of the first semester, 2022/23. In each of the four exams, students read an English passage and answered 10 multiple-choice questions on it, i.e., a total of four passages and 40 questions. Thus, a student’s reading score ranged between 0 and 40. The reading skills measured in the questions included identifying main ideas and supporting details, identifying cause and effect relationships, guessing the meaning of difficult words, determining the author’s purpose, and making conclusions.

## IV. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The questionnaires were administered to the participants electronically toward the end of the first semester of the academic year 2022/23. Students in the PYP are added to a channel in Microsoft Teams where all announcements and questionnaires are shared with them. Descriptive statistics were used to identify the general profile of students’ reading motivation, strategy use and comprehension. The t-test for independent samples were used to identify the effect of reading motivation on students’ reading strategy use and reading comprehension, and the effect of reading strategy use on their reading comprehension. Finally, stepwise multiple regression analysis was used to identify the contributions of students’ reading motivation to their reading strategy use and comprehension, and the contributions of students’ reading strategy use to their reading comprehension.

## V. RESULTS

### A. *The Profile of Students’ Reading Motivation, Strategy Use and Comprehension*

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the three variables. Skewness and kurtosis values ranged between -2 and 2, revealing that the variables were normally distributed (Bachman & Kunnan, 2005). Of the three reading motivation factors, extrinsic motivation ranked first ( $M = 4.30$ ,  $SD = 0.669$ ), followed by reading efficacy ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 0.759$ ) and intrinsic motivation ( $M = 3.52$ ,  $SD = 0.841$ ). The mean of students’ extrinsic reading motivation was substantially larger than the means of the other two motivation factors. This reveals that students are substantially extrinsically motivated to read. However, the means of the other two motivation factors are above 3.50 (Oxford, 2001), indicating that students are also highly efficacious about their reading and highly intrinsically motivated to read. Of the three reading strategy categories, while-reading strategies ( $M = 3.74$ ,  $SD = 0.526$ ) ranked first, followed by post-reading strategies ( $M=3.70$ ,  $SD=0.531$ ) and pre-reading strategies ( $M = 3.58$ ,  $SD = 0.638$ ). This indicates that students use while-reading strategies most frequently, followed by post-reading strategies and pre-reading strategies. The means of all individual strategy categories are above 3.50, indicating that students use all reading strategies with high frequency. Finally, the average of students’ reading comprehension (27.1) was above the mid-point (20). That is, students’ reading comprehension was above average.

TABLE 1  
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF READING MOTIVATION, STRATEGY USE AND COMPREHENSION (N = 308)

	Subscale	Min	Max	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Reading motivation	Extrinsic motivation	1.3	5.0	4.30	0.67	-01.2	1.79
	Reading efficacy	1.1	5.0	3.64	0.76	-0.18	-0.32
	Intrinsic motivation	1.0	5.0	3.52	0.84	-0.32	-0.28
Reading strategies	Pre-reading strategies	1.7	5.0	3.58	0.64	-0.25	0.19
	while-reading strategies	2.3	5.0	3.73	0.53	0.08	-0.12
	post-reading strategies	1.0	5.0	3.70	0.76	-0.38	0.14
Reading comprehension	Reading comprehension	12	38	27.1	4.56	-0.63	1.18

*B. Differences in Reading Strategy Use and Comprehension by Reading Motivation*

The independent samples t-test was used to identify the differences between highly and moderately motivated students in reading strategy use and comprehension. For this purpose, the students were grouped into highly and moderately motivated based on their means, using Oxford’s (2001) scoring system: high (mean of 3.5 or higher), medium (mean of 2.5 - 3.4), and low (mean of 2.4 or lower). None of the students’ means of the three motivation factors was lower than 2.4 and hence there was no category for low motivated students.

Students with high extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and high reading efficacy were found to use all reading strategy categories more frequently and have better reading comprehension than their counterparts with moderate extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and moderate reading efficacy. All differences were significant at the 0.01 level, except for the difference between highly and moderately efficacious students in the use of post-reading strategies (p = 0.05). Overall, these results show that all three factors of reading motivation, i.e., extrinsic and intrinsic reading motivation and reading efficacy positively affected students’ reading strategy use and reading comprehension.

TABLE 2  
DIFFERENCES IN STUDENTS’ READING STRATEGY USE AND COMPREHENSION BY THEIR READING MOTIVATION

Dependent variable	Motivation group	N	M	SD	t-value	p
Pre-reading strategies	High extrinsic	222	3.65	0.61	4.73	0.000
	Moderate extrinsic	86	3.12	0.63		
	Highly efficacious	174	3.75	0.60	5.17	
	Moderate efficacious	134	3.38	0.62		
	High intrinsic	176	3.77	0.61	5.94	
	Moderate intrinsic	132	3.35	0.59		
While-reading strategies	High extrinsic	222	3.82	0.48	8.68	0.000
	Moderate extrinsic	86	3.07	0.42		
	Highly efficacious	174	3.87	0.48	5.45	
	Moderate efficacious	134	3.55	0.54		
	High intrinsic	176	3.88	0.51	6.06	
	Moderate intrinsic	132	3.53	0.49		
Post-reading strategies	High extrinsic	222	3.78	0.74	5.33	0.000
	Moderate extrinsic	86	3.08	0.65		
	Highly efficacious	174	3.80	0.75	2.52	
	Moderate efficacious	134	3.58	0.76		
	High intrinsic	176	3.84	0.79	3.85	
	Moderate intrinsic	132	3.51	0.68		
Reading comprehension	High extrinsic	222	27.6	4.13	6.07	0.000
	Moderate extrinsic	86	22.9	5.55		
	Highly efficacious	174	28.0	4.13	4.11	
	Moderate efficacious	134	25.9	4.82		
	High intrinsic	176	27.8	4.52	3.20	
	Moderate intrinsic	132	26.1	4.44		

*C. Differences in Reading Comprehension by Reading Strategy Use*

It is clear from Table 3 that students who used all individual reading strategy categories more frequently had better reading comprehension. All differences were significant (p = 0.01), indicating that reading strategy use had a positive effect on students’ reading comprehension, with while-reading strategies having the strongest effect.

TABLE 3  
DIFFERENCES IN STUDENTS’ READING COMPREHENSION BY THEIR READING STRATEGY USE

Dependent variable	Strategy group	N	M	SD	t-value	p
Pre-reading strategies	High strategy users	196	27.8	4.14	3.8	0.000
	Moderate strategy users	112	25.8	4.97		
While-reading strategies	High strategy users	213	27.9	4.11	4.8	0.000
	Moderate strategy users	95	25.3	4.99		
Post-reading strategies	High strategy users	202	27.7	4.20	3.4	0.000
	Moderate strategy users	106	25.9	4.97		

#### D. Contributions of Reading Motivation to Reading Strategy Use and Reading Comprehension

All motivation factors and reading strategy categories significantly and positively correlated with one another ( $r = 0.23 - 0.63$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ). Reading comprehension significantly and positively correlated with all motivation factors and reading strategy categories ( $r = 0.21 - 0.34$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ). These results are shown in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4  
CORRELATIONS AMONG STUDENTS' READING MOTIVATION, STRATEGIES AND COMPREHENSION

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Extrinsic reading motivation	-						
2. Reading efficacy	0.486**	-					
3. Intrinsic reading motivation	0.546**	0.631**	-				
4. Pre-reading strategies	0.303**	0.339**	0.386**	-			
5. While-reading strategies	0.512**	0.428**	0.413**	0.633**	-		
6. Post-reading strategies	0.373**	0.232**	0.320**	0.397**	0.593**	-	
7. Reading comprehension	0.314**	0.304**	0.214**	0.283**	0.338**	0.226**	-

Stepwise regression analysis was conducted to further evaluate the contribution of reading motivation to reading strategy use and reading comprehension. As shown in Table 5, extrinsic motivation significantly and positively predicted students' reading comprehension ( $\beta = 0.218$ ,  $t = 3.56$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ), while-reading strategies ( $\beta = 0.398$ ,  $t = 7.28$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ), and post-reading strategies ( $\beta = 0.282$ ,  $t = 4.50$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ). This indicates that students with high extrinsic reading motivation are more likely to (1) use reading strategies more frequently while and after reading, and (2) have better reading comprehension. Reading efficacy significantly and positively predicted students' reading comprehension ( $\beta = 0.198$ ,  $t = 3.24$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ), pre-reading strategies ( $\beta = 0.185$ ,  $t = 2.35$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ), and while-reading strategies ( $\beta = 0.235$ ,  $t = 4.30$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ). That is, students with high reading efficacy are more likely to (1) use reading strategies more frequently before and while reading, and (2) have better reading comprehension. Intrinsic reading motivation only significantly and positively predicted students' pre-reading strategies ( $\beta = 0.286$ ,  $t = 4.23$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ) and post-reading strategies ( $\beta = 0.166$ ,  $t = 2.64$ ,  $p \leq 0.01$ ). This shows that students with high intrinsic reading motivation are more likely to use pre and post-reading strategies more frequently. Overall, the best predictor of students' reading strategy use and reading comprehension was extrinsic motivation, followed by reading efficacy. Intrinsic motivation failed to predict students' reading comprehension.

TABLE 5  
STEPWISE REGRESSION FOR PREDICTING STRATEGY USE AND COMPREHENSION BY READING MOTIVATION

Dependent variables	Independent variables	B	SE	$\beta$	t	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Pre-reading strategies	Intrinsic motivation	0.217	0.051	0.286	4.23***	0.405	0.164
	Reading efficacy	0.133	0.057	0.158	2.35*		
While-reading strategies	Extrinsic motivation	0.316	0.043	0.398	7.28***	0.552	0.304
	Reading efficacy	0.165	0.038	0.235	4.30***		
Post-reading strategies	Extrinsic motivation	0.321	0.071	0.282	4.50***	0.398	0.158
	Intrinsic motivation	0.150	0.057	0.166	2.64**		
Reading comprehension	Extrinsic motivation	1.482	0.416	0.218	3.56***	0.359	0.129
	Reading efficacy	1.190	0.367	0.198	3.24***		

When all motivation factors were entered as predictors of total reading strategies, the regression analysis produced three models (Table 6). In model 1, extrinsic motivation alone ( $\beta = 0.505$ ,  $t = 10.2$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ) significantly and positively contributed to reading strategy use with 25.5%. In the second model, both extrinsic motivation ( $\beta = 0.389$ ,  $t = 7.09$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ) and reading efficacy ( $\beta = 0.239$ ,  $t = 4.35$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ) significantly and positively contributed to reading strategy use with 29.9%. In the third model, extrinsic motivation ( $\beta = 0.341$ ,  $t = 5.85$ ,  $p \leq 0.001$ ), reading efficacy ( $\beta = 0.165$ ,  $t = 2.62$ ,  $p \leq 0.01$ ), and intrinsic motivation ( $\beta = 0.154$ ,  $t = 2.35$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ) significantly and positively contributed to reading strategy use with about 31.1%. Overall, the best predictor of students' reading strategy use was extrinsic motivation, followed by reading efficacy, and intrinsic motivation.

TABLE 6  
STEPWISE REGRESSION FOR PREDICTING OVERALL STRATEGY USE BY READING MOTIVATION

Predictors	B	SE	$\beta$	F	t	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Model 1							
Extrinsic motivation	0.39	.038	0.505	104.7***	10.2***	0.505	0.255
Model 2							
Extrinsic motivation	0.30	.042	0.389	64.91***	7.09***	0.546	0.299
Reading efficacy	0.16	.037	0.239		4.35***		
Model 3							
Extrinsic motivation	0.26	.045	0.341	45.76***	5.85***	0.558	0.311
Reading efficacy	0.11	.042	0.165		2.62**		
Intrinsic motivation	0.09	.040	0.154		2.35*		

#### E. Contributions of Reading Strategy Use to Students' Reading Comprehension

Results of the regression analysis regarding the prediction of students' reading comprehension by their reading strategy use are presented in Table 7. Of all the three reading strategy categories, only while-reading strategies significantly and positively ( $\beta = 0.338, t = 6.29, p \leq 0.001$ ) predicted students' reading comprehension. It predicted 11.5% of the variance in students' reading comprehension. That is, students with higher use of while-reading strategies have better reading comprehension.

TABLE 7  
STEPWISE REGRESSION FOR PREDICTING READING COMPREHENSION BY READING STRATEGY USE

Dependent variable	Independent variables	B	SE	$\beta$	t	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Reading comprehension	While-reading strategies	2.90	0.46	0.338	6.29***	0.338	0.115

\*\*\*p ≤ 0.001

F. Contributions of Motivation Factors and Reading Strategies to Reading Comprehension

When all motivation and strategy factors were entered as predictors of reading comprehension, the regression analysis generated three models. In model 1, while-reading strategies ( $\beta = 0.338, t = 6.29, p \leq 0.001$ ) alone significantly and positively contributed to reading comprehension with 11.5%. In the second model, both while-reading strategies ( $\beta = 0.225, t = 4.35, p \leq 0.001$ ) and reading efficacy ( $\beta = 0.195, t = 3.32, p \leq 0.05$ ) significantly and positively contributed to reading comprehension with 14.5%. In the third model, while-reading strategies ( $\beta = 0.204, t = 3.24, p \leq 0.001$ ), reading efficacy ( $\beta = 0.150, t = 2.42, p \leq 0.05$ ), and extrinsic motivation ( $\beta = 0.136, t = 2.09, p \leq 0.05$ ) significantly and positively contributed to reading comprehension with about 16%. This indicates that while-reading strategies and reading efficacy are the strongest predictors of students' reading comprehension.

TABLE 8  
STEPWISE REGRESSION FOR PREDICTING READING COMPREHENSION BY MOTIVATION AND STRATEGY USE

Predictors	B	SE	$\beta$	F	t	R	R <sup>2</sup>
Model 1							
While-reading strategies	2.90	0.46	0.338	39.59***	6.29***	0.338	0.115
Model 2							
While-reading strategies	2.19	0.50	0.255	25.97***	4.35***	0.381	0.145
Reading efficacy	1.17	0.35	0.195		3.32***		
Model 3							
While-reading strategies	1.75	0.54	0.204	18.96***	3.24***	0.397	0.158
Reading efficacy	0.90	0.37	0.150		2.42*		
Extrinsic motivation	0.93	0.44	0.136		2.09*		

VI. DISCUSSION

The results revealed that students were generally highly motivated to read. That students were both extrinsically and intrinsically motivated provides support to the self-determination theory, which suggests that the two motivational orientations are not mutually exclusive (Ryan & Deci, 2016). Nonetheless, the students were more extrinsically (M = 4.30) than intrinsically (M = 3.52) motivated to read. This finding echoes previous research reporting that FL learners read for both extrinsic and intrinsic reasons, with extrinsic reasons being more overwhelming (e.g., Dhanapala, 2008; Ölmez, 2015; Li & Gan, 2022). This seems logical in an FL setting like the Saudi one where the FL is used only in educational settings. It seems that the explanation that EFL university students read English mainly to reach their instrumental goals such as pursuing further studies (Kim, 2011; Lin et al., 2012) applies to the current sample. The students were also found to be highly self-efficacious about their EFL reading. This finding contradicts previous research where FL learners were found to have poor (Li & Gan, 2022) or moderate (Alsuhaibani, 2019; Mohammed, 2022) reading efficacy. A possible explanation for this finding is that students, being among the top five percent of secondary school graduates and being admitted to programs like medicine and engineering, have confidence in their English reading ability.

As to reading strategy use, the results revealed that the students were high users of all reading strategy categories, with while-reading strategies used most frequently, followed by post-reading and pre-reading strategies. This finding partly echoes the study of Ozek and Civelek (2006) where Turkish EFL university learners were found to use while-reading strategies more frequently, followed by pre-reading strategies and post-reading strategies. It also partly echoes the study of Nordin et al. (2013) where Malaysia university high achievers used post-reading strategies more frequently, followed by while-reading strategies and pre-reading strategies. Malaysian university low achievers used while-reading strategies more frequently followed by pre-reading strategies and post-reading strategies. An explanation why FL learners use while-reading strategies more frequently is that they may be more concerned with the actual reading act than with preparing for it or reflecting on it. Meanwhile, the use of pre and post-reading strategies does not seem to be as spontaneous and automatic as the use of while-reading strategies, i.e., learners need to be trained on the use of pre and post-reading strategies.

Students with high reading motivation (extrinsic, intrinsic, and efficacy) used all reading strategy categories more frequently. This finding converges with previous research reporting that extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and reading

efficacy positively correlate with EFL reading strategy use (Alsuhaibani, 2019; Wang et al., 2020; Han, 2021; Altumigah & Alkhaleefah, 2022; Mohammed, 2022). It also concurs with the studies of Dison and Shah (2020) and Meniado (2016) where a single composite measure comprising intrinsic and extrinsic reading motivation correlated positively with reading strategy use. It is reasonable that highly motivated learners use more reading strategies in the three stages of reading, as motivation drives learners to use all tools at their disposal, including reading strategies to improve their reading ability.

Reading strategy use was positively predicted by extrinsic motivation, reading efficacy, and intrinsic motivation respectively. The best predictor of reading strategy use was extrinsic motivation, followed by reading efficacy. Each of them predicted all strategy categories except for one category, with extrinsic motivation failing to predict only pre-reading strategies and reading efficacy failing to predict only post-reading strategies. Both of them predicted a large proportion of variance in while-reading strategies (30.4%). This finding is aligned with previous research reporting the positive impact of the extrinsic, intrinsic and efficacy factors on strategy use in FL reading (Shang, 2010; Meniado, 2016; Dison & Shah, 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Han, 2021; Mohammed, 2022). It seems that intrinsic motivation is more influential in L1 reading, while extrinsic motivation is more influential in FL reading. This seems reasonable, as students in the FL setting use the FL only in educational settings and thus do not have the same amount of reading as students in the L1 setting. Furthermore, students in the L1 setting may use reading as a pastime, while students in the FL setting may not read in English unless they have to. That is, the instrumental view of reading is more evident in FL settings.

Students with high reading motivation (extrinsic, intrinsic, and efficacy) were found to have better reading comprehension. This finding is not aligned with some previous studies (Ölmez, 2016; Dhanapala & Hirakawa, 2016; Meniado, 2016). It is nonetheless partly or completely congruent with other studies (e.g., Dhanapala, 2009; Han, 2021; Li & Gan, 2022). A possible explanation for these mixed results is that the relative significance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is culture-bound, with students in different cultures reading for intrinsic, extrinsic, or both intrinsic and extrinsic reasons. Reading efficacy has been generally found to correlate positively with reading comprehension in several EFL settings, e.g., Iran (Ghabdian & Ghafournia, 2016; Zarei, 2018), Turkey (Tercanlioglu, 2002), Indonesia (Fitri et al., 2019), Malaysia (Habibian & Roslan, 2014), Saudi Arabia (Mohammed, 2022), and Thai (Oranpattanachai, 2023).

The best predictor of reading comprehension was extrinsic motivation, followed by reading efficacy. Intrinsic motivation failed to predict reading comprehension. Again, this indicates that extrinsic motivation had a more significant impact on the participants' reading comprehension than intrinsic motivation. Also, students with high reading efficacy had better reading comprehension than students with moderate reading efficacy. Efficacy perceptions determine the effort the individuals expend to achieve their goals and their willingness to persist in the face of failure (Bandura, 1994). It is reasonable that highly motivated learners use more reading strategies in the three stages of reading, as motivation drives learners to use all tools at their disposal, including reading strategies to improve their reading ability.

Overall reading strategy use and the use of individual reading strategy categories correlated positively with reading comprehension. Students who used pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading strategies more frequently had better reading comprehension. This finding is congruent with some previous studies (e.g., Phakiti, 2003; Zhang & Seepho, 2013; Abbasian & Hartoonian, 2014; Islam, 2018; Zarei, 2018; Han, 2021; Mohammed, 2022; Oranpattanachai, 2023) and incongruent with other studies (e.g., Shang, 2010; Meniado, 2016; Sari, 2016; Alsamadani, 2022; Zhang & Sukying, 2022). This finding is also in line with previous studies where direct instruction of different reading strategy categories proved effective in enhancing EFL learners' reading achievement (Azizifar et al., 2015; Han & Choi, 2018; Li et al., 2022).

Only while-reading strategies positively predicted students' reading comprehension. This finding is consistent with previous research reporting reading strategy use as a significant predictor of reading comprehension in FL reading (Zarei, 2018; Zhang & Seepho, 2013). However, it is inconsistent with a study conducted on Arab university EFL students in three Saudi universities (Alsamadani, 2022). In this study, none of the reading strategies (planning, attending and evaluating) predicted students' reading comprehension. However, in another study (Mohammed, 2022) conducted on a sample of Saudi university EFL learners comparable to the sample in the current study and in Alsamadani's study, reading strategies (global, problem-solving, and support strategies) predicted students' reading comprehension. Students are more likely to attain good levels of reading comprehension by using reading strategies before, during and after reading. By so doing, they imitate reading with active minds, facilitate and aid their reading comprehension, and reflect on their reading to be better readers the next time they read (Paris et al., 1996). Language ability remains the dominant contributor in reading performance, but this does not mean that reading strategy use does not play a significant role in reading performance (Bachman, 1990).

Finally, when all motivation and strategy factors were entered in the regression analysis as predictors of reading comprehension, while-reading strategies alone positively contributed to reading comprehension with 11.5%. While-reading strategies and reading efficacy positively contributed to reading comprehension with 14.5%. While-reading strategies, reading efficacy, and extrinsic motivation positively contributed to reading comprehension with about 16%.

That is, students' reading comprehension was significantly and positively affected by their while-reading strategies, reading efficacy, and extrinsic motivation.

## VII. IMPLICATIONS

Students used pre and post-reading strategies less frequently than while-reading strategies. A possible reason for this is that the use of pre and post-reading strategies is not as spontaneous and automatic as while-reading strategies. This indicates that teachers should raise students' awareness and train them on strategies used before and after reading. This study and several other previous studies showed that these two types of reading strategies contribute significantly to reading comprehension. Furthermore, students' intrinsic reading motivation did not contribute to their reading comprehension. Teachers are thus recommended to enhance their students' intrinsic reading motivation, so it becomes more influential in their EFL reading. This can be achieved by considering students' interests in reading material selection. Teachers should also encourage students to read more for pleasure, e.g., students can be rewarded by getting extra marks if they prove that they have done extensive reading on their own.

## VIII. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on this study's findings, further research is needed to explore students' perceptions of pre and post-reading strategies. The reasons why reading intrinsic motivation is not influential in Saudi university students' EFL reading need to be explored. There is a need to conduct intervention studies to enhance Saudi university students' EFL intrinsic reading motivation. Identifying Saudi university students' EFL reading motivation and reading efficacy sources through qualitative research tools will be a valuable research endeavor. Finally, researchers may need to examine the effect of other important variables on Saudi university students' EFL reading strategy use and reading comprehension, e.g., autonomy, ideal L2 self, vocabulary knowledge, bottom-up and top-down text processing, and reading amount.

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# Willa Cather's Notion on Traditional American Women in the Novel *My Antonia*: An Approach of Genetic Structuralism

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**Abstract**—This article discusses the traditional American woman initiated by Willa Cather in the novel *My Antonia*. It was written in 1913 which describes the social conditions of the frontiers in the farming areas of the American West in Nebraska, Hastings, Black Hawk, Lincoln, and others. Frontiers generally still maintain traditional values in the survival of their families, especially Nebraska. The literary study method used in this article is the Genetic Structuralism Approach which emphasizes the sociological analysis of literature based on the structural meaning of literature and literary genetics. This approach is very appropriate to be used to find universal values documented in literary works which are termed *vision du monde* or world views. This research found Willa Cather's imaginative ideas about traditional American women in the novel *My Antonia* which includes aspects of performance, position, role, identity, and perspective. Traditional women's performances have the same appearance and clothing as traditional women in general in America. The traditional position of a woman is as the wife of her husband and the mother of her children. The role of traditional women is to take care of the household and to maintain the continuity of family life. Traditional women's identity is a housewife. The perspective of traditional women is to devote all their souls and bodies for family happiness, domestic harmony, and maintaining good relations with neighbors. Then Willa Cather's notion of traditional American women is full domestication and partial domestication.

**Index Terms**—America, novel *My Antonia*, traditional women, Willa Cather's notion

## I. INTRODUCTION

Europeans since the 1600s from the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and others came to the Northern American continent which is currently the United States and Canada. They are known as the first wave of immigrants and continued with the second wave of immigrants in the 1700s from Norway, Bohemian, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, and others. One of the interesting phenomena in the complexity of American society is the history of the lives of American women. One typical American woman who has a strategic role in ushering in the journey of American culture is traditional women. They have been around since the arrival of the British and Europeans in America in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They participated in clearing agricultural land in the colonies, contributed to the American independence movement, took part in supporting the abolitionist movement, participated in post-civil war national reconciliation, and formed the order of domestication of women in the American family. Many people are interested in knowing the typical phenomenological traditional women.

The arrival of the first wave of immigrants in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the second in the 18<sup>th</sup> century also involved women. One well-known women's group is puritan women who still maintain their traditional values. One typical notion of traditional women is to make the household a place to devote themselves. Household life which is termed as the domestication of women is seen as a space of life in achieving happiness. They obey the natural nature of women,

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namely to marry, take care of the household, have a husband, give birth, care for and raise their children. This traditional American women's notion is typical of performance, roles, ideas, principles, and outlook on life.

Two views are controversial in addressing the presence of this traditional woman. The first view is those who appreciate the role of traditional women's domestication in passing on moral values to American reform women or New American Women. The second view is that of radical feminists who see the pattern of traditional women's domestication as an obstacle to the American feminist movement, thereby slowing down the achievement of women's emancipation goals. The difference between the two views is minimized in this study through an explanation by an American woman writer named Willa Cather on the idea of her imagination towards traditional American women objectively and scientifically. The objectivity of traditional American women can be traced to the genetic documentation of one of Willa Cather's novels is *My Antonia*, which she wrote around 1913.

The documentation of traditional women in Willa Cather's novel *My Antonia* is traced genetically through Willa Cather's background knowledge or experience in perceiving traditional American women and exploring the reality of traditional women's social life in the history of American society. The appropriate literary research method used in explaining the documentation of these literary works is the Genetic Structuralism Approach. Based on this background, the researchers compiled the title of this article, namely *Willa Cather's Notion of Traditional American Women in the Novel My Antonia: An Approach of Genetic Structuralism*.

## II. LITERARY REVIEW ON TRADITIONAL WOMEN

The system of traditional women's values and culture is a matriarchal order that places the advantage of women's biological elements as mothers. The roles and functions of women are placed on their natural capacities, both physically and psychologically. According to Fromm (2011), matriarchal values are in line with the passive surrender of women to become mothers based on natural aspects and biological benefits. Spiritual, logical, and rational aspects are considered not too important for women because these aspects are more absolute in male or patriarchal values. Fromm's view meant that by fully dedicating a woman's self as a good mother, this could atone for her sins and mistakes as taught in religious myths.

According to Yeni's (2021) view, traditional women have a natural relationship with men in terms of roles and positions. The role of women is positioned as producers in the life system, while men act as exploiters. For example, in the reproductive function, women give birth as a result of the exploitation of men. It causes sexual exploitation of women by men. Traditional society according to Sapiro (1986) generally adheres to patriarchal values so it is prone to injustice in the gender relations between men and women. Patriarchy is the basis for justifying male dominance over women in various aspects of life such as family, politics, economics, law, culture, and others. Gender justice can be achieved if patriarchy is transformed into equality by eliminating all forms of male superiority over women.



Figure 1. Portrait of a Traditional Elite Woman in the Southern American Colony, Virginia, Who Maintained the European Ideal of Women as Housewives, Arranging Home Accessories, and Managing Slaves  
(Source: <https://www.google.com/search?q=traditional+women+of+America&biw=1366&bih=625&xsrf>. Accessed on June 1, 2022 at 00<sup>11</sup> p.m.)

Traditional women by several writers in 21<sup>st</sup> century are often abbreviated as tradwife. According to Hunt (2020), a tradwife is often seen as a woman who still maintains conventional gender roles. Typical of these women are not working, depending on their husbands, taking care of household needs, caring for babies and children. The main her works are cooking, preparing food, washing, cleaning, and so on, while her husband works, earns a living, collects money, and fulfills family expenses. This pattern of life according to Elsworth (2019) dominated the life of American society until the 1920s. After this period, there was a change in the order of life for American society, namely the wife

began to actively work in the office helping her husband take care of business and real estate, while the children were taken care of by a maid at home. A woman's dependence on her husband gradually decreases to create the typical modern woman who leaves her family for days to work. The image of men as the main breadwinners of the family is no longer valid today.

Based on all the explanations above, researchers can understand that the definition of a traditional woman is a woman who devotes all her physical and psychological potential to household life in fulfilling her duties and responsibilities as a wife to her husband and mother to her children. Her main duties are cooking, preparing food, washing, cleaning, caring for and educating her children. This definition is used to discuss Willa Cather's notion of traditional American women in the novel *My Antonia* which includes aspects of performance, position, role, identity, and perspective.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This research methodology is the conceptual foundation of the genetic structuralism approach which researchers' term as literary genetic structuralism. Referring to the relationship between sociology and literature, literature can be seen as not autonomous because literary works do not appear suddenly, but through a sociological process. The view that literature is social documentation has become the rationale for literary experts such as Goldmann (1981) regarding literary genetics. He thinks that the origins of literary works come from the structure of society and the results of human adaptation to their environment. Based on this thought, the researchers conclude that there are three main elements in the research method of Genetic Structuralism, namely the literary structure, the background of the author's social life in the literary works, and the social reality absorbed by the author. It indicates that the author's idea is to become a publication medium on social media that can influence public opinion (Arafah & Hasyim 2019).

The process of creating literature begins with social reality that is impregnated by the author, then that reality is processed according to the author's imagination, then the author produces creativity in the form of literary works, and finally transforms into a world view that carries universal values. According to Abbas (2021), the author's imagination is built from a reality not a dream because the author produces literary works in a conscious state. The social awareness of the author in the literary works is the basis for the premise that literary works are born from a sociological process. An author represents a number of hopes and desires of the people around him which are poured into the form of literary works. Indeed, literary works are not a series of real events directly in society because they were born from an imagination, but contain parables of ongoing conditions. Through fictional characters, an author seeks to voice certain groups of people. Authors cannot be separated from their fictional facts and social facts (Damayanti et al., 2021). So even though the work is fiction, it represents a connection with the community group in which the work was born as its genetics as stated by Guerin (1979) in his writing *Genetic Approaches*.

Many problems that arise in human life as a social reality that takes place in a society within a certain period of time. This reality can take the form of human action in various forms such as feminism, emancipation, slavery, romance, colonialism, oppression, religious conflict, resistance, and others. Massive human actions have the potential to become issues in aspects of culture, politics, economy, religion, education, love, others, which in the history documents them as group, ethnic, and national identities. Identity is considered as a social fact attached to a particular society and then documented by the author in literary works, such as Willa Cather documents the identity of American prairie women in her imaginative works. It means that fictional reality can be considered as historical documentation of certain events (Mutmainnah et al., 2022).

Literary works are created through an author's imaginative process that geniusly transforms facts into fiction. Authors in a conscious state of creating literary works even need years of contemplation in order to absorb a reality that is happening to them or events that are developing in the surrounding community. This reality is seen by the author as an aspiration that grows and develops in society as Goldmann (1977) once said that the author is naturally a member of society who carries out social interactions for a long time. The world view or *vision du monde* of an author does not appear suddenly, but takes place slowly to form a high quality literary work. The world view referred to by Goldman is the collective view of society in certain situations. This collectivity is considered as awareness in voicing the whole ideas, aspirations, and feelings of various social groups. Atmaja (2009) states that an author creates literary works is not personal wish, but for the benefit of his social group. The author does not represent himself in constructing his fictitious imagination, but there is an ideology that represents the collectivity of the social consciousness of the people which is fought by author. Goldman identified this ideology as a world view or *vision du monde*.

Goldman's view (Damono, 1979) on the Genetic Structuralism Approach is an attempt to combine structural elements (intrinsic aspects) of literary works with sociological elements of literature (extrinsic aspects). Goldman emphasizes that literary works are still fictitious realities, but the inspiration for these realities has sources from direct ideas and indirect ideas. The direct idea comes from the author's knowledge, while the indirect idea comes from empirical facts that are adhered to by certain groups of people. These two ideas are considered as the genetics of the literary work. The combination of literary works with the author's background knowledge and empirical facts of certain groups of people will form an objective view as universal values in the meaning of the literary work.

Genetic Structuralism Approach can be said as a method of analyzing literary structure which is carried out dialectically in order to trace the origins of the literary work. According to Ratna (2015), world view or *division du monde* is an expression of the social and physical collectivity of society in a long historical journey and it is

documented in major literary works. Only great literary works are able to accommodate various problems in people's lives as universal values. Literary works that inequality have limited capacity in recording social phenomena and are temporary in nature so that they are unable to accommodate a world view that is so broad and universal even though literary works can play a role in creating harmony in society (Rahman & Weda, 2018). The task of literary researchers and readers is to dismantle this world view as the origin of literary works or literary genetics imagined by the author through the research method of literary genetic structuralism.

The data source of this research refers to the data emphasized in the Genetic Structuralism Approach method, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is the object of study in the form of literary works as in general literary research, while secondary data is a number of information containing the background of the author's social life and social reality as the genetics of the literary work being studied. The primary data for this research is the novel *My Antonia* by Willa Cather in 1913 which was published by Signet Classic, New York in 2014. Then the secondary data for this research is all information related to the genetics of literary works which are the object of research, namely (1) social background and Willa Cather's life experiences as a writer; and (2) the history of traditional American women as a reality of social life.

Research data processing refers to the research formulation of genetic structuralism referred to by Endraswara (2013). The data is processed into two main parts, namely the first is the structural meaning of the novel *My Antonia* as an intrinsic aspect of literature, and the second is traditional women in the social reality of American society as an extrinsic aspect of literature. The processed results of these two data produce a world view or *division du monde* in the form of Willa Cather's notion of traditional American women in the novel *My Antonia*. The construction of research data processing is described in the following chart:

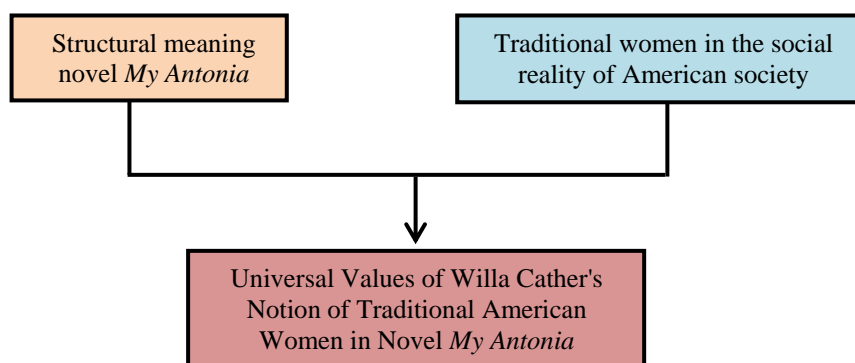


Chart 1. Reconstruction of Research Data Processing

In the research chart above, the relationship between universal values that occur in the history of a nation and literary stories is seen as the ultimate goal of research on the sociology of literature. The researcher is of the view that the process of creating the author's imagination is from fact to fiction, then the scientific study of literature goes through the reverse process from fiction to fact. It shows that the documentation of facts in fiction is an important relationship to be elaborated in the sociology of literature as a result of scientific research as well as being a scientific responsibility of a researcher towards readers. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that Literary Genetic Structuralism is a literary research method that emphasizes the analysis of the relationship between literature and social reality. Literary work as an imaginative product is considered to have genetics which is the origin of the emergence of literary ideas in constructing fictional narratives. Fictional ideas of writers are absorbed from social facts in society. Analysis of literary works in this research method must be able to reveal the origins of the structural elements of literature in the author and the discourses that occur in society.

#### IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The essence of the results of this research is elucidated into three parts, namely the structural meaning of the novel *My Antonia*, traditional women in the social reality of American society, and Willa Cather's notion of traditional American women in the novel *My Antonia*.

##### A. The Structural Meaning of the Novel *My Antonia*

The structural aspects of the novel *My Antonia* which include characterization, setting, plot, and theme are summarized in one description called the structural meaning of the novel *My Antonia*. This novel consists of five volumes, namely volume one entitled The Shimerdas with nineteen parts, volume two entitled The Hired Girls with fourteen parts, volume three entitled Lena Lingard with four parts, volume four entitled The Pioneer Woman's Story with four parts, and volume five titled Cuzak's Boy with three parts. The whole story in this novel uses a mixed plot, namely backward plot and forward plot.

The social setting of this novel takes place in the lives of multi-cultural rural communities, complex urban communities, and highly educated metropolitan communities. Rural people in Hastings live as farmers, cattle breeders and cultivators. They come from various cultural groups, including English, Bohemian, and Russian. They were generally not rich people like Mr. Shimerda's family from the Bohemian family, but there were also wealthy farmers like Jim's grandfather from the English community. The urban community in Black Hawk is rich people who employ girls from surrounding rural areas such as Mrs. Harling which employs Antonia, Yulka, Lena, Tiny and others. For example, Antonia works at the Harling family's home and earns US\$ 3 per week, "*Mrs. Harling finally agreed to pay three dollars a week for Antonia's service – good wages in those days – and to keep her in shoes*" (Cather, 2014, p. 109). The life of the people in the city is also very complex with various professions such as businessmen, traders, artists, dancers, and others. The metropolitan community in the City of Lincoln is an educated people who received the higher education of James Burden and Gaston Cleric.

The time setting for the telling of this novel ranges from 1890 to 1922. This time range is taken from Jim Burden's meeting with Tiny Soderball in Salt Lake City in 1908. At that time Tiny Soderball had left Black Hawk town for ten years, which means around 1898, the same year when Jim continued on the study in the City of Lincoln. Jim lived in Black Hawk Town for five significant years from 1893 to 1898. Previously Jim had lived in Hastings for three significant years from 1890 to 1893. Then Jim Burden's reunion with Antonia was when he was nineteen years old which means 1899. After that Jim met Tiny Soderball in Salt Lake City in 1908, "*After nearly ten years in the Klondike, Tiny returned, with considerable fortune to live in San Francisco. I met her in Salt Lake City in 1908*" (Cather, 2014, p. 207). Jim had promised to return to meet Antonia since the last meeting in 1899. Twenty years later, Jim managed to meet Antonia in Hastings, which means that the event occurred in 1922. Their meeting was at the same time the end of the novel *My Antonia* and at that time, Jim's age about 42 years. Between 1890 and 1922 there was a massive migration from rural areas to urban areas, especially the younger generation. This migration occurs because they are tempted by the life of a rich, free, and glamorous urban community.

The tendency of telling the novel *My Antonia* about the life relations between the older generation and the younger generation is the survival of the tradition of women's domestication in the midst of the emergence of new values that are more free and open. Old generation characters such as Grandmother, Grandfather, Mrs. Shimerda, and Mr. Shimerda shows their peace in family life. Having a household is the ideal and purpose of their life. The idealization of women's domestication traditions underwent a shift when village girls like Antonia came to the city who was tempted by wealth and freedom. After experiencing various dilemmas, problems, and decades of destruction in the city, Antonia finally returns to the village to become the wife of her husband and the mother of her children and live the life of a happy farmer. Based on this phenomenon, one of the themes of this novel is the dilemma of maintaining the traditional values of American women in the midst of the renewal era.

#### *B. Traditional Women in the Social Reality of American Society*

Women in the northern colonies such as Massachusetts, Plymouth, Rhode Island, and others held strong spiritual values known as Puritanists. They stay at home carrying out routine tasks in the kitchen while educating their children to be pious by reading the Bible, teaching their children ethics and morality. The Puritans were a group of reformers of Christianity who wanted to restore the purity of Christianity, but they experienced persecution in England. They then left Scotland and fled to Leiden, Holland, but they were treated unfairly by the Calvinists so they left Holland and continued on to the American mainland by boarding the Mayflower. Cineotta (1992) stated that they numbered 140 men, women and children, but only 102 managed to arrive in mainland America on November 21, 1620.

The group of early Puritanist women who survived arriving in Provincetown, Massachusetts consisted of 18 family women, 7 women children, and 4 girls, while 73 were men. Shortly before landing on Cape Cod, New England, they formulated the main ideas which were the foundations of a constitution called the Mayflower Compact. According to Francis (1981), this idea aspires to the formation of government and legal institutions that are built on constitutional laws that treat everyone fairly and equally. This idea of justice and equality became the spirit of traditional American women in the northern colonies which was adopted from puritanical teachings. The number of European women who came with their families to the American colonies increased after the great migration in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century.





Figure 2. Portrait of Puritan Women in the Northern American Colony, Massachusetts and a Young Family Pair in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Plymouth (Source:<https://www.google.com/search?q=traditional+women+of+America&biw=1366&bih=625&xsrf>. Accessed on June 1, 2022 at 00<sup>21</sup> p.m.)

The discussion on notion of traditional American women is rather complex because of the various backgrounds of religion, culture, traditions, teachings, models, and social classes inherited from Europe, as has been explained regarding the historical aspects of the arrival of European women in the American colonies. They come from various ethnic groups, and nations. Researchers in this part generalize notions of traditional American women which are considered to reflect various types of traditional women as housewives who also prepare their daughters to marry and teach them to manage the household well.

Typical of traditional American women as women of the house that have been awakened since the early colonial period of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the period of the second wave of immigrants from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The position of women as wives and their roles as housewives was further strengthened when Victorian values dominated women's discourse in England and Europe throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially among the elite. Victoria (1819-1901) was Queen of England who reigned for 64 years from 1847 to 1901 and died at the age of 82 in Osborne. Queen Victoria according to Rolka (2005) was nicknamed the Grandmother of European nations because of her descendants who ruled in the Kingdoms of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Greece, and Russia. At that time according to historians, the British Empire controlled almost a third of the world which stretched from Europe, America, Africa, South and Southeast Asia, Australia, the Pacific Islands and Oceania.

The influence of Victorian values also has a broad impact on the traditional American women order as Djajanegara (2000) said that American society is dominated by descendants of the British. This resulted in the cultural and traditional ties between the American people and the British being so strong that they are often referred to as the Anglo-American nation. The traditional values of women sparked by Victoria include women having to maintain their chastity, women having to be religious, women having to appear feminine, women having to be passive, women having to be diligent in taking care of their family and household, women having to maintain their domestic life, and so on. These values have an impact on the attitudes of traditional American women who tend to be passive, inferior, dependent, and resigned. Victorian values also influenced traditional American women's views. According to Olsen (1950), the perspective of traditional American society is that a girl's education is sufficient to be good at reading, writing, and calculating. Skills that suit her are sewing, cooking, babysitting, music and art. All education and skills obtained by women are intended to support their roles as wives and housewives.

### C. Willa Cather's Notion of Traditional American Women in the Novel *My Antonia*

Willa Cather's imagination of traditional American women is found in various fictional characters in the novel *My Antonia*, but this research article only describes two female characters, namely Grandmother and Mrs. Shimerda. These two fictional characters are social documentation of traditional women in the social reality of American based on Willa Cather's observations and life experiences over the years in Red Cloud, Nebraska, Illinois, and a number of frontier farming areas in the central and western regions of America. According to Prahl (2019), Willa Cather was born into a farming family in 1873 and experienced traditional life in Back Creek Valley, Virginia. From the age of nine to his teens, she followed her parents to live in a frontier slum in Nebraska. This background in social life, according to Pallardi (2022), also influenced the notion of traditional women in Willa Cather's imagination, as she illustrated in Grandmother and Mrs. Shimerda in the novel *My Antonia* in 1913.

#### (a). Grandmother

Grandmother was usually name used by Jim and the rest of the Hastings farms and the town of Black Hawk used for Mrs. Burden. She was Jim Qualey's grandmother who raised him from the age of ten when his parents died in Virginia.

Grandmother was in her fifties when Jim first came to her house. By the end of the story when Jim was in his forties, she was still living in his eighties. She was tall and slender, had brown skin, black hair, still had good teeth, was smiling, affectionate, and good at getting along with her neighbors, "*A tall woman, with wrinkled brown skin and black hair, stood looking down at me; I knew that she must be my grandmother*" (Cather, 2014, p. 13). Appearance and clothing are the same as traditional women in general in America. Even though she was a successful farmer with an affluent life, she still looked the same as the ordinary people in Hastings village and was friendly to everyone.

Her position as the wife of Mr. Burden or Grandfather, Mrs. Burden plays herself as a good and ideal housewife as a traditional middle class woman. Her role is to manage the conditions in the house and social relations with the surrounding environment, such as managing family spending money, cleaning, preparing food, taking care of clothes, managing the yard, and maintaining social communication with neighbors. She is also good at organizing and leading the workers in his house like Jake Marpole, Otto Fuchs, and others. They are Bohemian people who come from the far-east looking for work in the American West, especially in Nebraska (Cather, 2014).

Jimmy's father named Mr. Qualey is the son of Mrs. Burden or Grandmother so Jimmy Qualey is her grandson. Relative background from his father, his full name is Jimmy Qualey Burden. In Jimmy's view, his grandmother had successfully portrayed her identity as a good housewife. As the wife of Mr. Burden, she is able to please her husband in building a harmonious and peaceful family and household together. Then as the mother of Mr. Qualey, she also succeeded in educating her son so that Mr. Qualey was successful in building a career and raising his family in Virginia, where Jimmy Qualey Burden was born.

Grandmother views her life's purpose as devoting her whole body and soul for family happiness and domestic harmony and maintaining good neighborly relations. It was proven when she welcomed the arrival of her grandson, Jimmy Qualey Burden, who had been orphaned since he was ten years old. She loved, educated, raised and educated her grandson so he succeeded in becoming a legal consultant for the Western Railways railroad company. She succeeded in instilling family harmony to Qualey in building his household with his wife, Ruthland Whitney. Grandmother was able to maintain good communication with her neighbors from Hastings farming areas such as the Shimerda family to urban Black Hawk areas such as the Harling family.

(b). *Mrs. Shimerda*

Mrs. Shimerda is a housewife who has three children, namely a boy named Ambrosch and two women, namely Antonia called Tony and Yulka called Julka. The Shimerda house was separated by a small hill from the Burden house in a farming area called Hastings. The social relations of these two families are very close in a good neighborly relationship, even though both are different in terms of economic status and ethnic group background. This also underlies the closeness between Jim Qualey from the Burden family and Antonia from the Shimerda family such as studying together, riding horses, playing rabbits, catching birds, picking crops, and so on (Cather, 2014). The familiarity of the two families creates social issues in the novel *My Antonia*.

Mrs. Shimerda along with a number of other frontier cultivators came from a Bohemian family whose ancestors came from Austria, Sweden and Norway. They include pioneering women in clearing land in the American West such as in Nebraska who also work hard with men to manage nature that is still wild and vicious, "*The Shimerdas were the first Bohemian family to come to this part of the country*" (Cather, 2014, p. 20). When Jimmy Qualey Burden first met the Shimerda family, Mrs. Shimerda was in her forties and tall, well-built and full of spirit. Appearance and dress reflect as a traditional woman in general in America. Her life as a farmer has not been able to make her and her family live in luxury so that people know the Shimerda family as simple farmers.

Her position as the wife of Mr. Shimerda, Mrs. Shimerda plays herself as a housewife who is responsible for the family as a traditional woman in the farming village of Hastings. Her role is to manage conditions in the house such as managing family spending money, cleaning, preparing food, taking care of clothes, managing the yard, and maintaining social communication with neighbors. She tried hard to portray herself as a single parent when Mr. Shimerda died while her two daughters still needed financing, namely Antonia and Yulka. Financial conditions have not been able to meet the needs of family life so that Mrs. Shimerda allows Antonia and Yulka to go to Black Hawk City to work as hired girls in the Harling family. Her identity as a housewife made Mrs. Shimerda is directly responsible for educating her children and teaching Antonia and Yulka skills in cooking, washing, cleaning, and others. All of these skills are very useful when they have a household, "*We were willing to believe that Mrs. Shimerda was a good housewife in her own country, but she managed poorly under new conditions: the conditions were bad enough, certainly!*" (Cather, 2014, p. 28).

Mrs. Shimerda set her life goals in traditional female domestication to devote all her soul and body to family happiness and domestic harmony and to maintain good neighborly relations. It was shown when her husband died, she still tried to love and educate her children and maintain the integrity of the family. In maintaining good social relations with neighbors, Mrs. Shimerda often took her children to visit neighbors in the Hastings farming area, such as visiting the Burden family on Saturdays or Sundays. She also allows Antonia and Yulka to be friends and play with Jimmy Qualey, enjoying their childhood as good neighbors. When Jake Marpole got into a fight with Ambrosch, Mrs. Shimerda supports Mr. Burden reconciled the two in order to maintain the harmony of neighboring life. When the Burden family moved to Black Hawk City, the Shimerda family continued to visit this family as a testament to the life of traditional American society which always maintained social relations with neighbors.



Fictional female characters in the novel *My Antonia*, namely Grandmother and Mrs. Shimerda have a number of traits count as a traditional woman which is 10 out of 15 or the number of traits in percentage is 67%. It shows that there are major differences in the characteristics and attitudes typical of traditional women in the two characters, especially in the aspects of dependency, passive, weak, and quitter. They appear as independent, active, strong, and confident women. Minor differences from the characteristics and attitudes typical of traditional women in these two characters, namely inward oriented, subjective, take no risk, and emotional aspects. Grandmother's traits are objective and rational, while Mrs. Shimerda's traits are to be brave and outward oriented. It can be seen in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1  
FEMALE TRAITS IN SELECTED WOMEN CHARACTERS OF NOVEL *MY ANTONIA*

No .	Female Traits	Novel <i>My Antonia</i>	
		Grandmother	Mrs. Shimerda
01	Dependency	-	-
02	Passive, weak	-	-
03	Non aggressive	+	+
04	Not competitive	+	+
05	Inward oriented	+	-
06	Orientation between people	+	+
07	Empathy	+	+
08	Caring nature	+	+
09	Sensitive	+	+
10	Subjective	-	+
11	Intuitive	+	+
12	Quitter	-	-
13	Easy to accept	+	+
14	Take no risk	+	-
15	Emotional	-	+
Number of traits count		<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>
Number of traits in percentage		<b>67</b>	<b>67</b>

Based on the time setting of the novel *My Antonia*, which ranges from 1890 to 1922, it can be explained that the characteristics and attitudes typical of traditional women dominate female fictional characters. The table above shows that the combined attitudes and characteristics of the two female characters in the novel represent 12 out of 15 of the number of female traits, which means around 80 percent. Grandmother and Mrs. Shimerda in the novel *My Antonia* is a traditional woman who works in the fields with her family and has not received formal education. Their lives are as housewives and interact socially with heterogeneous groups of people, namely neighbors in the farming village of Hasting and the town of Black Hawk.

Based on the analysis of the characteristics and attitudes of traditional women in the structural meaning of the novel *My Antonia* and the social reality of traditional American women, it can be seen that Willa Cather's notion on the traditional American women in the aspects of performance, position, role, identity, and perspective as mentioned in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2  
WILLA CATHER'S NOTION FOR TRADITIONAL AMERICAN WOMEN IN NOVEL *MY ANTONIA*

No.	Traditional Aspects of American Women	Novel <i>My Antonia</i>	
		Grandmother	Mrs. Shimerda
01	Performance	Appearance and clothing are the same as traditional women in general in America. Even though she was a successful farmer with an affluent life, she still looked the same as the ordinary people in Hastings village and was friendly to everyone.	Appearance and dress reflect as a traditional woman in general in America. Her life as a farmer has not been able to make her and the family live in luxury so that people in Hasting know the Shimerda family as simple farmers.
02	Position	The wife of grandfather (Mr. Burden) and is a good and ideal housewife who is good at managing and leading the workers in her house like traditional women from the upper middle class.	Mr. Shimerda and portrayed herself as a simple housewife and responsible for the family like a traditional lower-class woman in the farming village of Hastings.
03	Role	Regulating conditions in the house such as managing family spending money, maintaining cleanliness, preparing food, taking care of clothes, managing the yard, maintaining an atmosphere of harmony in family life, and building social communication with neighbors. She also plays a role in managing her husband's business in the farming and animal husbandry sector.	Managing conditions in the house such as managing family spending money, maintaining cleanliness, preparing food, taking care of clothes, managing the yard, maintaining a conducive atmosphere in household life, and building social communication with neighbors.
04	Identity	A housewife who is also involved in managing her husband's productive business in the farming and animal husbandry sector. She is seen as an active, innovative, wealthy and generous housewife.	A Housewife who depended more on her husband and resigned to accepting the realities of life. She is seen as a passive, modest, and patient housewife.
05	Perspective	A housewife must devote her whole body and soul to family happiness, domestic harmony, and maintain good relations with neighbors. She was able to maintain good communication with his neighbors from all classes, both when she was still in the Hastings farming area such as with the Shimerda family and when she moved to the urban Black Hawk area such as with the Harling family.	A Housewife devotes all her souls and bodies for family happiness and domestic harmony and maintains good neighborly relations. It was shown when her husband died, she still loved and educated her children and kept the family intact. She often took her children to visit neighbors' houses such as with the Burden family on the Hastings farm.

Willa Cather's thoughts on traditional American women are those who devote their lives to the household as wives and mothers of their children. Their main jobs are cooking, preparing food, washing, cleaning, serving her husband, educating children, and so on. Traditional American society considered education for a girl to be good at reading, writing, and counting. Skills suitable for girls are sewing, cooking, babysitting, music and art. All education and skills acquired by women are intended to support their roles as good wives and housewives. Willa Cather distinguishes two patterns of traditional American women's life, namely full domestication and partial domestication. Full domestication is a traditional woman who depends more on her husband's livelihood and is resigned to accepting the reality of life as a housewife as is typical for Mrs. Shimerda. The typical full domestication is generally embraced by women from the lower middle class. On the other hand, partial domestication is a traditional woman who participates in managing her husband's business or participates in earning a living with her husband to support the family economy. She is seen as an active and innovative housewife as a typical Grandmother. The typical partial domestication is generally embraced by women from the upper middle class. The presence of Grandmother and Mrs. Shimerda as a typical traditional woman in the novel *My Antonia* shows that Willa Cather acknowledged the existence of traditional women in American society at that time. Then Willa Cather's notion of traditional American women is full domestication and partial domestication.

The impact can be found in the full domestication of women in *My Antonia* as a reflection of traditional American women is both positive and negative. A number of positive impacts are woman focuses on household management, woman has a lot of time to educate her children, woman has close inner relationships with her husband and children, woman has the opportunity to communicate with neighbors, and so on. The negative impact is woman's dependence, woman's loss of public access, woman's powerlessness in decision making, and others. On the other hand, the partial domestication of women has a positive impact on women's participation in helping men increase their income and family welfare. The negative impact is women tend to leave their hometowns and are oriented towards urban life.

## V. CONCLUSION

Literature is reconstructed by the author based on the fictional imagination of the social reality of society so literary works are considered to have sociological elements. It indicates that literature has genetics absorbed by the author from his/her life experience as Goldman's basis for thinking in constructing the Genetic Structuralism Approach, one of the scientific methods in researching literary works. In this study, the novel *My Antonia* is considered to have genetics from the social background of Willa Cather's life in the American frontier farming areas such as Virginia, Hasting, Black Hawk, Red Cloud, Nebraska, Illinois, and others.

Willa Cather illustrates the presence of traditional American women in the novel *My Antonia* as reflected by the fictional characters of Grandmother and Mrs. Shimerda. They are fictional characters who narrate traditional American women living in the farming areas of Central and West America around Hasting, Black Hawk, Nebraska, and others.

Willa Cather categorizes traditional American women according to performance, position, role, identity, and perspective. Traditional women's performances have the same appearance and clothing as traditional women in general in America. The traditional position of a woman is as the wife of her husband and the mother of her children. The role of traditional women is to take care of the household and maintain the continuity of family life. Traditional women's identity is a housewife. The perspective of traditional women is to devote all their souls and bodies for family happiness, domestic harmony, and maintaining good relations with neighbors. Then Willa Cather's notion of traditional American women is full domestication and partial domestication.

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# Regional and Sociolinguistic Variation of Personal Pronouns in Dialects of Najdi Arabic

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**Abstract**—This study examines the regional and sociolinguistic variation in the paradigms of personal pronouns, independent and dependent, in Najdi dialects. The regional dialects are Central, Qassim, and Northern. The social dialects are sub-varieties of the Central dialect: Hamadan, Hawazin, and Sedentary. The data was collected using the sociolinguistic interview of 25 speakers. It was found that there were more variations in the personal pronoun forms than what have been reported in the literature. When comparing forms with Standard Arabic, the Central dialects are more conservative in the number of changes to the forms. However, Qassim and Northern have retained gender distinction in plural forms while Central dialects did not. This study introduced forms of personal pronouns that were never mentioned in the literature.

**Index Terms**—Hamadan, Hawazin, Najd, northern dialect, Qassim dialect

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Personal Pronouns in the Semitic Languages

The Semitic languages use five types of pronouns: personal pronouns, suffixed possessive pronouns, determinative-relative pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and indefinite and interrogative pronouns (Lipinski, 2001). Personal pronouns are either independent (free) or dependent (suffixed). The independent pronouns, as the name suggests, are used separately, as in Indo-European languages. The dependent pronouns are suffixed to nouns, verbs, or even prepositions.

Personal pronouns in general, and in Semitic languages in particular, are susceptible to universal language changes, but their main forms remain intact. In Tables 1 and 2, it is obvious that the forms of personal pronouns, for example, in some of the Semitic Languages are mainly similar. However, an example of universal linguistic change is that the dual forms are partially lost in (Classical) Arabic and fully lost in other languages. The loss of the dual number in personal pronouns is due to the economy principle (Al-Sharkawi, 2017, p. 183). Although irrelevant to this study, it needs to be mentioned that the dual forms are preserved in Najdi dialects in nominal cases, unlike other Arabic dialects.

TABLE 1  
INDEPENDENT PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN SOME OF THE SEMITIC LANGUAGES

Number	Person/gender	*Proto-Semitic	Arabic	Aramaic	Hebrew	Ge'ez
Singular	1	?an-a	?ana:	?ana:	?ani:	?ana
	2M	?an-ta	?anta	?anta	?atta:	?anta
	2F	?an-ti	?anti	?anti	?att	?anti
	3M	?u-wa	huwa	hu:	hu:	wə?ətu
	3F	?i-ya	hiya	hi:	hi:	yə?əti
Dual	1	?an-ka:	--	--	--	--
	2	?an-tana:	?antuma:	--	--	--
	3	?u-na:	huma:	--	--	--
Plural	1	nih-nu	nahnu	?anaḥna:	nahnu:	nəḥna
	2M	?an-ta-nu	?antum	?antu:m	?attem	?antəmmu
	2F	?an-ti-na	?antunna	?anti:n	?atte:n	?antən
	3M	?u-nu	hum	himmo:	he:m	wə?ətomu
	3F	?i-na	hunna	hinni:n	he:n	yə?əton

TABLE 2  
DEPENDENT PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN SOME OF THE SEMITIC LANGUAGES

Number	Person/ gender	*Proto- Semitic	Arabic	Hebrew	Aramaic	Ge'ez	
Singular	1	GEN	-iy	-i:	-i:	-i:	-ya
		ACC	-ni	-ni:	-ni:	-ni:	-ni
	2M	-ka	-ka	-ka:	-k	-ka	
	2F	-ki	-ki	-k	-ki:	-ki	
	3M	-fu	-hu	-hu:	-hi:	-hu	
Dual	3F	-fa	-ha:	-ha:	-ha:	-ha:	
	1	-nay	--	--	--	--	
	2	-kunaya	-kuma:	--	--	--	
Plural	3	-funaya	-huma:	--	--	--	
	1	-na	-na:	-nu:	-na:	-na	
	2M	-kun	-kum	-kem	-ko:n/m	-kəmmu	
	2F	-kin	-kunna	-ken	-ke:n	-kən	
	3M	-fun	-hum	-hem	-ho:n/m	-homu	
3F	-fin	-hunna	-hen	-he:n	-hon		

### B. Personal Pronouns in Arabic and Modern Arabic Dialects

Personal pronouns in modern Arabic dialects have evolved rather differently, which has led some scholars (e.g., Al-Sharkawi, 2017; Ferguson, 1959; Versteegh, 1984) to introduce the *peninsular* versus *non-peninsular* dichotomy. According to Al-Sharkawi (2017, p. 183), non-peninsular contemporary Arabic dialects (i.e., spoken outside the Arabian Peninsula have evolved from the Arabic koine (see Ferguson, 1959) which has gone through decades of simplification and eventually koineization. This intrinsically indicates that contemporary dialects in the Arabian Peninsula (e.g., Najdi dialects) are radically more conservative given that they were not subjected to leveling and koineization as their non-peninsular counterparts.

The comparison between peninsular and non-peninsular dialects is beyond the scope of this study. However, in this section, some light will be shed on the general differences between personal pronouns paradigms in both dialect groups.

In discussion of Ferguson's theory of the Arabic koine, Cohen (1970, p. 109) points out that there are some common features shared by non-peninsular modern Arabic dialects that indicate such a systematic process of koineization. The features concerning personal pronouns are the partial/complete loss of /h/ in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person masculine suffixed pronouns and the loss of gender distinction in plural pronouns. The former feature, however, is retained in most peninsular dialects, and the latter is retained in several peninsular dialects, some of which are in Najd.

For a better understanding of this dichotomy, refer to Table 3 which contains references for the paradigms of personal pronouns in modern Arabic dialects arranged geographically.

TABLE 3  
REFERENCES FOR PERSONAL PRONOUNS (INDEPENDENT AND SUFFIXED) IN MODERN ARABIC DIALECTS

Part of the Arab World	Dialect	Reference
West	Algiers	Boucherit (2006, p. 63)
	Tripoli	Pereira (2009, p. 551)
	Khartoum	Dickens (2007, p. 560)
	Cairo	Woidich (2006, p. 326)
	Morocco	Caubet (2008, p. 277)
	Tunis	Gibson (2009, p. 566)
Levant	Amman	Al-Wer (2007a, p. 510)
	Baghdad	Abu-Haidar (2006a, p. 226)
	Damascus	Lentin (2006, p. 548)
	Palestine	Shahin (2008, p. 531)
	Beirut	Na'in (2006, p. 279)
Arabian Peninsula	Oman	Edzard (2008, p. 483)
	Sana'a	Watson (2009, p. 110)
	Bahrain	Holes (2006, p. 247)
	Kuwait	Holes (2007, p. 613)

### C. The Dialects Understudy

The dialects of Saudi Arabia have been categorized as a continuum of each of the countries bordering them (Ingham, 2009, p. 123). The dialects of the southern part of Saudi Arabia share features with those of Yemen. The eastern dialects share features with those of Bahrain and The United Arab Emirates (Holes, 1984, p. 30). The dialects of Hijaz (west) have been regarded as Egypto-Levantine because of several features they share with said Arabic varieties (Ingham, 1971, p. 277). As pointed out by Ingham (1994, p. 1), the dialects of Najd, however, have had less contact with other countries and therefore have been noted to be conservative in nature. According to Ingham (1994, p. 5), they can be subcategorized into Central Najdi (spoken in Riyadh Province), Northern (spoken in the northern parts of the Arabian



Peninsula, Hayil and Northern Borders Provinces), and finally mixed Northern-Central (spoken in Qassim Province). The geographical distribution of Najdi dialects is provided in Map 1.

The central Najd dialect is spoken in an approximate radius of 500 km and thus there are sub-dialects that exhibit differences in some linguistic features, some of which are personal pronouns. The sub-dialects are the dialect of the Sedentary population, the dialect of Bedouin tribes that are originally from the southern parts of the Arabian Peninsula (descendants of the ancient tribe of Hamadan), and the dialect of the Bedouin tribes that are originally from the mid-western parts of the Arabian Peninsula (descendants of the ancient tribe of Hawazin). For further details on this sub-categorization of Central Najd dialects refer to Alajmi (2019).



Figure 1. Map Showing Administrative Provinces Covering Najd Area and Corresponding Najdi Dialects  
Adapted From Alajmi (2019, p. 29)

#### D. The Study and Research Questions

Personal pronouns are one of the most intriguing paradigms in linguistics, especially from a comparative diachronic perspective. Although they show resistance to change and maintain to some extent similar basic forms, they tend to exhibit minor variations mostly at the morphophonemic level across languages/dialects descending from the same language family.

The personal pronouns of Saudi Arabian dialects have been examined by Prochazka (1988). There are valuable contributions by Prochazka, but the classification of dialects and sub-dialects is rather outdated and to some extent random. For instance, the dialects in one instance will be distinguished based on city (e.g., Riyadh), but based on lifestyle in another (e.g., Bedouin). Furthermore, in other instances, it is based on tribe (e.g., Qahtan). Ingham (1994, p. 193) provided several differences between Najdi dialects based on personal pronouns, but there is a lack of a deeper classification of the dialects, like the one which will be used here (provided by Alajmi, 2019).

The current study will provide the paradigms of personal pronouns of regional and social dialects of Najd. The dialects share a similar phonemic inventory and most grammatical features. However, there is a considerable number of morphophonemic differences, most of which are present in the paradigms of personal pronouns. These variations are preserved in each dialect because they are below the level of the speaker's consciousness, i.e., *indicators* or *markers* (as established in Alajmi & Alghannam, 2022). However, some forms of personal pronouns in some dialects have reached the level of *stereotype* and thus are mostly avoided by speakers. Such forms will be discussed below.

This study aims to answer the following question:

- What are the regional and sociolinguistic variations in the paradigms of personal pronouns in Najdi dialects?

To reiterate, the regional dialects examined here are Northern, Qassim, and Central. The social dialects are Hawazin Bedouin, Hamadan Bedouin, and Sedentary, which are sub-varieties of the Central dialect.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are several linguistic studies on Najdi Arabic that have been carried out by non-native and native speakers (e.g., Abboud, 1979; Al-Sudais, 1976; Al-Sweel, 1987; Ingham, 1994, 2008; Johnstone, 1964). Following the traditional framework, these studies provided descriptions of the main linguistic features of the Najdi dialect and sub-dialects. The paradigms of personal pronouns (Independent and dependent) have been mentioned in most studies. However, only a few of them pointed out the regional and social variation of personal pronouns. Ingham (1994, p. 193), for example, was one of the first to point out the differences between the forms of 3SM and 3SF suffixed pronouns in Central as opposed to Qassim and Northern dialects. In the Central dialect, the forms are 3SM *-ih* and 3SF *-ha* (e.g., *kita:b-ih* 'his book' and *kita:b-ha* 'her book') while in the other two dialects it is 3SM *-uh* and 3SF *-ah* (e.g., *kita:b-uh* 'his book' and *kita:b-ah* 'her book'). What Ingham (1994) and others fail to mention is that *-ih* is not the only form of 3SM pronoun in the Central dialect. As will be discussed below, there are actually two forms for 3SM: *-ih* and *-ah*. The former is used by Bedouin tribes while the latter is used by Sedentary groups. Other recent sociolinguistic studies on Najd (e.g., Al-Essa, 2008) refer to personal pronoun forms, but compare one paradigm of Najdi personal pronouns with another Saudi dialect (e.g., Urban Hijazi). There are new studies in which some personal pronoun forms of Najdi dialects are mentioned, but to my knowledge, there is no thorough examination of personal pronoun paradigms in Najdi dialects (both regional and social). This study digs deeper into the awareness rank of some forms (stereotype, marker, and indicator) and whether they are abandoned or are still in use. This study will shed light on the loss of gender distinction in plural forms in some dialects and retention in others.

## III. DATA COLLECTION AND METHODOLOGY

The data in this study have been collected by the sociolinguistic interview. Participants were interviewed for an average of one hour. They were asked questions on a range of topics gauged to the interest of each participant. The structure of the interview is designed to elicit stretches of free speech in which the participant is relaxed and hence less attention is paid to speech (Labov, 1984, p. 32). In interviews with Arabic speakers, eliciting styles using reading tasks is not applicable because of the diglossic situation in the Arab world (Al-Wer, 2013, p. 245). In other words, when participants are given reading tasks, they will more likely switch to Standard Arabic. Therefore, free conversation is the targeted type of production data in this study and in most studies that investigate Arabic varieties.

The sample is comprised of 25 speakers, five speakers from each dialect and sub-dialect. The researcher reached out to participants via a friend of a friend technique. The age of participants ranges from 25 to 45. The level of education is roughly the same for all participants (i.e., have a college degree).

All forms of personal pronouns, independent and dependent, have been recorded and analyzed. A participant might use more than one form for a pronoun, one is the standard one and the other is a marked feature or stigmatized. Observations on such forms will be discussed below.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data collected from the interviews have been transcribed, and all forms for each dialect have been provided below. The independent personal pronouns are listed in Table 4 while dependent forms are listed in Table 5. Observations on each set of pronouns are given under the corresponding Table. The forms that are considered non-standard (i.e., marked) are written in bold in the tables. The discussion of forms will be based on pronouns rather than dialects. In other words, the forms will be discussed row by row.

TABLE 4  
INDEPENDENT PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN REGIONAL AND SOCIAL DIALECTS OF NAJD

Person. Number. gender	SA	Hamadan	Hawazin	Sedentary	Qassim	Northern
1SC	<i>ʔana:</i>	<i>ʔana:</i>	<i>ʔana:</i>	<i>ʔana:</i>	<i>ʔana:</i>	<i>ʔana:</i>
1PC	<i>naħnu</i>	<i>ħinna</i>	<i>ħinna</i>	<i>inna</i>	<i>ħinna</i>	<i>ħinna</i>
2SM	<i>ʔanta</i>	<i>ʔant</i>	<i>ʔantah</i>	<i>ʔint</i>	<i>ʔant</i>	<i>ʔant</i>
2SF	<i>ʔanti</i>	<i>ʔanti</i>	<i>ʔanti</i>	<i>ʔinti / ʔintaj</i>	<i>ʔinti</i>	<i>ʔinti</i>
2DC	<i>ʔantuma:</i>	--	--	--	--	--
2PM	<i>ʔantum</i>					
2PF	<i>ʔantunna</i>	<i>ʔantu:</i>	<i>ʔantu:</i>	<i>ʔintaw</i>	<i>ʔantu:</i>	<i>ʔantu:</i>
3SM	<i>ħuwa</i>	<i>ħu:</i>	<i>ħu:/ħwah</i>	<i>ħu:</i>	<i>ħu:</i>	<i>ħu:</i>
3SF	<i>ħiya</i>	<i>ħi:</i>	<i>ħi:</i>	<i>ħi:</i>	<i>ħi:</i>	<i>ħi:</i>
3DC	<i>ħuma:</i>	--	--	--	--	--
3PM	<i>ħum</i>				<i>ħum</i>	<i>ħam</i>
3PF	<i>ħumma</i>	<i>ħum</i>	<i>ħum</i>	<i>ħum</i>	<i>ħin</i>	<i>ħin</i>

- 1SC: This form *ʔana:* is the most preserved form of all, not only across Najdi dialects but also across the Semitic languages (see Table 1)



- 1PC: The Sedentary form *inna* is the only different variant from all other dialects. It should be noted that when speakers of other dialects were asked about this form, they were not aware of this variation (i.e., it is a marker or indicator).
- 2SM: For this form, Najdi dialects have lost case marking, and therefore the last /a/ in *ʔanta* is lost. The Hawazin dialect has added /h/ to their form, as well as to 3SM *hwah*. In the Sedentary dialect, the stem *ʔant* has changed to *ʔint*, not only in this form but across the entire paradigm as well.
- 2SF: Hamadan and Hawazin have preserved this pronoun from Classical Arabic. The Sedentary dialect, as discussed above has undergone the change *ʔant* → *ʔint*. Qassim and Northern have undergone this change as well, but surprisingly it is restricted to this pronoun. 21% of the tokens in the Sedentary dialect were realized as *ʔintaj*. The addition of a glide at the end is also found in the Sedentary 2P *ʔintaw*.
- 2DC: The dual forms for all personal pronouns are lost in all modern Arabic dialects.
- 2PM, 2PF: The gender distinction has been lost in all Najdi dialects in these forms. It is *ʔantu*: for both masculine and feminine. The Sedentary form, however, contains a glide at the end as stated earlier.
- 3SM, 3SF: The 3S forms show no variation across all dialects, except Hawazin dialect 3SM. The frequency rate of usage for *hwah* in the data is 27%, as opposed to the other form *hu*: (73%).
- 3PM, 3PF: The gender distinction in these forms has been lost in Central dialects but preserved in the others. The Northern dialect has undergone the change /u/ → /a/ in the masculine form. This is not a sporadic change, however. Rather, it is consistent with other dependents forms, as shall be discussed below.

TABLE 5  
DEPENDENT PERSONAL PRONOUNS IN REGIONAL AND SOCIAL DIALECTS OF NAJD

Person.Number. gender	SA		Hamadan	Hawazin	Sedentary	Qassim	Northern
	GEN	-i:/	-i:	-i:	-i:	-i:	-i:
1SC	ACC	-ni	-ni	-ni	-ni/-a:ni	-an	-an
1PC		-na	-na	-na	-na/-a:na	-na	-na
2SM		-ka	-ik	-ik	-ik/-k	-ik/-k	-ak
2SF		-ki	-ts/-f/-ik	-tʃ/-ik	-s/-ik	-ts/-ik	-ts/-ik
2DC		-kuma:	--	--	--	--	--
2PM		-kum				-kum	-kam
2PF		-kunna	-kum	-kum	-kum	-kin	-kin
3SM		-hu	-ih	-ih	-ah	-uh	-uh
3SF		-ha:	-ha:	-ha:	-ha:	-ah	-ah
3DC		-huma:	--	--	--	--	--
3PM		-hum				-hum	-ham
3PF		-hunna	-hum	-hum	-hum	-hin	-hin

- 1SC: In Arabic and modern Arabic dialects, the suffixed pronouns of accusative and genitive cases are different. For the other forms, they are the same. For the genitive case, all dialects of Najd have the same forms as Standard Arabic. As for the accusative case, the forms are different in Qassim and Northern dialects, as noted by Ingham (1994, p. 193). In addition, *-a:ni* is attested among Sedentary speakers who inhabit the towns north of Riyadh and south of Qassim. Two of the five speakers representing the Sedentary dialects have used this form 34% of the time. To elaborate, the total number of tokens for this pronoun in the speech of these two speakers was 41. The occurrences of *-ni* were 27 (66%) while the occurrences of *-a:ni* were 14 (34%).
- 1PC: This form is preserved in all Najdi dialects as *-na*. However, as is the case with the previous form, the Sedentary dialect has *-a:na*, and it is used by the same aforementioned speakers.
- 2SM: For this pronoun, the form is *-ik* for all dialects except for the Northern dialect which is *-ak*. In the Sedentary and Qassim dialects, sometimes the stem to which the suffixed pronoun is attached is re-syllabified resulting in loss of the epenthetic vowel /i/ in *-ik*. Therefore, the word *tʃlib-ik* ‘your order’ is realized as *tʃalab-k*.
- 2SF: The realizations of this pronoun are some of the most unique forms in the Arabic Language. They have been observed by early Arab grammarians, e.g., Sibawayh and Ibn-Jinni (Al-Azraqi, 2007, p. 230), and they are still studied by contemporary native and non-native linguists (e.g., Al-Azraqi, 2007; Al-Essa, 2009; Al-Rojaie, 2013; Johnstone, 1963). The standard form of this pronoun in Najdi dialects is *-ik*, which is identical to the Masculine form. The non-standard variants, however, are different across dialects. Under Haman for example the non-standard forms *-ts/-f* were reported. The former is produced by the Dosari Tribe while the latter is produced by the Ajmi tribe, all of which descend from the Haman ancient tribe as stated earlier (see Alajmi, 2019). Hawazin dialect exhibited a rather unique form *-tʃ*, which is similar to that of Kuwaiti Arabic (Holes, 2007, p. 613). The Sedentary dialect uses *-s* while Qassim and Northern dialects use *-ts*, which is similar to that of the Dosari Tribe. It must be noted that the speakers’ awareness of some of these non-standard forms is rather high (i.e., stereotype). The frequency of some of the variants recorded was quite low due to this fact. The discussion of the sociolinguistic details of these forms is beyond the scope of this research.
- 2PM, 2PF: As is the case with independent pronouns, the gender distinction in Central dialects has been lost. In Qassim and Northern dialects, however, the gender distinction is retained. As noted across the masculine

- forms in the Northern dialect, there is a tendency to use /a/ instead of /u/ and /i/ (Northern *-kam* vs. other dialects *-kum*).
- 3SM: Ingham (1994, p. 193) noted the variation between the Central form *-ih* and Qassim/Northern *-uh*. However, the form used by the Sedentary dialect is *-ah*, not *-ih*. As for when this pronoun is suffixed to a stem ending in a vowel, the form is *-h* for all dialects (e.g., *ʕale:-h* ‘on him’ and *ʕasʕa:-h* ‘his stick’). In Qassim dialect, it was noted that if the ending vowel is /e/, it is changed to a glide /j/. Therefore, *ʕale:-h* ‘on him’ was used by some Qassimi speakers as *ʕalj-ah*.
  - 3SF: The variation in this pronoun between Central and Qassim/Northern dialects was also noted by Ingham (1994, p. 193). It must be noted that nowadays some speakers from Central Najd, especially Sedentary, face difficulties when communicating with speakers of Qassimi and Northern dialects because the masculine form in the Sedentary dialect is identical to the feminine form in the other two (*-ah*).
  - 3PM, 3PF: The observations on these forms will be redundant because the independent and dependent forms are identical in all dialects.

## V. CONCLUSION

The regional and sociolinguistic variation of personal pronouns has not been addressed properly in the literature. It was found that there is a considerable variation in the paradigms of personal pronouns across Najdi dialects. Central dialects are more conservative than Qassim and Northern Dialects in terms of changes in the actual forms. Qassim and Northern, however, are more conservative than Central in the sense that they preserved gender distinction in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural forms. Personal pronouns are generally indicators or markers. This means that speakers of each dialect will continue to use their variant of the pronouns, and they will be less likely to converge to the standard form. Some pronouns, however, have achieved the level of a stereotype and thus are avoided. Consequently, the leveling in the relevant paradigm can be noticeable, e.g., 2SF.

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# The Influence of Language Contact on the Usages of $xən^{35}$ in Duyun Dialect

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**Abstract**—Duyun has been a multi-ethnic area since ancient times, and its grammar has been influenced by both Chinese and local minority languages. This paper is intended to compare the usages of the *hen*-family in Duyun dialect, Mandarin, and minority languages from the perspective of language contact, and to trace the origin of  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect by examining the evolution of *hen* in Chinese. It is proposed that the prepositive usage of  $xən^{35}$  is a historical continuation of *hen* in Chinese during the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, while the postpositive usage of  $xən^{35}$  is influenced by the local minority languages. The distinctive usages of  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect are due to language contact.

**Index Terms**—Guizhou Duyun,  $xən^{35}$ , Chinese, minority languages, language contact

## I. INTRODUCTION

*Hen* is the most frequently-used degree word not only in Mandarin but also in Guizhou dialects. In Mandarin Chinese, *hen* is pronounced as  $hən^{214}$ , while in Guizhou dialects, the pronunciation of the *hen*-family varies among dialects, for instance, *hen* in Guizhou Duyun dialect is pronounced as  $xən^{35}$ . Regardless of the pronunciation of the *hen*-family in these languages, their written forms are consistent in the relevant literature, which is written as 很 when being used as adverbials. Besides, the *hen*-family has similarities and differences in terms of distribution, as shown below:<sup>1</sup>

- |        |                              |                    |
|--------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| (1) a. | 很 哭                          | (Duyun dialect)    |
|        | $xən^{35}ku^{33}$            |                    |
|        | HEN cry                      |                    |
|        | ‘cry a lot’                  |                    |
| b.     | 很 喜欢                         | (Mandarin Chinese) |
|        | hen xihuan                   |                    |
|        | HEN like                     |                    |
|        | ‘like very much’             |                    |
| c.     | 很 叫                          | (Sandong Shui)     |
|        | $naŋ^6 khau^5$               |                    |
|        | HEN bark                     |                    |
|        | ‘bark furiously’             |                    |
| (2) a. | 红 (得) 很                      | (Duyun dialect)    |
|        | $xoŋ^{53}(tæ^{42}) xən^{35}$ |                    |
|        | red DE HEN                   |                    |
|        | ‘very red’                   |                    |
| b.     | 红 *(得) 很                     | (Mandarin Chinese) |
|        | hong de hen                  |                    |
|        | red DE HEN                   |                    |
|        | ‘very red’                   |                    |
| c.     | 红 很                          | (Sandong Shui)     |
|        | $ha:n^3 eo^3$                |                    |
|        | red HEN                      |                    |
|        | ‘very red’                   |                    |

As illustrated above, the *hen*-family in the above languages can occur before or after predicates, varying in whether the particle DE can be omitted when *hen* occurs after predicates. The above contrast indicates that compared with the

<sup>1</sup> For simplicity, this paper takes the phonological notations of Duyun dialect (Zhou, 2012) as the representative of Guizhou dialects. As for the phonological notations of the *xən*-family in the minority languages of Guizhou, this paper mainly refers to *xən* in Miao language and Sandong Shui language. As for the expression of the examples, the asterisk “\*” is used to denote that the sentence is ungrammatical, and the parentheses ( ) are used to denote that the element is optional. In particular, (X) denotes that X is optional; (\*X) denotes that the occurrence of X is not allowed; \* (X) denotes that X is obligatory. Abbreviations used in the examples are as follows: HEN: *hen*; DE: the structural particle placed between VP/AP and *hen*; CL: classifier; NEG: negative element; SFP: sentence-final particle; DUR: durative marker; 1. SG<sub>MASC</sub>: the first-person singular used by the masculine in ancient Chinese; INTERJ: interjection; PERF: perfective aspect marker.

distributions of *hen* in Mandarin and Shui,  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect has the most flexible distribution when interacting with predicates.

Interestingly,  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect can occur in the clause twice, forming the  $xən$  VP  $xən$  phrase. This phenomenon can be found in Shui but not in Mandarin. Consider the following examples:

- (3) a. 很 哭 很 (Duyun dialect)  
 $xən^{35}ku^{33} xən^{35}$   
 HEN cry HEN  
 ‘cry a lot’
- b. \*很 喜欢 很 (Mandarin Chinese)  
 $xən xihuan xən$   
 HEN like HEN  
 ‘like very much’
- c. 很 有力 很 (Sandong Shui)  
 $naŋ^6 liək^8 \epsilon o^3$   
 HEN strength HEN

The above contrasts indicate that there is a close relationship between  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect and the *hen*-family in Mandarin and Shui in terms of word order. To examine the relationship, this paper is intended to examine the origin and evolution of the usages of  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect from the perspective of linguistic contact by using Corpus Online, the *Shui Language Compendium*, and the introspection on Duyun dialect. It is proposed that the prepositive usage of  $xən^{35}$  and the stranded usage of  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect are archaic usages, associated with the usages of *hen* in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, whereas, the postpositive usage of  $xən^{35}$  is borrowed from the usage of its counterpart in the local minority languages, and thus the usages of  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect are the result of language contact.

This paper is organized as follows. Section 1 is the introduction. Section 2 examines the origin of the usages of  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect, followed by the evolution of  $xən^{35}$  in section 3. Section 4 is the conclusion.

## II. THE ORIGIN OF THE USAGES OF $xən^{35}$ IN DUYUN DIALECT

The usages of  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun are closely related to Duyun’s history. According to Qin (2020), Duyun had a military and civil official division in the Yuan Dynasty. Since then, the official language has continued to influence the local language of Duyun throughout history, creating the present-day Duyun dialect. In Tu (1998), Duyun belongs to the Qiannan dialect, which is distinctive from other dialects in Guizhou, because the distribution of Duyun dialect is basically the same as that of the ancient Duyun Prefecture in the Ming and Qing dynasties. This indicates that the Qiannan dialect has had a certain stability from ancient times to the present. The seemingly unique vocabulary, phonology, and grammar of Duyun dialect today are likely to be archaic phenomena. Although Duyun dialect belongs to a subgroup of Southwest Mandarin, in ancient times, Duyun was mainly a place where various minority groups lived, which means that the languages spoken in ancient Duyun were mainly minority languages. Because of these complex historical reasons, phonology, vocabulary, and even grammar of Duyun dialect have been influenced to a greater or lesser extent by a combination of official and minority languages. Nowhere is this more evident than in the degree word  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect, whose counterpart is the most frequently used degree word in Mandarin and Guizhou’s minority languages as well.

As shown in the introduction, the distribution of  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect has similarities and differences in Mandarin and the local minority languages. In order to find out why  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect has such distributions, the next section will trace the usages of  $xən^{35}$  based on the historical development of Duyun, starting from the usages of  $xən$  in the official language of the Yuan Dynasty.

### A. The Degree Words 很/狠 in the Yuan Dynasty

The usage of 很 as an adverb can be found in some documents of the Yuan Dynasty. According to Ota (2003), 很 was a colloquialism used among northerners who had more contact with Mongols. Liu (2016) argues that the modern Chinese adverb 很 is derived from the adverb 很. The word 很 in the Yuan Dynasty is a period marker since its written form gradually disappeared from the literature in the later period. Before being replaced by 很 and 狠, 很 acts as an adverbial, occurring before verbs and adjectives. When 很 modifies verbs, it denotes a high frequency in (3), whereas, when 很 modifies adjectives, it denotes a high degree in (4). Consider the following examples:

- (3) 很 骚扰 百姓 有。 (《礼部六•三十三》) (verb)  
 $xən sao-rao bai-xing you$ . (*Libuliu-sanshisian*)  
 HEN harass civilian SFP (*Rites of Passage VI – XXXIII*)  
 ‘They often harass civilians.’
- (4) 如今 地广 民众, 事物 很 多 有。 (《朝纲一•典章四》) (Adjective)  
 $rujin di-guang min-zhong shi-wu xən duo you$ . (*Chaogangyi-dianzhangsi*)  
 nowadays vast territory many people thing HEN many SFP (*Dynasty Outline I - Chapter 4*)

‘Nowadays, there is a wide range of people on the land, and there are many things as well.’

很 as an adverbial is mainly found in some conversational textbooks from the Yuan Dynasty. One of the most classic textbooks is *Laoqida*, a conversational textbook written in the then-standard Beijing dialect for Koreans who want to learn Chinese. Feng (2010) claims that in the original version of *Laoqida*, 很 is used as a degree adverb as many as 16 times, while in the later editions including *Laoqida-yanjie*, *Laoqida-xinshi*, *Chongkan-Laoqida*, 很 is replaced with 狠.

The above claim can be verified by Corpus Online since we found that only 很 and 狠 were used in the Yuan Dynasty, both of which can be used interchangeably.<sup>2</sup> As for 狠, it mainly modifies adjectives:

- (5) 我师傅 性格 温厚。 狠 用心 教 我们。(元《老乞大新释》)  
 wo shi-fu xing-ge wen-hou. xan yong-xin jiao wo-men. (Yuan, *Laoqidaxinshi*)  
 my teacher character gentle HEN attentive teach us (Yuan, *Laoqidaxinshi*)  
 ‘My teacher has a gentle character. He teaches us with great care.’
- (6) 人参 正 缺少 呢。 所以 价钱 狠 好。(元《老乞大新释》)  
 ren-shen zheng que-shao ne. suo-yi jia-qian hen hao. (Yuan, *Laoqidaxinshi*)  
 ginseng DUR lack SFP so price HEN good (Yuan, *Laoqidaxinshi*)  
 ‘Ginseng is in short supply, so the price is very good.’

As shown above, 狠 can modify the adjectives *yongxin* ‘attentive’ (5) and *hao* ‘good’ (6), denoting a high degree. But we do not retrieve the usage of 狠 as a complement in the corpus. This manifests that 狠 mainly functions as an adverbial in the Yuan dynasty.

#### B. The Degree Words 很/狠 in the Ming Dynasty

In the Ming Dynasty, only 很 and 狠 are used interchangeably, whose grammatical functions involve both similarities and differences. As for the similarities, 很 and 狠 can function as adverbials, occurring before predicates. Specifically, 很 occurs before the adjective *mingliang* ‘bright’, denoting a high degree in (7a), while 狠 occurs before the verb *jiao* ‘caw’, denoting a high frequency in (7b). Consider the following examples:

- (7) a. 这书室 庭户 虚敞, 窗 很 明亮。(明·抱瓮老人《今古奇观》)  
 zhe shu-shi ting-hu xu-chang, chuang hen ming-liang. (Ming, *Jinguqiguan* by Baowenglaoren)  
 this study courtyard spacious window HEN bright (Ming, *Ancient And Modern Wonders* by Baowenglaoren)  
 ‘The study and the courtyard are spacious and the windows are very bright.’
- b. 那乌鸦 还 在那里 狠 叫。(明·凌濛初《二刻拍案惊奇》)  
 na wu-ya hai zai na-li hen jiao. (Ming, *Erkepaianjingqi* by Ling Mengchu)  
 that crow still ASP there HEN caw (Ming, *Amazing Tales* by Ling Mengchu)  
 ‘That crow still keeps cawing there.’

Moreover, 很 and 狠 can function as a complement, following the complement marker 得, of which 很 is compatible with the adjective *yuan* ‘far’, denoting a high degree in (8a), while 狠 is compatible with the verb *kan* ‘chop’, denoting a high force in (8b). Consider the following contrast:

- (8) a. 这 家子 远 得 很 哩! (明·吴承恩《西游记》)  
 zhe jia-zi yuan de hen li! (Ming, *Xiyouji* by Wu Chengen)  
 this family far DE HEN SFP (Ming, *Journey to the West* by Wu Chengen)  
 ‘We are still far away from the family.’
- b. 金天雷 看见 他 砍 得 狠。(明·罗懋登《三宝太监西洋记》)  
 Jintianlei kan-jian ta kan de hen. (Ming, *Sanbaotaijianxiyangji* by Luo Maodeng)  
 Jintianlei see him chop DE HEN (Ming, *The Three Treasures Eunuch of the West* by Luo Maodeng)  
 ‘Jintianlei saw that he cut with a vicious action.’

As for the differences, 很 can be reduplicated and its resulting reduplicant can modify the verb phrase *jiaotajisheng* ‘call out a few times’ in (9a), whereas, 狠 can act as a predicate and be modified by the degree adverb *zui* ‘most’ in (9b):

- (9) a. 待 小生 很很 叫 他 几 声。(明·李清《明珠缘》)  
 dai xiao-sheng henhen jiao ta ji sheng. (Ming, *Mingzhuyuan* by Li Qing)  
 wait 1.SG-MASC HEN-RED call him several voice (Ming, *Mingzhuyuan* by Li Qing)  
 ‘Let me call him a few times loudly.’
- b. 雷公 最 狠。(明·罗懋登《三宝太监西洋记》)  
 leigong zui hen. (Ming, *Sanbaotaijianxiyangji* by Luo Maodeng)  
 Thunder God most ferocious (Ming, *Sanbaotaijianxiyangji* by Luo Maodeng)  
 ‘Thunder God is most powerful.’

<sup>2</sup> All the examples of ancient Chinese are retrieved from Corpus Online: <http://corpus.zhonghuayuwen.org/>.

It can be seen that both *很* and *狠* can be used interchangeably. However, the former is mainly used as an adverbial while the latter can be used as a predicate. The above contrasts indicate that the semantic functions of *很* and *狠* begin to diverge; it seems that *很* is more functional than *狠*.

C. *The Degree Words 很/狠 in the Qing Dynasty*

In the Qing Dynasty, the semantic functions between *很* and *狠* are still vague. *很* is mainly used as an adverbial, modifying the verb *chengzan* ‘praise’ in (10a), the adjective *zhengchang* ‘normal’ in (10b), or as a complement of adjectives in (10c). By contrast, *狠* is mainly used as a predicate; to be specific, it can form the A-not-A form in (11a) and co-occurs with the aspectual marker *le* in (11b). Consider the following examples:

- (10) a. 江西省 的 绅士, 都 很 称赞。 (清·曾国藩《曾国藩家书》)
 

Jiangxisheng de shenshi, dou hen cheng-zan. (Qing, *Zengguofanjiashu* by Zeng Guofan)  
 Jiangxi Province DE gentleman all HEN praise (Qing, *Zengguofan's letter home* by Zeng Guofan)  
 ‘The gentlemen of Jiangxi Province praised the fame of our brother.’
- b. 九弟 的 功课 很 正常。 (清·曾国藩《曾国藩家书》)
 

Jiudi de gongke hen zheng-chang. (Qing, *Zengguofanjiashu* by Zeng Guofan)  
 Jiudi DE homework HEN normal (Qing, *Zengguofan's letter home* by Zeng Guofan)  
 ‘Jiudi's work is very normal.’
- c. “哇呀, 怪道—怪道 臭 得很! 臭 得很!” (清·石玉昆《七侠五义》)
 

“waya, guaidao—guaidao chou de hen! chou de hen!” (Qing, *Qixiawuyi* by Shi Yukun)  
 “INTERJ strange Taoist—strange Taoist smelly DE HEN smelly DE HEN (Qing, *Qixiawuyi* by Shi Yukun)  
 ‘Wow! The strange Taoist—he stinks very much! It stinks!’
- (11) a. 狠 也 不 狠? (清·佚名《五美缘》)
 

hen ye bu hen? (Qing, *Wumeiyuan* by anonymity)  
 HEN or NEG HEN (Qing, *Wumeiyuan* by anonymity)  
 ‘Severe or not?’
- b. 拘束 狠 了。 (清·吴敬梓《儒林外史》)
 

ju-shu hen-le. (Qing, *Rulinwaishi* by Wu Jingzi)  
 restrain HEN PERF (Qing, *The Scholars* by Wu Jingzi)  
 ‘Sixth-Master Fang is severely strangled by his clothes.’
- c. 此 计 也 就 毒 得 狠 呢。 (清·石玉昆《七侠五义》)
 

ci ji ye jiu du de hen ne. (Qing, *Qixiawuyi* by Shi Yukun)  
 this stratagem also then vicious DE HEN SFP (Qing, *Qixiawuyi* by Shi Yukun)  
 ‘This stratagem is also very vicious.’

To sum up, *很* and *狠* in Ming and Qing dynasties can be used as either adverbials or complements of predicates. When *很* and *狠* function as adverbials, they can modify both verbs and adjectives; when they act as degree complements of predicates, the complement marker *de* cannot be omitted. It can be seen that the usage of *很* is the same as that of *xən*<sup>35</sup> in Duyun dialect demonstrated in the introduction. This means that the usage of *xən*<sup>35</sup> is derived from the ancient counterpart in Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. However, it is not a whole story since we do not find *很* in Corpus Online can be in the form of VP/AP *xən*, much less in the form of *xən* VP *xən*. In other words, the postpositive usage of *xən*<sup>35</sup> in Duyun dialect has nothing to do with that of *很* in ancient Chinese. A question then arises: Where do these two usages of *xən*<sup>35</sup> in Duyun dialect come from?

D. *The Hen in Minority Languages*

As mentioned before, Duyun is a multi-ethnic area where ethnic minorities account for more than half of the Han people. Because of historical reasons, these minorities are basically distributed in mountainous areas and townships, while those who remain downtown have basically been assimilated and speak Duyun dialect. It is noteworthy that some minorities such as Miao and Shui can speak not only their mother tongues but also Duyun dialect. Based on this, it can be predicted that the vocabulary, phonology, and grammar of Duyun dialect may be influenced by the linguistic characteristics of both the official language and these minority languages. The following section will seek explanations for the two distinctive usages of *xən*<sup>35</sup> in Duyun dialect from minority languages.

(a). *The Degree Words ɛo<sup>3</sup> and naŋ<sup>6</sup> in Shui*

Zhang (1980) observes that the degree adverbs *ɛo<sup>3</sup>* and *naŋ<sup>6</sup>* in Shui are equivalent to *hen* in Chinese. The former is a vernacular word while the latter is borrowed from Chinese. As for distributions, on the one hand, *ɛo<sup>3</sup>* can appear after or before predicates, of which the postpositive *ɛo<sup>3</sup>* is used more frequently than the prepositive *ɛo<sup>3</sup>*. Consider the following examples:

- (12) a. sa:i<sup>3</sup> ɛo<sup>3</sup> (postpositive)
 

问 很  
 ask HEN

- ‘ask too much’  
 b. ha:n<sup>3</sup> ɛo<sup>3</sup>  
 红 很  
 red HEN  
 ‘very red’  
 (13) ɛo<sup>3</sup> maŋ<sup>4</sup> (prepositive)  
 很 喜欢  
 HEN like  
 ‘very like’

The borrowed *naŋ*<sup>6</sup>, on the other hand, appears only before verbs and adjectives, as exemplified below:

- (14) a. naŋ<sup>6</sup> khau<sup>5</sup> (prepositive)  
 很 吠  
 HEN bark  
 ‘bark a lot’  
 b. naŋ<sup>6</sup> kuŋ<sup>2</sup>  
 很 远  
 HEN far  
 ‘very far’

Interestingly, *ɛo*<sup>3</sup> and *naŋ*<sup>6</sup> can have the form of *naŋ*<sup>6</sup> VP *ɛo*<sup>3</sup>, which is similar to the *xən* VP *xən* form in Duyun dialect. See the following example:

- (15) maŋ<sup>1</sup> naŋ<sup>6</sup> liək<sup>8</sup> ɛo<sup>3</sup>.  
 他 很 有力 很。  
 he HEN powerful HEN.  
 ‘He is very powerful.’

As shown above, syntactically, on the one hand, the postpositive *xən*<sup>35</sup> in Duyun dialect has to do with *ɛo*<sup>3</sup> in Shui; to be specific, the vernacular *ɛo*<sup>3</sup> in Shui is a postpositive degree adverb though there exist a few cases where *ɛo*<sup>3</sup> influenced by Chinese *xən* can appear before predicates. On the other hand, the borrowed *naŋ*<sup>6</sup> can only appear before predicates, which is the same as the prepositive *xən*<sup>35</sup> in Duyun dialect. Most importantly, *ɛo*<sup>3</sup> and *naŋ*<sup>6</sup> can have the form of *naŋ*<sup>6</sup> VP *ɛo*<sup>3</sup>, which coincides with the *xən* VP *xən* form in Duyun dialect. Semantically, when *ɛo*<sup>3</sup> or *naŋ*<sup>6</sup> co-occur with action verbs, they denote a high frequency, whereas, when *ɛo*<sup>3</sup> and *naŋ*<sup>6</sup> occur with adjectives, they denote a high degree. This corresponds to the meaning of *xən*<sup>35</sup> in Duyun dialect. The usages of *ɛo*<sup>3</sup> and *naŋ*<sup>6</sup> verify the claim that the AP *xən* form and the *xən* VP *xən* form in Duyun dialect are influenced by the local minority languages.

(b). *The Degree Words poŋ*<sup>44</sup> *va*<sup>44</sup> /*va*<sup>44</sup> in Miao

In addition, Wang (1985) observes that degree adverbs *poŋ*<sup>44</sup> *va*<sup>44</sup> /*va*<sup>44</sup> in Miao can only appear after the verb *ken*<sup>55</sup> ‘cry’ denoting a high frequency in (16a) and the adjective *ne*<sup>33</sup> ‘many’ denoting a high degree in (16b), as shown below:

- (16) a. ken<sup>55</sup> poŋ<sup>44</sup> va<sup>44</sup> (postpositive)  
 哭 很  
 cry HEN  
 ‘cry a lot’  
 b. teo<sup>55</sup> ɛ<sup>33</sup> ɛ<sup>33</sup> ne<sup>33</sup> ze<sup>33</sup> poŋ<sup>44</sup> va<sup>44</sup>  
 条 河 那 多 鱼 很  
 CL river that many fish HEN  
 ‘There is a lot of fish in that river.’

In the above examples, *poŋ*<sup>44</sup> *va*<sup>44</sup> is a postpositive degree adverb, which appears only after the predicate when modifying the predicate. Although *xən*<sup>35</sup> in Duyun dialect can also appear after predicates, it can only occur after adjectives, contributing to a high degree. If *xən*<sup>35</sup> is intended to express a high frequency of events, it can only occur before verbs. If *xən*<sup>35</sup> is enforced to occur after verbs like the VP *poŋ*<sup>44</sup> *va*<sup>44</sup> form, the attachment of another *xən*<sup>35</sup> before the verb can salvage the phrase, producing the *xən* VP *xən* form. In short, during the long-term communication between Miao and Han, the postpositive usage of *xən*<sup>35</sup> has been influenced by Miao’s word order.

### III. THE EVOLUTION OF *HEN*<sup>35</sup> IN DUYUN LANGUAGE DUE TO LANGUAGE CONTACT

#### A. *The Evolution of Word Order of xən*<sup>35</sup>

In recent years, due to the popularization and promotion of Mandarin, the young generation of Duyun people prefer to communicate in Mandarin. Thus, these young people can accept the usage of the prepositive *xən*<sup>35</sup> modifying adjectives like *hen* in Mandarin. Moreover, they use *xən*<sup>35</sup> to produce a lot of forms including *xən*<sup>35</sup> + adjectives/psychological verbs/modal verbs, which are totally unacceptable to the older generation of native speakers in



Duyun who have never been exposed to Mandarin. This can predict that the spread of education has led to a gradual dominance of Mandarin Chinese in Duyun dialect.

### B. The Evolution of Meanings of $xən^{35}$

In addition to the influence of Mandarin Chinese,  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect has further developed other grammatical meanings. Specifically, when the prepositive  $xən^{35}$  modifies action verbs, it can denote a high frequency of actions and a long duration of time. Moreover, in specific contexts, the co-existence of  $xən^{35}$  with action verbs can derive some subjective meanings, including  $ε^{h,35}xuə^{33}$  'like/love' and  $nen^{35}$  'able'. Meanwhile, the postpositive  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect derives some conventional meanings. Namely, when the postpositive  $xən^{35}$  occurs with an adjective, regardless of the adjective's emotional colorings (positive, negative, and neutral), it denotes not only a very high degree but also a negative emotion. This suggests that, although a grammatical element has the same usage as its counterpart in other languages, the element may derive a unique usage within a community due to several factors, for instance, culture.

### C. The Key to the Evolution of $xən^{35}$ : Language Contact

From the perspective of language contact,  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect is influenced by not only Chinese but also minority languages. At the same time,  $xən^{35}$  evolves internally. As Thomason (2001) emphasized, in the course of evolution and development, any language will come into contact with other languages to varying degrees. According to Wu (2007), the language evolution triggered by language contact will have various indirect consequences: one is the interference; the other is the creation; the latter is formed by further promotion of the internal structure of the language based on interference.  $xən^{35}$  under discussion is a typical contact evolution, which refers to the cross-linguistic "transfer" of language features, i.e., the recipient language acquires some kind of linguistic interference from the source language. In this sense, the original meaning of the prepositive  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect denotes a high frequency or a long duration, which transfers from the grammatical meanings of  $xən$  in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties. During the long evolution of the language,  $xən^{35}$  has derived some new meanings, such as  $ε^{h,35}xuə^{33}$  'like/love' and  $nen^{35}$  'able'. Furthermore, under the interference of Mandarin, on the one hand, the usage of  $xən^{35}$  among young people in Duyun is the same as that of *hen* in Mandarin, i.e.,  $xən^{35}$  can occur before adjectives, denoting a very high degree; on the other hand, the AP  $xən^{35}$  form and the  $xən^{35}$  VP  $xən^{35}$  form in Duyun dialect are interfered by the postpositive modifiers in the local minority languages, thus producing a unique form that is different from Mandarin Chinese. This indicates that language contact is a key factor for the unique distribution of  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect.

## IV. CONCLUSION

By examining  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect diachronically and synchronically, it can be seen that in a multi-ethnic region, the influence of language contact is prevalent, which can lead to further evolution of the internal structure of the language. In Duyun dialect, the prepositive  $xən^{35}$  inherits the usages of *hen* in the Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, denoting a high frequency or a long duration. Whereas, the postpositive  $xən^{35}$  is interfered with by the usages of its counterpart in the local minority languages. Both the prepositive  $xən^{35}$  and the postpositive  $xən^{35}$  have undergone different degrees of internal evolution to produce new grammatical meanings. Due to the strong popularity of Mandarin, these special usages of  $xən^{35}$  in Duyun dialect are gradually declining. As dialects are cultural living fossils, the linguistic community should take active and effective measures to protect linguistic diversities and thus cultural diversities.

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# Implementing a Problem-Based Learning Model in Writing Scientific Articles for Undergraduate Students

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**Abstract**—This study aims to determine the effect of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) on writing scientific articles. The target group was 70 Indonesian students at Universitas Asahan enrolling Indonesian Language course. The duration of the course was 14 weeks. Students were asked to submit individual writing and group projects during the experiment. This study employs a quasi-experiment with a non-equivalent post-test design in two Indonesian Language courses. According to the results, the aggregate mean score of students in PBL class was 79.91. In comparison, the overall mean score of students in the control group or those who did not adopt the PBL approach was 66.51. These results suggest that students in PBL class could write good scientific articles.

**Index Terms**—problem-based learning, scientific article writing, language learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a transfer of one's ideas or thoughts into an article. Through writing, human thoughts will be conveyed properly. The audience tends to accept information in the form of writings more readily than verbal communication. At the university level, students are expected to write effectively. By enhancing their writing abilities, students can create conceptual solid, and valuable links between research and independent learning (Sutarman et al., 2019; Williams, 2017). Besides being useful for the provision of the ability to compose a thesis, in general, writing scientific papers such as field research or a book is a mandatory requirement that students must meet as one of the requirements for graduation. One of the objectives of learning Indonesian Language courses is that students can produce high-quality scientific papers. In writing activities, students are trained to express ideas that are complete and easily understood by readers. Scientific work is a written work that contains the results of expressing someone's ideas or ideas obtained through observations, research, or review of a matter which is then compiled through specific methods (Wibowo, 2012). In addition, scientific work is a human product based on knowledge, attitudes, and scientific thinking (Sudjana, 2020). As can be inferred based on these explanations, writing scientific articles is a skill that students need to master because it shows how they think and observe using specific methods or ways. Eventually, learning to write scientific papers would aid students in writing their final assignments (Azizah & Budiman, 2017).

Students are encouraged to engage in frequent writing activities to produce scientific papers such as books, journals, and other publications, and popular science publications such as articles. Generally, scientific works are papers, scientific articles, and final assignments (i.e., undergraduate theses, theses, and dissertations) (Aini et al., 2020). Writing scientific papers is one of the skills that students must have (Grech, 2017). Proficiently writing scientific papers will help students develop communication, critical thinking, and analytical skills (Lu et al., 2019; Walsh et al., 2020). The way that must be done to improve the ability to produce an excellent scientific paper is that it should be prepared accurately, carefully, and thoroughly (Tullu, 2019).

For undergraduate students, basic skills in writing scientific articles are critical. It aims to instill a scientific culture in students (Machmud, 2016). Students not only act as knowledge collectors but also as creators of knowledge. Students can also use scientific articles to disseminate information from research results through publication. Thus, the

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knowledge possessed by students will continuously develop. In addition, sharper imagination, improved language mastery, and confidence are all advantages of being able to write (Oppenheimer et al., 2017).

Unfortunately, as with reading, Indonesian students' writing activities are not well-established (Rahmiati, 2013). It can be proven by the results of previous studies, which state that students' writing skills are still in the low category (Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017; Emilia, 2016). Students perceive academic writing as complex, while the main problem of student work is mainly assessed in written form (Azizah & Budiman, 2017; Fatimah & Masduqi, 2017). There are several obstacles that students face when writing scientific articles, which ultimately makes the student's writing less qualified. Regarding this, the quality of scientific articles is determined from several aspects, namely the writing system (Franco et al., 2021), research topics (Adelia et al., 2018), literature and empirical data (Aisiah & Firza, 2018), paraphrased citations (Agathokleous, 2022; Chen, 2021; Hafiar et al., 2019), and bibliography (Goyal et al., 2020). Furthermore, students also usually face difficulties finding scientific articles relevant to their research interests.

The lecturer's duty is essential so students can maximize their writing skills with various methods that can be applied in class. Using a learning model is one way to encourage academic writing skills in students. One of the possible learning models is problem-based learning (PBL). The PBL model is a learning approach that employs the diverse cognitive talents of students independently and in groups, as well as in the actual environment, to solve issues that are meaningful, relevant, and contextual (Yew & Goh, 2016). PBL attempts to enhance the ability to apply principles to new or real-world challenges. PBL also aims to teach students future-relevant knowledge, process, and problem-solving abilities. Furthermore, lecturers should prepare students to be researchers, critical thinkers, and creative thinkers to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century (Eldin et al., 2017). Using the PBL model in learning to write will significantly help students complete their final project in writing scientific papers or become an activist with written works that can be read by society. Through PBL, students are required to be able to identify gaps that distinguish them from previous research. Therefore, PBL will help students integrate old knowledge with new knowledge possessed by students and develop problem-solving skills. Based on these explanations, this study aims to determine the significant effect of a PBL model on students' ability to write scientific papers.

## II. METHODS

The research design uses a quasi-experiment with a non-equivalent post-test design. The participants were undergraduate students in the even semester of the academic year 2021/2022 of the Language Education Study Program at Universitas Asahan, North Sumatra. The determination of experimental and control groups was based on the mean score on the midterm examination in five classes. The mean scores of classes A, B, C, D, and E were 87, 85, 80, 75, and 80, respectively. Class B was chosen as the control group, while class D was the experimental group, with 35 students in each class.

The experimental class used the PBL model, while the control class used conventional models (lecturing). At this point, the evaluation is focused on each student's ability to write scientific articles independently. Table 1 summarizes the learning treatment for the two groups.

TABLE 1  
EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Group	Treatment	Post-test
Experiment	X <sub>1</sub>	O <sub>1</sub>
Control	X <sub>2</sub>	O <sub>2</sub>

Notes: X<sub>1</sub>: using the PBL model; X<sub>2</sub>: without the PBL model; O<sub>1</sub>: scientific writing skills of the experimental group; O<sub>2</sub>: scientific writing skills of the control group

The writing difficulties of the students served as the instructional material. The semester learning plan was developed, and its validity and reliability were evaluated before conducting the study. A rubric was used to evaluate the student's scientific writing skills. Five aspects were evaluated, including 1) the manuscript format, 2) the originality of the ideas, 3) the topic addressed, 4) the sources of data and information, and 5) the synthesis analysis of information sources. The article assessment of the student's writing abilities was administered after the study. A t-test analysis was carried out using SPSS 29.0 for the *Windows* program with a significant level of 0.05.

## III. RESULTS

The results demonstrated that the scientific writing scores in both classes varied. The frequency distribution of students' abilities to write scientific articles is presented in Table 2. Initial data processing was performed using the prerequisite test, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normality with a significance level of 0.05.

TABLE 2  
STUDENTS' SCORES ON THE ABILITY TO WRITE SCIENTIFIC ARTICLES

Interval Scores	Category	N (%)	
		Experimental Class	Control Class
91-100	Excellent	-	-
75-90	Very Good	30 (85.71%)	10 (28.57%)
60-74	Good	5 (14.29%)	20 (57.14%)
40-59	Moderate	-	5 (14.29%)
<40	Poor	-	-
<b>Total</b>		35	35

Table 2 shows that the percentage of students who get very good grades is 85.71% and 28.57% for the experimental and control classes, respectively. Meanwhile, 5 students (14.29%) and 20 students (57.14%) from the experimental and control classes are in a good category. In addition, no students got excellent grades from experimental or control classes. Meanwhile, 5 students from the control class are in the moderate category (the lowest score obtained in this study). Table 3 presents the score distribution to find the difference in scores between the experimental and control classes.

TABLE 3  
SCORE DISTRIBUTION ON SCIENTIFIC WRITING SKILLS

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experiment	35	60	89	79.91	6.68
Control	35	45	78	66.51	8.27
Valid N (listwise)	35				

Table 3 shows that PBL significantly affects students' ability to write scientific articles according to the mean score and the standard deviation. The mean scores in the experimental and the control classes are 79.91 and 66.51, respectively, which suggests that the experimental class's skills in writing a scientific article are better than the control class. After obtaining the student scores, the scores of both classes were further processed using a t-test to test the research hypothesis.

TABLE 4  
NORMALITY TEST RESULTS

Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Control	0.178	35	0.007*	0.910	35	0.007*
Experiment	0.177	35	0.007*	0.920	35	0.014*

\*p < 0.05 (not normally distributed)

According to Table 4, the analysis of the prerequisite test for scientific writing abilities suggests that the data distribution is not normal since Sig. is less than a significance level of 0.05. The next step is, therefore, to evaluate the hypothesis using the Mann-Whitney U test (see Table 5).

TABLE 5  
MANN-WHITNEY TEST RESULTS

Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
496.000	50.872	4.875	0.001

Based on the results in Table 5, Sig.2-tailed is 0.001 or < 0.05. Therefore,  $H_0$  is not supported, and  $H_1$  is supported, which means that the PBL model affects students' scientific writing skills. These results suggest that using a PBL model in writing scientific articles can significantly affect student writing skills. This result is consistent with prior studies, which claimed that the PBL model could enhance students' writing skills (Chang et al., 2019; Iswandari et al., 2017; Kristyanawati et al., 2016).

#### IV. DISCUSSION

In this study, the stages of PBL are as follows: (1) introducing students to the problem; (2) organizing students to learn; (3) directing the investigation; (4) producing and presenting the work; and (5) assessing and evaluating the problem-solving process (Strobel & Barneveld, 2009). Students can learn from a variety of literature during these stages. The PBL model's syntax leads students to think, analyze, conduct research, and compose research reports. The PBL model affects the critical thinking skills students need in analyzing problems, and it refers to the second step in this model, which focuses on organizing the students to learn critically (Wenno et al., 2021). In this step, students and the lecturer decide on the project's topic and the problem-solving method. Students could build the project by collecting information regarding the project, the plan, and the objective. The lecturer facilitates students in getting information from various sources. Meanwhile, in the third and fourth phases, the PBL model includes learning steps that can affect

the capacity to compose articles, namely formulating hypotheses and collecting data from the information needed in problem-solving (Syamsidah & Hamidah, 2018). The primary goal of the PBL model is in the third phase, specifically the investigation phase, which can be completed individually or in groups. In this phase, students collect data, formulate hypotheses, and propose answers to build and hone their problem-solving skills. Implementing research-based learning can help students enhance their metacognitive problem-solving skills (Amaral et al., 2017; Pratama, 2018; Wardoyo et al., 2021). In the producing and presenting work phase, the syntax motivates students to effectively convey their work to other groups to optimally achieve competence in writing scientific articles.

Writing competency requires the allocation of time and the completion of learning activities that enable students to produce writing from the results of their research. The students should write following the rules or the format. The students' manuscript format must be organized regarding the assessment indicators. Then, the student's creativity of ideas is wide-ranging, as each group member may express their opinion communicatively and constructively. In this study, the topics raised were quite interesting for some groups. They chose the latest topics related to the theme. The students perceive that PBL helps them generate ideas to start writing (Nisa et al., 2017). In addition, PBL will increase students' passion, self-assurance, creativity, and capacity for self-directed and collaborative learning. Eventually, it increases instructors' motivation and instructional satisfaction (Luh et al., 2017).

Understanding the problem is essential in the first stage. Problem orientation is a stage that refers to students understanding problems, formulating solutions, and finding the right solution according to the stages and ensuring all stages are carried out correctly (Downing et al., 2009). At this stage, the lecturer guides students to solve the given problem (Syamsidah & Hamidah, 2018). Problem-based learning significantly influences students' ability to write scientific articles in the experiment class. These results can be obtained because the PBL model encourages students to actively participate in investigating authentic problems. Students discuss and communicate more in groups while conducting investigations. Communication between group members effectively obtains quick answers for students unaware of the problems to be formulated and studied. Since students can ask the lecturer directly in the control group, they choose to ask the lecturer rather than discuss in groups.

Based on the study's findings, there are some supported findings from other researchers. In the second phase, students are organized to learn based on the PBL model. It engages the student's critical thinking and problem-solving. The findings suggested that PBL affected students' problem-solving and scientific writing abilities (Sari & Sumarmi, 2021). This research is supported by a study about the effect of group investigation on undergraduate students' capacity to produce scientific articles, which showed that directing the investigation positively influences the quality of students' scientific articles because the data and facts are written according to the actual results (Wardani & Sari, 2017).

Regarding the fourth and fifth learning stages, the students in the experimental class were more active in researching what they already knew about the problem's fundamental causes. They acquired the essential information and tools to solve the problem by assessing synthesis sources of information and evaluating the problem-solving process. Meanwhile, in the control group, the students often asked the lecturer how to get the data and information sources. Sometimes, they got confused in analyzing and evaluating the information needed. Those observation results indicate that PBL enables students to think contextually about the given problems, work well in a group, develop critical thinking, and encourage them to be more explorative (Affandi & Sukyadi, 2016).

Writing ability demonstrates the level of student learning. As a result, these skills need to be developed through the learning process. Lecturers can construct learning processes that direct students' abilities to compose scientific articles by selecting relevant learning models. The learning model depicts the activities involved in the learning process. Professionally, instructors use models selectively to attain specific learning objectives. The choice of an appropriate model can influence the accomplishment of learning objectives. However, lecturers must motivate students to develop their writing abilities to compensate for the limitation that does not exist in the PBL learning phases (Parra & Calero, 2019).

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the results, the PBL model significantly affects the ability to write scientific articles for Language Education Study Program students at Universitas Asahan. The mean scores on the ability to write scientific articles for the experimental and control classes are 79.91 and 66.51, respectively. Improvements must be made utilizing models with learning syntax targeted toward writing abilities. It is suggested that the lecturer may provide students with additional practice by providing a topic bank or allowing students to choose the topics they want to develop as additional assignments. In addition, additional lecturer feedback is required to clarify any doubts students may have while writing so they can gain more concrete ideas about better structure content and organized written texts.

## VI. SUGGESTION

Students must possess writing proficiency to effectively communicate their ideas and potential solutions to issues arising from the events they face. The subsequent researcher can explore this topic with a broader perspective and may incorporate alternative pedagogic approaches that could augment students' analytical thinking abilities in compiling and producing high-quality scientific work.

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# Implementation of New English Language Policy in Saudi Context: Perceptions, Challenges, and Remedies

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**Abstract**—With the advent of Saudi Vision 2030 implementation, the internationalization of the Saudi education system has invigorated significant alterations in teaching and learning practices specifically concerning English language teaching. Since the beginning of 2021, under the new language policy, English has been taught from Grade 1. The aim is to meet the persisting global educational, job, business, and linkage challenges by educating and training the youth in English as the focal tool for future advancement. However, the realization of these objectives depends on various sociocultural factors. The perceptions of the important stakeholders such as teachers, the suitability of the EFL curriculum, and the professional training of EFL teachers can perform a pivotal role in achieving or undermining these goals. Also, teaching practices in real contexts can pose multiple unforeseen challenges and hurdles. This research intended to explore the perceptions of EFL teachers in introducing English as early as grade 1, their practices, and the practical challenges this new policy poses in its effective implementation. To achieve the said objectives, a tailored-made questionnaire comprising quantitative and qualitative items was administered. The detailed analysis highlighted many aspects of concern such as the lack of professional training for EFL teachers, unsuitable and incompatible curriculum, neglect of communicative skills, etc.

**Index Terms**—English language policy, teachers' beliefs, EFL practices, curriculum/syllabus suitability, Saudi context

## I. INTRODUCTION

The past few decades have witnessed an ever-increasing need of introducing English as an ESL or EFL in different countries' language teaching policies and systems. As English represents an unparalleled "social, cultural, intellectual, linguistic, political and economic capital" (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017, p. 200) different nations are forced to produce competent English speakers to meet global challenges. For that purpose, many countries have incorporated teaching and learning English into their national language policies. As the following figure illustrates, apart from English-dominant countries like the USA, UK, Canada, etc, 142 other countries maintain the teaching of English as a mandatory element whereas, another 41, incorporate English as an elective component, elucidating the denomination of English as a world language.

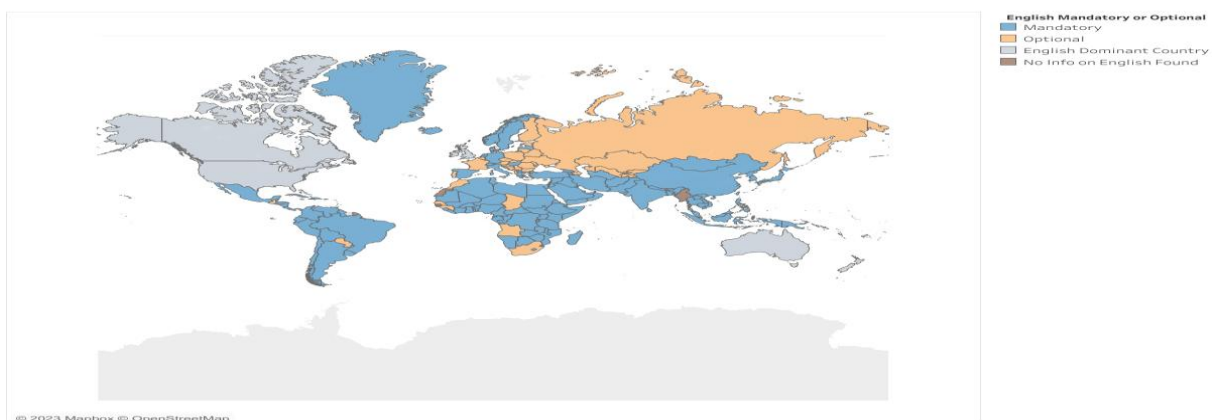


Figure 1. Global English Education Policy

Note. Countries in which English Language is a Mandatory or an Optional Subject (interactive). (n.d.). <https://www.uwinnipeg.ca/global-english-education/countries-in-which-english-is-mandatory-or-optional-subject.html>.

In line with the global trends, within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (hence KSA), the language policy concerning English has undergone several changes over the past few years. Initially (1937) it was introduced at elementary school (grades 4,5,6), then was introduced at both intermediate and secondary levels (1942). Next, in 1974 & 1980, the contact



hours were increased and then decreased respectively. In 2004, the Saudi MoE introduced the “English language as early as grade six of primary school” (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017). More recently, English as a foreign language teaching and learning has been made part of the curriculum of grade 1 and onwards since the beginning of the academic year 2021 by MoE, as one of the key components of Saudi Vision 2030 which is considered a memorandum of economic growth of KSA (Jabeen et al., 2022). Devising ESL/EFL language policies, however, is only the first step, the successful implementation of the language policies is a more demanding, complicated process including the geo-political situation and status of English within the host country.

The socio-cultural and geo-political status of English within KSA has been of major concern as despite the government-level English facilitating mass attempts, and policies, there are still apprehensions at the ground levels against the inclusion of English into mainstream educational paradigm (Almansour, 2013; Al-mengash, 2006; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Phan & Barnawi, 2015) under the fear of bringing western culture, mindset into the country, and also compromising and undermining the status of Arabic. Moreover, the successful execution of language policies also depends on the beliefs and practices of the primary stakeholders such as teachers, students, and parents, designing and availability of appropriate curriculum, course materials, infrastructural support, and teachers’ training (Arago o, 2011; Lin, 2013). Among all the stakeholders, English language teachers hold a very vital position in the EFL/ESL teaching and learning process (Brown & Englehardt, 2016). Their beliefs, practices, and training, all contribute towards either the success or failure of the EFL/ESL language policies developed and implemented. Considering, the newly established EFL teaching policy in KSA, it becomes pivotal to explore the nature of the role English teachers are playing in the successful implementation of the policy under the following research questions:

- Q1. What perceptions do EFL teachers possess regarding the new English language policy and curriculum?
- Q2. To what extent EFL teachers are provided with English language teaching training?
- Q3. What are the various challenges teachers face while teaching English to young learners?
- Q4. How can EFL teaching challenges be addressed for effective implementation of the said policy?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Indisputably, in recent times the boundaries between nations and countries have been reduced and confined to physical division on maps merely. People are interconnected and interlinked with each other more than ever now—socially, culturally, politically, ethnically, etc (Hülmbauer et al., 2008). Such complex and intricate worldwide interconnectivity has been facilitated by and paradoxically facilitates the phenomenon of ‘multilingualism’ dispelling the previously existing linguistic barriers among the speakers of varied languages. Among the languages that are commonly used around the world by non-native speakers, English indisputably holds the position of the most “prevalent language for intercultural communication” (Hülmbauer et al., 2008, p. 26) serving as a ‘lingua franca’. As defined by Firth (1996, p. 246) English as a lingua franca has been perceived as a “contact language’ between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication” making it inevitable for various countries to incorporate English as a second or foreign language into their teaching and learning systems by revising their language policies (Geiti, 2020). In such scenarios, the role of EFL/ESL teachers as one vital stakeholder becomes very crucial in the effectiveness of the English teaching and learning process (Bai & Yuan, 2019).

Multiple studies have been conducted in various contexts concerning the role of teachers’ backgrounds, beliefs, and perceptions in the way they deliberate teaching and learning English within formal academic situations. Belief as defined by Borg (2001) is “a proposition which may be consciously or unconsciously held, is evaluative in that it is accepted as true by the individual, and is therefore imbued with emotive commitment; further, it serves as a guide to thought and behavior” (p. 186) can deeply govern EFL teachers’ responses to and practices in teaching English. The majority of the findings in the previous research establish that there has been a profound and complex interplay between teachers’ beliefs and their teaching practices in the effective teaching of English as an FL (Kihlstedt, 2019; Lin, 2013; Tekin, 2015; Whyte et al., 2022). Teachers’ background knowledge, learning, social status, affiliations, and what they “think, know and believe” irrefutably “have much influence on what teachers do in the classroom” (Zheng, 2015, p. 1).

Along with teachers’ beliefs, teachers’ training and professional development in EFL teaching also have a deep impact on teachers’ performance. The teaching of a foreign language to different level learners needs different sets of skills and training as teaching young learners in early school years or kindergarten is different from teaching adult learners (Crosse, 2007). Many researchers have emphasized the inclusion of young learners’ specific “activities for the application of communicative and motivational initiatives which encourage children’s motivation, thinking skills, and creativity through involving them in play and storytelling (Cameron, 2003; Crosse, 2007; Gillis & Nilsen, 2014). However, in many ESL and EFL teaching contexts, the cruciality of language teachers’ training and development is undermined which resultantly, compromises the efficacy of the target language teaching and learning practices (Chaves & Guapacha, 2014; Mizell, 2010).

The lack of professional development, target language teaching skills, and exposure to digitalized and recent language teaching practices make the EFL/ESL practitioners overlook and unanticipated the challenges of changing language teaching contexts. Being unaware of the current developments, demands, and needs, the EFL/ESL teachers keep practicing the decades-old, traditional teaching methods, holding on to beliefs clashing with their language

teaching practices, and even believing that their way of teaching needs no changing (Chaves & Guapacha, 2014; Khan, 2012; Mizell, 2010; Novozhenina & López, 2018).

Within the KSA context, numerous studies have highlighted the status and situation of English language teaching. Despite the natives' occasional concerns, the government has consistently been advancing in incorporating EFL teaching in all educational spheres and levels (Almansour, 2013; Al-mengash, 2006; Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Mehboob & Elyas, 2014; Phan & Barnawi, 2015). However, the extent such efforts are fruitful in developing and producing competent English speakers/users has been questioned rigorously in the previous literature being inadequate in achieving the said goal. Outdated teaching and learning practices, a lack of pre and in-service teachers' training and development, limited exposure to modern teaching and learning trends and methods, and challenges in incorporating digital literacies (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Khan, 2012; Mehboob & Elyas, 2014) are only a few examples of the causes that produce a gap between the EFL policies and their effective implementation.

The effectiveness of EFL teaching has become even more viable with the advent of the new language policy of teaching English from grade 1 in KSA and thus it is crucial to examine the nature of readiness and relevant training teachers have as fundamental stakeholders in the EFL teaching-learning continuum. Also, exploring their perceptions and beliefs regarding the new language policy, their classroom practices, the provision of administrative support, the relevance of the EFL curriculum, and the challenges they encounter was necessary to evaluate and predict the future of the new policy in KSA.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This exploratory study was conducted to gain new insights and views, and for increasing knowledge of the phenomenon under discussion (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010). Female English teachers at the early-year school level were the focus of the study. A total of 60 teachers within the Alkharj region participated in the research. Both quantitative and qualitative means were employed for data collection, analysis, and interpretation purposes. The mixed method approach supported understanding and exploring the English language teaching continuum in its breadth and depth taking advantage of the merits of both (Clark & Ivankova, 2016). To achieve a detailed, profound, and holistic understanding, a purpose-built, comprehensive questionnaire was developed and administered at schools involving female English teachers of early-year education to gauge their beliefs, practices, as well as the challenges they encounter (See Appendix A).

The questionnaire comprised 6 parts and a total of 45 closed and open-ended items, based on the pertinent areas of investigation as demonstrated in the table below:

TABLE 1  
QUESTIONNAIRE FRAMEWORK

Part	Question/statements	Focus
1.	Demographic questions	Age, education level, field of education, and experience.
2.	New English Language Policy	Teachers' awareness of and beliefs about the new EFL policy.
3.	Provision, relevance, and effectiveness of syllabus, books/course materials, and infrastructure in implementing the new language policy	The relevance and importance of administrative, and infrastructural support, and the effectiveness of the EFL curriculum.
4.	Teachers' professional development and training for teaching English as EFL	The provision of the pre and/or in-service professional development and EFL teaching training
5.	Medium of instruction, focus of EFL curriculum, teachers' objectives of and practices in English language teaching	The focus of EFL teaching and learning curriculum, the language of the medium of instruction, and the teaching methods adopted.
6.	Challenges faced by teachers in teaching English as a foreign language.	The factors hampering the effective EFL teaching

### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

The questionnaire was administered online and once the responses were collected, they were analyzed in two phases: the quantitative and the qualitative analysis phases. The following section demonstrates the quantitative representation and analysis.

#### A. Quantitative Analysis

TABLE 2  
PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Part 1	Question/statements	Responses	
		Range	No. / % of respondents
1.	Age (years)	20-30	10
		31-40	24
		41 and above	26
2.	Educational level	BA	73%
		MA	15.8%
		Other	11.2%
3.	Field of education	English	73.3%
		Other	26.7%
4.	Teaching experience (years)	0-2	5.6%
		3-5	11.1%
		6-8	11.1%
		9 and above	72.2%

As demonstrated, the majority of the EFL teachers were between the age range of 31 and 41 and above 83% to be exact. 73% of these teachers held a BA degree whereas 15.8% of them were MA graduates. Importantly, almost 73% of the teachers had an English specialized degree whereas, the rest 27% were graduates in other disciplines. Most of the respondents were experienced teachers with an experience of 9 years and above.

These demographic features represent important factors. For instance, the majority of the teachers are in mid-careers, teaching for several years, and hold a minimum degree level. It reflects that these EFL teachers, though have valuable experience in teaching English, may lack the knowledge of recent teaching and learning methods, approaches, and use of advanced technology. Also, 27% of the EFL teachers do not hold an English specialized degree which does not qualify them for being an EF teacher in the first place.

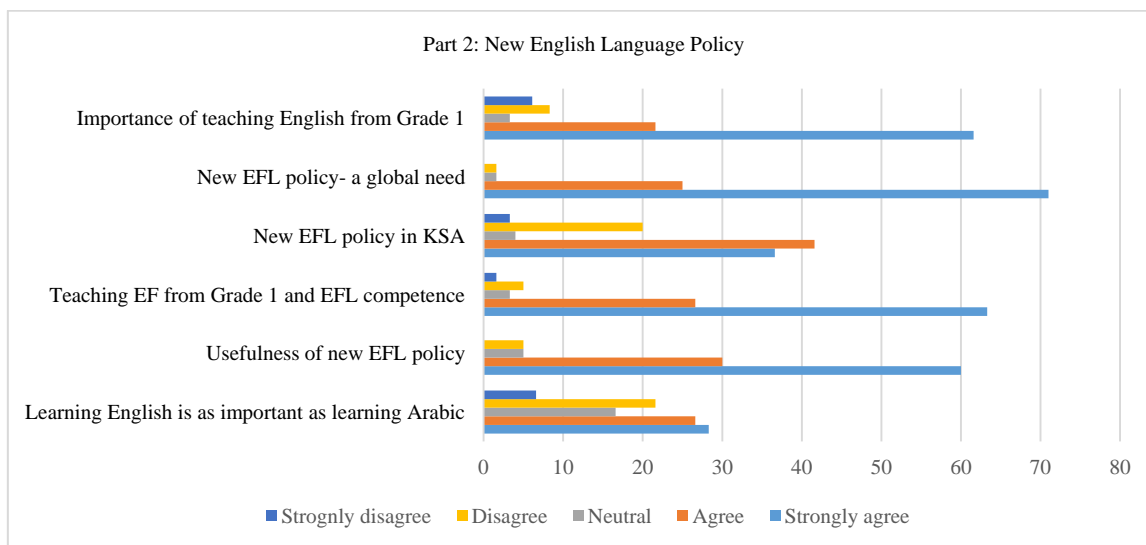


Figure 2. New English Language Policy

This section aimed at gauging EFL teachers' perceptions of introducing English teaching from grade 1 as EFL teachers' beliefs and perceptions have proven to be crucially related to and even governing their teaching and learning practices (Araga, 2011; Lin, 2013; Bai & Yuan, 2019). When asked whether or not teachers believe teaching English from grade 1 is important, 82% of them favored its importance. However, almost 16% of them believed it is not important to teach English which may affect their EF teaching intentions and practices. Similarly, although a significantly higher number of respondents (96%) acknowledge that the new EFL policy is in line with global needs, almost 23% of them do not believe it was necessary to introduce it as early as grade 1, which reveals their dissatisfaction with the new policy. Similarly, most EF teachers also opined that teaching English from early grades will enhance the linguistic competence of EF learners which shows a positive attitude towards EFL teaching. Interestingly, there was a mixed reaction from the teachers regarding the importance of teaching English and Arabic, with 42% of them believing that both languages are important, while, 29% refuted the importance of both. Another, 17% of them did not comment.

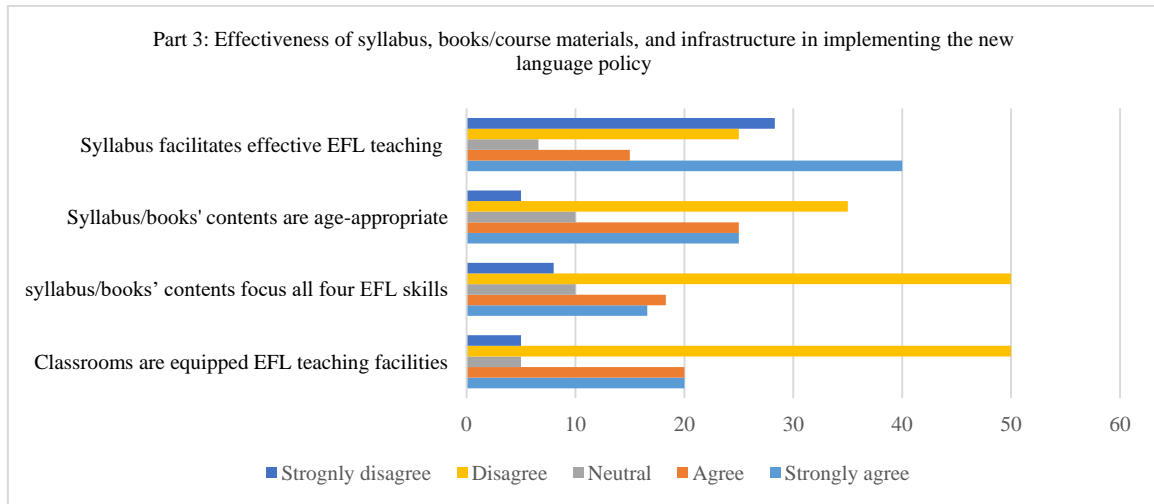


Figure 3. Effectiveness of Syllabus, Books/Course Materials, and Infrastructure in Implementing the New Language Policy

EFL curriculum and syllabus hold the key to implementing the language policies and obtaining the set goals (Itmeizeh & Hassan, 2020). If the designed curriculum does not encompass the main areas e.g. skills to be focussed, methods/approaches to be applied, linguistic competence, and critical thinking to be developed, etc, the end results will be compromised and left unachieved too. As per participants' responses, the curriculum and syllabus/books designed and developed for teaching English at grade 1 are not considered to be effective. Almost half of the teachers are dissatisfied and claim that the EFL curriculum does not facilitate effective EFL teaching. Likewise, 35% of the teachers consider the current curriculum unsuitable for the age level of the learners. Another major problem highlighted is that of the unequal focus of the curriculum, syllabus/books on all EFL skills. A vast majority of 58% of the participants believe that the books and syllabus contents do not focus on teaching reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills equally. In addition, EFL teachers also pinpointed that the classrooms lack language teaching equipment and resources.

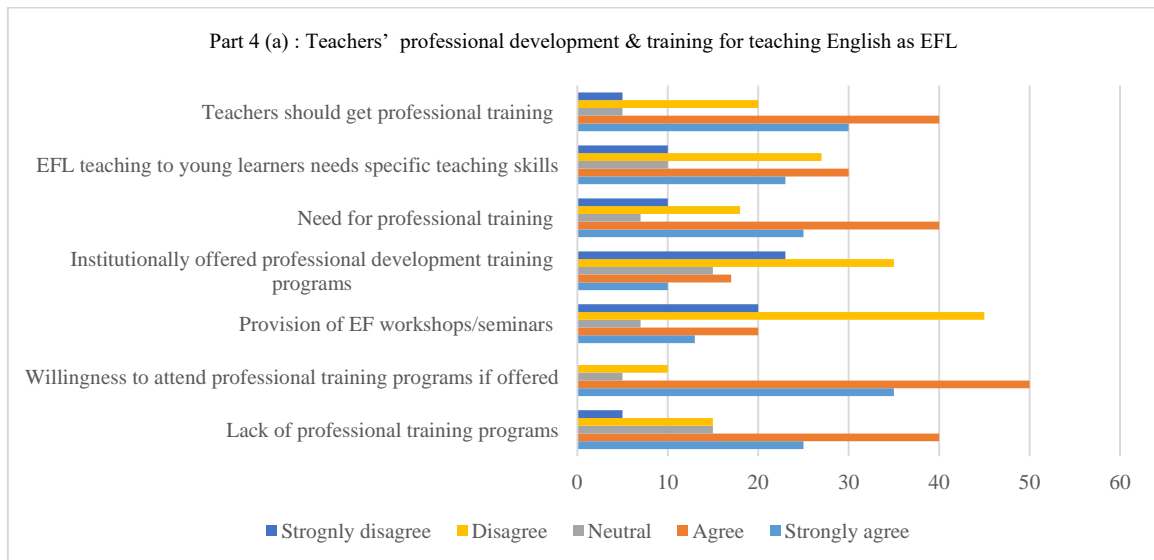


Figure 4. Provision and Perceptions of EFL Teachers' Concerning Professional Development

Continuous professional development and training have been considered and proven to be crucial in honing EFL teachers' skills for teaching more effectively and smoothly by professionally handling any challenges emerging (Chaves & Guapacha, 2014; Khan, 2012; Linz, 2013). Surprisingly, where 70% of teachers approved of the need for professional development, 25% of them negated it. As discussed earlier, teachers' beliefs and attitudes have a deep impact on the way they perceive and practice EFL teaching, this negation of the professional development need reflects teachers' unawareness of the cruciality of professional development. Also, almost 53% of the participants believe that teaching very young learners needs specific teaching skills, unlike 37% who do not think teaching to different age learners differs and requires different skills. Many previous studies have established the fact that teaching adults and teaching young learners are significantly different and require particular skills, training, and approaches (Crosse, 2007; Derakhshan et al., 2015; Ismail, 2015). The teachers' perception that teaching young and adult learners is the same may lead to the use of inappropriate teaching methods and approaches which in turn, may compromise the whole teaching and learning process and its effectiveness. Almost similar responses can be observed when the teachers were asked

about the need for professional development and training. Also, as per the responses of the participants, the provision of professional development training, workshops, and seminars by their institutions, and overall is one of the seriously neglected areas, as 58% and 65% of them respectively claimed that there is no such training, despite the fact that majority of them (85%) are willing to opt for such programs and opportunities if offered.

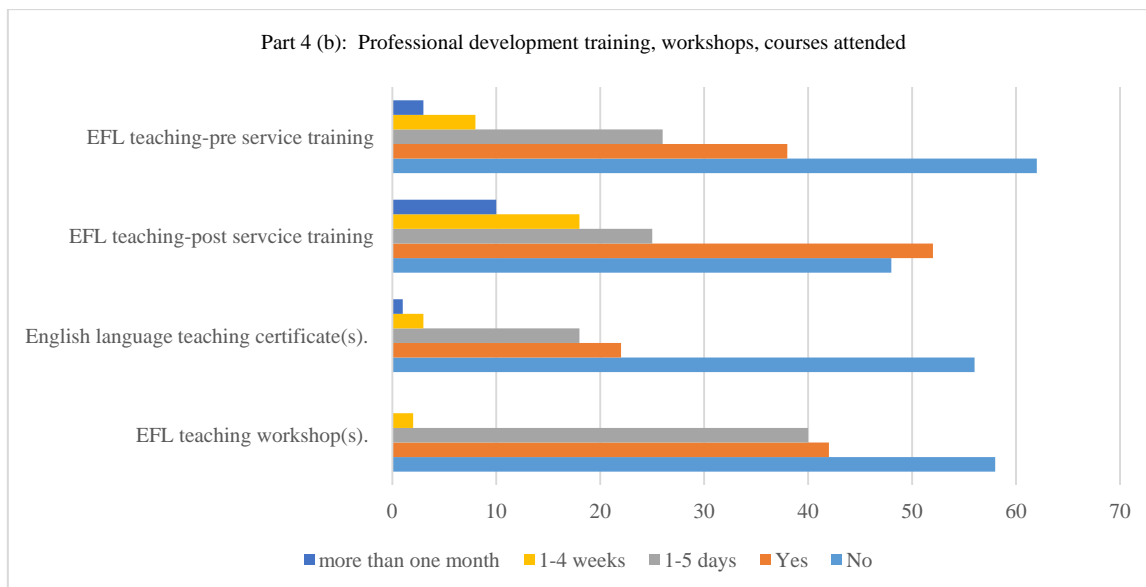


Figure 5. Teachers' Participation in Professional Development Training, Workshops, Courses

The above figure demonstrates the situation of pre and post-service teaching training, workshops, and/or certificates teachers have to perform as efficient EFL teachers. 37 of 60 teachers had no prior EFL training and 48% of them had attended no training after they started performing as EFL teachers. For the ones who had attended any training, their duration remained less than a week in most cases. As far as earning EFL-related certificates is concerned, 56% of the participants have no certificates, whereas, 18% of them avoided answering this question. Only 4 of the participants had EFL certification. A similar trend is evident in the reactions of the participants related to the workshops they had, with 58% having no workshops and 42% attending short-duration workshops. These responses validate the previously highlighted fact that there is a scarcity of pre and post-service professional development training, workshops, seminars, etc.

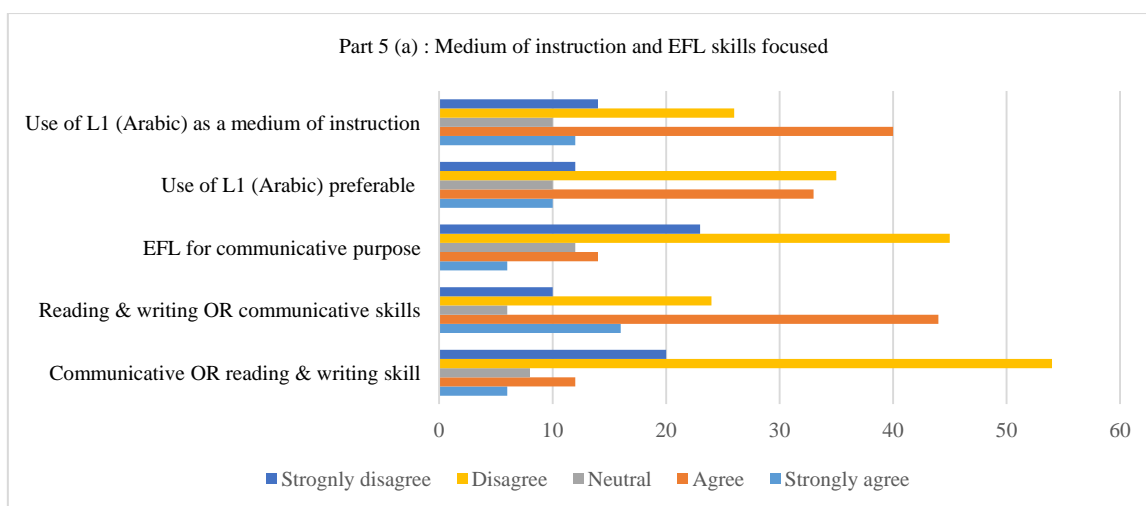


Figure 6. Medium of Instruction and EFL Skills Focused

One very pertinent area of EFL/ESL teaching and learning practices is the medium of instruction, common scholarly debate asserting that the target language should be employed as the medium of instruction and the use of L1 should be minimized (Almoayidi, 2018; Shin et al., 2020). 52% of the teachers established that Arabic is used as the medium of instruction, contradicting their responses when 47% of them do not prefer English to be used as a medium of instruction. It can be inferred that though teachers are aware of the necessity of using the target language as a medium of instruction, they still use Arabic as a teaching medium. Also, when asked whether or not the syllabus focuses on enhancing the communicative skills of EFL learners, the majority of responses remained negative demonstrating that communicating

in English is not the objective of the syllabus 74% of the teachers claim reading and writing skills are focused more than listening and speaking as far as the course materials and activities are concerned. This traditionally maintained focus on EFL teaching methods and approaches hampers the development of communicative competence in EFL learners in KSA which has been pointed out in many research studies (Al Ahdal et al., 2014; Al Asmari, 2015; Ashraf, 2018). Naturally, the learners will learn to speak in the target language when they will be given the opportunities to practice speaking in that language in various situations for various purposes.

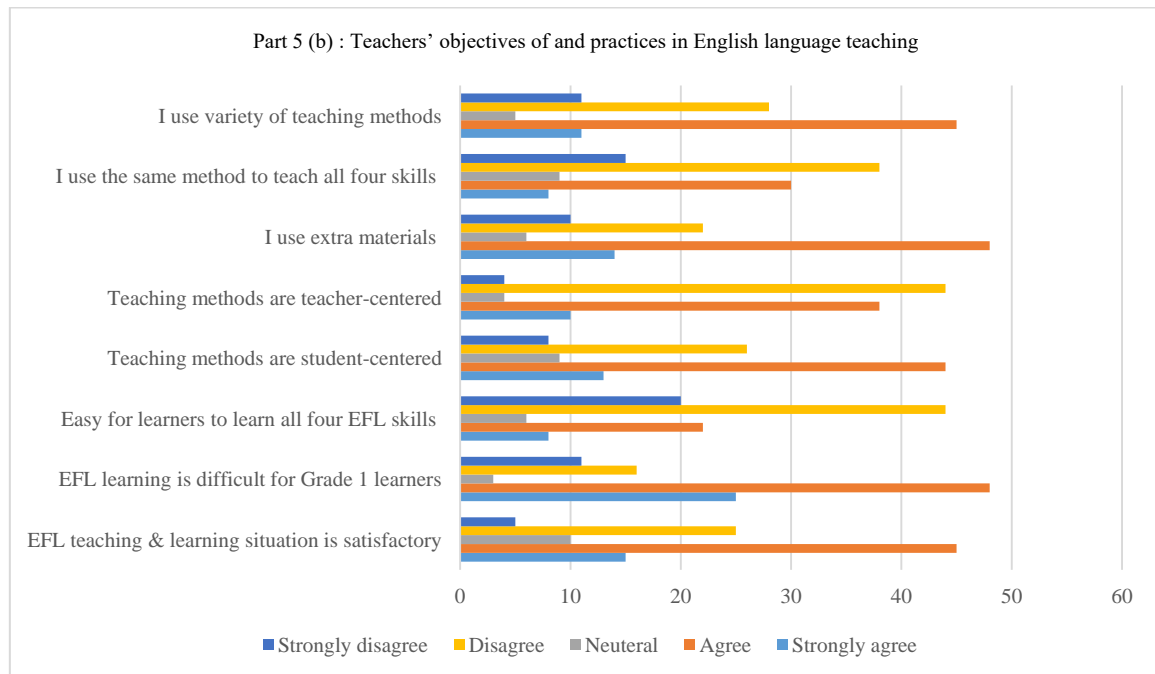


Figure 7. Teachers' Objectives of and Practices in English Language Teaching

The last part of the questionnaire focused on the individual practices of the respondents within the classroom situation. As asserted, a vast majority of teachers employ a variety of teaching methods and use extra materials if needed to make EFL teaching more effective. However, interestingly, almost half of the participants stated that the teaching methods are commonly teacher-centered and the other half maintained that they are learners-centered. On the other hand, 66% of the teachers said that the learners do not find it easy to learn English, specifically the young learners who face difficulties in learning English as declared by 73% of the teachers. But, 60% of the respondents despite all the issues highlighted in different parts of the questionnaire, believe that the overall EFL teaching and learning situation within KSA is satisfactory.

### B. Qualitative Analysis

The open-ended, qualitative items were included so that pertinent areas of investigation can be investigated more profoundly through the perceptions and beliefs of the EFL teachers, the way they perceive them. Also, the main aim was to triangulate, validate and elaborate further on the key areas investigated in the quantitative part of the study.

#### (a). Language(s) Used Most Often as a Medium of Instruction and Why

One of the long-debated aspects of EFL/ESL teaching and learning practices is that should the teachers use the target language solely or L1 as well as a medium of instruction, or to what extent teachers need to rely on L1 if used. As established in previous studies, the nature and extent of the use of the target language or L1 can significantly hamper or facilitate EFL teaching and learning effectiveness (Chiou, 2014; Shin et al., 2020). With only a few exceptions, most of the teachers stated that they use both L1 (Arabic) and the target language (English), and sometimes Arabic is used more often than English. The most common reason offered for using L1 is that young learners come with exposure to only L1 listening and speaking and it becomes difficult to teach them in the target language only as stated ‘..they (learners) don’t understand when I speak in English or explain in English. So I use Arabic to explain’. Also, some teachers believe that using the target language more often will stress young learners out right at the start of their school education. Some of the teachers said they use English very less resorting to the grammar-translation method when the book contents are taught or explained so that the learners can understand easily. Overall, it can be inferred from the responses that Arabic is adopted most of the time as a medium of instruction by EFL teachers which negates the fact that L1 should be used judiciously and sparingly while teaching a foreign or second language (Chiou, 2014; Shin et al., 2020) even recommending a “90% L2 and 10% L1” ratio (Hlas, 2016).

#### (b). EFL Skills Focused and Why

Traditionally, all around the world the main skills focused on within EFL/ESL contexts remain literacy skills i.e. reading and writing while oral skills are neglected (Jabeen, 2016). Within KSA, the same traditional way of teaching EFL has been questioned and criticized in many research studies (Al-Tale, 2017; Alrabai, 2016; Khan, 2013). Despite, the ongoing emphasis on focusing on the development of all skills, the majority of the teachers claimed that the main focus remains on reading and writing skills, and listening and speaking are less focused. Elaborating on the reason for this, they highlighted that the syllabus, books, and course materials, and contents lay more emphasis on teaching reading and writing than listening and speaking as in the words of one teacher "...the books and activities are mostly related to writing and reading... less tasks for listening and speaking".

*(c). EFL Skills Neglected and Why*

Some of the teachers believed that no skills are neglected, while others stated that more focus is laid on literacy skills and less on the development of oracy skills. And the causes of this less emphasis are the same as above i.e. lack of contents, focus, and activities in the syllabus and coursebooks. A few teachers remarked that "English pronunciation is challenging" for young learners and they find it difficult to speak in it.

*(d). Challenges EFL Teachers Face in Teaching EFL Syllabus, Course/Textbooks Contents*

Interestingly, almost 38% of the respondents claimed that they have no challenges in teaching the books, course materials, etc. While some of them pointed out that sometimes "...books contents are above students age level or understanding level" and "...it becomes difficult to clear their concepts". Some reported that linguistic content is difficult for young learners to comprehend. "Curricula are not compatible with the skills required of students to achieve and also not compatible with their desires", as described more specifically by one of the teachers, the curriculum and syllabus seem ineffective in promoting the specific language skills development and taking the needs of the learners into account.

*(e). Challenges EFL Teachers Face in Teaching EFL Skills*

Speaking is one of the most problematic and challenging skills for EFL teachers to teach as "...Textbook content doesn't provide to the student what they need in level 1 for speaking". Moreover, some EFL teachers believe that the role of parents and guardians needs to be more supportive and English language learning conducive "...Parents or guardians must talk to children in English and give time at home". Also, the interference of L1 on English pronunciation is another challenge both teachers and learners face, "...some of the sounds don't exist in our native language so the students could find it somehow difficult to pronounce". Similarly, the unavailability of audio-visual aids and language labs is also one of the major reasons why listening and speaking are not practiced more often. A few of the teachers also found the books "either too simple or too difficult". In addition, learners are sometimes not ready or motivated to learn, "...reading and writing skills in particular are not very appealing to students and most of them found these skills boring and challenging", as the content is difficult for the learners to comprehend so they lose interest.

*(f). Ways to Make Teaching EFL More Effective*

The teachers offered a number of suggestions to address the issue of EFL teaching and learning situations to make it more effective and successful. One of the major recommendations is revising the curriculum and syllabus of grade 1 English making it more suitable and relevant to the age, needs, and backgrounds of the learners. In addition, the teachers suggested adding more listening and speaking activities to promote the development of the speaking skill of the learners. Moreover, currently, the textbooks lack the fun-learning aspect. EFL teachers believe that adding fun activities, learning through playing, singing, and using hands-on tools and toys can significantly increase the learners' interest in learning English. The participants also emphasized the importance of a more supportive role of the parents in learning and speaking English at home too. A few teachers also highlighted the student-teachers ratio as well as one of the factors impeding effective English teaching and learning.

## V. CONCLUSION

For the past few decades, there has been an increased awareness and acceptance of incorporating English into mainstream education within KSA, a reflection of which are the continuously changing EFL policies, immense efforts, budget spent, and multiple measures taken at the governmental and private levels (Barnawi & Al-Hawsawi, 2017; Mehboob & Elyas, 2014). However, the success of any language policy depends on multiple factors and the effective roles played by each and every stakeholder involved. The current study aimed at constructing a comprehensive investigation and overview of the latest EFL policy and its implementation within KSA with respect to teachers' beliefs, curriculum relevance, teaching and learning practices, and challenging factors impeding its successful implementation. The demographic details reflect that the majority of the EFL teachers are in their mid-careers, teaching for more than 9 years, holding a basic BA degree (73%) and MA (27%), and without any EFL/ESL teaching certification (with the exception of only 2 teachers out of 60). The teaching of foreign languages and specifically to young learners need a set of specific skills, but as found in this study, there is a lack of professional training programs, workshops, training, and



seminars which deprives the EFL teachers of necessary exposure to the latest and up-to-date teaching methods and approaches, advanced technology, learning styles, etc.

Furthermore, most EFL teachers showed serious dissatisfaction with the syllabus, textbooks, and course materials of early-grade EFL learners being unsuitable to their age levels, too difficult for learners' comprehension, insufficient contents, and focus on communicative skills, etc. The next area of concern is the use of L1 for teaching English as EFL teachers acknowledge the frequent use of Arabic which has proven to be a main hindrance in developing the linguistic and communicative competence of the learners (Chiou, 2014; Shin et al., 2020; Jabeen, 2017). Also, as inferred from both quantitative and qualitative analysis, the textbooks, course contents, and activities, do not address the need for EFL teaching through fun and play which makes English learning more difficult, uninteresting, and challenging for young learners. To sum up, to achieve the goal of producing competent English users, EFL teachers should be continuously trained professionally through professional development and training and EFL/ESL teaching certification so that they are able to face the day to challenges of English teaching more efficiently. There is a dire need to revisit the EFL curriculum developed for young learners as it seems to seriously lack to address the multiple needs of the learners and EFL teaching objectives. Also, the overall EFL teaching and learning context should be made conducive to effective teaching and learning practices by providing infrastructural support, language labs, monitoring the student-teacher ratio, and more flexible teaching approaches.

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#### APPENDIX. QUESTIONNAIRE FRAMEWORK

The following questionnaire aims at identifying the perceptions and beliefs of early-year English teachers regarding the new English language policy, teaching practices, and the challenges they face in teaching English as a foreign language from Grade 1 and above. Your cooperation is highly appreciated.										
Part 1: Demographic items										
1. Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	20-30	<input type="checkbox"/>	31-40	<input type="checkbox"/>	41 and above				
2. Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	BA	<input type="checkbox"/>	MA	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify) _____				
3. Field of Education/Highest Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	English	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify) _____						
4. Teaching Experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	0-2 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	3-5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	6-8 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	9 years and above		
Part 2: New English Language Policy Please choose your response from a scale of (1) Strongly agree to (5) Strongly disagree										
1. It is important to teach English from Grade 1 learners onwards in KSA.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
2. The new policy of teaching English from Grade 1 onwards is according to the global needs of learning English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
3. This new policy was needed according to the English language teaching context in KSA.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
4. Teaching English from Grade 1 will improve the early-year learners' EFL competence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
5. I find the new English language policy useful in teaching English as a foreign language.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
6. It is as important for learners to learn English as to learn Arabic in the early years of language learning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
Part 3: Provision, relevance, and the effectiveness of syllabus, books, and infrastructure in implementing the new language policy										
1. The syllabus provided facilitates teaching English effectively from Grade 1.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
2. The syllabus/books' contents are appropriate according to the age level of the learners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
3. The syllabus/books' contents focus on teaching all four skills- reading, writing, listening, and speaking equally.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree
4. The classrooms are equipped with the basic facilities needed to teach English as EFL. (projectors, audio-visual aids)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly disagree



4. Teachers' training for teaching English as EFL	
1. Teachers should get professional training for teaching English to young learners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
2. Teaching English to young learners needs specific teaching skills.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
3. It does not need to have professional training to teach English to young learners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
4. I attended training(s) for teaching English as a foreign language before starting to teach English.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes    Numbers of trainings: _____ (i.e. 1, 2, 3)    Duration of training: _____ (days, week, months) <input type="checkbox"/> No
5. I attended training(s) for teaching English as a foreign language after starting to teach English.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes    Numbers of trainings: _____ (i.e. 1, 2, 3)    Duration of training: _____ (days, week, months) <input type="checkbox"/> No
6. I have an English language teaching certificate(s).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes    Numbers of certificates: _____ (i.e. 1, 2, 3)    Name of certificate: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> No
7. I have attended an EFL/ESL teaching workshop(s).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes    Numbers of workshops: _____ (i.e. 1, 2, 3) <input type="checkbox"/> No
8. There are professional development training programs offered by your institute.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
9. There are workshops/seminars provided for teaching English more effectively.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
10. You would like to attend professional training programs if offered.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
11. There is a lack of professional training programs at school levels to teach English to early-year students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
5. Teachers' objectives of and practices in English language teaching	
1. Use of L1 (Arabic) is necessary to teach English to young learners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
2. Use of L1 should not be allowed in EFL classrooms.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
3. The course materials and activities focus on teaching learners how to speak English.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
4. Teaching English for reading and writing is focused more than teaching how to communicate in English.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
5. Teaching English for communication is focused more than on teaching reading and writing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
6. I use different methods to teach English to young learners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
7. I use the same method to teach all four skills i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
8. I use materials other than course books to make teaching English more effective.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
9. My methods of teaching are more teacher-centered.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
10. My methods of teaching are more learner-centered.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
11. My students find it easy to learn all four skills in English.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
12. Young learners find it difficult to learn English as early as Grade 1.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
13. The overall situation of teaching English in the early years is satisfactory.	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
6. Qualitative items: Medium of instruction, skills-focused, challenges faced by teachers in teaching English as a foreign language.	
1. What language(s) do you use most often as a medium of instruction and why?	
2. On what EFL skills, is most of your class time spent? Why?	
3. Which EFL skill(s) do you think are neglected or less focused? Why?	
4. What challenges or difficulties do you face (if any) in teaching EFL syllabus or course/textbook contents?	
5. Are there any challenges or difficulties in teaching English reading and writing skills to grade 1 and above learners?	
6. Are there any challenges or difficulties in teaching English listening and speaking skills?	
7. How can teaching English to young learners be made more effective?	

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# Appropriating Feminist Voice While Translating: Unpublished but Visible Project

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**Abstract**—Translating a text and making it comprehensive for others is an essential job of the translator, but when a woman translator transfers a text and intentionally stresses the female voice, the act becomes a gender-significant distinction. This study aims to understand the 'feminist' translation strategies used by translators in producing her works. It also aims to study the feminist movement in the Arab world. This paper adopts Skopos's theory to justify using specific strategies in their translation and explain why translators' identities are becoming more visible. The databases from ProQuest, Taylor and Francis, EBSCO, and Google Scholar, were used to explore research articles and books published between 1980 and 2021 for western feminist studies and between 2000 and 2021 for Eastern (Arab) feminist studies. Systematic analysis methods were used, and findings were reported in this study. The results were discussed and presented thematically. Additionally, this paper opens more discussions on the politics of feminist texts in different ways and methods via translation. It shows how the translator's interventions and strategies reshape the Translations so that the force of the feminist message is amplified in some places and mitigated in others. However, further research is needed to investigate more questions, such as the effect of understanding feminism(s) and the translator's ideology on the translation of feminist texts produced. This paper is a crucial contribution to feminism in the Arab world because very few works have been published, and few scholars have discussed this topic.

**Index Terms**—Arab activists, Arabic translation, Arab feminism, feminist translation, strategies

## I. INTRODUCTION

Fifty years ago, a feminist movement emerged, focusing on a patriarchal language and highlighting gender disparities. Gender studies help better understand the power of language to perpetuate patriarchy and the potential of translators to dismantle the sexist nature of language by looking at translation through the lens of gender studies. Works by feminists were produced to express their political views, make themselves visible, and challenge what they saw as the traditional language. Following this movement, feminist translation, a tactic to affirm women as text makers, claim their identities, and challenge patriarchal authority through the translation of feminist literature, arose as an additional phenomenon. While the original text is perceived as "powerful and generative," the translation is viewed as "the weaker derivative feminine," according to Simon (1996) and Von Flotow (2016). Thus, two historically marginalized groups, translation and women, were brought together.

In this paper, feminist translation refers to a space of intellectual knowledge and practical work where feminist theory converges with translation studies. It is currently taking shape within the framework of translation studies under the name of "Gender Issues in Translation" and "The Relationship of Translation to Gender" as part of research efforts launched in the eighties of the twentieth century by Laurie Chamberlain in her article on "*Gender and Metaphor in Translation*" (1992). In her article, she focused on several figurative images used to refer to translation with gender features, as if the relationship of the translated text to the original is that of a woman and a man. The 1990s witnessed a significant role in integrating the gender perspective into translation studies, with Sherry Simon's "*Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission*" (1996) and Louise Von Flotow's "*Translation and Gender: Translation in the Age of Feminism*" (1997), both focused on the gender position in translation, theory, and practice, and presented women translators from the Middle Ages onwards. Furthermore, one of the studies by Von Flotow, entitled "*Translating Women*" (2011), addresses issues of voice, mediation, interpretation, and subjectivity, with applications to various women's translations and writings.

The Arab world was not isolated from this movement which inspired and influenced Arab women to adopt this new Trend and work on making their voices heard. Under these circumstances, a project will see the light with the efforts of Arab women using translation to disseminate their ideas and thoughts in the produced works.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Theory of the Feminist Translation

Women's status as so frequently and impressed in society and literature, according to Baer and Massardier (2015), is central to feminist theory, which uses Translation to change this status. It is all about translating into a particular culture, including that society's philosophy, history, and social context. Fawcett (2014) sees that in light of the cultural revolution, translation studies have a new way to engage with other fields, such as feminism and other social

movements. It has been a longstanding tradition that translators and women have been placed in a lower social position than their male counterparts. Women's representations in patriarchal culture are echoed by the hierarchical authority of the source material (Cordingley & Mantini, 2015). Gender is a sociopolitical element that permeates Translation, and feminism in translation studies focuses on this aspect. Feminist translators use gender as a prism to examine each unique Translation, paying particular attention to language indicators of gender that may represent a text's gendered characteristics.

Feminist ideology has often been promoted through neologisms or the coining of new phrases as part of experimental translations. Since the old binary notion of translation only perceived the original and translated text as two poles, fidelity has been a long-standing issue in translation research (Bowker et al., 2016). Hatim (2014) notes that the absolute binary opposition model should be reconstructed to counteract the polarity reconstruction. The relationship between the person doing the translating and the person who wrote the original text (the author) is like that between a man and a woman. Translating does not alter the original meaning but instead extends its life. Chamberlain (1992), as cited by Hatim (2014), discusses "Les belles infidèles," in which she argues that the loyalty of marriage and the faithfulness of translation have a common element. It indicates a link between the ST (spouse, parent, or author) and the TT (women) as a contact between a couple. Traditional marriages have a "double standard" for disloyalty: the wife is put on trial in front of the public, but the husband is spared any consequences. The metaphor (Les belles infidèles) that beauty "Les belles" is associated with unfaithfulness "infidèles" is further explained by Chamberlain (1992) as a kind of gender discrimination.

The formation of feminist translation theory may be an act of politics to expose prejudice against women in translation. According to Castro (2013), many strategies summarise the most significant feminist translation tactics that are not always feminist but are done with a feminist purpose, categorized by von Flotow (1991): supplementing, prefacing, footnoting, and hijacking. Von Flotow (2012) says that "Supplementing" compensates for differences between two languages. Translators may introduce terms that have no place in the original text because of their feminist bias. They can add anything they see essential to the translation. For example, after "brothers," translators often add the word "sisters." It is a feminist addition to the source material that indicates the translator's purposeful intervention in the original text. One of the main drawbacks of this strategy is that supplementing might lead to different ST-TT language pairings. As a standard method in feminist translation, prefacing and footnoting include explanations of the origins and objectives of the original material, clearly demonstrating the translators' goal to draw attention to the situation of women in general. According to numerous academics, hijacking occurs when feminist translators fix sexist language in original texts based on their subjective preferences or intentions (Mourad & Darwish, 2013; Korayem et al., 2012).

Massardier-Kenny (1997) categorized two approaches to feminizing the target text: author-centred and translator-centred. For one, the reader is helped by recovery and commentary. At the same time, for the other, parallel texts are employed so that the target culture's context is more closely aligned with the sourcebook (Munday, 2012). Massardier-Kenny went one step further than von Flotow in establishing a link between the author (original text) and the translator (target text). She urged translators to collaborate with one or more colleagues rather than face the challenge of independently translating a piece of work. Because they all involve interventions over the ST, hijacking and translator-centred translation techniques have nothing in common. On the other hand, translators heavily influence TT due to its high subjectivity. The target text will lose its original meaning when feminist translation corrects potentially sexist terms.

Von Flotow (2012) and Massardier-Kenny (1997) have discussed feminist translation techniques and Maier's categorization of credence to their arguments. Maier's initial method, "a null strategy or direct translation," mirrors Massardier-perspective Kenny's toward feminism in translation studies — "it is the feminist application of these tactics that renders them feminist" (cited in Yang et al., 2019). Because of Massardier-translator-centered Kenny's strategy, Maier came up with two more approaches: identifying and questioning women in the field. For the women-identified approach, It is noted that translators identifying themselves as women is at the center of these three methodologies (cited in Davis, 2014). Interestingly, these methods react favorably to a strategy that puts the translator at the center.

### III. STUDY FRAMEWORK

In conventional translation studies, men translators have traditionally held a prominent position. Feminist translation theory, on the other hand, requires female translators to be more dominant. This paper follows Skopos's theory to justify the use of specific strategies by feminists in their translated works and explain why translators' identities are becoming more evident/ visible. Skopos's theory is an interesting theoretical foundation for feminist translation and developing the female voice in translation. Skopos's theory sees translation as a deliberate act to transfer the TT function. Based on Skopos, a feminist translator seeks to utilize unique ways to translate or even rework the source material to emphasize gender inequality in the original text (Du, 2012; Vermeer, 1978). Figure 1 shows the framework of Skopos's theory.





Figure 1. Skopos Framework

Figure 1 shows the Skopos framework, in which the translator needs to focus on producing a target text that will be easily comprehended by readers and will align with their situation, needs, cultural and contextual background, and the situation for which the text is being produced (Mei, 2010). This framework aligns with the current paper because it helps answer the research questions.

Feminist translation's initial goal is to redefine the connection between the source and target texts, a radical departure from standard translation theory's concepts of faithfulness and equivalence. The feminist translation is viewed as an action-based strategy for achieving political visibility in the context of feminist activism. They argued numerous ways to improve female translators' subjectivity and make women's voices more prominent in target texts during translation (Doherty, 2016). Feminist translation, on the other hand, may alter the character of translation studies and feminism because of its emphasis on the manipulations and interventions over the target text to recognize the translator's subjectivity. There are several reasons why the gender of words should be altered in a feminist translation, but one of the most common is that the source text contains sexual content. Stead of "he/she," "him/her," and "theirs," we use "shey," "shem," and "sheir" (Munday, 2012). There is also a "double standard" in feminist translations: the temptation to employ harsh and forceful feminist applications in the TT. On the other hand, translation by women does not seek to recreate a female-dominated space but rather to give a fresh manner of expressing gender concerns. The last point: Feminist translators select the theory that best serves their political objectives, even if that theory is illogical (Pym, 2017).

#### IV. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In the last 20 years, feminism ideology has increased in the Arab world. It is not easy to follow their productions as publications are rare due to challenges and acceptability of their ideology in the Arab countries, but their voice can be listened to. From this perspective, the purpose of the study was to grasp an in-depth understanding of their project. After reviewing the feminist trend in the West, this paper will focus on the strategies adopted and used by Arab women's activists. How do they intend to include their voice in their Translations of foreign works? The current study further aimed to explore how they used to accomplish their project. This research will be a crucial contribution to understanding the feminist project in the Arab world and is one of the fewest research papers on this topic.

#### V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following questions were addressed because of the given background of the study:

- 1- What are the old and current trends in feminism and translation research in the East and West?
- 2- How have feminist translators used various strategies to convey feminist messages in both Worlds (East and West)?

#### VI. METHODOLOGY

This research aims to examine the current developments in feminist translation theory research and analyze how it has been utilized in such translation. Thus, the study was carried out using a systematic and qualitative approach, content-based analysis research that can yield qualitative results. Such a method has its advantages, as the researcher can gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and a broad and open perspective of the perspectives (Bryman, 2014). The narrative approach was employed to reveal and understand the feminist movement in the East and West. Many databases were used to collect data on the feminist movement, such as Taylor and Francis, Ethos, and Google

Scholar. Research questions are used to choose which papers are included in the current study (Uman, 2012). Only papers that aligned with the topic for inclusion were chosen (i.e., those that were fully accessible and dealt with feminism and translation) but excluded studies that were not scholarly published. Search phrases "feminist translation and novel," "feminism, translation, novel," and "Feminist identities and translation novel" were selected based on the research topics that were being answered.

## VII. DISCUSSION

In this study, feminist translation is understood as a concept that emerged from the reality of interest in feminist theory and the pursuit of translation studies. These requirements can be summarized as follows to guarantee the linguistic accuracy of the translation and the accuracy of the transfer of thinking epistemically: It is not sufficient for translating the feminist text to master the two languages concerned. Nevertheless, there must be a deep understanding of the feminist text and the ideology it contains, and its terminology. Furthermore, there must be an awareness of the power relations inherent in the act of translation and the translation as an interpretive act in which the translator plays the role of mediator between the original text and the translated text. It is also necessary to recognize the specificity of the feminist discourse that it is primarily a political discourse aimed at empowering women cognitively. Although it is not directed at women only, it addresses female readers within the general readership. Finally, translating the feminist text is considered a political act that is not limited to transferring knowledge, culture, and thought but instead sought to build new feminist knowledge in the Arabic language. It will then, in the long run, contribute to social change by raising awareness and empowering women with knowledge. Hence, the following will address some of the well-established concepts in translation theory and reflect on their manifestations when practising translation from a feminist perspective.

### A. *Domestication or Foreignization*

Venuti (1995) sees that any translated work is the product of two basic translation strategies: domestication and foreignization. Domestication is the translator's dealing with the text to bring it closer to the audience of readers linguistically and stylistically. Thus, the text after its translation looks like an author's untranslated book, written in the translated language and stemming from the culture into which it is being translated, which, as Venuti clarifies, is closer to an ideal in traditional translation practices based on the principle of translator invisibility, text transparency, and fluency of translation. On the other hand, foreignization, as a strategy in translation, refers to transferring the text from one language to another while preserving its linguistic, stylistic, and cultural features when translating it, without adapting and domesticating it in a manner that goes along with the language and culture to which it is transmitted (Yang, 2010). It is based on transferring the reader to the text, i.e., preserving the characteristics of the original text and making them available linguistically to readers through translation while adapting the translated language and its stylistic rules to suit the original text, its linguistic context and cultural history. Venuti believes that foreignization in translation includes a degree of "resistancy" for the "violence" in the domestication of the original text.

By contemplating the concepts of domestication and foreignization in the context of feminist translation, it is noted that feminist thought, in general, tends to emphasize privacy and pluralism and resist forms of domination in its diversity. Thus, feminist translation is necessarily closer to following the strategy of foreignization because it does not erase the linguistic, stylistic, and cultural features of the transmitted text and does not subject the translated text to the system of the language into which it is translated (Asiri et al., 2020), even away from the context of domination. Suppose the translation is done mainly between two texts in a system disrupted by power relations. In that case, feminist translation, based on feminist thought, calls for giving the marginalized party a voice and resisting all forms of violence, discrimination, and domination at the level of action – that is, when translating. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that in the case of feminist translation, foreignization becomes double, as it is not limited to linguistic and stylistic aspects, literary types, and approved texts. However, also foreignization is represented in the subject and content. A challenge at the level of strangeness and strangeness of content. When translating a feminist text into Arabic, the translator faces the problem of choosing between domestication and foreignization, with what domestication may achieve in terms of fluency and approximation to the content of the feminine text on the one hand, and between foreignization that is systematically consistent with feminist thought. However, following it as a translation strategy may extend the gap between the readers and feminist thought and text. This is an issue that is exacerbated by the translator's lack of familiarity with the context of the feminist text and the history of feminist thought locally and globally, and perhaps most embodied when translating terms belonging to the field of feminist and gender studies, with what is required here of knowledge and specialization in translation, and even in the ability to formulate new terms.

### B. *Intimate and Specialized Translation*

The difference between translating the feminist text and the concept of feminist translation is also represented in the attitude towards the translated text, as feminist translation requires the translator to take a position that supports feminist thought and to be familiar with feminist theory and its details in work under translation. Therefore, two concepts from translation theory might be recalled: the 'specialist translator' as put forward by Immanuel Wallerstein and the concept of 'simpatico' by Venuti. Wallerstein (1981) believes that the problems related to the translation of terminology in the social sciences, in many cases, result from the absence of specialization in translation. Since interest is limited to the

translator's knowledge of the two languages concerned in the translation process without paying attention to the translator's scientific and cognitive specialization, on the other hand, Venuti put forward the concept of sympathy and compatibility: that is, the intellectual closeness between the translator and the author, as he believes that the relationship between the two parties may not be limited to the presence of compatibility and "sympathy" between the translator and the author, but rather from the existence of a "common identity" that unites them. However, the problem that may appear between the author's position and the translator, in his opinion, is the dominance of the author's voice over the text and the absence of the translator's position. This is thus related to the issue of translation transparency and the translator's absence. However, Venuti goes further than that, as he explains through his experience in translation that the "intimacy" between the two parties does not necessarily lead to the absence of the translator's voice. However, instead, it is a space that makes the translator sometimes resort to "resistance" and not "domestication" the text to identify it with the author intellectually and his participation as a party in reproducing the text in a different language, in a manner that does not disturb the "fidelity" of the translation, which may be considered settled within the framework of "intimacy".

Thus, the translation theory presents the specialization and intellectual compatibility model between the author and the translator, which raises questions when translating feminist texts. It is not limited to the problems of intimacy between the feminist author and translator or the problem of distorting the feminist text when translating it by a translator hostile to feminist thought. There are two cases where we see the translator's voice in the translation process. This paper notes that the real crisis lies in the lack of specialization; the translation comes "objective" but incomplete, not because of hostility to feminist thought but the lack of knowledge of its depths and dimensions. Thus, the result is a text transmitted more literally than being translated from one language to another: neither an intimate translator nor a hostile person leaves his mark on the text. This is reflected in the readers' understanding of the feminist text and thus affects their evaluation of the translated feminist text and even feminist thought in general. It is in the interest of the feminist text that the translating party should be visible and his voice heard.

### C. *The Visible Translator*

The presence and/or absence of the translator in the text is one of the essential issues expressed by Venuti (1995), with the concept of the "invisible translator", which came to overturn the traditional rule of proper translation. It is based on "transparency," that is, the illusion that the language of the translated text is its original language with no indications that it was translated. Venuti referred to "the illusion of transparency", which hides behind the translator's role as a mediator interfering in the transmission of meaning, given that translation is not an objective act but rather the result of the translator's interpretation of the text translating. Therefore, the more visible the translator is in the text, the greater the actual objectivity of the text. As for the feminist perspective, the "invisible female translator" is a systematic contradiction with feminist thought, which recognizes the importance of recognizing subjectivity as a basis for objectivity and making the invisible visible and the silent audible. Thus, feminist translation agrees with translation theories that reveal the illusions that the transparency of the text carries but distort reality by ignoring the role of the translator in interpreting the text when it is transferred from one language to another. The issue here is not limited to criticizing the practices of the "invisible translator". However, translation theory intersects with feminist theory in its deconstructive aspects and reception theory, which looks at writing as interpretation and translation, thus rewriting and representation of a text and not transferring. Hence, feminist translation is keen not to claim the objectivity of the translation and to reveal the translator by paying attention to the margins of the female translator, the translator's words, and any other threshold of the text. Instead, it goes beyond and points and seeks to shed light on the female presence in the text through the feminization of language, for example, to reflect the presence of women in the text as author, translator, self, and reader.

### D. *Translating the Feminist Discourse*

In her book on "*Translation Studies*", Bassnett (2002) explains that translation from the perspective of literary theory combines Linguistics, Reception Theory, and the theories of Interpretation and Representation. This paper considers adding the feminist theory. It also addresses feminist translation as an act of reading and rewriting. For example, Gayatri Spivak, in her article "*The Politics of Translation*" (1993), puts forward the idea of "the female translator surrendering to the text." This means she obeys the original text with its linguistic features and rhetorical aspects because "translation is the most intimate act of reading," and therefore, as long as the female translator does not have the right to become an intimate reader of the text, she cannot give in to the text, nor can she answer the call of the text. The task of surrendering here is conveying the text with the most significant sensitivity and awareness of its linguistic and stylistic characteristics. However, it is a task that must be accompanied by the female translator's awareness of the context from which she is translating.

If Spivak (1993) started from the position of the translator as a reader, Godard (1989), in her pioneering study, "*Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Feminist Translation*," relied on the concept of translation as a rewriting of the original text, making the translation act as a production of the text not simulate and replicate it in another language. On the other hand, just as feminist thought is based on the "difference" between the sexes as an intellectual basis for paying attention to the women's experience and not evaluating it according to a single prevailing normative system, so feminist translation pays attention to the areas of differences, not the congruence between the original text and the translated text. Godard (1989) adds that the feminist translator, as she seeks to emphasize the difference in her critical stance from what



is prevalent: and express her happiness in the practice of reading and re-reading, writing and rewriting, intends to leave her mark on the translated text by using italic letters sometimes as a comment in the text, as well as regarding she writes it in the margins, or her keenness to write an introduction to the translated work. Nevertheless, rewriting is not limited to the theoretical concept affected by literary theory, specifically the theory of reception and deconstruction theory. Instead, feminist translators pay attention to the multiplicity of translations of a single text. Based on their differences, they assert that the translation includes rewriting the text.

Hence, some researchers specializing in translation and gender perspective, such as Louise von Flotow, point out the importance of reviewing translated women's writings or texts of interviews with feminist personalities to uncover mistranslation and/or distortion areas. She reveals what she has been exposed to in one of the published interviews with the feminist pioneer Simone de Beauvoir from omissions and modifications in the translated version of the interview changes targeting Simone de Beauvoir's feminist discourse.

Simon (1996) goes beyond imposing a feminist presence on the translated text or translating the feminist discourse as reading or rewriting. She proceeds from the concept of "fidelity" in translation, bypassing the limits of literal translation or domestication of the text, to refer to a commitment to a writing project shared by both parties, i.e., the author on the one hand, the translator on the other. However, Sherry Simon raises a critical problem in the translator's position on translating a text that she disagrees with intellectually and is even hostile ideologically. She asks the following question: What might a feminist translator do if she deals with a text that contradicts it on an ideological or aesthetic level? It is a question that brings us back to the issue of "intimacy" and its opposite of hostility, and she answers it with the required commitment to translating the text with its "resistance" by committing to the translator's independence, raising her voice and expressing her position in the margins and introductions.

Thus, the characteristics of feminist translation crystallize by contemplating the additions that feminist theory influenced and enriched translation studies, as female researchers specialize in translation studies from a gender perspective. They started from within the Translation Theories by dismantling some concepts such as: fidelity, intimacy, specialization, domestication, foreignization, and visual presence, and rewriting while combining them with some basic concepts in feminist thought such as difference, agency, voice, and resistance, and transferring them to various cultural contexts. There are few studies on translation between Arabic and English, or another Target language, from a feminist and/or gender perspective, and they are rarely published.

## VIII. STRATEGIES FOR TRANSLATING THE FEMINIST TEXT INTO ARABIC

### A. *The Theoretical Framework*

This paper supports the belief that any translation practice requires a degree of theoretical knowledge of the problems, strategies, and practices of translation, a matter whose importance doubles when dealing with a specialized knowledge text, mainly when translating studies of an academic nature. This paper introduces the school of Western feminist literary criticism and presents models for feminist literary criticism while presenting the critical school in which this paper considers systematically interested. In this sense, there is an agreement between the message that the western feminists carry in their articles and translations and what Arab feminists are trying to convey in translating texts into Arabic, as they are united by the quest to crystallize a feminist literary criticism approach. Regarding the primary methodology in translation, based on feminist theory and translation studies, it is noted that Arab feminists chose the strategy of foreignization rather than domestication when translating. The strategy prevents adapting the original text to the service of the Arab linguistic and cultural context. Instead, it supports them in preserving what may seem strange in the texts, proposing thoughts and methods that differ from what is prevalent in Western schools of thought and research methods (Sun, 2011). Therefore it is logical that it bears a strangeness in its Arabic form.

### B. *The Translation of Terms*

The translation of feminist text includes an intellectual approach and a cultural discourse developing since (Yang, 2010). The translation here is not limited to its direct meaning, the transmission between two languages or cultures, but also transcends the prevailing discourses. Thus, translators are often forced to provide an explanatory translation of concepts, define terms, and perhaps even formulate some terms corresponding to the term or concept used in the original language due to its absence in the target language. The "Kohl journal," a Lebanese feminist journal, on its website, provides translators with a glossary of terms to be used in the feminist translation context. The translation of the feminist term requires complete knowledge of its history, development, connotations, and meaning. It is not only a matter of searching for the exact equivalent (equivalence) in the Arabic language, but often they do not find an appropriate equivalent for the feminist term in the Arabic language. It is either because the corresponding bears history and different connotations or because the term itself is derived and formulated in a foreign language within the framework of feminist theory and therefore has no exact equivalent in Arabic. Thus, feminist translation requires reference to dictionaries of terms in their original languages (it relied on translating many terms from the "Dictionary of Feminist Theory" by Maggie Hum or Kohl journal, for example) and referring to dictionaries between Arabic and other languages.

Regarding the translation of the term and its problems, one basic example in feminist and gender studies, which still raises issues when translated since its repeated use in the nineties of the twentieth century: the term "جندر / gender" due

to its many translations into Arabic. Translating this term requires starting with knowing its origin in the West. It began to be used in the eighties of the twentieth century to develop the feminist theory that deals with the cultural formation of femininity and masculinity. Considering that femininity and masculinity are cultural forms, just as femininity and masculinity are linguistic forms. This was the logic used by the editorial board of *Alef* magazine when they formulated the term "الجنوسة/gender" as a translation of "gender" by deriving it from the triple root "ج ن س" and by analogy with the weight of "فعولة" in Arabic. Samia Mehrez was the first to open the discussion about translating the term "gender," explaining the path of liberating the term from colonial influence on the one hand and resorting to solutions that produce a hybrid term. It is represented in her opinion by the term "جندر / gender," which combines a common root between the Arabic language and the ancient Greek language on the one hand, and the weight of the term deriving from the rules of morphology in the Arabic language as shown above.

However, the term "الجنوسة / genderness" did not have general acceptance and did not achieve its spread despite its introduction in the context of cultural studies, where the formula used was a detailed explanatory translation, the form of "cultural and social formation of gender" used by feminist academics in their writings. The introduction of the term "الجنوسة / gender" came during a period when the most common term was "النوع الاجتماعي / social gender," which took the form of a brief explanatory translation, to become the dominant translation of the term in the developmental literature and social sciences, with the time abbreviated in a shortened form, which is the term "النوع / gender." It is currently the most common term in the social sciences. On the other hand, the use of "الجندر / gender" as a translation of the foreign term has increased, especially with the flexibility of the word "gender" in derivation and inflexion due to the possibility of dealing with it as a quadripartite word "ج ن د ر."

### C. *The Feminization of Language*

The feminization of language means the emphasis on the presence of women in the text and not implicitly including it under masculine linguistic forms in which it is supposed to refer to both genders with the predominance of masculine forms and the use of masculine plural, specifically masculine plural forms (جمع المذكر السالم) to refer to a plural that includes members of both sexes even when there is a majority of women and an individual of men. This also applies in Arabic grammar to the forms of verbs, nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and other elements of the language in which masculine predominates over feminine and masculine forms dominate in plural cases. For instance, regarding the translation from English into Arabic, it is known in the English language that nouns only come in one form, which does not apply to the Arabic language, in which nouns are either feminine or masculine. Thus, a word like "translator" in English does not refer to a specific gender but is a neutral noun applied to the male or female translator. Arab female translators refer specifically to women and sometimes direct their speech to women. Hence, they are keen to translate the name into the feminine form in Arabic when it is clear that the noun refers to the feminine. Otherwise, they chose to use a form that combines the feminine and masculine: the female translator (المتترجمة) or the male translator (المتترجم), the male researcher (الباحث) or the female researcher (الباحثة) as a translation of the singular form of researcher or translator to confirm the presence of women. It is a feminine language applied to translate names, confirming their presence as a leading party that the authors talk about and the articles address. Therefore it is not permissible to ignore or marginalize women using masculine forms that contain them implicitly, even if they hide them linguistically, such as the peaceful masculine plural.

### D. *The Female Voice*

Three levels of the female voice do exist the female voice in the original text, the female voice in the translated text (these points were addressed indirectly in the previous points above), and the female author's voice with the female translator's voice, which this paper focuses on here. The issue of raising the feminist voice is implicitly present in the previous points. It is not meant by it to confirm the superiority of the feminist voice over others but rather to raise it in the sense of providing the opportunity to be heard, stemming from the conviction that the feminist voice is fading, if not silencing, within the framework of the prevailing values of culture, criticism, and creativity. Thus, the female translators were keen to preserve the latent feminist voice in the original text and even emphasized it in the Arabic formulation. However, the female translator's voice as editor is also evident, perhaps indirectly, through the priority of their selection of translations, as they were keen to include studies written by feminist critics, over different periods, in a manner that consolidates the feminist voice in criticism and creativity, not as a "season." Alternatively, a "temporary state" or just a "call" in literary criticism, but instead as an expression of continuous thought, a progressive approach, and an audible voice. They are shedding light on the precursors of feminist literary criticism in the Arab world since the beginning of the twentieth century, confirming that the feminist voice has existed for decades. However, it has remained muted, and feminists must raise it and highlight its companions.

However, translating the feminist text brings the problem of demarcating the boundaries between the feminist voice and the author's voice in the text so that the female translator's voice would not be louder than the original text's voice. Many female translators allocate space for their voice in the introduction of the translated work so that their voice does not directly interfere with the author's voice on the pages of the work. As the Western critical school, they sought to point out examples of feminist criticism in the Arab world so that the book does not seem like a mere arena for transmitting what Western feminist criticism produced but rather an attempt to create an implicit dialogue between the Western experience and the Arab experience in women's creativity and feminist criticism. From here, they saw that they

should not be satisfied with conveying the voices of the Western feminist critics and gave Arab women critics a voice and space to express their critical approaches, thus allowing the book to open up the space for plurality and diversity of visions, and refers to faint voices in Arab literary criticism.

#### *E. Translation as a Political Act*

Translating the feminist text is a political act that includes a process of cognitive empowerment. Translating examples of Western feminist literary criticism allows Arab female researchers and male researchers to identify features of thought, theories, research, and application in the world, in a way that achieves for women and men a measure of cognitive empowerment and the ability to compare, choose and criticize creation and creativity. Also, translating the feminist text is a political act because it provides a feminist knowledge building in the Arabic language that contributes to spreading more awareness, owning tools for analysis and expression, and identifying patterns of resistance and action towards change. Observing the efforts made to translate feminist texts into Arabic made it clear the extent to which these translated works contribute to an intellectual activity that contributes to crystallizing an Arab feminist discourse. Suppose the Arab literary criticism schools do not include a school for Arab feminist literary criticism. In that case, however, the recognition of the effort made by feminists to establish a school for feminist literary criticism, including its pluralism and diversity, calls to pay attention to the Arab critical history and explore in it women writers and critics whose voices have been dimmed and fallen with the time from the history of literature and criticism. Thus, translation is not here for simulation but becomes a motive for further understanding, criticism, confrontation, quotation, rejection, and all forms of constructive interaction. The aim is not to divert attention to the West but to acquire research tools that help research history to extract women from it and formulate terms expressing an existing, indefinite reality.

Therefore, translating a feminist text and making it available to readers is not in itself a mere linguistic activity that transfers the text from language to language, culture to culture, and audience to audience, but rather a political activity directed to its readers to raise feminist awareness, empowering women with knowledge and crystallizing an alternative vision for Social justice prevails at all levels. In the longer term, they aspire, through translating texts and introducing the trends of feminist literary criticism, to incitement to crystallize Arab feminist literary criticism, including the elevation of value and voices of Women, not only in academic research methods but also in the creative arena, and even in daily critical practices.

## IX. CONCLUSION

This paper has focused on using feminist translation theory and skopos theory in the study of works that have been translated and written to stress the female voice in Arabic. Interdisciplinary translation studies have grown rapidly in the past 20 years, demonstrating a social and cultural phenomenon in the Arab world. There is a strong potential that this issue will become more popular in the following years because of the high interest in this research field. As seen from the discussion section, women in the Arab world try to translate works based on a feminist perspective. Translations into Arabic are increasing due to their position as a local powerhouse and the rapid growth of feminist movements in Arab countries. There is much evidence to suggest that how works are translated is affected by the gender and ideological perspectives of the translators. Awareness that women are part of the dominant group and that this state is not inherent or socially determined necessitates that women unite to enjoy the same level of independence as men. Intellectuals, as presented above, all contributed to the cultural shift in translation in the 1990s, which gave rise to the idea of ideology in translation. Thus, women in the Arab world follow western models to create changes, find a space for themselves, and strive to legitimate their unpublished works. The rise of feminism in the 1970s and 1980s started an interest in language's gendered role due to an increased awareness of patriarchal views of language. In Quebec, a new focus on feminism emerged due to the province's language modification policy. It is not only women taking full advantage of this favorable environment, but they are also employing various translational strategies to achieve what Godard has termed "transforming," which he defines as a concept that emphasizes the labor involved in translating and creating meaning as an essential element of transformation (Godard, 1997). Thus, even when interventionist approaches have been condemned, certain complicity or tolerance can be noted while translating feminist literature. Notably, the study uses Skopos's theory to explain why feminist translation strengthens the translator's subjectivity and justifies their use of the presented strategies. Several techniques, highlighted by feminist academics such as Luise von Flotow, might assist translators in coping with feminist texts because of the rising importance of subjectivity. Feminist translation theory was born in the West, and now it is under an appropriation by the audience in the Arab world despite the severe challenges coming from religion, society, and policymakers. Western feminist translation theory can be combined with Arab socio-cultural variables to examine if it is possible to achieve feminist translation on an expected level in the Arab world.

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# Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Relating to the Use of Tasks in Tertiary English as a Foreign Language Classrooms in China

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**Abstract**—Task-based language teaching (TBLT) has been recommended in the new College English Curriculum Requirement in China (Ministry of Education, 2017) for students learning English as a foreign language. Teachers might not, however, implement these concepts in their classes. This study aims to investigate whether the concept of TBLT has made its way into EFL teachers' theoretical beliefs and the degree to which TBLT is being put into practice. By using semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, this study investigated the beliefs and practices of three tertiary English teachers in China and their use of tasks in their language classes. The results show that although these teachers had positive attitudes toward TBLT, only some activities in their classes could be classified as tasks. The teachers' use of tasks seemed to be influenced by web-based textbooks and their own reflective practices. This study provides recommendations for developing language teacher education programmes based on TBLT in China.

**Index Terms**—task-based language teaching (TBLT), tasks, teachers' beliefs

## I. INTRODUCTION

Task-based language teaching as an encouraging innovative approach has appeared in government educational policies in many countries in the Asia-Pacific region and has been advocated for inclusion in curricula and commercial syllabuses as a central teaching method (Nunan, 2003). In Nunan's survey of educational policies and practices in the Asia-Pacific region, officials are reported to have claimed that TBLT was the chief principle in their English language curricula. In China, the Chinese national curriculum has been revised because of the socioeconomic reform and high-speed economic development that China is experiencing in the context of a globalized world. English, as a global language, is widely believed to play a vital role in promoting international exchange and facilitating economic progress (Wang, 2007). Students are therefore required to achieve a high degree of English language proficiency, especially communicative proficiency. In this environment, it is believed that TBLT could be an approach that will help improve students' communicative proficiency by engagement in language use tasks. At the tertiary level, TBLT is recommended in the new College English Curriculum Requirement as a means to support a shift from a teacher-centred to a student-centred approach (Ministry of Education, 2017).

The job of syllabus designer now falls to teachers, who have to design tasks that best suit their students' needs and abilities, in line with curriculum expectations. However, understandings of what TBLT is and how it can be implemented effectively differ among teachers. Candlin (2001) contends that when it comes to the implementation of the task-based approach, "there are numerous possibilities that the intended curriculum leaves open to teachers" in terms of pedagogical decision-making (p. 241). It is highly possible that teachers may not necessarily translate these innovative ideas into their classrooms.

It is therefore timely to investigate how teachers in China are implementing the newly introduced curriculum. Previous studies in the Chinese context have focused on the beliefs and practices of school teachers and issues that prevent the successful implementation of curriculum innovation at the school level in Hong Kong and some highly developed cities in mainland China (Deng & Carless, 2010; Zheng, 2013). However, little research has been conducted on tertiary English teachers' beliefs about the implementation of TBLT. A limited range of articles has centred on the advantages and disadvantages of TBLT and the description of specific task steps in authentic classrooms aiming to develop students' listening, speaking, reading or writing skills (Li, 2013).

This research explored tertiary teachers' beliefs and practices as a starting point for providing practical implications for future teacher training programmes. East (2012) has emphasized that investigating teachers' beliefs and practices can ultimately challenge theoretical beliefs and promote teachers' practices in this area.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Two areas of the literature are reviewed in this section: TBLT principles, and empirical studies into teachers' beliefs and practices related to TBLT in China.

### A. Four Criteria Used to Evaluate a Task

TBLT has been developing over several decades as a learner-centred and experiential pedagogical approach which enables learners to engage in authentic communicative language use, leading to language acquisition during task performance. It has two essential features and strengths: a primary focus on meaning, and attention to language forms arising from communicative interaction (East, 2015). These features of TBLT compensate for the shortcomings of the traditional language teaching approach where grammar is taught in an explicit, teacher-fronted and systematic way, with teaching based on the assumption that learning is a linear process and that what is learned is what is taught.

The notion of ‘task’ is central to TBLT (Ellis, 2009), and I have borrowed the four criteria proposed by Ellis to evaluate tasks in the participants’ classes. Ellis (2009) claims the task criteria are based on a detailed study of a number of previous definitions. The criteria are:

1. The primary focus should be on ‘meaning’ (... learners should be mainly concerned with processing the semantic and pragmatic meaning of utterances).
2. There should be some kind of ‘gap’ (i.e., a need to convey information, to express an opinion or infer meaning).
3. Learners should largely have to rely on their own resources (linguistic and non-linguistic) in order to complete the activity.
4. There is a clearly defined outcome other than the use of language (i.e. the language serves as the means for achieving the outcome, not as an end in its own right) (Ellis, 2009, p. 223).

Ellis and Shintani (2013) explain that these criteria can be used to distinguish tasks from ‘grammar exercises’ and they present examples to demonstrate the difference (p. 9). They point out that while a situational grammar exercise may satisfy criteria 2 and 3, it cannot satisfy criteria 1 and 4. Take this example: Student A is given a shopping list and Student B plays the role of the shop owner. Student B has a different list, showing all the goods in their shop. Student A is required to ask Student B questions to find out which items they can buy from the shop. Student B must also identify the items that the shop does not stock. The outcome is the items purchased by A, and the items B identifies as not being in stock. However, Ellis and Shintani explain that if both students are given the following dialogue to imitate, and use the list of items they are given to fill the blank space, it would be an exercise, and not a task:

Student A: “Good morning. Do you have any \_\_\_”?

Student B: “Yes, I have some”. Or, “No, I don’t have any”.

Ellis and Shintani (2013) argue that this exercise is not a task. This exercise requires learners to attend to the forms “any” and “some” and to use structured replies, rather than having a primary focus on meaning. There was no information gap to be closed and students did not rely on their own resources because they were given sentence models to imitate. There was no clearly defined outcome as they were focusing on practising the language forms.

Ellis’ (2009) four criteria have therefore been chosen as the means to evaluate and identify tasks in this study.

### *B. Empirical Studies Into Teacher Beliefs and Practices Related to TBLT in China*

TBLT is an essentially Western notion, but since its first appearance in China, the number of studies investigating the practicability of TBLT in Chinese classrooms at the school level has grown (Carless, 2009; Hu, 2013; Luo & Xing, 2015; Zheng, 2013). However, considerable difficulties and concerns were uncovered in the studies that drew on interviews, classroom observations and questionnaires in authentic classrooms in Chinese schools. In a country as large as China, the findings are diverse, although it was found that most teachers’ practices appeared to diverge from TBLT principles.

The widely reported constraints relate to the Chinese educational system: its grammar-oriented examinations, limited teaching resources, tight instructional time, classroom management and conflict with students’ learning styles and preferences (Lai, 2015). Furthermore, teachers’ deep-rooted views of the transmission of language knowledge and their lack of competence and confidence prevent them from using TBLT in their classrooms (Luo & Xing, 2015). Deng and Carless (2010) investigated the impact of examinations on TBLT innovation and concluded that teachers’ misconceptions may be a more powerful barrier to pedagogic innovation.

Similarly, Ellis (2015) notes that some reported constraints are not real problems and that the real problem is how to carry out a well-designed education programme to inform teachers of TBLT in a systemic way. Furthermore, researchers reiterate the complicated situation whereby TBLT is supposed to be implemented and highlight the importance of having flexibility in adopting a specific teaching approach (East, 2017). A carefully designed task-based programme requires a clear understanding of teachers’ current perspectives and practices in relation to TBLT. This study serves as a point of departure towards understanding the implementation of TBLT in current tertiary EFL classrooms and highlights implications for a future task-based programme for teacher development.

## III. THE STUDY

This study attempted to address three research questions:

1. What do teachers know, understand and believe about TBLT?
2. In what ways do teachers integrate the core characteristics of tasks into their practice?
3. What factors might affect teachers’ realization of their beliefs in TBLT?

Three EFL teachers at two tertiary institutions in China were selected as participants because they were experienced teachers and claimed to use tasks in their classrooms.

Semi-structured interviews of at least 60 minutes were conducted to gather the teachers' background information, general teaching methods, and beliefs and perspectives about TBLT, and then classroom observations were done. Questions arising from the observations were asked during the class break or after classes to elicit comments on key issues or for clarification about their task uses.

Observations lasted a minimum of three hours per teacher. Teachers' instructions and actions and the classroom activities at different stages were the focus. Interviews, teachers' instructions and lectures were digitally recorded and transcribed by the researcher. Emerging themes about TBLT theories and the criteria were highlighted.

The classroom activities were classified into different instructional stages. Each stage was then evaluated according to the four task criteria to identify the activities that seem to align most closely with the criteria. This analysis was tested for coder reliability until an agreement was reached on the use of the criteria. The teacher's reported beliefs about TBLT were then compared with their actual classroom practices to analyse their task implementation.

#### IV. RESULTS

An outline of the observed classroom activities, including task-like activities or tasks observed in the classes, is described in this section. An analysis of task implementation is presented after comparing each teacher's beliefs with their observed practices.

##### A. Teacher Participant Grace

Grace's observed reading and writing class focused on reading a passage from a unit entitled *Icy Defender*, in the web-based textbook *New Horizon College English, Reading and Writing, Book 4* (Zhen, 2011b). Two activities were observed in this class. In the first, a pre-reading activity, each student contributed one sentence to a whole-class discussion on the differences and similarities between Hitler and Napoleon and their experiences on the same battlefield. Grace responded to each student by repeating or rephrasing their sentences. The second activity was to learn new words and phrases from the reading passage, and this occupied two-thirds of the class time. The teacher asked students to read through each paragraph, and then she picked out words and phrases to explain. She explained the different word meanings and made sentences using them. She then asked students to translate the sentences and introduced more words related to the selected words and phrases. She also started conversations with her students based on certain new words.

Grace's reading and writing class was mostly teacher-fronted learning of the new words and phrases in the passage from the textbook, with Grace highly in control of all the activities. The aim of the classes was to practise the language forms from the textbook rather than focusing on meanings, although there were some interactions related to the new words. After evaluating against the four criteria used in this study, no evidence of TBLT was found in her classes.

When asked about TBLT in the interview, Grace said that "tasks should play the leading role in my approach where language used for the communicative purpose was the emphasis". In her understanding, the core principle of TBLT was to use language for communication. However, she accentuated that she used an "eclectic approach" in her classes in order to cater to her students' needs.

Observation of Grace's classroom provided evidence of her "eclectic approach". She hardly used tasks in her classes and most of the class focused on the textbook language points. She justified this approach by saying she believed the teacher was the authority, as "students may not know the important language points in the reading passage," and students' understanding of vocabulary improved after she had explained it. She believed that some group members cannot benefit from communicating with each other because of their weak English. This might also have explained why she devoted more time to teacher-controlled activities. Grace also pointed to the students' long-established habit of learning language forms from their teachers. She said her students had developed since high school a belief that they were not learning anything substantial if she did not express words and phrases. She said they cared how many words they learned in her class; they would take notes "fiercely" when she expressed words and grammar. Grace took this student's need into consideration when planning her classes.

Although no tasks were observed in Grace's class, Grace described some examples of tasks that she had used. She had asked students to use English to interview students from other countries on their campus about their countries' symbols and to record a video of this interview. Grace also engaged her students in a performance, such as a drama, chosen, prepared, rehearsed and presented in English by groups of students once a week.

The other self-reported example was a weekly speaking activity in her listening and speaking class. Students, in groups, exchanged opinions on hot issues related to the textbook topic. They recorded and transcribed their discussions before submitting them to Grace, who provided feedback on the overall ideas and how they were expressed. Although the second task appeared to be only a general discussion with no clearly defined outcome, these two self-claimed tasks, based on her descriptions, appeared to be task-like activities according to the four criteria for evaluation of a task. Grace also categorized some communicative activities as task examples because she understood 'tasks' as being mainly activities to promote communication.

Grace also explained what she saw as the advantages of using these activities. Grace held positive attitudes towards tasks, even about some of the constraints reported in the literature (Carless, 2009). For example, she did not agree with



the view that TBLT conflicted with the role of the College English test (Deng & Carless, 2009), or that some teachers in China were not proficient enough in English to implement TBLT in their classrooms. Although she admitted this was a shortcoming, she felt it was not significant enough to influence task implementation. She claimed that teachers and students had access to up-to-date listening and reading materials from English-speaking countries, which, along with technology use, can assist non-native English teachers in task implementation and also English learning overall. She said she taught students to explore knowledge by themselves, rather than just receiving knowledge from her. She downloaded listening and reading materials from the Internet for them to explore. This approach was also influenced by the limited time available in class.

Grace also pointed out that teachers in China have increasing autonomy over classroom activities and the content of the final examination, which, in her view, means they can also implement tasks. She said she was not required to follow the textbooks completely in class, which gave her freedom in designing communicative activities and tasks for her classes. Universities provided her with opportunities to attend seminars focusing on language teaching theories, including TBLT and how to include tasks. She saw the advantages of using these tasks in students being actively involved, and teachers and students enjoying the communicative language learning process. She felt through the communicative activities she could “change the introvert students’ attitudes by always encouraging them and helping them to build their confidence in speaking English boldly”.

Grace did point out that some students complained that they could not benefit because of the limited oral English of other group members during the task. Another barrier was the limitations of the textbook on her task uses; she stated that it was difficult to design communicative activities or tasks, seeing the themes and styles imposed by the texts as constraining. Although Grace had encountered these problems in the implementation of tasks, she appeared to be positive about TBLT overall.

Based on her explanation of the key principles of TBLT, the examples she gave of tasks and task-like activities, her rejection of the constraints mentioned in the literature as well as her affirmation of the engaging role of tasks for her students, it can be concluded that, at least as far as the evidence in her self-report, tasks had become a part of Grace’s teaching. She has some understanding of TBLT. However, owing to her apparently incomplete understanding of what constituted a task (that a task is just a focus on communication), some of the tasks she described seemed to be highly task-like activities rather than tasks. That few tasks were noted may also be due to the limited time for classroom observations. There is some self-reported evidence, therefore, that Grace was incorporating tasks in her practice, although tasks were not observed as being implemented in her actual practice.

### *B. Teacher Participant Gloria*

The class observed was designed to be a reading and writing class, although in practice more listening and speaking activities were observed. Gloria started her classes with a review activity; she asked students to write a passage using dictated words and phrases. After this revision, there was a teacher-led class brainstorm on the words and phrases related to the lesson topic: cars. A free writing exercise followed, where the students were divided into two groups and recorded opposing views on driving cars in China. Students then debated in pairs, followed by a teacher-led class debate. The last activity was to skim read a passage on Smart Cars and discuss their key features. The majority of lesson discussion time was allocated to debating whether or not students should drive cars in China, with students required to give their opinions. After evaluating against the four criteria it was determined that a debating task satisfied all four criteria.

Gloria’s beliefs about language teaching and tasks appeared to be consistent with her observed practices. Gloria claimed she used TBLT in her classes, but said she also included other approaches, believing that TBLT does not cater to all the classroom needs. She pointed out that she had been “exploring TBLT” for some years. When asked about the definition of ‘task’, she described it only briefly: “Students were given a task to perform and they were required to present the outcome at the end of tasks, such as a presentation”, giving a debate as an example.

Just as Gloria had described in the interview, she was observed using tasks in her reading and writing classes. She included one task with other approaches: a topic-based debating task, a major classroom activity, which occurred before a skim reading of the text and after a group discussion and a writing activity. She did not devote her class time to the explicit expression of language forms from the textbooks, but she was observed extending students’ vocabularies by building on their utterances. A series of listening, speaking, reading and writing activities were observed in both her reading and writing class, and the listening and speaking class. Her classes appeared to be highly communicative.

She said she included tasks into her classroom programmes because of her principle of engaging students in language learning. This was apparent during the debating activity in which students actively negotiated meanings. Gloria also explained that she used this approach because she saw the classroom as a community where every student participant and community member communicates and learns from one another rather than the classroom being “a platform for a teacher to pass on knowledge”. This was evident as students communicated their differing viewpoints.

Gloria mentioned several major factors that influenced her implementation of tasks. She stated that she first gained knowledge of TBLT when completing her diploma in Singapore; subsequently, she further developed her understanding through reading journal articles, through her study during the completion of a PhD degree and the professional development opportunities offered by her university, such as a seminar given by Ellis. She argued, however, that the examples provided by Ellis were not appropriate for her students, being more suitable for elementary students. She

complained about the lack of resources, for instance, examples of tasks to use in her teaching, and that she had to design tasks by herself based on the textbook topics.

As well as these factors influencing her task implementation, she emphasized that her current teaching approach, including the use of tasks in her classes, was mainly determined by her characteristics. She described herself as “an especially self-motivated person”, who sought to continually improve her approach through reading and study, and she made changes in response to any problems arising from the application of the theory into her practice.

If students were highly involved in an activity, Gloria would continue to use and refine it. This seems to reflect her general approach to teaching language, which is to engage her students. She further justified her different approach by saying that the need to pass the higher entrance examination in their high schools had necessitated the very traditional, teacher-dominated approach to learning grammar. She said the students “wanted their college life to be different”. Her perception of students’ expectations of their college life led her to use tasks in her classes. Rather than catering to their long-established learning habits, she viewed students’ needs from a different perspective, in contrast to the other two participant teachers.

Gloria’s attitudes towards TBLT were positive; she said that some negative reports of TBLT in the literature were not necessarily barriers to implementation. She believed non-native language-speaking teachers can apply TBLT if they prepare their classes thoroughly and have a deep understanding of the topic from the text. Nonetheless, she admitted that giving feedback to the students was challenging, especially when questions arose spontaneously during communication. She also disagreed with claims that exams hindered task implementation, saying that their universities recruited excellent students who did not have difficulty in passing the College English Examinations. Further, she did not see Asian students as passive learners, saying that they may seem to be introverted, but are longing to be involved in using language to communicate in her classes, and this requires a process, guided by the teacher.

Lastly, she mentioned that the use of textbooks also supports her to use tasks and that she extended the topics from the textbooks. She also supplemented the textbooks with a large amount of authentic material from other resources.

In summary, my study found that Gloria’s task implementation appeared to concur with her beliefs. The key principle guiding Gloria’s language teaching was to ensure that students are actively engaged in language learning, which is consistent with one of the task criteria. This may account for the convergence of her beliefs and task practices in her classes. Her definition of classrooms also helped to support the use of tasks. Gloria said she supplemented TBLT in her reading and writing classes with other listening, speaking, reading and writing activities, because she believed a task-based approach cannot cater to all the needs in the classroom. She asserted that her pursuit of perfection and her students’ needs are the major factors influencing her task implementation. She was positive about TBLT and advocated the use of TBLT despite the arguments in the literature.

### C. Teacher Participant Susan

One of Susan’s observed reading and writing classes focused on reading a passage about death in the web-based textbook *New Horizon College English, Reading and Writing, Book 3* (Zhen, 2011b), and her speaking and listening classes were based on the companion book. Three major activities were observed in Susan’s reading and writing classes: two movie clips and epitaphs of four famous people, employed to elicit the ideas related to the theme; a focus on new words and phrases from the reading passage; an analysis of the writing style and students’ completion of a piece of writing. Following these activities, Susan listened to two students’ writing and read her sample writing. All these activities were based on the reading passage in the textbook. This class was teacher-dominated, with the majority of class time devoted to the explicit presentation of the language points from the textbook.

The second observed class was a listening and speaking class, with the topic of business negotiation and ideas on how to start a business. Three listening activities were included: watching and listening to a video and completing a table based on the video, and two listening passages, followed by multiple-choice questions. There were two speaking activities: one in which students created and presented a business talk; and one where students matched qualities and skills with different occupations and justified their choices to their partners. All the activities were from textbooks or courseware.

After evaluating against Ellis’s four criteria, no evidence of TBLT was found in Susan’s classes. Although the two spoken activities were highly communicative, they were not tasks as there were no clearly defined outcomes. The first was a role-play of a business talk. In the second activity, Susan asked her students to talk about and justify their decisions but did not instruct them to reach an agreement on at least one choice, which, if included, would have indicated a clearly defined outcome.

Susan’s observed classroom activities did not correspond to her claims that her current classes were task-based, possibly as a result of her misunderstandings about tasks. She equated tasks with common activities. When implementing what she claimed were tasks, she excluded explicit explanations of language forms. She stated that the explicit explanation of language forms was at the “while reading stage”, emphasizing that in this stage she did not use tasks. Susan claimed she benefited from the textbooks and that they had led her to employ tasks. It was obvious that she regarded the general activities as tasks, apart from the expression of the language forms in classes.

Susan stated in her interview that she depended heavily on the textbook. All the activities, including the observed task-like activity, were selected from the textbook and its courseware. She used the teachers’ reference book and its accompanying materials as her teaching guide.

Susan's misunderstandings about tasks appeared to lead her to choose communicative activities from the courseware, rather than real tasks, for her observed listening and speaking class. This courseware consisted of a PowerPoint, based on the textbook, which seemed to include three highly task-like activities along with a variety of other activities. One of the tasks required students to work in small groups to rank ten occupations from the most to the least stressful and give reasons for their group's choices. Another task required students to try to sell something to their partner by using negotiation strategies and to report their results to the whole class. The third task was a group discussion about job application skills, to inform the design of a handbook for graduates. In the PowerPoint, however, these activities are not called "tasks".

In Susan's observed listening and speaking classes, she chose the two spoken activities from the courseware rather than the three highly task-like activities: developing business dialogue with given words and phrases, and a matching activity, and a discussion with peers about their choices. The communicative activities she selected were not true tasks. Susan's reason for not choosing the three task-like activities may relate to limited class time, which she had emphasized was a barrier to the implementation of tasks. Also, her preference for focusing on language forms enabled her to choose activities which demanded less time and to include more targeted language forms. For instance, she chose the activity of role-playing, using given phrases, in a business dialogue, but then omitted the follow-up task-like activities which required students to create their dialogue.

Susan also may have been constrained by other factors she believed hindered her implementation of tasks, such as the negative influence of other students in the activities, the large classes and pressure from the demands of national College English text and final exams. These possible constraints on task implementation in China have been identified previously in the literature (Butler, 2011). Susan also explained that she devoted time to the explicit teaching of language forms owing to her students' need to pass the exam and to improve their writing.

To sum up, Susan's claim that she taught task-based classes was not confirmed by observations of her practice. The discrepancy is most likely due to her misunderstandings of tasks; she regarded general activities as tasks. She had learned about tasks from the textbook-related training; this, she claimed, had the greatest influence on her. She was observed also to depend on the textbooks and claimed that tasks could motivate her students in their language learning. The barriers to task implementation that she identified were consistent with some of the constraints reported in the literature.

## V. DISCUSSION

Drawing on data from the interviews and classroom observations, I investigated three research questions. The first question examined the extent to which TBLT had found its way into teachers' beliefs. All three teachers appeared to be positive about TBLT and considered that they used tasks in their classrooms. They all acknowledged that tasks can arouse students' interest and engage them in language learning. The teachers reported positive attitudes towards concepts congruent with TBLT even though they seemed to have limited knowledge about TBLT. Grace claimed that tasks should play a leading role in language classrooms, and Gloria emphasized that she had been exploring tasks for many years. Moreover, neither Grace nor Gloria agreed with some of the factors preventing the implementation of TBLT in Asian countries, as articulated in the literature. However, the 'tasks' claimed by Susan were not real tasks due to her misunderstanding about tasks.

Grace and Gloria provided examples of classroom activities which seemed to correspond to task criteria (Ellis, 2009). Susan, however, appeared to have some misunderstandings about tasks. While reporting that she used 'tasks' from the textbooks and courseware (mainly Powerpoints) from the textbook-based website, she chose only what were activities. She equated general activities, such as listening exercises, spoken activities, a summary of each paragraph of a text, and writing activities, with 'tasks'.

Teachers also took an eclectic attitude towards tasks. Gloria embraced TBLT, as it was in line with her teaching principles, but acknowledged it was not her only teaching approach. Similarly, Grace acknowledged using an eclectic approach in her classes because she had to focus on learning of language points from the textbooks. East (2012) also found that in some cases task was interpreted as simply a synonym for "activity".

The findings of this study are congruent with those of East (2015) who, referring to studies on teachers' perspectives by Andon (2009), Carless (2009), East (2012), Van den Branden (2009), and Van den Branden et al. (2009), concluded that teachers "hold a range of interpretations and understandings of TBLT", ranging from relatively comprehensive descriptions of TBLT theories to limited explanations (p. 415). My findings also suggest that, although the Chinese teachers appeared to have positive attitudes towards tasks, they seemed uncertain about the definition of tasks and task criteria.

The second research question asked how teachers integrate the core characteristics of tasks into their practices. Although all the teachers' descriptions of tasks seemed to demonstrate an apparent enthusiasm for using tasks, in practice (at least in the observed lessons) they were less enthusiastic about using tasks. Two major characteristics were identified in the three teachers' use of tasks. Firstly, two teachers (Susan and Grace) preferred to integrate spoken task-like activities into a series of listening activities, but only in their listening and speaking classes. Their reading and writing classes were still teacher-dominated classes with the focus being on language forms from the textbooks. This finding is in line with the study by Peng (2018) who investigated eight teachers' cognitions and practices related to

TBLT at the tertiary level in China (these were teachers of Chinese as a second language). Peng found that the teachers used “a combination of the traditional approach and TBLT, with the traditional approach predominating” (p. 197). One teacher (Gloria) in my study, however, was observed to implement a task deliberately into her reading and writing class with a series of listening, speaking, reading and writing activities.

Further, Susan chose task-like activities that did not prioritize a particular task feature, which had a non-linguistic outcome at the end of the task. In choosing these activities, she may also have been influenced by limited class time. Teachers may find it difficult to understand how a non-linguistic outcome fits into a language-teaching classroom. Having a non-linguistic outcome is one of the key criteria that distinguish TBLT from the traditional approaches, which have a major focus on teaching language forms. Long (2015) also pointed out that TBLT is so fundamentally different from a traditional approach, and is therefore a challenge to teachers’ deep-rooted traditional ideas of teaching language in their classrooms.

In seeking to answer the third research question about the factors that affect teachers’ task implementation, my study identified several similar issues to those reported in the literature, including the use of textbooks and students’ established learning habits (Butler, 2011; Deng & Carless, 2010; Ellis, 2015). In contrast to other studies, it was found that teachers’ reflections, their personalities and education around using tasks played a vital role in task use. However, it should be acknowledged that it is difficult to uncover factors that influence teachers’ beliefs and practices as this is largely tacit knowledge.

The first factor claimed by the three Chinese teachers to influence task implementation is the use of textbooks. Researchers have found that teachers in China rely on textbooks. This constrains them from using tasks (Xiongyong & Samuel, 2011). The three Chinese teachers in this study, however, claimed that textbooks, their associated multimedia and their web-based resources supported them in using tasks.

For Susan, the textbook was the authority and she chose two task-like activities from the textbooks even though she had misunderstandings about the tasks. Similarly, for Gloria and Grace, the textbook seemed to be the foundation from which they designed their tasks. Grace reported that she designed task-like activities based on the topics of the passages. She explained that she always gave her students a topic to discuss and they submitted the recording of the discussion to her in the spoken and listening classes. Another task she mentioned was to ask students to make a video based on the topics of the textbook. While Gloria used all these resources creatively and selectively, she referred to the textbooks and courseware to design real tasks. In the observed classes, Gloria referred to only one of the warm-up questions on one PowerPoint slide, which she turned into a debate. She did not spend much class time on the expression of the new words and phrases, but devoted most of the time to the debate task.

From the descriptions of interviews and the observed classes, it could be seen that textbooks exerted influence on the three Chinese teachers’ task implementation to different extents. The current textbooks used by the three teachers are dramatically different from the traditional textbooks. Various language carriers, such as websites, CDs and apps, have extended the original (one) paper textbook to provide both students and teachers with more resources. Teachers claimed that they now have increased autonomy due to the variety of web and multimedia-based resources. All three teachers were observed to make decisions about what should be incorporated into their classroom activities based on these various resources, as it would be impossible to include all in the limited class time. Furthermore, Gloria and Grace pointed out that students could access the language points easily through the websites and apps, and so there was no need to focus excessively on this aspect during class. Teachers could devote more time to communicative activities and tasks. Gloria and Grace, unlike Susan, appeared to take advantage of the freedom and inspiration provided by the varied and plentiful teaching resources attached to the textbooks to design tasks and integrate them into their classes.

Despite there still being a culture and tradition of reliance on textbooks for Chinese teachers, the considerable number of resources they now have available to choose from in the web-based textbooks allows greater freedom in the selection of their classroom activities, which includes tasks. Although the use of web-based textbooks can play a facilitating role in task implementation for Chinese teachers, the textbooks also constrained the teachers in their task design, and Grace noted it was difficult for her to design tasks based on some of the topics.

It is evident from the observations that teachers modified tasks to “make them fit more comfortably with their own preferred teaching styles” (East, 2015, p. 10). The findings also appear to concur with Andon and Eckerth’s (2009) conclusion that teachers “experiment with different elements of TBLT, reject some of them, embrace others, and combine all of them with other pedagogical elements” (p. 305). The three teachers adapted and integrated tasks into their classrooms based on their course demands and understandings of TBLT.

The second influencing factor from my study relates to learning cultures and Chinese students’ learning habits. Two teachers (Susan and Grace) pointed out that they explained language points from the textbooks to cater to perceived students’ needs and habits for learning language forms as presented in the textbook. Grace stated that her students saw the language points as items of knowledge they could take home with them. In contrast, Gloria viewed students’ habits and needs differently, saying that students had different expectations for their college study compared with their teacher-dominated and examination-oriented learning in high school. Rather than catering to students’ long-established habits of receiving knowledge from teachers, Gloria preferred the approach of engaging her students in using language to communicate.

All the teachers in this study agreed that tasks can motivate and engage students in language learning, as also reported in earlier literature (Van den Branden, 2009). East (2017) reported, “teachers drawing on TBLT ideas report increased confidence, enjoyment and motivation among learners” (p. 421). Ellis (2015) also points out that “the so-called passive nature of Asian students is not a reason for rejecting TBLT”. TBLT can be applied to “re-socialize” these students because “Asian students are not inherently passive but may only appear to be so because they have been socialized into passivity in the classroom” (p. 384).

The Chinese teachers’ reflective practices and personalities seemed to play a role in whether, and how, they used tasks. Gloria emphasized that it was the continuous reflection on her own efforts that led her to explore TBLT in practice. Similarly, Grace argued that it was her personality that played a decisive role in the task implementation. She aimed to continually improve her teaching approaches through her reading and ongoing study, and she made changes according to the issues raised from her readings, and from her students’ challenges and responses. Her attitude seemed to echo the argument in the literature that teachers’ analytical thinking about their past and current teaching beliefs, experience and practice can bring about change to their beliefs and practices (Borg; 2011; Farrell & Ives, 2015).

Grace stated that her personality influenced her acceptance and implementation of tasks; she said she was an open-minded person who was willing to accept new approaches and try different activities, including TBLT. Although Grace was not observed using tasks in her classes, the task examples she described appeared to be in line with the task criteria.

Chinese teachers’ reflective practices seemed to play an important role in task implementation. This echoes the findings in the literature that education programmes grounded in reflective practice which embody “an understanding that facilitating critical thinking about past and present beliefs alongside actual experiences in the classroom will enhance the likelihood of changes both to beliefs and to future practice” (East, 2017, p. 414).

Gloria and Grace described factors within their university in China which may also account for the implementation of task-like activities or tasks being observed in their classes and reported in their statements. Factors include teachers’ increasing autonomy over the content of the final examination, professional development opportunities around the latest language learning and teaching theories, the role of new technologies, and strong levels of support from their university in implementing tasks.

To conclude, the use of textbooks, student factors, examinations, teachers’ reflections and personalities, education programmes, as well as a number of other favourable conditions at the tertiary level, are found to have an influence on teachers’ implementation of tasks. Although there are likely to be other factors influencing task implementation, these were the factors observed in teachers’ classes and elicited from the interviews.

## VI. CONCLUSION

As with any study, it is important to identify limitations. This was a small-scale study focused on three teachers in tertiary institutions and the generalizability of the findings is therefore limited. It should be recognized that more classroom observations from teachers in other institutions would have provided a stronger basis for claims about the teachers’ work. Nonetheless, this study provided interesting and in-depth understandings of three teachers’ perspectives and practices related to TBLT. As Andon (2009) claims, understanding how teachers interpret and practise TBLT has the potential to inform future teacher education programmes. East (2012) states that investigating teachers’ beliefs and practices related to TBLT can ultimately challenge theoretical perspectives and promote teachers’ practices in this area.

A key recommendation of this study is a greater emphasis on appropriate teacher education initiatives. More research should be conducted into educational programmes to improve teachers’ understanding of TBLT. Furthermore, teacher educators should carry out follow-up studies to examine teachers’ use of tasks in their natural contexts, such as East’s (2017) investigation of teachers’ perspectives and use of tasks three years after initial teacher education. Research with teachers could also investigate why teachers accept some aspects of TBLT while resisting others. Teachers would benefit from assistance in designing tasks with task outcomes and encouragement to reflect on how this concept should be interpreted and enacted.

The results of this study also suggest that TBLT-focused teacher education, perhaps related to web-based textbooks and grounded in reflective practice, would be an effective way to promote the implementation of tasks by Chinese teachers. It would also be effective and feasible for tasks to be integrated into textbooks in order to help overcome the lack of task resources reported by teachers.

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# Uncovering the Edge of Ambivertedness in Acquiring the English Language

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**Abstract**—The current study endeavors to investigate the preferred English language learning strategies among individuals who self-identify as ambiverts. A mixed-methods research design, comprising a survey questionnaire and follow-up interviews, was implemented to gather data from a sample population of 68 English-major students, of which 22 self-identified as ambiverts. The study aimed to elucidate the influence of the balance between introversion and extroversion on ambiverts' favored learning strategies and to examine the benefits this balance provides in terms of selecting strategies that are best adapted to their unique needs and preferences. The results demonstrate that ambiverts favored affective learning strategies, such as musical accompaniment and positive self-talk, as well as compensatory strategies, such as deductive reasoning and seeking assistance. Furthermore, ambiverts displayed a proclivity for metacognitive strategies, including the recognition of faults and focusing on specific tasks, and memory-related strategies, including the utilization of color-coding and the integration of images and keywords. The study also revealed that social strategies, such as collaboration with others and seeking clarification, were favored by ambiverts, emphasizing the significance of interaction and engagement in the learning process. These findings have important implications for language educators and may inform the development of more inclusive learning materials that cater to a broad range of learning styles, including ambiverts, and enhance the effectiveness of language instruction.

**Index Terms**—ambiverts, language learning strategies, Vietnam

## I. INTRODUCTION

The escalating prominence of English as an international lingua franca in spheres such as commerce, science, and technology within Vietnam necessitates individuals' exceptional communicative capabilities in the language (Vu & Peters, 2021). Catering to the demands of multinational corporations and foreign investors requires sophisticated English proficiency (Yehekel & Rawal, 2019), while academics must adeptly engage in knowledge exchange with global peers. Consequently, the intensified emphasis on English proficiency mandates superior pedagogical approaches to maintain economic competitiveness (Thao & Mai, 2020). Discerning students' favored learning strategies is crucial for efficacious language instruction and addressing diverse needs. This empowers educators to customize instruction, enhancing language acquisition (Lestari & Wahyudin, 2020), by creating engaging lessons, providing targeted feedback, and promoting effective methodologies (Nisbet & Shucksmith, 2017). This cultivates self-awareness, expansion, and development, particularly for ambiverted students who likely exhibit unique learning styles.

Gaining an insightful understanding of ambiverts' preferred language learning strategies is crucial for research as it can inform the development of more effective pedagogical approaches and learning materials. Ambiverts, as individuals who exhibit both extroverted and introverted tendencies, bring a unique perspective to the language learning process.

By studying their learning preferences and habits, researchers can uncover how to best support ambiverts in their language acquisition journey. This can have far-reaching benefits for language education and the development of pedagogical practices that cater to a diverse range of learners. Moreover, a deeper understanding of ambiverts' language learning strategies can inform the creation of more inclusive language learning environments that accommodate a broad spectrum of learning styles.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Characteristics of Ambiverts*

Ambiverted language learners are individuals who exhibit both extroverted and introverted tendencies, thereby embodying characteristics of both personality types and displaying a remarkable ability to modify their conduct according to situational demands (Davidson, 2017; Petric, 2022). The following are some of the salient features of ambiverted language learners:

- **Modifiability:** They are capable of adjusting their pedagogical approach in response to their surroundings and the specific learning task at hand. They can exhibit extroverted and gregarious behavior in social settings, while concurrently relishing solitude and tranquility for concentrated learning.
- **Versatility:** They have a well-roundedness that stems from their ability to competently maneuver both social and solitary learning environments.
- **Interpersonal Communication:** They are skilled communicators, which is a crucial attribute for language learning as it enables them to engage in speaking exercises with native speakers and other language learners.
- **Autonomy:** They possess the ability to work effectively both independently and in groups, thus affording them ample opportunities to learn.
- **Assurance:** They are frequently self-assured in their abilities and exhibit a willingness to take calculated risks and attempt novel experiences, which is an advantage in language learning as it necessitates abundant practice and exposure to new material.

In conclusion, ambiverted language learners possess a singular combination of traits that permit them to effectively balance their social and solitary learning styles, thereby rendering them adaptable and well-rounded learners.

### *English Learning Strategies*

The implementation of learning strategies has been shown to be a crucial factor in promoting the acquisition and retention of knowledge (Nisbet & Shucksmith, 2017). These strategies encompass a diverse range of techniques, including note-taking (Salame & Thompson, 2020), memorization (Oanh & Hien, 2006), self-testing (Nisbet & Shucksmith, 2017), and feedback acquisition (Leenknrecht et al., 2019). In the context of English language education, English learning strategies refer to the specific techniques and methods utilized by learners to attain and enhance their linguistic proficiency. Such strategies encompass activities such as the practice of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and grammar (Hashim et al., 2018) as well as metacognitive techniques such as goal-setting, progress monitoring, and self-evaluation (Channa et al., 2015). The effective implementation of these English learning strategies can play a significant role in enhancing the communicative competence and language proficiency of learners.

### *Oxford's Framework of English Learning Strategies*

The Oxford Framework for Learning Strategies (2003) delineates six interrelated domains of learning strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective, and social. The application of this framework in the Vietnamese educational context has revealed some trends in learning strategy preference, such as a tendency towards memory-related strategies, such as rote memorization (Cong-Lem, 2019), and difficulties in the implementation of metacognitive strategies (Nguyen & Trinh, 2011). Cultural and social factors may influence the effectiveness of affective and social strategies (Nguyen et al., 2006). However, it is crucial to consider the cultural, educational, and instructional context when adapting the Oxford framework for use in Vietnam (Vu, 2021).

### *Cognitive Language Learning Strategies*

The investigation of cognitive learning strategies, which encompasses the mental processes involved in the acquisition and retention of information, has garnered significant scholarly attention (Di Carlo, 2017). Research has identified several cognitive strategies, including chunking, elaboration, visualization, association, and repetition, that have been shown to be effective in language learning. Empirical evidence supports the positive relationship between the implementation of these strategies and improved language proficiency outcomes, as demonstrated in a study conducted by Chang and Liu (2013) which revealed significant progress in the language competency of Taiwanese students. Therefore, the comprehension and implementation of cognitive learning strategies are essential for the enhancement of language proficiency and communicative competence.

### *Metacognitive Language Learning Strategies*

The implementation of metacognitive learning strategies, which encompasses the employment of sophisticated cognitive processes and self-regulating techniques, has been demonstrated to be highly advantageous for language learning. These strategies, including self-evaluation, goal setting, and reflection, have been shown to result in superior language proficiency outcomes, particularly in the areas of listening comprehension and writing skills (Vandergrift & Tafaghodtari, 2010; Wang & Wang, 2018). The ability to plan, monitor, and assess one's own learning endeavors



through the utilization of metacognitive strategies is especially crucial when preparing for language proficiency exams, where goal setting and progress tracking are key considerations (Leutwyler, 2009).

#### *Memory-related Language Learning Strategies*

The application of memory-related learning strategies, which encompass techniques aimed at facilitating the retention and retrieval of information, has been shown to greatly enhance language learning outcomes (Bala & Bala, 2018). Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of memory-related techniques, such as repetition, elaboration, and visualization, in improving language proficiency (Chang, 2015; Barcroft & Sommers, 2005). Given the central role that vocabulary, grammar, and other linguistic structures play in effective language acquisition and preparation for proficiency exams, the implementation of memory-related strategies is essential in attaining language proficiency and communicative competence.

#### *Compensatory Language Learning Strategies*

The implementation of compensatory learning strategies, comprising techniques that alleviate linguistic constraints and barriers, has been demonstrated to have a positive impact on language learning outcomes (Mutlu et al., 2019). Empirical research has substantiated the effectiveness of compensatory methods, such as circumlocution, context guessing, and nonverbal communicative techniques, in enhancing language proficiency (Izzah et al., 2021; Gani et al., 2015). These strategies are especially useful for learners facing specific linguistic challenges, as they serve to facilitate effective communication and overcome difficulties related to grammar or vocabulary.

#### *Affective Language Learning Strategies*

The application of affective learning strategies refers to the utilization of techniques aimed at regulating emotions and attitudes in the context of language acquisition (Robles, 2018). These strategies encompass various methods, such as the promotion of positive self-talk, the setting of objectives, and the acquisition of social support. The positive impact of these strategies on language learning outcomes has been substantiated by empirical studies (Zakaria et al., 2019; Wael et al., 2018). These techniques are particularly useful for learners who encounter difficulties in motivation, anxiety, or attitude and can enhance language proficiency and communicative competence by regulating emotional and attitudinal factors.

#### *Social Language Learning Strategies*

The implementation of social learning strategies encompasses techniques for language acquisition through interpersonal interaction and collaboration, including practices such as peer instruction, soliciting evaluative feedback, and negotiating meaning. The efficacy of these strategies has been well established through research, with studies demonstrating their positive impact on language learning outcomes (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978; Oflaz, 2019). These strategies are particularly advantageous for individuals seeking to develop communicative proficiency and interact with native speakers of the target language. Engagement in collaborative activities with proficient speakers or other learners can greatly enhance language proficiency in educational or professional settings.

### III. METHODS

#### *Research Design*

This study employs an intricate descriptive methodology and a mixed-methods approach to explore the favored English language learning strategies among a sample of self-identified ambiverts. Participants were asked to self-assess their ambiverted status based on the results of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a widely used psychometric instrument (Myers & McCaulley, 1988). The research design involves the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data through a combination of survey questionnaires and follow-up interviews, respectively. This dual data collection approach (Glik et al., 2005) provides a comprehensive understanding of the dominant learning strategies among the student population. The survey questionnaires generate numerical data that are amenable to statistical analysis, thereby revealing common patterns and tendencies. Conversely, the follow-up interviews provide qualitative insights, enabling a more in-depth exploration of the students' experiences and perspectives, thereby enhancing our understanding of their preferred learning strategies and their perceptions of the strategies' efficacy. The use of both data collection techniques generates a comprehensive and accurate portrayal of the favored learning styles of the ambiverted cohort, offering valuable insights for language educators and students alike.

#### *Participants*

This document, constituting an essential component of a comprehensive research endeavor, includes study participants derived from a unique cohort consisting of 68 undergraduate students majoring in English. Upon administering the MBTI test, individuals exhibiting ambivert characteristics were formally identified as the subjects for this empirical investigation. The sample population for this study consisted of 68 students from an English-major cohort, of which 22 self-identified as ambivert. This subgroup consisted of 7 male and 15 female students. Participants for the subsequent qualitative interviews were purposively selected to achieve a representative cross-section of the sample, in accordance with the predominant learning strategy categories that were identified through the administration of a questionnaire survey. The study was conducted in accordance with ethical principles, including ensuring confidentiality and obtaining informed consent from participants. The primary objective of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of the students' learning preferences and needs, with the aim of customizing pedagogical approaches and improving the efficacy of language instruction.

### *Data Collection Instruments*

#### *Questionnaire*

The study employed a survey questionnaire to determine the extent to which the participants utilized various strategies for English language acquisition. The survey encompassed a totality of 20 elements, with its primary concentration aimed at appraising the employment of cognitive strategies (Q4. The practice, repetition, and application of formulas; Q5. Rapid reading and keyword identification; Q6. Translation, invocation of general principles, and their application to respective scenarios; Q7. Note-taking and summarization), metacognitive strategies (Q11. Concentration on specific tasks or activities; Q12. Pursuit of knowledge through book reading; Q13. Establishment of a schedule for environmental organization; Q14. Identification, assessment, localization, and rectification of errors), memory-related strategies (Q1. Commitment to memory of images, keywords, and auditory signals; Q2. Use of variegated colors or highlights to signify words; Q3. Flashcard utilization), compensatory strategies (Q8. Inference of word meanings; Q9. Employment of morphological cues like suffixes, prefixes, word order, and other linguistic indicators; Q10. Search for pertinent data in scholarly articles/textbooks), affective strategies (Q15. Practice of mindfulness or meditation; Q16. Music engagement; Q17. Self-dialogue to augment self-assurance), and social learning strategies (Q18. Use of checklists for peer-evaluation; Q19. Request for clarification; Q20. Collaboration with peers). The questionnaire was designed to incorporate both quantitative and qualitative elements, including Likert-type scale evaluations and open-ended responses for participants to elaborate on their experiences and preferences. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were rigorously tested, with a 0.89 Cronbach's alpha score indicating its reliability and a validation process involving content validation and expert review confirming its validity. The primary objective of the questionnaire was to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' preferred learning strategies for English language acquisition, with the data analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods to identify patterns in the preferred learning strategies.

#### *Semi-structured Interviews*

The qualitative interview component of the study aimed to elicit rich and nuanced perspectives from a purposeful subset of participants regarding their favored English language learning strategies. The semi-structured interview format facilitated an open-ended and unencumbered exploration, with questions designed to gather information about participants' utilization of diverse learning strategies, their preferences, and their subjective evaluations of their effectiveness. The face-to-face interviews were recorded and transcribed for subsequent analysis and aimed to provide a deeper understanding of participants' perceptions and experiences concerning their preferred learning strategies. For instance, questions might have probed into participants' experiences with group work as a learning strategy, their preferred strategies for preparing for an English language proficiency examination, and the like.

#### *Data Analysis*

The present study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in data collection and analysis. The quantitative data was analyzed utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, with a reliability and validity test implemented to assess the survey questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviations, were employed to analyze participants' favored learning strategies. In parallel, the qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews underwent a rigorous process of thematic analysis. The verbatim transcriptions were meticulously examined using a deductive approach to identify recurring themes and patterns in participants' responses. These themes were then coded and categorized based on their relevance to the research questions, undergoing a cyclical refinement process until a final set of themes was established. Ultimately, the quantitative and qualitative data were integrated to provide a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the students' preferred learning strategies in the context of English language acquisition, offering valuable insights for language educators and students to tailor their pedagogical approaches and improve the effectiveness of language instruction.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective of the present study was to ascertain the preferred learning strategies of a cohort of individuals who self-identify as extroverts, after conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the commonly employed techniques among the study population. The results of the analysis, which were classified into six primary domains in line with the Oxford framework, are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
AMBIVERTS' MOST FREQUENTLY USED LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES (N=22)

	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
<b>Affective Strategies</b>	1.66	4.66	3.61	.65
<b>Compensation Strategies</b>	2.00	4.33	3.55	.56
<b>Cognitive Strategies</b>	1.50	4.25	3.53	.65
<b>Social Strategies</b>	2.00	4.66	3.47	.68
<b>Metacognitive Strategies</b>	2.00	4.00	3.31	.50
<b>Memory-related Strategies</b>	1.33	4.33	3.17	.81

Table 1 displays the frequently used strategies as reported by the ambiverted group. Akin to the extroverts group, this group’s most frequently used strategies were affective strategies (M=3.61), followed by compensation (M=3.55), cognitive (M=3.53), and social strategies (M=3.47). The metacognitive (M=3.31) and memory-related strategies (M=3.17) were the least utilized strategies by ambiverts.

Table 2 exhibits the scrutiny findings for each constituent within the six primary classifications of learning stratagems.

TABLE 2  
AMBIVERTS’ MOST FREQUENTLY USED ITEMS ON THEIR LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES (N22)

Items	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD
Q16. Music engagement	2.00	5.00	4.00	.69
Q15. Practice of mindfulness or meditation	2.00	5.00	3.45	.86
Q17. Self-dialogue to augment self-assurance	1.00	4.00	3.36	.79
<b>Affective Strategies</b>	<b>1.66</b>	<b>4.66</b>	<b>3.61</b>	<b>.65</b>
Q8. Inference of word meanings	2.00	5.00	3.73	.70
Q10. Search for pertinent data in scholarly articles/textbooks	2.00	5.00	3.45	.80
Q9. Employment of morphological cues like suffixes, prefixes, word order, and other linguistic indicators	2.00	5.00	3.45	.86
<b>Compensation Strategies</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>3.55</b>	<b>.56</b>
Q6. Translation, invocation of general principles, and their application to respective scenarios	1.00	5.00	3.55	.96
Q5. Rapid reading and keyword identification	1.00	5.00	3.55	1.01
Q4. The practice, repetition, and application of formulas	2.00	5.00	3.55	.91
Q7. Note-taking and summarization	2.00	5.00	3.50	.80
<b>Cognitive Strategies</b>	<b>1.50</b>	<b>4.25</b>	<b>3.53</b>	<b>.65</b>
Q19. Request for clarification	2.00	5.00	3.64	.79
Q20. Collaboration with peers	1.00	5.00	3.59	.85
Q18. Use of checklists for peer-evaluation	2.00	5.00	3.18	.85
<b>Social Strategies</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>4.66</b>	<b>3.47</b>	<b>.68</b>
Q14. Identification, assessment, localization, and rectification of errors	2.00	4.00	3.50	.60
Q11. Concentration on specific tasks or activities	1.00	5.00	3.32	.84
Q12. Pursuit of knowledge through book reading	2.00	4.00	3.27	.63
Q13. Establishment of a schedule for environmental organization	2.00	5.00	3.14	.83
<b>Metacognitive Strategies</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>4.00</b>	<b>3.31</b>	<b>.50</b>
Q2. Utilizing different colors or highlights to differentiate words	1.00	5.00	3.41	1.01
Q1. Utilizing images, keywords, and the preservation of sounds in memory	1.00	5.00	3.41	1.05
Q3. Using flashcards	1.00	5.00	2.68	1.00
<b>Memory-related Strategies</b>	<b>1.33</b>	<b>4.33</b>	<b>3.17</b>	<b>.81</b>

These results suggest that the ambiverts in the study had a strong preference for affective learning strategies, particularly listening to music and engaging in positive self-talk, as indicated by their high mean scores (M=3.64 and M=3.59, respectively). Practicing meditation was also favored, albeit to a lesser extent, as evidenced by the slightly lower mean score (M=3.18).

In the interviews, Participant 2 explained why he preferred listening to music as an affective learning strategy to other types as follows:

Music is a powerful source of inspiration and motivation for me. Whether it is classical to concentrate or pop to get pumped, music affects my mood and energy in a way meditation does not (Participant 2).

The statement of Participant 2 exemplifies the versatility inherent in ambivert individuals, who possess both introverted and extroverted traits (Davidson, 2017; Petric, 2022). The assertion that music holds a significant influence on his mood and energy levels aligns with the notion of extroverted tendencies, as the use of external stimuli (music) to regulate emotions and motivation is a common characteristic of extroverted individuals (Jamshidzad et al., 2020).

Besides, positive self-talk was favored by Participant 4 with the following reasons:

Positive self-talk is a technique that I find helpful for maintaining a positive mindset and boosting my confidence. By intentionally choosing to think positively and reframing negative thoughts, I can approach challenges with a more optimistic and proactive attitude (Participant 4).

The utilization of positive self-talk as a mechanism to cultivate mental fortitude and augment self-assuredness concurs with the hypothesis that individuals exhibiting ambiverted traits tend to demonstrate an inclination towards deliberate and proactive regulation of their emotional and affective conditions (Aguilar, 2018; Davidson, 2017). The emphasis on transforming negative cognitions and adopting a proactive and optimistic stance in the face of adversity indicates that Participant 4 might exhibit a more extroverted disposition (Neff et al., 2007), as he seems to actively engage and overcome challenges.

The results also suggest that the ambiverts in the study preferred compensation learning strategies such as utilizing deductive reasoning to infer the meanings of words (M=3.73), asking for assistance to get missing information (M=3.45), and employing morphological and syntactical cues (M=3.44), as indicated by their mean scores.

The findings in qualitative data also explained why ambiverts preferred utilizing deductive reasoning to infer the meanings of words to other types of compensation language learning strategies. Participant 6’s excerpt displayed the aforementioned explanation:

With deductive reasoning, I can use my existing knowledge and the information available to me to make logical conclusions about the meaning of a word. For example, if I come across the word “photosynthesis,” I can use my knowledge of roots and prefixes to break down the word into its component parts: “photo” meaning light and “synthesis” meaning to create or produce. From there, I can infer that photosynthesis refers to the process by which plants use light to create energy” (Participant 6).

The demonstration of deductive reasoning by Participant 6 aligns with the hallmark traits of ambiverts as possessing both introverted and extroverted tendencies (Davidson, 2017; Petric, 2022). This cognitive process of drawing conclusions and making inferences from available information highlights the individual’s capacity for critical thinking and information synthesis, characteristic of the ambivert personality type (Galate & Galate, 2023; Yusoff et al., 2016). This combination of skills has been shown to be advantageous in various contexts, such as learning, problem-solving, and decision-making (Petric, 2022).

Additionally, the quantitative data analysis results suggest that the ambiverts in the study had a relatively consistent preference for cognitive learning strategies, with the mean scores being relatively close for each strategy. The highest mean scores were for utilizing general rules and applying them to situations ( $M=3.55$ ), skimming and scanning ( $M=3.55$ ), and practicing, repeating, and recognizing formulas ( $M=3.55$ ), indicating that these strategies were favored by the ambiverts in the study. Taking notes and summarizing was still preferred, but to a slightly lesser extent, as indicated by the lower mean score ( $M=3.50$ ).

Participant 8 explained why she was in favor of utilizing general rules and applying them to situations as follows:

Using general rules means finding patterns that work in different situations. I use these rules to predict new situations, like finding patterns in grammar to guess unknown words in a new language. Applying these rules means using what I learned to make decisions and solve problems in new ways. This takes critical and creative thinking and using my knowledge in new ways (Participant 8).

The statement highlights the dichotomous nature of ambiverts, who possess a combination of introverted and extroverted traits (Davidson, 2017; Petric, 2022). Ambiverts are known to possess critical and creative thinking skills and the ability to apply their knowledge in new and innovative ways (Galate & Galate, 2023; Yusoff et al., 2016). This adaptable and flexible approach to problem-solving, as demonstrated by Ambivert 8’s utilization of general rules, aligns with previous studies that indicate a proclivity for success in problem-solving and decision-making among ambiverts. The ability to balance introspective and analytical abilities with proactive and innovative action is a hallmark of the ambivert personality type.

Participant 1 preferred skimming and scanning to other types of cognitive learning strategies. She shared her thoughts as follows:

Skimming means quickly reading to understand a text. It helps me get the main ideas without getting bogged down in details. It is good for a quick overview or when I do not have much time. Scanning is searching for specific information. If I need a statistic, I will scan a report to find it fast without reading everything” (Participant 1).

This statement highlights the characteristic of ambiverts as individuals who possess both introverted and extroverted tendencies (Davidson, 2017; Petric, 2022). The ability to quickly understand and retain information, through skimming and scanning, is a common trait among ambiverts, as they are able to effectively balance their attention to detail with their ability to quickly grasp the essence of information (Hayes & Stratton, 2022). The use of these techniques is particularly beneficial for individuals who need to navigate large amounts of information in a limited amount of time, and previous studies have shown that ambiverts often excel in time-sensitive and information-rich environments (Colwell, 2015; Stough et al., 1996).

On the other hand, Participant 3 found practicing, repeating, and recognizing formulas effective to him. He stated,

Practicing and repeating formulas means doing problems repeatedly until I understand. This helps me remember and be confident. Recognizing formulas means knowing which one to use quickly. This takes good understanding and the ability to find the right one fast. Being able to recognize formulas quickly saves time and makes me more productive, especially on tests or in high-pressure situations (Participant 3).

This aligns with the characteristics of ambiverts as individuals who exhibit a balance between introversion and extroversion (Davidson, 2017; Petric, 2022). Ambiverts have a versatile approach to learning and can effectively utilize both intuitive and analytical thinking in problem-solving (Galate & Galate, 2023; Yusoff et al., 2016). The use of techniques such as practicing and repeating formulas and quick recognition of them showcases the ambivert’s efficiency and productivity in high-pressure situations (Titze et al., 2017), reflecting their ability to strike a balance between rote memorization and conceptual understanding.

Besides, the results suggest that the ambiverts in the study preferred social learning strategies such as requesting the speaker to reiterate, reword, or moderate their speech tempo ( $M=3.64$ ) and cooperating with others ( $M=3.59$ ), as indicated by their higher mean scores. Adopting checklists was still preferred, but to a lesser extent, as indicated by the lower mean score ( $M=3.18$ ).

Participant 7 displayed the reasons why he was comfortable for requesting the speaker to reiterate, reword, or moderate their speech tempo as follows:

Asking the speaker to repeat or reword means asking them to say it again or in a different way. This is helpful when I miss something or do not understand. It is especially useful in group settings or when the speaker is speaking fast. By asking for a repeat or reword, I can better understand and stay involved in the conversation (Participant 7).

This statement aligns with previous research on ambiverts, who are characterized by their adaptable interpersonal skills and communicative competence (Davidson, 2017; Petric, 2022). The reported use of active listening and the request for repetition or rephrasing highlights the ambivert's engagement and investment in the communicative exchange, reflecting their ability to effectively understand and interact with others in group settings or professional/personal contexts.

On the other hand, Participant 2 shared why he preferred cooperating with others to other types of social learning strategies. He stated,

Working with others means going after a common goal together, like group projects or team assignments. By working with others, I learn and improve my own knowledge. It also helps me build communication and interpersonal skills like active listening and conflict resolution, which are important for personal and professional relationships. Working with others is also fun and makes learning enjoyable (Participant 2).

This statement aligns with previous studies on ambiverts, who exhibit a proclivity towards cooperative learning and group collaboration (Davidson, 2017; Zulkarnain & Nurmayana, 2022). Ambiverts benefit from this approach to learning through the acquisition of knowledge and skills from diverse perspectives and experiences (Dorjee & Ting-Toomey, 2020; Grant, 2013). Their ability to work effectively with others is a key interpersonal competency, valued in both personal and professional contexts. Research also suggests that ambiverts are more motivated and engaged in the learning process when the experience is collaborative and enjoyable (Huang & Dunn, 2022).

These results suggest that the ambiverts in the study preferred metacognitive learning strategies such as recognizing, evaluating, locating, and rectifying faults ( $M=3.50$ ) and focusing on specific tasks or activities ( $M=3.32$ ), as indicated by their higher mean scores. Reading books or engaging in discourse with others and applying the acquired knowledge ( $M=3.27$ ) and establishing a schedule or organizing one's physical surroundings ( $M=3.14$ ) were still preferred, but to a lesser extent, as indicated by the lower mean scores.

Participant 8 detailed the benefits of recognizing, evaluating, locating, and rectifying faults to explain why she preferred this type to other types of metacognitive learning strategies as follows:

Recognizing faults means finding areas to improve from self-reflection, feedback, or assessments. Evaluating faults is seeing their severity and impact, being honest and objective. Locating faults is finding the cause of the problems by analyzing my learning. Rectifying faults is making a plan to improve, like practicing, getting help, or changing study habits (Participant 8).

This statement is in concurrence with the established traits of ambiverts, who are characterized by their ability to balance introversion and extroversion (Davidson, 2017; Petric, 2022). Ambiverts are known for their adaptability, introspective nature, and the ability to self-evaluate and improve. The act of recognizing faults, evaluating their impact objectively, and developing practical solutions aligns with the traits of ambiverts, who possess a combination of introspective and proactive qualities (Xu et al., 2014). This ability to balance their strengths and weaknesses and continuously strive for improvement is a hallmark of the ambivert personality type.

Meanwhile, Participant 10, who preferred focusing on specific tasks or activities to others, shared his view points about this strategy as follows:

Focusing on specific tasks means breaking down big goals into smaller, manageable parts. This helps me prioritize and make progress in a structured way, avoid distractions, and stay focused. Setting goals and deadlines for each task keeps me motivated and on track. It also helps me understand the subject better by focusing on specific concepts or skills (Participant 10).

The statement "Focusing on specific tasks means breaking down big goals into smaller, manageable parts" aligns with the characteristics of ambiverts as individuals known for their organizational and goal-oriented tendencies (Davidson, 2022; Grant, 2013). The strategy of breaking down larger goals into smaller tasks enables ambiverts to prioritize their resources effectively, advance in a structured manner, and steer clear of distractions. The setting of specific goals and deadlines for each task fosters motivation and accountability, and deepens comprehension of the subject matter.

Finally, these results suggest that the ambiverts in the study had a relatively consistent preference for memory-related learning strategies, with the mean scores being relatively close for the first two strategies. Utilizing different colors or highlights to differentiate words ( $M=3.41$ ) and utilizing images, keywords, and the preservation of sounds in memory ( $M=3.41$ ) were favored by the ambiverts in the study, as indicated by the higher mean scores. Using flashcards was not significantly preferred by the ambiverts in this study, as indicated by the lower mean score ( $M=2.68$ ).

In the interviews, Participants 2 and 5 shared their different points of view regarding the impacts of utilizing different colors or highlights to differentiate words and those of utilizing images, keywords, and the preservation of sounds in memory on their English learning. Specifically, Participant 2 explained why he preferred utilizing different colors or highlights to differentiate words to others as follows:

Using different colors or highlights for words means assigning colors to different ideas or information. This helps see connections and quickly find key information, especially for exams or projects with a lot of information. Using colors or highlights makes studying more enjoyable and helps understand how concepts fit together (Participant 2).

The utilization of images and keywords to recall information, as well as the preservation of sounds, further supports the idea of ambiverts being adaptable learners who are able to effectively leverage multiple learning modalities to retain information (Lawrence, 2014). The use of visual aids, such as mental images, and the focus on key words or phrases highlights the ambivert's ability to navigate between different learning styles, while the preservation of sounds reflects their ability to utilize auditory cues to recall information (Petric, 2022; Kusumarasdyati, 2022).

On the other hand, Participant 5 preferred utilizing images, keywords, and the preservation of sounds in memory to others with the following explanations:

Using images means making visual connections between words and mental pictures. This makes it easier to recall information later. For example, I might make mental images of a list of items and their order. Using keywords is focusing on key words or phrases to remember information. This helps me recall complex or technical information quickly. Preserving sounds means using sounds to remember information, like repeating it out loud or making sound associations. This makes it easier to recall later (Participant 5).

The utilization of visual aids and auditory methods to aid memory recall aligns with the documented versatility of ambiverts. Studies have demonstrated that ambiverts possess the capability to form visual connections between words and mental images, thereby facilitating easier recall (Stough et al., 1996). Additionally, the adoption of keywords to remember technical information highlights their aptitude for retaining complex information (Griffin, 2022). The utilization of auditory methods, such as preserving sounds, further showcases the resourcefulness of ambiverts in optimizing their memory recall processes.

Interestingly, the interviewees had the same opinions about using flashcards as ineffective English learning strategy to them. Participants 3 and 6 shared,

I learn better when I understand the concepts and connect ideas. Flashcards focus on memorizing and can be boring and too simple. This makes it hard to recall information in a nuanced way (Participant 3).

I like to learn through interactive methods like group discussions or visual aids. This helps me understand concepts and recall information better. Flashcards are repetitive and boring, making it hard to stay motivated and focused. They also do not show the complexity of the information, making it hard to recall in a nuanced way (Participant 6).

This aligns with prior research indicating that ambiverts tend to learn more effectively through interactive and engaging methods (Kusumarasdyati, 2022), rather than through rote memorization techniques such as flashcards (Krišto, 2012). As noted by Participant 3 and 6, they prefer to comprehend underlying concepts and form connections between ideas, and find flashcards to be monotonous and unstimulating. This orientation towards interactive learning is consonant with the hallmark traits of ambiverts, characterized by their versatility and the harmonious balance between introversion and extroversion.

## V. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the preferred English language learning strategies of individuals who self-identify as ambiverts. A mixed-methods approach was employed, consisting of a survey questionnaire and follow-up interviews, to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from a sample population of 68 English-major students, 22 of whom self-identified as ambiverts. The results of the study highlight the impact of the balance between introversion and extroversion on ambiverts' preferred language learning strategies, and demonstrate the advantages that this balance affords them in terms of being able to select learning strategies that are best suited to their individual needs and preferences. The study found that ambiverts preferred affective learning strategies, such as listening to music and engaging in positive self-talk, as well as compensation strategies, such as utilizing deductive reasoning and asking for assistance. Additionally, the study found that ambiverts favored metacognitive strategies, such as recognizing faults and focusing on specific tasks, and memory-related strategies, such as using different colors or highlights and using images and keywords. The study also found that ambiverts preferred social strategies, such as cooperating with others and asking for clarification, highlighting the importance of interaction and engagement in the learning process for ambiverts. These findings suggest that the balance between introversion and extroversion in ambiverts is beneficial for their language learning, enabling them to select strategies that cater to their unique needs and preferences. The insights gained from this study have the potential to inform the development of more effective pedagogical approaches and learning materials that accommodate a broad range of learning styles, including ambiverts.

## VI. IMPLICATIONS

Based on the results of the study, several pedagogical implications can be drawn. To begin with, language educators should incorporate affective learning strategies, such as listening to music and engaging in positive self-talk, into their instruction to support ambiverts in their language acquisition journey. Secondly, educators should promote the use of

compensatory strategies, such as deductive reasoning and seeking assistance, to help ambiverts navigate obstacles in the language learning process. Additionally, language educators should emphasize metacognitive strategies, such as recognizing faults and focusing on specific tasks, to foster self-awareness and understanding of the learning process among ambiverts. Furthermore, memory-related strategies, such as using different colors or highlights and incorporating images and keywords, should be encouraged to aid ambiverts in recalling information. The creation of opportunities for interaction and engagement, such as through cooperative work and asking for clarification, should be incorporated into the learning process to support ambiverts' language acquisition. Moreover, language instruction should be tailored to meet the diverse needs and preferences of ambiverts, taking into account their balance between introversion and extroversion and their preferred learning strategies. Finally, these findings have the potential to inform the development of more inclusive learning materials that cater to a broad spectrum of learning styles, including ambiverts, and promote effective language instruction.

## VII. LIMITATIONS

This study is subject to certain limitations that must be taken into account when interpreting its results. Firstly, the sample size of 22 self-identified ambiverted English language learners may not be representative of the broader population of ambiverted language learners. The sample was drawn from a specific cohort of English-major students, and the results may not generalize to other populations of ambiverted language learners. Secondly, the study relies on participants' self-assessment of their ambiverted status, which is based on the results of the MBTI. Although the MBTI is a widely used psychometric instrument, self-assessment is inherently subjective and may be subject to bias or inaccuracies. Additionally, the mixed-methods approach employed in this study, while offering a comprehensive understanding of ambiverted learners' learning preferences, may also introduce limitations. For example, the data collected through the survey questionnaire may be influenced by social desirability bias, whereby participants may respond in a way they perceive as socially acceptable rather than providing an accurate representation of their experiences and preferences. The qualitative interview component may also be subject to the biases of the interviewer, leading to a skewed portrayal of participants' experiences. The statistical analysis of the survey data provides valuable insights into the predominant learning strategies among ambiverted learners, but it may not capture the complexity and nuances of participants' experiences and preferences. The qualitative data gathered through the follow-up interviews offers a more in-depth exploration of participants' perspectives, but it is constrained by the purposive selection of interview participants and the subjective nature of data collection.

## VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Regarding the limitations of the methodology, it is suggested that future studies in this field aim to increase the sample size and expand the geographical scope of the data collection to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, incorporating objective assessment methods could mitigate the potential impact of social desirability bias and recall bias on self-reported data. Furthermore, considering a more rigorous quantitative or qualitative methodology, such as extending the duration of data collection or implementing a more exhaustive qualitative approach, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the students' preferred learning strategies. Future research could also explore the comparative analysis of preferred learning strategies across different cultural and linguistic contexts, and evaluate the durability and stability of these strategies over time. Additionally, examining the interplay between motivation and preferred learning strategies, incorporating technology into language learning, and collecting the perspectives of language instructors could provide valuable insights into the implementation of preferred learning strategies in language education. Moreover, analyzing the relationship between preferred learning strategies and language learning outcomes, and exploring the influence of individual differences, such as learning styles and personality traits, on preferred learning strategies could offer a more nuanced perspective on language learning. Finally, assessing the transferability of preferred learning strategies to other subjects and languages, and exploring their potential applications beyond language education, could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of their effectiveness and versatility. These research avenues have the potential to further our understanding of preferred learning strategies and their impact on language learning outcomes, and inform the development of more effective and personalized language instruction for all students.

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# The Image of the Arab World in the Spanish and Latin American Journalistic Discourse: Immigration as an Example

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**Abstract**—Spain's and Latin America's perception of Arabs is conditioned by a set of labels. This article aims to study the (re)presentation of the figure of the Arab immigrant in both Spanish and Latin American journalistic discourse. The researchers, through the use of a series of lexical and rhetorical resources, demonstrate that, this discourse effectively contributes to the generation of labels about the population of the study in question. Our corpus of analysis is essentially made up of newspaper articles with national and local circulation (*El Mundo*, *El Diario de Sevilla*, *El Tiempo*, *Libertad Digital*, etc.). The methodology followed in the analysis is based on the theories of Van Dijk about discourse and racism in Spain and Latin America.

**Index Terms**—the Arab world, journalistic discourse, immigration, discourse analysis, Van Dijk

## I. INTRODUCTION: CORPUS AND METHODOLOGY

The Arab and Muslim world is still seen as exotic by both western and Latin American societies. Despite the connections that unite the East, the West, and America (migrations, political, commercial, and cultural relations, etc.), the collective image of the Arab continues to acquire very negative nuances in most of these countries. On the one hand, Spain is one of the European countries that have had the most contact with the Arab world, especially with Morocco. The history of the country establishes an unquestionable link with Islam and the influences of its culture throughout the Spanish territory. At present, immigration is one of the essential sources of contact between the Muslim community and Spanish society. On the other hand, the Arab presence in Latin America dates back to the beginning of the arrival of the Spaniards at the end of the 19th century. Their large community was of Arab origins and was mostly composed of Syrians, Lebanese, and Palestinians. In this context, Latin America had different Arab migratory waves from the Middle East, which implies that Arabic culture has also left a considerable influence on these countries in different ways.

In these processes of civilizations' dialogue, the role of the media is essential. According to Van Dijk (2005, pp. 5-6), the major and most influential forms of institutionalized racism today, however, are to be found in the mass media. Research in many countries has shown, time and again, that the mass media are the main source of racist beliefs (...) research shows that people's everyday beliefs about immigration or minorities are not usually based on daily experience, but on the mass media.

The influence of media on current societies is large since they open door to realities that, on many occasions, remain outside the citizens' experience. Thus, images about Arabs and Muslims mostly originate from stories drawn from some media sources forming the public opinion. The journalistic discourse, therefore, plays a key role in guiding the recipients' thoughts and attitudes. It informs them about the events that happen every day and teaches them how they must be interpreted.

Linguistically speaking, language is the element that materializes the purposes marked by journalists. The latter creates an image of the collective based on several discursive strategies that, in turn, are carried out through verbal elements, such as the lexicon, rhetorical figures, and syntactic structures. These elements are joined together to create a completely stereotypical image of an entire group that lives in the host country.

The objective of this study is to analyze the linguistic resources in the Spanish and Latin American media discourse when representing the Arab world in its publications. We will demonstrate that journalists develop a series of discursive strategies that seek to categorize and criminalize the Arab collective through a highly connotative lexicon and rhetorical figures that deeply contribute to the demonization of the figure of the other. At the same time, this study holds a comparison between the representation of the Arab world in the Spanish press to that in the Latin American press in order to highlight the similarities and differences in the treatment of the other.

The methodological approach of this study employs the discourse analysis theory, with a special focus on Teun Van Dijk for its theoretical and research contributions in this field, especially in his works *Discurso y racismo* (2001) and *Racism and Discourse in Spain and Latin America* (2005). According to the Van Dijk approach, the researchers will

analyze the verbal utterances that reflect the representations of the figure of the Arab immigrants in the Spanish media discourse that manifest in two levels of the text: macro and micro structures. The structure of the text and the arrangement of the news, for example, belong to the macro-structural organization (an element of analysis to examine the general meaning of the text observed through theme/topic of discourse). On the other hand, lexical, morphological, Syntactic, semantic and rhetorical resources are part of the microstructural organization. They describe the local meaning of the observed text through the choice of words, sentences, and paragraphs. According to Chakour (2014), these elements are joined together to facilitate the interpretation of the journalistic message and, above all, develop a critical perspective to read the texts that use different means or ways to express their meanings.

In our analysis, we will limit ourselves to the microstructural analysis of the linguistic resources that reflect the representation of the figure of the Arab immigrant in the Spanish and Latin American press. This study examines these resources highlighting two discursive strategies that we have set out to analyze: the criminalization of the immigrant figure and the increase of the number of immigrants from Arab countries. Therefore, the representation of the figure of the Arab immigrant in the Latin American press demonstrates the prevalence of two images: the erotization and the indirect criminalization of the figure of the Arab.

## II. THE ARAB WORLD IN THE SPANISH AND LATIN AMERICAN POPULAR CULTURE

### A. Spain

In Spain, cultural diversity is a recent fact in history, which requires special security measures. Clearly, it is assumed that Spain has been a homogeneous society, progressively, losing ground with the incursions of waves of immigrants. This is, at least, the image that is transmitted to us through the media. For most of the time, it is adopted by many of the native population, given the great influence of media discourse in manipulating thought. However, according to Balta (2001), we must not lose sight of the fact that the figure of the moor has always been present throughout history in the collective imagination of the Spanish society.

Immigrants are seen as a threat to Spanish culture and identity, especially the Arab and Muslim immigrant population (Chakour, 2014, p. 41). We can give the example of the former Catalan leader Jordi Pujol, who, on October 2, 2002, declared that:

immigration to be one of the problematic facts of Catalonia of the last year, he insisted that it is a general problem in developed countries but in Catalonia, it has specific significance because immigration can affect our identity. He then says: we cannot lose sight of the fact that a central culture of reference must exist, that is what we have been working on for centuries (El Pa í, Oct. 3, 2002).

The construction of image of the other is formed according to the cultural, historical, and social realities of the Spanish society that creates it. The geographical paradigm always has a great importance. According to Martín-Muñoz (1999), the geographical factor has particular impact in the case of Muslim Arabs, since they have not only been their neighbors, but, for eight centuries, they have coexisted with the Moors. In this sense, it seems appropriate to highlight some aspects of the image of the Arab immigrants (or Moors, a word that reflects prejudices inherited since medieval times). According to Balta (2001, p. 31), the horizon of Spanish life is dominated by the contrast between the Christian and the Moor since the fall of Granada in 1492. The alien is both Muslim and a foreigner and the presence of Muslims in Spanish society does not contribute much more than the annihilation and destruction of the Spanish identity.

This media image of Arab and Muslim immigrants is preserved in Western countries, in general, and in Spain, in particular. It has aroused exclusive political speeches on the immigrant population in Spain, particularly, the one that belongs to Arab and Muslim traditions. It is very important to add that the representations of the everyday lives and concerns of Muslim immigrants are seldom covered. Their negative acts, especially crimes and drugs, are stereotyped, whereas their major contributions to culture and society—except in sports and entertainment—tend to be ignored or belittled.

### B. Latin America

The Arab presence in Latin America dates back to the arrival of the Spaniards at the end of the 19th century. A large community of Spaniards are of Arab origins, mostly composed of Syrians, Lebanese, and Palestinians:

The first Arab immigrants in Latin America arrived in the late nineteenth century when the Ottoman Empire still existed. Because of their arrival to Latin America with Ottoman passport, many people identified them as Turks. This still persists in the popular mind and does not fit any racial categories (Guzman, 2000, p. 23).

In this context, Latin America had different Arab migratory waves from the Middle East. The first one was between 1870 and 1900, due to the Turkish domination that led many Arabs to look for other cozier lands. The second wave of immigration was between 1900 and 1914 because of the English and French occupation in the Middle East as a consequence of the First World War. And finally, the third wave occurred following the occupation of Palestine in 1948 and in 1974 because of the civil war in Lebanon.

Latin America is, therefore, a continent that has strong ties with the Arab world, due to the existence of millions of descendants of Arab immigrants living there. Their settlement stories in Latin American lands, social integration, and economic and political contribution have resulted in Latin American narratives and media representations reflecting the characteristics of their presence (Tosan, 2014).

In recent years, South America and the Islamic Arab world have significantly enhanced interregional ties in political, economic, commercial, and cultural domains. This is evident in the emergence of these ties in their common agendas and in the educational and cultural networks, among others, as seen in the media. Likewise, despite the geographical and cultural remoteness, the uprisings that occurred in the Arab world since the end of 2010 did not go unnoticed in South America. The increase in links with Arabs, the presence of broad oriental communities in South America, and the permanent interest of intellectuals and media contributed to bringing these events closer to the spaces of political, academic, and journalistic debate. More recently, the regional war scenario, the mass migrations in Syria, the Israeli bombings in Gaza, the rise of the Islamic State have further enhanced the interest in the local scene (Vagni et al., 2016). According to Vagni (2016), this interest has not been accompanied by ameliorating the image of Muslims or Arabs in the intellectual, journalistic, or, sometimes, academic perception in South America. It is still usual to observe the persistence of entrenched images and perceptions when counting and explaining the realities of the Arab-Islamic world.

### III. REPRESENTATION OF THE ARAB IMMIGRANT IN THE SPANISH AND LATIN AMERICAN MEDIA

At present, media are considered one of the main sources of knowledge and training. They are conceived as true reflexes and transmitters of the social, economic and political realities of a given society, regardless of whether this reality is true or not. They perform, according to Tabares (2000), a very decisive mediation task between reality and people. Television, radio, and the written press play an increasingly important role through which politicians, economists, and academics have the possibility of accessing large audiences. However, in the words of Marín (1994, p. 207):

One needs to conceive the media in terms of truths and falsehoods and independence and alignments. It is a fact that we are already used to. The relevant thing is that the media, beyond lying or misinforming, manipulate and mold reality. They are, therefore, one of the most powerful linguistic instruments that provide us with indirect and mediated knowledge of our environment (Cited in Sa Paras, 1987).

According to Sánchez et al. (2005, pp. 107-108), "There can exist what is called informative objectivity since all means are always mediated by partial interests of ideological, economic or commercial types". In addition to this categorization, according to Tabares (2000), the media, by their very nature, affect a label of reality. At the same time, they are also transmitting culture. Therefore, they have the power to set the public opinion of readers who do not have direct access in their daily lives.

The means most used by ideological power groups is the written press, although the latter never lives isolated from news agencies, television chains and advertising companies. It is the most conducive means to reflection and analysis, provided that we are aware of the interests defended by each newspaper and have the precaution of diversifying our reading sources. In this sense, says Chomsky (1986), the press, always dressed in features of objectivity, is increasingly an instrument of informative manipulation and biased communication. However, the same author insists, despite everything, it remains the best possibility of accessing the reality in which the game is won to radio and television. For this reason, it will be necessary to consume it, but from a critical attitude and systematic analysis of its contents.

In the case of Arab immigrants, for example, their image presented by the different newspapers, television, and radio channels in Spain and Latin America is unipolar. In Spain, the propensity of a topical vision of small boats, victims, queues of people who want to regularize their situation, confinements in churches or hunger strikes are topics that are exploited by the press to stereotype them. Thus, the repetition of some arguments or the use of certain images, which imply a fundamentally problematizing discourse of the Arab immigration presence in Spain, are common and are hardly inevitable in the press and in the informative programs on radio and television. According to Ripollés (2004), the image of Arab immigrants offered in Spanish journalistic discourse is quite negative. The insistence on associating immigration and illegality through spreading information on the arrival of small boats, for example, deprives immigrants of their rights and legitimizes their marginalization and criminalization. In this way, a unique and stereotyped image of all immigrants coming from Arab countries is created, regardless of their circumstances and conditions.

According to Chakour (2014), journalists resort to the polarization strategy among us (the natives) and they (immigrants, more specifically Arabs in this case) to legitimize such attitudes, interpreted as discriminatory by immigrants. It constantly highlights the positive attitudes of the host society, which offer an opportunity and hope to immigrants and the negative ones that cause problems and instability in Spain.

Most of our knowledge of the world undoubtedly emanates from the variety of news and reports that we daily read or listen to. Van Dijk (1997, p. 53) underlines this idea assuming that:

The western press, especially the right-wing press, (re) produces and underlines, in addition, a negative image of minorities, immigrants, and refugees. Therefore, it contributes to the growing manifestations of intolerance, prejudices, and discrimination against those who come from the third world, both in Europe and in America.

As for Latin America, according to the historian Antonia Robledo in his article: "Turkophobia Anti-Arab Discrimination in Chile, 1900-1950" (1994), the Arabs were more exposed to criticism and defamation for having been stigmatized as a lower ethnic group. Complaints made through the press that Chilean media used pejorative arguments to belittle the Arabs. Having these prejudices helps generate generalizations of falsified information, that is, in the formation of stereotypes. People assign attributes that are consistent with their own beliefs and prejudices, and in this

way, the analysis of and the beliefs of another group is carried out from the powerful's perspective, forgetting that the other culture is based on different values and culture. In this way, Chilean society valued Arab immigrants from its own patterns and normative criteria, a situation that resulted in contempt for the foreign group.

#### IV. LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE VERBAL RESOURCES USED IN THE MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE FIGURE OF THE ARAB IN THE SPANISH PRESS

In the analysis of our corpus, we observe the use of two discursive strategies contributed to the distortion of the figure of the Arab immigrant:

1. The negative theming of the migratory phenomenon, linking Arab immigration, especially Moroccan, with drugs, crime, social disintegration, cultural deviation, etc., and
2. the exclusion of the figure of the Arab immigrant of the host society, considering the immigrant as an alien and distortion of the Spanish national identity.

These people present themselves as an enemy or a threat to the security and stability of the host society. Paradoxically, it is perceived, in some journalistic texts, especially interpretive and opinion, as a dramatization of the migratory phenomenon that induces shock rather than fear. The drama of the phenomenon is shown, describing the unfortunate situation in which the collective mass, its poverty, its idiomatic difficulties, etc., generates an "emotional reaction of compassion and piety by the receiver" (Rizo, 2001). However, the two strategies that most predominate our corpus are the criminalization of the figure of the immigrant Arab and the increase of the number of Arab immigrants arriving at the peninsula.

Now, we are going to study the verbal resources that reflect the representation of the figure of the Arab immigrants in the Spanish media discourse manifested on two levels of the text: the structure of the text and the arrangement of the news. As we have clarified in the introduction, our analysis is limited to the microstructural analysis of the linguistic resources collected for the analysis of the representation of the figure of the Arab immigrant in the Spanish press. The operation of these resources will be studied in each of the two discursive strategies that we have set out to analyze, that is, the criminalization of the immigrant figure and the increase of the number of immigrants from Arab countries.

##### A. *First Strategy: Criminalization of the Figure of the Arab Immigrant*

In the criminalization of the figure of the Arab immigrant, journalists launch a series of lexical elements that define these people in terms of crime and illegality. The group belonging to these lexical fields places the Arab immigrant in the category of social conflict and crime. It is a decisive resource that affects the construction of a discourse of negative otherness with respect to the collective. It highlights the criminal or conflicting relationships of some of these people and obvious legal normality in their behavior (Nash, 2005). In the lexical analysis of this strategy, two essential aspects have been detected on which we will base our analysis:

- a) The use of a valuation lexicon that connotes and, on many occasions, denotes violence, aggression, illegality, etc., linking these practices directly to the migratory phenomenon.
- b) The abundant use of demonyms that underline the immigrant-origin of the collective attributing the absolute responsibility to cause instability and insecurity in the host country. The immigrant's nationality is present in most corpus managed in this regard.

Journalists use a lexicon with highly valuable connotations. In the criminalization strategy of the figure of the Arab immigrant, verbs greatly contribute to the projection and creation of the image of a criminal and criminal immigrant, which originates only conflicts in the host society. This strategy can be perceived in the example we show below:

##### **(1) Stop a man after burning his 17-month-old son with a cigarette**

A man was arrested in Zaragoza last Saturday as the alleged perpetrator of a crime of domestic violence by assaulting his wife and their son. Nouredine Z, 48, was brought to court, after being denounced by his wife for having assaulted her and the son of both, of 17 months, inside the conjugal domicile. The 38-year-old wife suffered blows to the back, face and legs, and the baby burned with the coals of a cigarette on the right cheek and caught a foot with a door (El Mundo, 24/3/2018, p. 18).

In this fragment, verbs such as assaulting, burning, and suffering are part of the terminological repertoire belonging to the field of violence, fear, and terror. These concepts are strongly associated with the Arab immigrant collective in the Spanish press, which is defined as solely responsible for the production of threatening events to the country's security. Let's look at the following fragments:

##### **(2) 8 Moroccans have been freed from mafia.**

Eight Moroccans have been freed after being abducted for not paying the Mafia that brought them to Murcia. The traffickers falsified legal documents for the immigrants, who were undernourished and crowded onto a farm near Malaga (La Verdad de Murcia, 07/07/2000).

##### **(3) Detained 9 "without papers" with 60 kilos of hashish in tariff.**

The Civil Guards arrested nine immigrants yesterday 4.5 miles south of Punta Paloma, in Tarifa, in a boat with 60 kilos of hashish pollen (...) the immigrants were transferred to the port of Tarifa, and, after an inspection, the agents found 60 kilos of hashish inside the boat. The Civil Guards arrested immigrants, of Moroccan origin, all of them of are adults and undocumented at the time of their arrest (de Sevilla, 23/01/2015, p. 46).

In the second example, a direct link between immigration and mafia and between immigration and drug trafficking is established in example 3. Immigrants, in addition to being detected by police officers for drug trafficking, are presented as cunning suspects trying to divert the law and avoid the police. The subjectivity of the journalist in the choice of verbs appears very clear in this example. It is a highly connotative verb that underlines the cunning of immigrants and their ability to deceive. Many other verbs, with lower negative axiological connotations, could have played the role of describing this action. However, the author opts for the use of this description to accentuate the criminal features of these people, who should be always seen as distrustful.

In addition to the use of a highly connotative lexicon in the two previous examples, we observe, the presence of other elements that establish a direct connection between the nature of the crime and the origin of the immigrant. In the first fragment, for example, the fact of mentioning the name of the immigrant is a rare practice in this type of news, in which only the initials of the names usually appear. It really reveals the origin of the immigrant as an Arab (Nouredine).

In the second and third examples, a reference is directly made to the origin of the immigrant through the demonym Morocco. The outcome results in negative concepts such as crime and violence directly associated with certain nationalities, mostly Arab. The Former Interior Minister Mariano Rajoy declared that: *an excess of immigrants causes marginalization and crime* (La Verdad, 13/05/2002). The other Former Interior Minister of PP Mayor Oreja confirms this link explicitly in an interview with El Peridico on 26/5/20023: *Illegality normally leads to delinquency, then, to higher rates of crime when immigration grows. We have to associate the irregularity with delinquency, and the culture of legality is the best antidote.*

Therefore, we can point out a constant negative treatment of Arab immigrants in the media: It is in this discursive context that the explicit link between crime and Arab immigration arises. The Arab presence in Spain is increasingly depicted as the source of insecurity and crime. Spanish politicians and media recipients relate the excessive increase in crime rates. To immigrants: robberies, assaults, drug trafficking, falsification of identity documents, etc.

#### B. Second Strategy: Increase of the Number of Arab Immigrants

In the Spanish press, this constantly emerging discourse of Arab stereotyping invokes fear in citizens. According to Van Dijk (2005, p. 33):

Politicians think they can win votes among those citizens who are made afraid of increasing immigration, or who are concerned about crime and everyday feelings of insecurity, attributed to foreigners. Many concerns of citizens, such as unemployment, economic problems, or street crime, may thus be associated with immigration and by blaming the victims.

The representation of migratory flows, especially Arabs, is formulated from the elaboration of categories such as an avalanche, a wave, etc. This association of immigration with an unstoppable avalanche of people creates an ideology of fear that distorts the perception of real figures on immigrant settling in the country (Nash, 2005, p. 51). The evidence that there is an increasing number of non-community foreigners in Spain is perceived, to a lesser extent, by everyday practices than by discursive practices. The construction of immigration as a problem in Spanish society is a symbolic construction, and it can be seen as the product of speeches from various actors and social scenarios.

In this context, political and media speeches are especially influential. They refer to the huge number of people who overflow, above all, the Spanish coasts, in war or military metaphors such as "waves," "floods", "flows," "avalanche," "illegal," "invasion", "immigrant traffic", "Immigrant riots", "Bands of Immigrants", "Mafias", etc. Secondly, all of them serve to promote the idea that those immigrants are many and do not cause more than hostility (Chakour, 2014).

The great part of the journalistic examples in our corpus describing the arrival of Arab immigrants, attempting to convince us that the number of people who arrive by sea is very important and can denote threat and danger to the whole of the receiving society. Let's look at the following examples:

##### (1) 4.295 immigrants detained in Cadiz.

The 4.295 immigrants detained in Cadiz since January nearly quintuple the estimate for the same time period in 1999 (El Pias, 01/07/2000).

##### (2) The Civil Guards detain 141 immigrants.

The Civil Guards detain 141 immigrants in a mere 24 hours a long Spanish coasts. A Sub-Saharan arrived in Ceuta after having swum across the maritime border from Morocco. (Levante EMV, 02/07/2000).

##### (3) More than 400 'undocumented' immigrants arrive in the Canary Islands in the last 24 hours.

The arrival of Cayucos continues to the Canary archipelago. The number of immigrants moving towards the Canary Islands within just over 24 hours has increased to 419, after being rescued yesterday. Seventy-seven are without papers traveling in a boat that was located 165 miles south of Tenerife, as reported yesterday to EFE Fuentes of the Canary Islands. Government Delegation (El Mundo, 13/05/16, p. 30).

##### (4) The ship of 60,000 Moroccans collapses at the port of Algeciras.

(...) The operation out of these Christmas dates coincides with the Muslim season of festivals, which led to the number of Moroccan passengers who wish to travel to their country of origin. To attend to the enormous number of passengers who wanted to cross the Strait, exceptionally, during the early hours at 5.30 am advancing to Ceuta (El Mundo, 26/12/ 2016, p. 28).

In these fragments, another metaphor is commonly used, in the Spanish press, which describes Arab immigrants in terms of invasion, that is, an avalanche. However, in example (3), the adverb 'more' has been used to be an approximate



assessment of the number of arriving immigrants. However, this approach alerts the reader of the danger of the arrival of those people and magnifies their number. In example 4, the reference is made to people already living in Spain in their attempt to pass the holidays in their country of origin. The idea that the number of these people is enormous. They cause problems not only in their entry into Spain but also at their departure. The two terms of avalanche and wave have highly warlike and negative connotations, loaded with stereotypes and prejudices that distort reality and generate a state of alarm by promoting a feeling of threat and danger within the native population. These words also convey the idea of immigration as an unprecedented pressure that questions the possibilities of integration. This idea, once settled, can ensure social support for restrictive policies to contain migratory flows:

The repeated emphasis on the irregularity of entry, the huge numbers, the role of the police, and arrests contribute to first definitions that are very important in the development of attitudes about newcomers (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 48).

Before talking about the media representation of the figure of the Arab immigrant in the Latin American press, we are forced to observe, according to Al-Amar's statement et al., (2021, pp. 61-62):

We can affirm that ambiguity continues to be one of the peculiarities of political discourse. This ambiguity consists, essentially, in not telling the whole truth, although, after all, it is not the responsibility of the language but that of the politician. With etiquette and understatement, euphemisms have become a professional medium and a policy among current Spanish politicians who use diplomacy to manipulate audiences. Furthermore, they also appear to adopt double standards, saying something nice and convenient up front yet knowing that reality is the opposite.

#### V. LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE VERBAL RESOURCES USED IN THE MEDIA REPRESENTATION OF THE FIGURE OF THE ARAB IMMIGRANT IN THE LATIN AMERICAN PRESS

In Latin America, the figure of the Arab began to emerge from the first arrivals of Spaniards to the New World. Their influence lasted more than eight centuries in the Iberian Peninsula. Subsequently, the Arabs, especially Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians, arrived in the 19th and 20th centuries for wars. In this context, the Arab has always been represented as an exotic figure, distant, and with different customs and traditions. However, the attack of September 11, 2001 was a decisive point in the change toward the worst perceptions of the Arab in Latin America, since it drew on the social representation of Muslims as religious fanatics. This misrepresentation is based on homogenizing all Arabs and Muslims for the misdeeds of Al Qaeda, falsifying all in the process.

In this way, a homogeneous idea about Muslims was built in the perception of public opinion as an extended image of terrorism including all believers in Islam against US citizens and their neighbors. This process of objectification has been clear in the different journalistic notes and in the statements of security officials, and even in the official reports of the agencies (Alcalá 2020).

In our research corpus, newspapers, such as *La Prensa* from México, *El Mercurio* from Chile, *Clarín* from Argentina, *El Tiempo* from Colombia, y *Las Últimas Noticias* from Venezuela, are examined. They are the newspapers with more news about the Arab world. The most addressed themes in the Spanish-American press: 1-The Arab Spring, 2-Islamic Movements in the Arab world; 3-Arab-Israeli conflict; 4-the Arabs in Latin America; 5-The war in Iraq; 6- Arab world and Latin America; 7- Conflicts between Spain and Morocco; 8- The immigration of Arabs in Latin America.

It is necessary to indicate here, according to Vilorio (2003), that the Arab in Latin America is still studied, discovered, traced, understood, and disorientated from academic, fictional, and vocabulary texts. However, this task is half done: the "Arab" is already part of the daily life of the American present. As can be seen, when dealing with Arab issues in the Latin American press, the thematic concerns are different from those represented in the Spanish press, due to the differences found between the historical context of Spanish-Arab relations and relations between the Arab world and Latin America. We observe the predominance of two main discursive strategies, that is, the exoticization of the figure of the Arab and its indirect criminalization. Next, we are going to give some examples of these two discursive strategies the Latin American press depicts.

##### A. First Strategy: The Exoticization of the Figure of the Arab

Exoticization can be understood as the loss of cultural diversity. It is the loss of great legacies of cultural traditions that are replaced by the exotic global cultural trend. Seeing the trend of the Latin press and how it represents the Arab, one would have no doubt that the Arab world was viewed with an eye of exaggeration that tended to fashion the oriental Arab civilization with exoticism, ambiguity, and irrationality. In Gharib's words:

Orientalism became a representation of the East as uncivilized, inferior and potentially in need of "intervention and rescue". Since saving the "Other" in the distant parts of the world needed dominant powers and political and military action, colonialism was based in the Arab world with strong motives to operate its various resources (Gharbi, 2016).

Next, we offer the following examples on the exoticization of the figure of the Arab taken from the Latin American press.

##### (1) 'Top' 5 of our food: Arab flavors that became coastal



It is no coincidence that a city like Barranquilla has the largest number of Arab restaurants in the country. But the culinary influence of the historic immigration of Syrians and Lebanese at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, extended beyond this city. It is recognized throughout the territory of the Caribbean Coast. It has become so ingrained that there are many anecdotes that record the sense of belonging to such flavors and preparations, with variations that result from the natural fusion with the local pantry. There are many Arab dishes that pass for typical coastal dishes today (El Tiempo, Colombia, 30/05/2021).

**(2) The Muslim community with a mosque in Barranquilla that makes a donation.**

In Barranquilla, there is a Muslim community that for approximately 15 years has been immersed in the social problems of the city and decided to contribute a percentage of their savings to the vulnerable population. His most recent social work was carried out on the weekend of May 23, with a thousand items of clothing and 400 markets. It occurs just when it is known that 61.5 percent of families in Barranquilla do not have the resources to eat three times a day, according to Dane. The 'shaikh' or religious leader of the community is Isa García, a 50-year-old Argentinian with a partner from Bumangués, whom he met in the United States and with whom he decided to establish his home a decade ago in the capital of the Atlantic (El Tiempo, Colombia, 15/06/2021).

**(3) Arab ambassadors share their culture at the UNAM Film Library**

Welcoming, Videgaray highlighted Mexico's interest in continuing to strengthen ties with Arab countries. He highlighted that as a result of the historic tour of the President of the Republic, Enrique Peña Nieto, to four Gulf countries in January 2016, work visits by high-level Mexican and Arab officials have increased. Typical dishes from the Arab region and the exchange of culture enlivened the meeting of ambassadors from seven nations of that region with Mexicans who met in the José Revueltas' room of the University Cultural Center in order to inaugurate the Arab film cycle that has, as its headquarters of UNAM, the highest house of studies in Mexico. Led by Hugo Villa Smythe, General Director of the UNAM Film Library, representatives from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Libya, the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, and Algeria, enjoyed a happy gathering where typical dishes from the invited countries filled the tables for those present (La Prensa, México, 28/06/2019).

*B. Second Strategy: (In)direct Criminalization of the Figure of the Arab*

After analyzing the image of the Arab immigrant offered by the Spanish press, a massive and systematic criminalization of Arab immigrants can be observed, almost always associating them with citizens' insecurity that immigrants constitute a danger to Spanish culture and identity. In the case of the Latin American press, it is clearly seen that this image is less negative due to the relative acceptance of Arabs in Latin American society, where Arab immigrants managed to adapt to the customs of the host countries without losing all features of their original cultural identities, achieving many successes at all levels. One can give the example of former presidents who were the sons of Arab immigrants such as the Argentine Carlos Menem (1989-1999), the Honduran Carlos Flores Facussé (1998-2002), and the Salvadoran Tony Saca (2004-2009). We cannot forget other celebrities such as the Mexican billionaire of Lebanese origin Carlos Slim or the Mexican actress Salma Hayek. Despite all this success, a new trend can be seen in the Latin American press after the attacks of September 11, 2001, where the Arab or Muslim is represented as a new enemy, threatening the destruction of the civilized world, without separating the individual or group action of a few people with the identity of a whole group of believers. Next, we offer the following examples on (In)direct criminalization of the figure of the Arab taken from the Latin American press.

**(1) Islamic Terrorism in Latin America: Venezuela as a Base of Operations**

The Caribbean country is one of the strategic points of radical Islamist groups in the region. Most of the discussions today among pundits, politicians and the media relate to the Sunni Jihadist/Salafist type of terrorism, as it is considered the most important global threat. According to Mehmet Ozkan, a professor at the Turkish National Police Academy, Latin American Muslims are very well connected to social media, through which many of them learn about Islam, Arab culture, and the Middle East. However, the strong presence of Latino Muslims in virtual spaces was not successful in attracting them to ISIS through these channels. As of 2017, a total of 76 people from Latin America (23 from Argentina, 50 from Trinidad and Tobago, and 3 from Brazil) are believed to have traveled to ISIS territory. If these numbers are true, they clearly indicate that Latin American fighters make up less than 0.003 percent of the total foreign fighter population. (Infobae, México, 10/09/2020)

**(2) Arabs Ruling in Latin America.**

Nor do you need to be of Arab descent to sell yourself to the jihadists. Hugo Chávez is the clearest example that anyone can serve as a pimp. When the students took to the streets of Caracas shouting Freedom! in protest against the Venezuelan dictator who wanted to stay in power for life, they were brutally repressed by state forces supervised by the Vice Minister of Internal Affairs and Justice, Tarek El-Aissami, in charge of Citizen Security, who was also deputy director of Identification and Aliens.

El-Aissami promoted urban guerrilla warfare when he was president of the student union at the Universidad de Los Andes. According to Phil Gunson of the Miami Herald, of the 1,122 people who lived in the ULA dormitories, only 387 were active students and more than 600 had no relationship with the university.

El-Aissami maintained political control of the residences, where stolen vehicles were hidden and drugs were trafficked. His criminal tenants used ski masks to commit misdeeds in the streets. Tarek's father, Carlos, runs the Venezuelan branch of the Iraqi Baath party, and his great-uncle Shibli el-Aissami was assistant secretary general of that political organization in Baghdad during Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. (Libertad Digital, Honduras, 22/01/2008).

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The Muslim world largely remains looked at as something mysterious to many nations, despite the fact that the evolution of today's societies has deeply connected these geopolitical boundaries over the past decades. History, in turn, establishes an indisputable link with Islam, and the influences of its culture throughout the entire Spanish territory are unquestionable. The presence of the Arab element in South America throughout the ages has, in turn, contributed to the creation of a stereotyped image of the Arab that has evolved over time.

As regards the (re)presentation of the figure of the Arab immigrant in both Spanish and Latin American journalistic discourses, we must indicate that it cannot be stopped categorically and generally. Here, we are dealing with an Islamophobia representation of this reality. Indeed, a negative and, to a certain extent, a stereotyped image of the Arab and Muslim world is transmitted, but the differences in the informative and, above all, editorial treatment between one newspaper and the other are so evident. It is difficult to reach a common conclusion of this type. On the other hand, it is not possible to speak at any time of informative objectivity, since media are always mediated by partial interests of ideological, economic, or commercial types.

Here it should be noted that the image of the Arab and Muslim world that is presented in the Spanish press is pejorative. It is because most of the news that is published on this subject has a negative tone linked to wars such as those in Iraq or Afghanistan, conflicts such as the Arab-Israeli attacks, terrorist attacks linked to the al-Qaeda network or the Islamic state, and violations of human rights, specifically against women and political dissidents. It is common for an image of Islam and Muslim countries linked to backwardness to be transmitted, in the face of Western modernity. The way of life and the political system of the Western countries is presented as an ideal to which the Arab and Muslim countries should aspire. In fact, Arabs and Muslims become more respected when their customs or virtues are more widespread in Western countries, that is, when the 'other' tries to resemble the 'self'.

Throughout this study, we have seen how journalists develop a series of discursive strategies that seek to categorize and criminalize the Arab collective through a highly connotative vocabulary and rhetorical figures that profoundly contribute to the demonization of the figure of the other. Undoubtedly, these strategies play an important role in denigrating the image of immigrants in public opinion. In conclusion, it is clearly seen, through the analysis of different newspapers that the criminalization of the figure of the Arab immigrant and the increase of the number of Arab immigrants that arrive in the Peninsula predominate as the most used strategies in the Spanish press about Arab immigrants.

In the case of the Latin American press, the image of the Arab immigrant is less negative where the acceptance, integration, and defense of Arabs is seen. This trend cannot be understood without taking into account the successful processes of social integration, product of the economic success, and the political visibility that Arab immigrants achieved in the second half of the 20th century in their diasporic homes in Latin America. It is not an exaggeration to say that the exoticization and the indirect criminalization of the figure of the Arab are the most prevalent discursive strategies in the Latin American press regarding Arab immigrants.

Lastly, taking into account the influence that the written media have on the formation of Spanish and Latin American public opinion on the Arab and Muslim world, it would be something positive and promising to see a greater effort on the part of the editorial boards. It becomes an obligation needed to balance the large volume of negative news and replace it with a more positive tone.

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# Genre-Based Learning Model With Literacy Activities and Character Strengthening: Effectiveness in Language Learning

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**Abstract**—During the implementation of online learning, some policies in the education sector cannot be implemented such as the National Literacy Campaign and Strengthening Character Education. These two programs can be integrated into the learning process including in language learning, especially the learning models and teaching materials. This study aims to develop a genre-based learning model by integrating literacy and character-strengthening activities. This Research & Development (R & D) used the Plomp Development model (Preliminary Research, Prototyping Phase & Assessment Phase). In the Assessment Phase, the researcher tested the developed product to check its practicality and effectiveness. The instruments used were questionnaires, observation sheets, and tests. The subjects were students of State Senior High School 8 Padang. The results showed that the genre-based learning model which integrates literacy activities and character-strengthening effectively increases students' literacy (reading and writing) and builds their character. This model does not significantly influence students' reading skills but significantly influences students' writing skills.

**Index Terms**—genre-based learning, literacy, character strengthening, language learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of information technology and the internet has globally increased online learning and the usage of both information technology and the Internet in education and research (Li et al., 2018). Consequently, educational institutions implement various crucial education reform and learning management initiatives using social networks widely known as online learning (He, 2020; Wannapiroon et al., 2022). Since the 1990s, online learning modalities such as video-based distant learning, which enables two-way communication across separate classes via the use of remote imaging, have been increasingly used (Omar et al., 2021). Recently, most people have access to personal computers and the Internet. The use of personal computers and the internet have made it possible for every student to take online classes from their own homes (Zhang & Zhou, 2003; Alamri, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic causes the need for technological and pedagogical adjustments to the structure of the school system (Karatat & Arpaci, 2021). The global digital gap caused by COVID-19 has affected the delivery of online education in underdeveloped nations (Demuyakor, 2020; Chatterjee & Chakraborty, 2020). Online education is the main way to ensure maximum learning continuity during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia (Purwadi et al., 2021). Online education has become the new norm during the pandemic; thus, educational technologies utilized by educators and students should be accessible, egalitarian, communicative, monitored, and sustainable to maintain student engagement in learning in the new normal period. Online learning is proven to be sustainable and hybrid (Santiago Jr. et al., 2021). Online learning has the potential to boost learning quality and productivity as it is more effective and easier to use than conventional methods (Lucero et al., 2021).

Information technology may replace education later, but it cannot replace the function of educators (Purwadi et al., 2021). To recognize learning challenges faced by students in real-time, learning engagement requires two key features, namely student behavior and student interaction (Wang et al., 2020). To realize the potential benefit of online learning, educators employ a pedagogical strategy (Aitken, 2020). Teachers have to make substantial efforts to redesign learning to transform traditional knowledge into online learning (Nurdiyanti et al., 2021). The efficacy of online learning is determined by the substance of the learning materials, the quality of interactions between instructors and students, adequate preparation, and the enthusiasm of the instructors (Sun & Chen, 2016).

Learning Bahasa Indonesia can use a text-based learning approach or a genre-based approach (Herman et al., 2020). This approach was first implemented in 2013, while genre pedagogy has been applied in secondary schools since 2004

as the basis for the English curriculum (Wijayanti et al., 2017). In the 1990s, the genre-based approach emerged in response to the weaknesses of the process approach (Nagao, 2018). The term "genre" comes from French which means "shape" or "type" (Dirgeyasa, 2016). In Western countries, spoken and written genres are frequently categorized by their main social function (Lu, 2011). Genre is a type of staged and goal-oriented text that results from the use of language (Batubara, 2013). Through genres, people in a culture share certain social goals and stages of using language (predictable organizational patterns) to achieve goals (Changpueng, 2013).

Since the genre is connected to the type of text, many experts claim that genre knowledge adds to the language acquisition process in some ways (Johns, 2002; Derewianka, 2004; Kongpetch, 2006; Chaisiri, 2010). Awareness of text elements such as type, convention, purpose, content, and context provides students with an awareness of text structure, which may help them in text-creating skills (Batubara, 2013). In understanding generic texts, students notice generic patterns and related linguistic elements (Price & Price, 2002). The main characteristics and advantages are emphasizing grammar as a source of meaning and text as a semantic choice within a social context (Martin, 2009). This approach systematically integrates language, topic, and context with explicit explanations "rather than focusing on compositional processes, text content, or abstract grammatical prescriptions without a body" (Hyland, 2007, p. 148).

The genre-based approach focuses on functional language, that is, language that occurs in a particular social environment (Burgos, 2017). Genre "reflects the conventions of various forms of writing" (Harmer, 2001) which is conveyed and determined by social context (Knapp & Watkins, 2005). This description focuses on the context of writing manifested as social interaction in the discourse (Uzun & Topkaya, 2018). Students are required to study relevant text which represents the genre. Students and teachers can try to "identify the cultural contexts and situations, the purposes, the functions, and language features of the text" (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010, p. 4). In terms of social purposes, linguistic characteristics, and schema, the majority of students can master the essential elements of the text (Nasihin et al., 2021).

Students are expected to learn text types and apply them in meaningful contexts. Depending on the needs of the students, genre-based learning can be effective for beginners in writing preparation courses (Almacolu & Okan, 2018). A genre-based approach seems appropriate for students with inadequate writing skills and motivation to teach and learn writing. It teaches students to write starting from simple steps to independent steps (Dirgeyasa, 2016). Many studies have focused on the application of the genre-based approach in writing courses (Rashidi & Mazdayazna, 2016; Dirgeyasa, 2016).

To negotiate meaning through writing, the genre-based approach covers some steps such as deconstruction, shared construction, and individual construction (Rose & Martin, 2012). Some strong reasons to teach academic writing using a genre-based approach. First, writing is a social activity that must be undertaken based on actual goals for specific audiences in a well-defined setting. Second, learning to write is an activity-based requirement in the writer's future place (Hyland, 2002). Third, learning to write must provide tangible results. Fourth, learning to write is a social activity. Fifth, learning to write is learning to use a language.

The genre-based approach is the most up-to-date approach that teaches students to write by helping them analyze texts of the genre to be studied (Nasihin et al., 2021; Samsudin & Arif, 2018). Typically, genre writing classes are structured related to the explicit examination of a genre sample in order to increase learners' awareness of the text's general structure, language features, and communicative purposes (Cheng, 2011). It is relatively easy for students to write particular texts as they can draw on their repeated encounters with similar texts (Hyland, 2007). This strategy can optimize writing learning because if students can speak about a topic, read and comprehend text about it, and listen to others speaking about it, then they can write a text about it (Siallagan, 2014).

The key advantage of the Genre-Based Approach for Indonesian students is its framework that supports students with inadequate skills and/or motivation (Ariyanfar & Mithell, 2020). As it fosters and enables self-learning, this approach aims to assist the development of students' writing skills at all levels including the basic, dependent, and reluctant to the most adept and independent (Dirgeyasa, 2016). Besides, this approach accelerates the improvement of low-achieving students' writing skills by getting them to the average level more quickly and effectively, as well as the progress of the higher-achieving students who have received more conventional instruction (Whittaker & Parejo, 2018).

Genre pedagogy can improve students' literacy skills (Wijayanti et al., 2017). Literacy can be defined as the ability to read and write at a level that allows people to comprehend and use both printed and digital communication (Bekkar & Ouerrad, 2021). Traditionally, literacy refers to the mastery of pre-determined, genre-based text-based reading and writing (i.e., five-paragraph essays, term papers), ritual performance on outlined tasks, participation in an activity separated from the process, and other social institutions (Squire, 2008). Literacy is fundamental for individuals to acquire the necessary capacities to participate in local, national, and global economic, cultural, and political discourses related to learning to read and write (Kellner, 2002). Literacy is an effective tool, a wide talent, and a proficiency that extends beyond reading and writing (Zua, 2021). Literacy is an important aspect of the right to education (UNESCO, 2010).

Literacy is a factor used to measure education and its effectiveness. A high rate of literacy level indicates that the education system can provide opportunities to gain good literacy skills. Besides, an adult's literacy level can be used to estimate life expectancy and standard of living with socioeconomic indicators such as income, education, and

employment (Prettyman, 2019). Literacy plays a significant role in 21st-century skills in this scenario (Özenç & Çarkıt, 2021).

Besides focusing on the cognitive domain, learning should also emphasize the affective domain. The learning process has to contain values that must be internalized within students in the context of character education (Septiani et al., 2020). Character is not something meaningless, but it can be taught in the family, schools, and community (Haniah et al., 2020). Schools have a significant role in building the student's character (Print, 2000; Nguyen, 2016). Schools with character education will be excellent places to build students' character so they can grow well in society (Astuti et al., 2020). In this case, the teacher actively teaches moral principles, standards, and habits by incorporating them into suitable topics (Irviana, 2020). This integration includes the imposition of values on the implementation of learning activities that support the practice of values for all subjects both inside and outside the classroom (Dianti, 2014).

Students have outstanding achievements, but their character and morals decrease (Sopacua et al., 2020). Success would be meaningless without character qualities such as honesty, a sense of responsibility, kindness, and persistence (Sudarmika et al., 2020). Intelligence is not enough to lead the country to a better future. A person's behavior in his personal, social, and national life will be influenced by his virtue and strength of character (Septiani et al., 2020). Besides ensuring the nation's survival, children will become future leaders so character-building activities should be a national priority (Agboola & Tsai, 2012). Character development is one of the objectives of the Indonesia Vision 2005-2025. Character education has been a priority in the development of education in Indonesia (Hakam, 2018). Therefore, character education must be able to be integrated into all lessons and executed at various educational levels (Amri et al., 2020).

As mentioned in the national education goals, one of the roles of the teacher is to promote moral principles in schools so that students actively improve their skills (Murti et al., 2020). Character education is designed to instill positive social attitudes and conduct in order to foster the growth of social competence (Harun et al., 2020). Learning can form character strengthening and good character strengthening will produce good student characters and vice versa (Baehaqi & Murdiono, 2020). To address the challenges of the 21st century, it is necessary to combine strong character and skills (Haniah et al., 2020). Therefore, this study aims to develop a Genre-Based Learning Model for high school students that integrate literacy and character-strengthening activities.

## II. METHOD

This Research & Development (R&D) aims to develop a Genre-based learning model that integrates literacy activities and character-strengthening activities for high school students. The development model was adapted from the Plomp (2013) model consisting of three stages, namely preliminary research, prototype development, and evaluation. The developed product was adapted to the curriculum, student needs, and learning situations. The research was conducted during online learning with asynchronous and synchronous (Zoom Meeting) learning (digital teaching materials were developed with the Ispring application).

Product trials were carried out at SMAN 8 Padang. The selection of these schools was carried out by purposive sampling with the provision that students were registered as students of SMA/MA Negeri in Padang City; are open to accepting innovation; can establish good cooperation; as well as having adequate facilities and infrastructure for conducting research. The trial was carried out from October to December 2021. The schedule was adjusted to the school curriculum so that the product was suitable for use at that time, namely explanatory text which was learned in odd semesters. Data were analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques to describe the validity, practicality, and effectiveness of the developed model. The criteria of selected limited trial and wide-scale trial subjects are presented in Table 1. According to the criteria selected as the subject of a restricted trial, both the experimental and control classes consisted of thirty students. This study used descriptive data analysis, which describes the validity and applicability. While the effectiveness statistics in the form of student learning outcomes were tested using an SPSS 17 analysis. The instruments covered questionnaires, observation sheets, interview guides, and tests.

## III. RESULT

The results of this study include the Preliminary Research, Prototyping Phase, and Assessment Phase. The detailed of each phase can be seen below.

### A. Preliminary Research

This stage aims to determine the needs of students and the learning situation. The results of this stage were collected from interviews with teachers and questionnaires filled out by teachers and students. The results of the needs analysis based on questionnaires and interviews regarding the needs and learning situations are (a) The current learning process is carried out through online learning & blended learning; (b) The learning approach uses scientific and text-based approaches, as well as task-based learning during online learning; (c) The online and blended learning use printed materials in the form of Pdf format; (d) The media used are WhatsApp, Zoom Meeting, and PowerPoint; (e) The learning process is not in line with the predetermined plan; (f) In writing factual genre texts, it is difficult for students to find correct data, facts, and information, while in writing narrative genre text, students find it difficult to write with creative ideas; (g) Some students copy other people's work or copy it from internet or books; (h) Some students are still

unsure about the type of text being studied and difficult to differentiate between two texts, for example exposition text and news; explanatory text and procedure text; short stories and folk tales; and other texts with almost the same characteristics in the form of structure and linguistic characteristics; (i) Literacy activities have not been carried out well in schools, especially during online learning (Indriyani et al., 2019); and (j) Strengthening student character needs to be integrated into learning (Atmazaki et al., 2019).

The results of the needs analysis based on student responses show that (a) students are less able to write texts according to the structure and language features of the text; (b) students require fun learning activities and varied teaching materials; (c) students have never been to the library during online learning; (d) students tend to be more interested in reading entertainment stories than textbooks; and (e) Students read and write only to fulfill obligations and do the assignments.

The results of the task analysis show that (a) The development of the genre-based learning model for Bahasa Indonesia by integrating literacy and character-strengthening activities was based on the 2013 curriculum; (b) The trial was conducted at State Senior High School 8 Padang, especially the eleventh grade; (c) The text used explanatory text; (d) The material described in the teaching materials covered the meaning, the function, the structure, and the linguistic features of the explanatory text; (d) The literacy activity covered reading and writing; and (e) Characters that are integrated into learning were honest, disciplined, responsible, creative, critical, active, and independent.

**B. Prototype Phase**

This stage aims to prepare product prototypes for the development of genre-based learning models containing literacy and character-strengthening activities. The initial stage was to develop a model as the basis for developing teaching materials. Integrated dialogical-interactive learning syntax covers building context, exploring genres, building field knowledge, reporting reading, analyzing the genre, constructing individual text and/or group, evaluation, presentation, and reflection (Atmazaki et al., 2021). The syntax of the developed model is presented in Figure 1 below (Atmazaki et al., 2019).

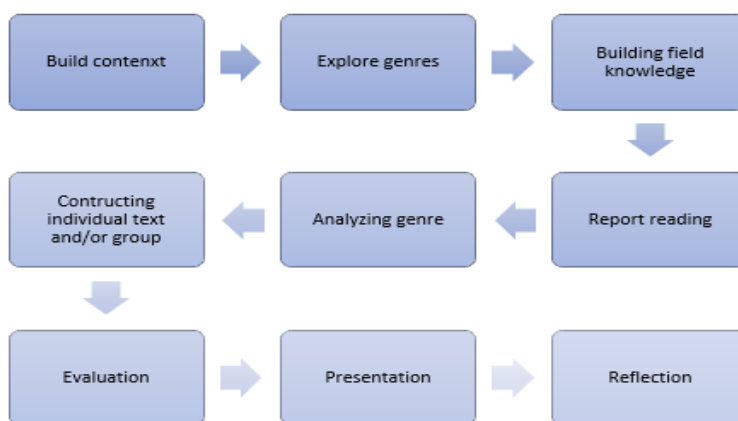


Figure 1. Genre Based Learning Model Syntax

After designing the model, the researcher developed the teaching using the i-Spring application. The learning media can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Snippets of Teaching Materials

After developing the learning model, then validation was carried out in two ways, namely self-validation and expert validation. The results of the validation are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
VALIDATION RESULT

Validation	Validation result (%)	Category
Self-evaluation	89.58	Very valid
Expert validation	91.15	Very valid

### C. Assessment Phase

The learning model that has been declared valid was then evaluated in the field. The trial was done in State Senior High School 8 Padang. The experiment was conducted in two groups, namely the control group and the experimental group. The learning process in the control group used a conventional learning model, while the learning process in the experimental group used Genre-based Learning Model that integrates literacy and character-strengthening activities. The learning process consisted of four meetings for learning activities and one meeting for testing. The trial was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic which used online learning utilizing the Zoom Meeting application.

The trial involved teachers of Bahasa Indonesia. The applicability of the developed model was evaluated using a questionnaire consisting of practicality indications and time allocation. Besides, practicality can be observed through the learning process activities. The outcomes of the practicality of the learning model are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2  
PRACTICALITY RESULT

Reted aspect	Practicality result (%)	Category
Practicality by teachers	92.86	Very practice
Practicality by students	84.33	Very practice
Learning activity	91.18	Very active

The effectiveness of the developed model was the final stage of the assessment. Effectiveness can be seen in student knowledge, attitudes, and skills. Cognitive tests were carried out by assessing students' knowledge of the material, namely explanatory texts. This test focuses on the ability to understand reading texts. Furthermore, the attitude was assessed by the teacher by observing students' attitudes during the learning process. The assessment of student's skills was carried out by assessing students' writing skills, namely writing explanatory texts based on the specified topic. The test was carried out after the students follow the learning process using the developed learning model. The effectiveness value is described as follows.

First, attitude assessment is related to students' attitudes during the learning process. This assessment aims to measure and determine aspects of attitude that are integrated into learning including honesty, disciplined, responsible, creativity, critical, and active. The average score of students' attitudes during learning using the developed learning model was "89.65" with the category of "A" based on the findings of the attitude assessment analysis (in the experimental group). Meanwhile, in the control group, the student's attitude score was 82.98 with the category of "B". Therefore, it can be concluded that the developed learning model can improve the character of the student.

Second, the student's cognitive test to assess the student's comprehension of the material used an objective test with multiple-choice questions. It aims to test the effectiveness of the developed model by considering the differences in outcomes in terms of knowledge (reading literacy) in the experimental group and control group. The learning outcomes for the experimental group and the control group are presented in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3  
LEARNING OUTCOMES

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Lerning Outcomes	1	30	<b>74.67</b>	8.401	1.534
	2	30	<b>63.33</b>	6.989	1.276

Based on the table above, the average value of learning outcomes (knowledge) or reading literacy in the experimental group taught with a genre-based learning model is higher than that of the control group. Before performing the hypothesis testing, the normality and homogeneity tests were conducted as a requirement. The normality test was conducted using SPSS 17 and the results are presented in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4  
TEST OF NORMALITY (KNOWLEDGE TEST)

	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Lerning Outcomes	1	.177	30	.017	.890	30	<b>.005</b>
	2	.197	30	.005	.910	30	<b>.015</b>

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the table above, both the experimental and the control groups have 30 df (degrees of freedom). This indicates that the number of data samples for each group is lower than 50, allowing the Shapiro-Wilk test to evaluate the normality of the data. Using the Shapiro-Wilk approach, Sig. for the experimental and control groups was 0.005 and 0.015. As the significance level for both groups is lower than 0.05, the student learning outcomes data for both groups



are normally distributed. Then, the independent sample t-test was conducted using the SPSS 17 and the results are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST (KNOWLEDGE TEST)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Lerning Outcomes	Equal variances assumed	1.872	<b>.177</b>	5.680	58	<b>.000</b>	11.333	1.995	7.339	15.327
	Equal variances not assumed			5.680	56.142	<b>.000</b>	11.333	1.995	7.337	15.330

As the significance value (Sig) of the Levene test is 0.177 which is higher than 0.05, the variances of the control and the experimental groups are the same as homogenous. Decisions about the Independent Sample t-test are based on the criteria of (1) If Sig. (2 tailed) > 0.05, then H0 is accepted or Ha is rejected, indicating that there is no difference between the experimental and the control groups in terms of the average learning outcomes, and (2) If Sig. (2-tailed) is less than 0.05, then H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted, indicating that there is a difference between the experimental and the control groups in terms of average learning outcomes.

Based on the results of the independent sample test" in "The same assumption of the variance," the value of Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.000 < 0.05; therefore, as a basis for the decision for the independent sample t-test, it can be concluded that H0 is rejected or Ha is accepted, indicating that there is a difference in the average learning outcomes (cognitive) between experimental and control groups.

The last assessment was the student's writing skills. The data collection instrument was a performance test sheet containing background, instructions, and an evaluation rubric. The purpose of the final exam was to determine the efficacy of the developed learning model by comparing the learning outcomes of students taught using the genre-based learning model (experimental group) and those taught using another learning model (control group). The learning outcomes in the experimental and control groups are displayed in Table 6.

TABLE 6  
LEARNING OUTCOMES

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Lerning Outcomes	1	30	<b>89.33</b>	7.730	1.411
	2	30	<b>78.30</b>	9.935	1.814

Based on the table above, the average value of learning outcomes or writing skills in the experimental group taught with a genre-based learning model is higher than that of the control group. Before testing the hypothesis, the researcher tested the normality and homogeneity of the data. The normality test was conducted using SPSS 17 and the results are displayed in Table 7 below.

TABLE 7  
TEST OF NORMALITY (KNOWLEDGE TEST)

	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Lerning Outcomes	1	.262	30	.000	.821	30	<b>.000</b>
	2	.281	30	.000	.851	30	<b>.001</b>

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the table above, both the experimental and the control groups have 30 df (degrees of freedom). This shows that the data sample were lower than 50 data samples for each group, allowing the Shapiro-Wilk method to test the normality of the data with the Sig. value of 0.000 and 0.001 for the experimental and control groups respectively. As the significance threshold for both groups is less than 0.05, data on student learning outcomes for both groups are normally distributed. As a result, the independent sample t-test was performed using the SPSS 17 test and the results are presented in Table 8.

TABLE 8  
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST (SKILL TEST)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Learning Outcomes	Equal variances assumed	.006	<b>.936</b>	4.801	58	<b>.000</b>	11.033	11.033	6.433	15.634
	Equal variances not assumed			4.801	54.694	<b>.000</b>	11.033	11.033	6.427	15.640

As the significance value (Sig) of the Levene test is 0.936 greater than 0.05, the variances of the control and the experimental groups are homogeneous. Decisions about the Independent Sample t Test are based on the criteria of (1) If Sig. (2 tailed) > 0.05, then H<sub>0</sub> is accepted or H<sub>a</sub> is rejected, indicating that there is no difference between the experimental and the control groups in terms of the average learning outcomes, and (2) If Sig. (2-tailed) is less than 0.05, then H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and H<sub>a</sub> is accepted, indicating that there is a difference between the experimental and the control group in terms of average learning outcomes.

Based on the results of the "Independent Sample Test" in the "the same assumption of the variance," the Sig. value (2-tailed) is 0.000 < 0.05; therefore, as a basis for decision-making in the independent sample t-test, H<sub>0</sub> is rejected or H<sub>a</sub> is accepted, indicating that there is a difference in the average learning outcomes (cognitive) between experimental and control groups.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Based on the results of the study, the Genre-Based Learning model that integrates literacy and character-strengthening activities in learning Bahasa Indonesia is considered valid, applicable, and effective. In line with the previous study, the Genre Based Learning paradigm has been widely utilized for language learning including the first language, second language, or foreign language. Coccetta (2015) investigates collaborative writing assignments using Wikis that focus on the narrative genre. It explores the extent to which first-year students in the Linguistic and Cultural Mediation Course at Ca' Foscari University of Venice (Italy) use Wikis to include hypermedia objects such as audio, video, images, and hyperlinks when engaging with online genres (p. 133). Sawangsamutchai and Rattanavict (2016) compared English reading comprehension and reading motivation of Thai seventh graders taught with applied teaching through a genre-based approach and teacher manuals. The results showed that the genre-based approach showed significantly higher scores in reading comprehension and motivation to read English (p. 54).

Yang (2016) tries to introduce a genre-based approach for use in some fields, such as guiding textbook organization, classroom teaching, and teaching concepts. Studies show that a genre-based approach has many advantages, such as integrating language learning and cultural knowledge, making writing both a process and an outcome, emphasizing the interaction of learning, and leading to the promotion of reciprocity between reading and writing. Nagao (2018) examines text-based writing lessons assigned as part of the teaching and learning cycle. The results of the preliminary analysis show that applying the teaching-learning cycle and genre-based approach to teaching writing has the potential to increase EFL students' awareness of generic structure and interpersonal meaning in writing argumentative essays (p. 130). Gómez-Rodríguez (2018) proposes the use of genre-based learning as a significant communicative language approach to encourage intercultural communicative competence of English learners through Sequences of Critical Thinking Tasks. This approach can be used as an initial but significant step to increase the critical intercultural awareness of English learners in an EFL learning environment (p. 154).

Mingsakoon and Srinon (2018) reveal that the SFL genre-based approach helped improve students' understanding and writing skills about the meaning, purpose, and organization of recount texts of personal experience until they could independently execute similar texts themselves at a higher level. Ueasiriphan and Tangkiengsirisin (2019) investigated the effects of a genre-based approach to teaching technical writing to Thai engineers, with a focus on writing work instructions, and the attitudes of Thai engineers towards this genre-based writing. This study suggests that a genre-based approach provides a useful method for Thai engineers to learn how to write work instructions (p. 723). Almacioğlu and Okan (2018) designed an alternative and effective way of teaching writing to English Language and Literature students using a genre-based method by considering their academic needs (p. 71). The result showed that most students acquired, at least, declarative type metacognitive awareness, and improve their writing skills and performance.

This approach has also been used in Indonesia. Dirgeyasa (2016) states that in the context of Indonesian education, the word 'genre' has become the most popular and controversial topic for teaching and studying English, especially writing skills. The results indicate that this strategy appears applicable to students with limited skills and motivation. It effectively teaches kids from simple or dependent to autonomous writing procedures (p. 45). Susanti et al. (2020) reveal that students with high and low abilities who participated in collaborative writing in homogenous proficiency pairs had higher writing abilities than those who participated in collaborative writing in heterogeneous proficiency pairs. This

suggests that pair collaboration can support language learning more optimally when there is no large skill gap between partners (p. 245). Herman et al. (2020) stated that GBA plays a crucial role in addressing students' writing achievement challenges (p. 464). Nasihin et al. (2021) examined the use and influence of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) in teaching and mentoring for the production of Research Articles to strengthen argumentation skills in writing (p. 167). Results indicated that GBA in writing training and mentoring improved argumentation skills in writing classes.

## V. CONCLUSION

The implementation of online learning results in some problems in language learning such as not implementing literacy activities and the difficulty of integrating character education in the learning process. Language acquisition is one of the literacies that need to be mastered so it requires a variety of learning models and technologies to facilitate the learning by using a genre-based approach and incorporating literacy and character education activities. The developed model is evaluated and tested in classroom settings. The results showed that the developed product is valid, practical, and effective. This approach does not influence reading skills but has a large effect on writing skills. Besides, it has no significant influence on reading literacy but has a considerable effect on writing literacy. As the model is piloted during the COVID-19 pandemic, it applies to online learning regardless of using blended or hybrid learning. Future studies can develop learning models by adjusting the needs of teachers and students.

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# Investigating EFL Students' Writing Skills Through Artificial Intelligence: Wordtune Application as a Tool

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**Abstract**—Artificial intelligence (AI) powered writing technologies such as Wordtune and Grammarly are increasingly penetrating the L2 writing domain. Despite the growing significance of such digital tools, few studies have explored how AI-driven applications impact Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) writing. The current study aimed to fill this gap by investigating whether and to what extent Wordtune facilitates Saudi students' writing. The participants were divided into two male and two female groups using a mixed-method design. For both male and female samples, one group was identified as the control group, whereas the other one was identified as the experimental group. Quantitative data were collected using pretests and post-tests and analyzed using SPSS. Qualitative data were derived from students' writing samples and assessed by two human raters. The results showed that using Wordtune, students in the experimental group surpassed those in the control group. Quantitative findings demonstrated that using Wordtune, the experimental group upgraded their writing and outperformed the control group in the final writing exam. Qualitative findings indicate that using Wordtune, the experimental group made modest writing gains at the lexical and syntactic levels. While lexical gains included more concrete nouns, vivid adjectives, and precise verbs, sentence-structure gains included the increasing presence of complex phrases and complex and compound sentences. Finally, the impact of Wordtune on writing quality was the same for both male and female participants.

**Index Terms**—artificial intelligence, writing skills, Wordtune, EFL students, English teaching

## I. INTRODUCTION

Effective writing is valuable in academic and professional environments (Lahuerta, 2017; McDonough & Crawford, 2018; Rosário, 2019). Through this process, writers showcase and synthesize knowledge, advance and evaluate arguments, and clarify and shape opinions (Zhou & Hiver, 2022). A well-written paper or proposal engages with, enlightens, and persuades the reader much more than a poorly written piece on the same subject. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, writing well is a prime predictor of academic prowess at the college level (Geiser & Studley, 2001). However, written academic English presents a challenge for students (Hamzaoui, 2021; Ruscetti et al., 2018) and more so for EFL learners (Alsied & Ibrahim, 2017; Hanauer et al., 2019). Academic writing barriers for English as an Additional Language (EAL) learners are many and varied: grammar, lexis, and mechanics of writing (Phuong, 2021; Singh, 2017), information structure (Flowerdew, 2019; Komba, 2015; Mahammoda, 2016), and genre conventions (Bitchener & Basturkmen, 2006; Finn, 2018).

Research has shown that digital writing tools powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI) can raise the level of learners' written English (Nobles & Paganucci, 2015; Dickson, 2017; Azah, 2019; Karyuatri, 2018; Coenen et al., 2021). Using AI, we refer to a sub-discipline within computer science focused on creating systems that can imitate the intelligence of human beings. The term "Artificial Intelligence" was first used by John McCarthy in 1956 to designate basic types of thinking machines (McCarthy et al., 2006). Since then, AI has been used to achieve goals in various fields, including education (Lin & Mubarak, 2021; Moussalli & Cardoso, 2020).

An example of AI in education is the advent of AI-powered digital writing assistants. These online tools are used worldwide to enhance writing quality (Zheng & Warschauer, 2017). However, currently available digital writing tools mostly focus on helping writers edit drafts for grammatical correctness (Winans, 2021), and only a few online writing applications assist users across the full spectrum of the writing process. One such application is Wordtune.

Wordtune is an AI-driven software that facilitates assists learners with their writing by allowing them to paraphrase their original text. When a user inputs a sentence or a group of sentences into Wordtune, this digital writing tool rewrites the original sentences by replacing words and modifying the sentence structure (Zhao, 2022).

Given that an increasing number of EFL students are using digital writing assistants, such as online dictionaries, thesaurus, Grammarly, and Wordtune, to enhance their written communication, investigating the degree to which such technologies positively impact the quality of English writing is warranted, especially in the EFL context, where students encounter more substantial challenges with writing than their L1 counterparts (Lin & Morrison, 2021; Hanauer et al., 2019).

Although a sizable body of research focuses on the role of lexicographic and correctness-focused digital writing tools in EFL writing, only a few studies have explored the extent to which a broad-spectrum digital writing tool, such as Wordtune, facilitates EFL writing students. Moreover, few studies have foregrounded the effects of a broad-based digital writing assistant, such as Wordtune, on Saudi EFL students' writing skills. The aim of the current study is to address this gap in the literature.

Quantitative data were collected using pretest and posttest, and qualitative data were derived from the textual analysis of students' writing samples. The following research questions formed the focus of the current study.

1. To what extent does Wordtune enhance student writing?
2. What are the specific improvements in Wordtune-mediated student writing?
3. Are there any statistical differences in students' writing skills based on their sex?

This study will make a meaningful contribution to the field of technology-enabled writing by foregrounding the efficacy of Wordtune in EFL writing, with specific reference to Saudi students. A deeper understanding of how Wordtune aids EFL writers will contribute to designing instructional strategies for Saudi EFL writers. This research is needed and timely for two major reasons. First, it determined the role of Wordtune in the writing of a specific subset of the EFL student community, namely, the Saudi EFL learners. This identifies for the stakeholders not only the aspects of EFL writing that Wordtune can change for the better but also the linguistic areas the students struggle with. Second, the conclusions drawn from this study point to potential areas for further studies on the role of AI-driven writing tools in EFL writing.

The remainder of this article is structured thus: first, under the section 'Literature Review' I discuss the relevant past research on the utility of digital writing assistants for school and college learners and the position of Wordtune in the environment of EFL writing. Next, under the 'Methodology' section, the participants, research tools and instruments of data analysis are reported. Then, the findings are reported and discussed. Afterwards, recommendations are made for stakeholders and the limitations of this research are noted. The paper concludes by reiterating the core findings of the current study.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital writing is an umbrella term for various related activities such as writing on Facebook and other social networking sites, blog writing, writing with a word processor, and other forms of online communication (Zhao, 2022). Digital writing assistants are online applications that help users with various aspects of writing. Digital writing tools include lexicographic applications, such as online dictionaries and thesauruses, grammar-focused tools such as Grammarly, and writing-process-focused tools, such as QuillBot and Wordtune.

### A. Digital Writing Assistants and Academic Writing

Prior research has investigated the impact of digital writing assistants on students' writing quality (AbdAlgane & Othman, 2023; Choo et al., 2017; Gayed et al., 2022). Moore et al. (2016) studied whether and to what extent digital writing tools improved the writing quality of college EFL students in Canada. Their findings revealed that while digital writing software could enhance writing skills, it alone was not sufficient to make a marked difference. Their qualitative findings underscored the significance and primacy of strategy instruction in face-to-face classrooms. In another study, Perry (2021) analyzed the extant literature on digital writing assistants and concluded that, in the L2 context, these online tools were most effective when embedded in judiciously designed writing programs. While the studies cited above addressed the question of whether digital writing tools facilitated L2 writing, these works did not discuss whether writing enhancements remained with participants in the long run. Hamouma and Menezla (2019) studied 80 EFL students and found that students proficient in the use of digital writing assistants were more likely to develop written English than those who were not well-acquainted with the technical features of digital writing tools. In another investigation, Purcell et al. (2013) surveyed 2,462 teachers to ascertain how digital writing tools impacted students' texts. They discovered that the recent digital writing platforms, such as Google Docs, with their advanced features, could improve students' writing.

The following key inferences may be drawn from the above survey of the role of digital writing tools in the context of academic written English: first, by and large, digital writing tools help students improve their written English, and second, digital writing assistants work best for the learners with an advanced understanding of digital writing technology.

### B. Wordtune as a Digital Writing Assistant

Driven by AI, Wordtune is an online writing tool that allows learners to paraphrase their writing. It does so by replacing the words in the original text with their synonyms and varying the sentence structure at the phrasal and clausal levels. Based on the natural language processing technique, Wordtune manipulates a large database of written text to rewrite sentences. This digital writing tool uses AI to determine patterns learned from a writing database to produce multiple rewrites of the original sentences (Zhao, 2022). Wordtune does not lift expressions verbatim from already available online material in producing a paraphrase.



Wordtune-produced paraphrases help the learner in two important ways: one, the learners begin to see what they intend to say, and two, as pointed out by Barrot (2020), when learners notice the qualitative difference between their text and the usually better paraphrases produced by Wordtune, they internalize different linguistic options available to shape a thought into a sentence, thereby enhancing their written English writing through self-regulated learning.

Wordtune serves users with different levels of writing proficiency. For instance, Wordtune provides beginners with the ability to translate phrases from foreign languages into English. In this manner, a user can even have an English paraphrase of the original text containing a few non-English phrases. Wordtune can help more skilled L2 learners polish their prose by providing multiple rewrites. By comparing and considering these rewrites, intermediate users can choose the correct words and clear sentence structures for their prose (Fitria, 2021). Additionally, Wordtune provides users with the option of compressing or expanding original sentences. Users can also compress or expand the original text using Wordtune (Zhang et al., 2022).

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### A. *Research Design*

This study employed a mixed-methods research design (Creswell, 2013). Quantitative data were collected first. To that end, pretest and posttest were administered to the control and the experimental groups. Next, qualitative data were collected through a textual analysis of some participants' writing samples to determine the impact of Wordtune on their writing quality, substantiating thereby the quantitative findings.

#### B. *Participants and Setting*

This study was conducted in two higher secondary schools, a boys' school and a girls' school, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Using purposeful sampling, two classes were selected from each school for data collection after the participants had consented to volunteer for the study. From the boys' school, two classes, comprising 38-39 students each were randomly selected. While one class constituted the control group, the other one constituted the experimental group. Similarly, from the girls' school, two classes, comprising 39-40 students each were randomly selected. Here too, one class constituted the control group, and the other one constituted the experimental group. The researcher chose a government school instead of a private one because he was interested in students with varying English proficiency levels. Most private school students have high levels of English proficiency. The number of student participants in each class was high because the number of students in government schools is usually high.

#### C. *Research Instruments*

Quantitative data were collected through a pre-test and a post-test designed to assess participants' performance on English writing tasks before and after traditional and Wordtune-enabled teaching. The pre-test consisted of paragraph prompts asking students to write short, informative paragraphs. The post-test also included paragraph prompts asking students to compose short, informative paragraphs. Qualitative data were derived from the human ratings of some participants' writing samples to ascertain whether the participants benefitted from using Wordtune as a digital writing tool. Students submitted their writing samples six times over 24 weeks. They completed assignments and writing tests. When completing assignments and taking tests, the students were not allowed to use Wordtune. Instead, they used Wordtune when they practiced writing in class or at home. Two professors from outside the institution/author compared and evaluated the writing samples for lexical, syntactic, and textual gains.

#### D. *Data Analysis*

The data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data, constituted by students' scores on the pretest and posttest, were examined using SPSS. Means and standard deviations of the students' writing samples were calculated to obtain the general characteristics of the score distribution. Quantitative data were subjected to paired- and independent-sample t-tests. While paired-sample t-tests were performed to test the effectiveness of the teaching methods, an independent sample t-test was run to ascertain whether there was a difference in writing scores between the experimental and control groups.

The qualitative data, comprising the students' writing samples, were assessed by two human raters, two professors of English from outside Jeddah, with five years of experience teaching English at a Saudi university. The writing samples were examined based on the assessment rubric used to evaluate vocabulary writing tasks, which rates written texts based on their lexical resourcefulness, grammatical accuracy and range, cohesion and coherence, and task completion.

#### E. *Procedure*

This study, spanning 24 weeks, took place at two high schools, a boys' school and a girls' school, in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, during the first semester of 2022/2023. Two classes were selected from each school for data collection. Two classes from the boys' school comprising 38-39 students each were randomly selected. One class constituted the control group and the other one constituted the experimental group. Similarly, from the girls' school, two classes, comprising 39-40 students each were randomly selected. Here too, one class constituted the control group and the other one constituted the experimental group.

For 24 weeks, each group at each school spent four hours per week learning writing skills from their textbooks. While the control groups received instructions through traditional teaching, the experimental groups received instructions using the Wordtune application. Each group at each school was administered a pre-test at the commencement of the semester. Afterward, at the close of the second semester, each group at each school was given a post-test. The results were recorded and statistically analyzed using SPSS.

In addition to administering the pretest and posttest, the researcher also collected students' writing samples at the beginning and end of the first semester and then at the close of the second semester (six times with six samples). These writing samples were subsequently analyzed qualitatively to determine whether and to what extent the use of Wordtune improved the participants' writing. Moreover, it provided a clear understanding of students' writing improvements and highlighted their writing problems and weaknesses.

#### IV. RESULTS

##### A. Phase 1: Quantitative Research

###### (a). Male Students

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations for the sample of 38 male students, the control group, and the sample groups, including their marks on writing skills tests before and after receiving instruction in traditional mode.

To test the effectiveness of instruction in traditional mode on students' writing skills, paired-sample t-tests were performed. Specifically, the researcher wanted to test the research questions whether the means of pre-handling the instruction in traditional mode ( $M = 58.4211$ ,  $SD = 17.08901$ ) and post-handling the instruction in traditional mode ( $M = 60.9474$ ,  $SD = 17.80062$ ) were equal for writing skills. Table 2 contains the results of paired-sample t-test. It reveals that, on average, learners did better after receiving instruction in traditional mode. This improvement was statistically significant [ $t(37) = 2.314$ ,  $p = .026 < .05$ ]. The 95% confidence interval of the difference between the means ranged from .31446 to 4.73817, and this difference was significant between the means of the sample.

TABLE 1  
T-TEST OF WRITING SKILLS TEST FOR MALE STUDENTS (CONTROL)

	N	M	SD
Pre-control	38	58.4211	17.08901
Post-control	38	60.9474	17.80062

TABLE 2  
T-TEST OF WRITING SKILLS TEST FOR CONTROL MALE STUDENTS

	Paired Differences		95% CI		T	df	sig
	Mean	SD	Upper	Lower			
Pair 1	2.52632	0.6531	4.73817	.31446	2.314	37	.026

Table 3 shows means and standard deviations for the sample of 39 male students constituting the experimental group, including their scores on the writing skills tests before and after using Wordtune.

To determine whether and to what extent Wordtune enhanced students' writing skills, paired samples t-tests were performed, testing the research query whether the means of writing skills before ( $M = 58.4615$ ,  $SD = 15.65054$ ) and after ( $M = 76.1538$ ,  $SD = 17.52673$ ) using the Wordtune application were equal. Table 4 shows the findings of the paired-sample t-test. It reveals that, on average, learners performed better with Wordtune. The level of improvement was statistically significant [ $t(38) = 16.317$ ,  $p = .000 < .01$ ]. The 95% confidence interval of the difference between means ranged from [15.49731 to 19.88730], which is significant between the means of the samples.

TABLE 3  
T-TEST OF WRITING SKILLS FOR MALE STUDENTS (EXPERIMENTAL)

	N	M	SD
Pre-experimental	39	58.4615	15.65054
Post-experimental	39	76.1538	17.52673

TABLE 4  
T-TEST OF WRITING SKILLS FOR MALE STUDENTS (EXPERIMENTAL)

	Paired Differences		95% CI		T	df	sig
	Mean	SD	Upper	Lower			
Pair 1	17.69231	6.77128	19.88730	15.49731	16.317	38	.000

To analyze the results of the final examination, an independent sample t-test was run. Table 5 presents descriptive statistics for each male group. Results reveal that the experimental group outscored ( $M = 76.1538$ ,  $SD = 17.52673$ ) the control group ( $M = 60.9474$ ,  $SD = 17.80062$ ). An independent samples t-test was run to ascertain whether there was a

difference in writing scores between the experimental and control groups. The findings in Table 6 specify a significant difference between the experimental and control groups [t (75) 3.78, p =.000 < .01]. The 95% confidence interval (CI) of the difference between the means ranged from 7.18634 to 23.22662, indicating a significant difference between the means of the sample.

TABLE 5  
GROUP STATISTICS OF USING THE WORDTUNE APPLICATION FOR MALE STUDENTS

	n	M	SD
Experimental	39	76.1538	17.52673
Control	38	60.9474	17.80062

TABLE 6  
INDEPENDENT T TEST OF USING THE WORDTUNE APPLICATION FOR MALE STUDENTS

t-test for equality of means								
	F	Sig	t	df	P-value	Mean difference	95% CI	
							Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.134	.715	3.777	75	.000	15.20648	7.18634	23.22662

(b). Female Students

Table 7 shows the means and standard deviations of the sample of 40 female students and the control sample, including their scores on writing skills before and after receiving teaching through the traditional method.

To test the impact of this classical teaching method on students' writing skills, pretest and posttest were used to test the research questions, that the means of pre-(M =55.1250, SD =17.70439) and post (M = 61.1250, SD =18.48379) were equal in writing skills. Table 8 shows the results of the paired-sample t-test. The results of the paired-samples t-test revealed that, on average, students performed better after receiving instruction using the traditional method. This improvement was statistically significant [t (39) = 10.014, p = .000 < .01]. The 95% confidence interval of the difference between means ranged from 4.78812 to 7.21188], and this difference is significant between the means of the sample.

TABLE 7  
T-TEST OF WRITING SKILLS TEST FOR FEMALE STUDENTS

	N	M	SD
Pre-control	40	55.1250	17.70439
Post-control	40	61.1250	18.48379

TABLE 8  
T-TEST OF WRITING SKILLS FOR FEMALE STUDENTS (CONTROL)

Paired Differences							
	Mean	SD	95% CI		T	df	sig
			Upper	Lower			
Pair 1	6.00000	3.78932	7.21188	4.78812	10.014	39	.000

Table 9 shows the means and standard deviations for the sample of 39 female students and the experimental sample, including their writing skill scores, before and after using Wordtune.

To test the effectiveness of using the Wordtune application on students' writing skills, paired sample t-tests were performed to test whether the means of pre-using the Wordtune application (M = 54.1026, SD = 18.56255) and post-using the Wordtune application (M = 72.0513, SD= 18.01746) were equal in writing skills. Table 10 shows the findings of the paired-sample t-test, demonstrating that, on average, learners performed better when using Wordtune. This improvement was statistically significant [t (38) = 19.269, p = .000 < .01]. The 95% confidence interval of the difference between means ranged from 16.06301 to 19.83442, and this difference is significant between the means of the sample.

TABLE 9  
T-TEST OF WRITING SKILLS FOR FEMALE STUDENTS (EXPERIMENTAL)

	N	M	SD
Pre-experimental	39	54.1026	18.56255
Post-experimental	39	72.0513	18.01746

TABLE 10  
 PAIRED SAMPLES TEST OF WRITING SKILLS FOR EXPERIMENTAL MALE STUDENTS

	Paired Differences				T	df	sig
	Mean	SD	95% CI				
			Upper	Lower			
Pair 1	17.94872	5.81716	19.83442	16.06301	19.269	38	.000

An independent-samples t-test was run to ascertain whether there was a difference in writing scores between the experimental and control groups. The results showed a significant difference between the experimental ( $M = 72.0513$ ,  $SD = 18.01746$ ) and control ( $M = 61.1250$ ,  $SD = 13583.47$ ) [ $t(77) = 2.660$ ,  $p = .01 < .05$ ] groups. The 95% confidence interval between the means ranged from [2.74609 to 19.10647], suggesting a significant difference between the means of the sample. Therefore, the research question whether there is any difference between the sample means was rejected. Further details are presented in Tables 11 and 12.

TABLE 11  
 GROUP STATISTICS OF USING THE WORDTUNE APPLICATION FOR FEMALE STUDENTS

	n	M	SD
Experimental	39	72.0513	18.01746
Control	40	61.1250	18.48379

TABLE 12  
 INDEPENDENT T TEST OF USING THE WORDTUNE APPLICATION FOR MALE STUDENTS

	t-test for equality of means							
	F	Sig	t	df	P-value	Mean difference	95% CI	
							Lower	Upper
							Equal variances assumed	.255

An independent-samples t-test was run to ascertain whether the use of Wordtune impacted the writing skills of male and female students differently. The results revealed that this difference was insignificant between male students ( $M = 76.1538$ ,  $SD = 17.52673$ ) and female students ( $M = 72.0513$ ,  $SD = 18.01746$ ), [ $t(76) = 1.019$ ,  $p = .311 > .05$ ], as shown in Tables 13 and 14. The 95% confidence interval of the difference between the means ranged from [3.91386 to 12.11899]. This shows no difference between the means of the sample.

TABLE 13  
 GROUP STATISTICS OF USING THE WORDTUNE APPLICATION FOR MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS

	n	M	SD
Male	39	76.1538	17.52673
Female	40	72.0513	18.01746

TABLE 14  
 T-TEST OF USING THE WORDTUNE APPLICATION FOR MALE AND FEMALE STUDENTS

	t-test for equality of means							
	F	Sig	t	df	P-value	Mean difference	95% CI	
							Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.496	.483	1.019	76	.311	4.10256	3.91386	12.11899

## B. Phase Two: Qualitative Research

### (a). Lexical Gains

A benefit accrued from the experimental groups' inclusion of Wordtune in their writing process was a noticeable improvement in their productive vocabulary. The evaluation of the participants' writing samples revealed that the paragraphs written after practicing writing with Wordtune used lexical resources, especially nouns, adjectives, and verbs, more precisely and appropriately than the writing samples produced without any prior practice with Wordtune. The analysis of writing samples revealed that progressing from the initial samples to later samples, students' successive texts contained more concrete and contextually appropriate nouns, more vivid adjectives, and more precise verbs than the nouns, adjectives, and verbs used in the initial writing samples. A few excerpts from the written samples substantiate this point:

Excerpt A: It is noticeable that the vocabulary of the sentences is very weak. This was based on the writing sample of a male participant, Student 10, in the first cycle of writing samples.

Rayyan is a good guy. He is help his friend. One time, he go 50 kilometers and give a wallet to a friend. The friend missed his wallet. And also one time Rayyan when he come from his office, he helped his friend. Because his friend was sick. Rayyan is a very good man. He is in his office right time. And also he does things what his company says.

Excerpt B: It is noticeable that the level of vocabulary level has improved. This was based on a writing sample from a male participant in the last cycle of writing samples.

Rayyan is a good guy. He is an amazing person because he helps his friends. Once, he drove 50 kilometers to give a friend a wallet. His friend before had missed that wallet. One time, after he came from his office, Rayyan also helped his friend who was not well. Rayyan is a sincere man also. He is in his office room at the right time. And also he does things according to company instructions.

Excerpt A is glaringly weak in lexical resourcefulness: it contains a vague adjective (good), an informal noun (guy); and imprecise verbs (went, does). In contrast, Excerpt B is at least a touch better in terms of lexical resourcefulness: a sharp adjective (amazing); a formal noun (person), and a better verb (drove).

#### (b). *Syntactic Gains*

In addition to vocabulary gains, gains in sentence structure were also observed. Analyses of writing samples demonstrated that texts composed after repeated writing practice with Wordtune exhibited greater syntactic maturity (phrasal complexity; greater number of conjoined and embedded clauses in the sentence) than texts written in the initial cycles of writing samples. The following excerpts illustrate this finding:

Excerpt A: It is noticeable that the structure of the sentences is weak. This was taken from the writing sample of a female participant, Student 7, in the second cycle of writing samples.

I sat in plane before five years. And also I think about it. I was afraid turbulence came. And also I was very very nervous. But the plane landed on airport. And also I was happy. I do not forget the flight.

Excerpt B: It is noticeable that the sentence structure has improved. This was based on the writing sample of a male participant, Student 3, in the last cycle of writing samples.

I first sat in a plane five years ago. Even today I think about that experience. I become afraid because during the flight there was turbulence. In turbulence, I was very nervous and also I was very afraid. Finally our plane landed safely on the ground and then I was really happy. Even today, I remember that scary experience.

Comparing the two excerpts for syntactic maturity, one can easily notice the prevalence of simple sentences in Excerpt A to the extent that the excerpt appears as a collection of choppy sentences. Except for the third sentence, Excerpt A is composed entirely of simple sentences accounting for choppiness. Excerpt B, however, is a modest improvement over Excerpt A. Excerpt B at least manages to have more phrasal structures (“even today,” “in turbulence,” “during the flight”) and compound and complex sentences (“I become afraid because during the flight there was turbulence,” “Finally our plane landed safely on the ground and then I was really happy.”)

## V. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to determine whether and to what extent the Wordtune application enhanced participants' academic writing. To this end, the data were analyzed statistically (quantitative analysis in SPSS) and holistically (assessment of writing samples by human raters). I now return to the research questions posed in the current study, unifying the findings of this inquiry and placing them within the discussion of the relevant literature.

The first question posed in this research was whether and to what extent the Wordtune application improved the writing skills of the participants. Findings from this study demonstrated that the use of Wordtune had a positive impact on participants' writing. This result was established using both the paired-sample t-test and the independent sample t-test. A paired-sample t-test was run to test the research question whether the means of pre- and post-use of the Wordtune application were equal for writing skills. The results demonstrate that, on average, the participating students performed better when using the Wordtune application and this improvement was statistically significant. In addition to the paired-sample t-test, an independent sample t-test was run to ascertain the differences in the final exam writing scores between the control group and the experimental group. The results revealed that the experimental group made significant gains in writing compared with the control group. These findings are consistent with the following inquiries into the role of digital writing assistants in enhancing students' writing skills: Barrot (2020), Rad et al. (2023), Choo and Li (2017). For example, Rad et al.'s (2023) investigation of AI's role in fostering students' writing skills demonstrated that the experimental group, which practiced a Wordtune-assisted writing process, was able to significantly improve their writing skills compared to the control group, which did not use Wordtune. Likewise, the findings of this study support those of Barrot's (2020) study on the impact of grammar on students' writing accuracy and clarity. Additionally, the treatment group comprehensively outperformed the control group when the writing post-test outcomes were compared. Qualitatively, Barrot (2020) concluded that participants were able to internalize points of grammar through metalinguistic clarifications attached to Grammarly's feedback.

The second question posed in this research is as follows: What, if any, specific improvements resulted from Wordtune-mediated student writing? The qualitative findings indicated that the participants made modest lexical and

syntactic writing gains by incorporating Wordtune into their writing processes. As far as lexical gains were concerned, a benefit accrued from the experimental groups' use of Wordtune as a digital writing assistant was the improvement in their productive vocabulary. The writing samples produced after Wordtune-enabled practice showed better lexical resourcefulness. They used nouns, adjectives, and verbs with greater precision and appropriateness than lexical resources in writing samples produced without any prior practice with Wordtune. The writing samples produced in the later stages of Wordtune intervention contained more concrete and contextually appropriate nouns, vivid adjectives, and precise verbs than the nouns, adjectives, and verbs used in the initial Wordtune intervention writing samples. These findings largely support previous research on AI's role in enhancing students' academic writing (Aljohani, 2021; Zhao, 2022).

Concerning writing gains at the syntactic level, analyses of writing samples produced in the initial and later stages of Wordtune intervention showed that texts written after repeated writing practice with Wordtune had at least a touch-better sentence structure (phrasal complexity; conjoined and embedded clauses in the sentence) compared with texts written within the initial writing practice with the Wordtune application. To substantiate this, while initial Wordtune writing samples suffered from choppy sentences owing to the prevalence of bare-bone simple sentences, later Wordtune writing samples were less choppy, as the sentences had at least some degree of phrasal and clausal complexity evident in the presence of compound and complex sentences in the writing samples. This result is consistent with those of other studies exploring the role of AI-based writing tools in supporting students (Rad et al., 2023; Coenen et al., 2021). For instance, Rad et al. (2023) demonstrated that over time, using Wordtune as a digital writing assistant enabled students to compose sentences that combined related ideas of equal or unequal status.

The third research question was the following: Are there any statistical differences in students' writing skills based on gender? To that end, an independent-samples t-test was performed to ascertain whether practicing writing with Wordtune impacted the writing skills of male and female students differently. The results revealed that Wordtune fostered the writing of male and female participants in largely the same way. Quantitatively, for both male and female participants, the post-Wordtune writing test scores were higher than the pre-Wordtune writing test scores. Qualitatively, both male and female participants benefited from writing gains at the vocabulary and sentence structure levels.

## VI. RESEARCH IMPLICATION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of this research have key implications for technology-enabled EFL writing. As it offers instant feedback on written texts, incorporating Wordtune into teaching and learning of writing will provide students with the opportunity to learn writing profitably by identifying writing issues and addressing them satisfactorily. Moreover, because Wordtune enables self-directed and self-paced learning, its use in and out of the classroom will likely lead to better performance by cultivating favorable writing habits and practices. Another important implication is that Wordtune usage leads to an increased level of student engagement with writing. Working with Wordtune, they begin to see the interaction between their input sentences and Wordtune rewrites as acts of discovery, prompting them to think about and work more on their own writing practices and products.

Anchored in the findings of the current study, the following recommendations are made to stakeholders. First, instructors should consider integrating AI-powered digital writing tools, such as Wordtune, into their writing classrooms. By explaining to students the merits of Wordtune rewrites over the original input sentences, instructors would get students to think and learn about the factors that distinguish strong sentences from weak sentences, and this consciousness-raising will lead to better writing. Second, students should be encouraged to use Wordtune rigorously in their out-of-class writing practice. When they see multiple and better rewrites of their input sentences, students naturally attempt to understand what made the rewrites better than the original; in this process, they cultivate good writing habits and adopt effective writing techniques. Finally, instructors should inform students about the limitations of Wordtune because an uncritical reliance on a digital writing tool might put students on the path of becoming blind followers of writing technology, which would be counterproductive to their writing.

Since the results and conclusions of the current study are rooted in a rather moderately-sized experimental sample, it would be valuable if researchers worked with larger samples in the future to explore the extent of the facilitative potential of Wordtune or other digital writing tools in the L2 environment. Such studies would help determine the scope of Wordtune and other tools for L2 writing. Additionally, other studies could vary the research period to determine if and to what degree the length of Wordtune-enabled writing practices influences writing development. The field of AI-assisted writing in the L2 domain will benefit from studies that compare the relative worth of different digital writing assistants. Finally, future studies should compare instructors' and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of Wordtune or similar digital writing assistants in EFL learners' writing development to help stakeholders consider these critical digital applications from two different vantage points.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This current study examined the impact of Wordtune on the writing skills of Saudi high school students. Overall, the findings revealed that using Wordtune fostered participants' writing. On average, the students' post-Wordtune writing performance was better than their pre-Wordtune writing performance, and this improvement was statistically significant.

Quantitatively, the Wordtune intervention led to higher writing test scores in the experimental group than in the control group. Qualitatively, it was found that the students using Wordtune gradually gained lexical resourcefulness and sentence structure. With rigorous practice with the Wordtune application, the experimental group participants could produce writings that were better than their initial Wordtune sample texts in terms of lexical resourcefulness and sentence variety. Another key finding is that Wordtune fostered the writing of both male and female participants in largely the same manner. Quantitatively, for both male and female participants, the post-Wordtune writing test scores were higher than the pre-Wordtune writing test scores. Qualitatively, both male and female participants made similar writing gains at the vocabulary and sentence structure levels.

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# Linguistic Expressions of Conditions of Chinese Legislative Provisions: A Register Grammar Perspective\*

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**Abstract**—There is difference in the distribution of grammar phenomena in different registers. This paper has carried out a comprehensive study of the linguistic expressions of *Conditions* in Chinese legislative provisions. In legislative provisions, the *Conditions* are usually used to indicate the preconditions or circumstances for the legal norm, which are referred to as *hypothetical conditions* in this paper. In contrast, the clauses introduced by the words *dan* ‘but’ or *danshi* ‘but/however’ are called *danshus* ‘provisos’. *Danshus* are always positioned after the main clauses, so they are called *post-conditions*. Legal norms can be categorized into authorization norms, obligatory norms, and compound norms. As special legal norms, *danshus* can also be categorized into *authorization*, *obligatory* and *exclusionary danshus* respectively. Through a corpus-based analysis of conditions of Chinese legislative provisions, this study has concluded that: i) *hypothetical conditions* are always expressed by *de*-constructions; ii) *post-conditions* are always expressed by *danshus*, including *exclusionary danshus*, *obligatory danshus* and *authorization danshus* respectively; iii) the use of *danshus* in Chinese legislative provisions are less than 7% of the total clause numbers; and iv) the co-occurrence of *hypothetical conditions* and *post-conditions* are less than 3% of the total clause numbers. Suggestions for future legislation and amendments: First, more *danshus* should be used; Second, the use of *de*-constructions should be more standardized; and Third, the co-occurrence of *de*-constructions and *danshus* should be increased.

**Index Terms**—legislative provisions, hypothetical conditions, post-conditions, linguistic expressions, register grammar

## I. INTRODUCTION

From the register grammar perspective, there is difference in the distribution of grammar phenomena in different registers, and so does the applicability of grammar rules. Zhang (2005) asserts that different registers have different grammars, and Zhang (2007) emphasizes the consciousness of register in grammar research and concludes that ‘looking for the right examples from the right register, and explaining the examples reasonably in the right register’ (p. 8). Tao (1999) advocates that register-centered grammar research is of great significance, and it should be a basic starting point of linguistic research in the future. Feng and Shi (2018) summarize the systematization of register grammar from different linguistic levels. This paper has carried out a comprehensive study of the linguistic expressions of *Conditions* in Chinese legislative provisions.

In terms of legislative technology, in order to enhance the economy and normativity of legal texts, the legislative provisions need to adopt formulaic sentence patterns (Chen, 2004a). The sentence patterns, sentence types and syntactic structure of legal texts are subject to the logical structure and meaning of legislative provisions, and it is only by combining these aspects that we can break through the dilemma that little is known about the legislative sentences (Pan, 2017).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Hypothetical Conditions of Legislative Provisions

In natural language, conditional sentence generally consists of two parts, conditional clause and result clause, and are usually referred to as hypothetical compound sentences.

In order to adapt to the characteristics of Chinese legislative provisions, the conditional clauses are often condensed into *de*-constructions to express complex meaning relationships (Sun & Zhou, 1997). There are many studies on *de*-constructions in Mandarin Chinese, for example Zhu (1983) argues that *de*-construction can be used in the sense of *zizhi* ‘self-referring’ or *zhuanzhi* ‘transferred-referring’ (pp. 17-19). In Chinese legislative provisions, Yu (1990), Sun and Zhou (1997), Wang (1997), Liu (2003; 2007), Chen (2004a; 2004b) focus on the linguistic characteristics of *de*-constructions, and consider the Chinese character *de* as structural particles, and the *de*-constructions can be used in

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hypothetical contexts.

Some other studies argue that the misuse of *de*-constructions in Chinese legislative provisions, such as Zhou (2002), Yin and Yin (2020) and the abuse of *de*-constructions, and *de* should be deleted or altered (Zhang, 2015).

What's more, the Chinese character *de* can be considered to be conditional marker in Chinese legislative provisions, such as Dong (2012), and Hu (2022). The conditions preceding the legal Subject in legislative provisions are usually used to indicate the preconditions, conditions or circumstances under which the legal norms are to be applied, and they are referred to as *hypothetical conditions* in this study.

### B. Post Conditions in Legislative Provisions

Adversative clauses are one of the general types in natural languages, and they indicate the semantic relations between two clauses. In Chinese, adversative clauses can be marked by direct markers of *dan/que* 'but' or indirect markers of *suiran* 'although' (Xing, 1992, p. 81).

In legislative provisions, the clauses introduced by the words *dan* 'but' or *danshi* 'but/however' are called *danshus* 'provisos', which are special norms which provide for exceptions, limitations, additions, etc. to the main clauses (Zhou, 1991, p. 56), and they are referred to as *post-conditions* because of their position after the main clauses. The CONDITIONS of legislative provisions discussed in this study include both hypothetical conditions and post-conditions.

### C. Logical Structure of Legislative Provisions

The language of law refers to the national language that is used in all legal activities (including legislative, judicial, administrative activities and scientific interpretation of laws) (Pan, 2020, p. 2). George Coode (1843), in his paper '*On Legislative Expression, or the Language of the Written Law*', points out that legislative provisions are generally composed of four elements, namely *legal Subject, legal Action, the Case and the Conditions*. (cited in Doonan & Foster, 2001, pp. 142-143). Li (2008) argues that there is no essential difference between *the Case* and *the Condition*, so George Coode's legal sentence pattern can be reduced to 'Condition + legal Subject + legal Action' (p. 77). In China, Pan (2017) proposes two logical models for legislative sentences: i) Condition + legal Subject + legal Action, and ii) Condition + Subject + Action + Sanction. The former is applicable to the sentence patterns of obligatory and authorization norms, while the latter is the standard format for those of Prohibitive norms. These two legislative sentence patterns can be merged into one: *Condition + legal Subject + legal Action + (Sanction)* (Hu & Jiang, 2017).

Crystal and Davy (1969) claims that most legal sentences have one of the following forms:

If X, then Y shall do Z,

or

If X, then Y shall be Z,

where 'If X' stands for the case(s) to which the rule of law applies, 'Y' stands for legal Subject, and 'Z' refers to legal Action (cited in Bhatia, 1993, p. 206).

From the analysis above, it can be seen that English and Chinese legislative provisions share the same elements of legislation: **Condition, legal Subject, legal Action, and (Sanction)**.

## III. METHODOLOGY

### A. Analytical Framework

Specific sentence patterns are abundant in legislative provisions, and it is necessary to compare and analyse them in sufficient quantity to summarize the rules of their use, to analyse the motivation for their existence, and to further refine the rules for the use of specific sentences patterns. Although hypothetical conditions and post-conditions of legislative provisions are different in terms of sentence type, sentence patterns and positions in the provisions, they are both essentially the CONDITIONS to which the legislative provisions apply, therefore, they are included in the unified category of CONDITIONS in this study.

The study links the linguistic expressions of hypothetical conditions to their semantic classification (indicating legal Subject or the Circumstance or the Case), and the linguistic expressions of post-conditions to the classification of legal norms such as authorization norms, obligatory norms and prohibitive norms. The Corpus of Chinese Legal Conditions (CCLP) has been created for the systematic counting, description and analysis of the linguistic expressions of hypothetical conditions and post-conditions. Based on the motivation of the linguistic expressions, the rules for the linguistic expressions of hypothetical conditions and post-conditions are summarized. The analytical framework of this study is as follow in Table 1.

TABLE 1  
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK OF CONDITIONS OF LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS

Conditions of legislative provisions		
Perspective of law	Hypothetical conditions	Post-conditions
Sentence types	Conditional sentence	Adversative clauses
Sentence patterns	<i>de</i> -constructions	<i>dan/danshi</i> clauses
Perspective of meanings	i. description of the Case	<i>i.exclusionary danshus</i>
	ii. indicating legal Subject	ii.authorization <i>danshus</i>
		iii.obligatory <i>danshus</i>
		iv. prohibitive <i>danshus</i>
Linguistics expressions	<i>i.de</i> -constructions (self-referring)	<i>i.dan/danshi...chuwai, etc</i>
	ii.hypothetical conjunction <i>ruguo</i> ‘if/ where’	<i>ii.dan/danshi...keyi, etc.</i>
	iii.hypothetical conjunction + <i>de</i> -constructions (self-referring)	<i>iii.dan/danshi...yingdang, etc.</i>
	<i>iv.de</i> -constructions( <i>transferred-referring</i> )	<i>iv.dan/danshi...bude, etc.</i>

B. Research Questions

1) What are the linguistic expressions of hypothetical conditions?

In legislative provisions, hypothetical conditions can be expressed by means of hypothetical conjunctions *ruguo* ‘if/ where’, *de*-constructions, and hypothetical conjunctions in combination with *de*-constructions.

The questions about the linguistic expressions of hypothetical conditions are as follow:

- i) what are the frequencies of the three linguistic expressions of hypothetical conditions?
- ii) which hypothetical conjunctions are preferred in legislative provisions, and what are their stylistic, grammatical and semantic mechanisms? and
- iii) what are the semantic and syntactic features of *de*-constructions in legislative provisions?

2) What are the linguistic expressions of post-conditions?

In legislative provisions, different post-conditions are expressed with typical expressions, for example, *exclusionary danshus* are always expressed by *dan/danshi...chuwai etc.*, *authorization danshus* by *dan/danshi...keyi etc.*, *obligatory danshus* by *dan/danshi...yingdang etc.*, and *Prohibitive danshus* by *dan/danshi...bude etc* respectively.

The questions about the linguistic expressions of post-conditions are as follow:

- i) what are the frequencies of linguistic expressions of post-conditions?
- ii) what are the functions and uses of sentence pattern *dans/danshi...* in legislative provisions?
- 3) what are the interaction between hypothetical conditions and post-conditions?

In some legislative provisions, both hypothetical conditions and post-conditions are used.

Through qualitative and quantitative analysis, this study has looked into the interaction of hypothetical conditions and post-conditions, and the interactions of its linguistic expressions *de*-constructions and sentence pattern *dan/danshi...*

C. Description of Corpus

This study collects 100 pieces of the latest laws enacted by the National People's Congress and its Standing Committee, covering eight legal departments. Thirty eight pieces of laws do not use *danshus*, and the remaining 62 pieces of laws are chosen to create CCLP, 7110 articles in total, with 841803 Chinese characters, 7512 *de*-constructions, and 481 *danshus*.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Linguistic Expressions of Hypothetical Conditions

(a). Self-Referring and Transferred-Referring of De-Constructions

In CCLP, there are 7512 *de*-constructions, in which 6360 are used as self-referring and 1152 are *transferred-referring*.

Zhu (1983) argues that *de*-constructions can be used for self-referring and *transferred-referring*. The term *transferred-referring* means a major shift in meaning after nominalisation, from denoting the action to refer to the participant of the action. The term self-referring refers to the act itself, and the change in meaning is not as significant as in the case of *transferred-referring*. The distinction between self-referring and *transferred-referring* is whether to refer to a thing or a situation (Zhang, 2007), in other words, if *de*-constructions refer to the action itself, it functions as self-referring, and if they refer to the person involved in the action, it is *transferred-referring*. In legislative texts, *de*-constructions can also be used as self-referring and *transferred-referring*. For example:

(1a)自然人下落不明满二年的，利害关系人可以向人民法院申请宣告该自然人为失踪人。(《民法典》第 40 条)

zi ran ren xia luo bu ming man er nian *de*, li hai guan xi ren ke yi xiang ren min fa yuan shen qing xuan gao gai zi ran ren wei shi zong ren.

(1b) *If* a natural person’s whereabouts have been unknown for two years, an interested person may request the people’s court to declare the natural person as a missing person (Article 40 of *Civil Code*).

(2a)违反本法第五十八条的规定，出借自己的证券账户或者借用他人的证券账户从事证券交易的，责令改正，给予警告，可以处五十万元以下的罚款。(《证券法》第195条)

wei fan ben fa di wu shi ba tiao de gui ding, chu jie zi ji de zheng quan zhang hu huo zhe jie yong ta ren de zheng quan zhang hu cong shi zheng quan jiao yi *de*, ze ling gai zheng, gei yu jing gao, ke yi chu wu shi wan yuan yi xia de fa kuan.

(2b) *Where* anyone lends his own securities account or borrows others' securities accounts to conduct securities transaction in violation of the provisions of Article 58 of this Law, he shall be ordered to take corrective measures and be given a warning, and may be imposed a fine of not more than RMB 500,000 (Article 195 of *Securities Law*).

In example (1a), *de-construction* indicates the situation where the whereabouts of a natural person are unknown for two years, and the *de-construction* is used as self-referring. In example (2a), the *de-construction* refers to the person who has performed the two acts by stating 'violation of .....' and 'lending...' in which the *de-construction* is used as *transferred-referring*.

Of the 7512 *de*-constructions in CCLP, 6360 (84.66%) are used as self-referring and 1152 (15.34%) are used as *transferred-referring*. Why is it that about 85% of the *de*-constructions are self-referring and only 15% are *transferred-referring*? Possible reasons are as follow:

Firstly, it may be related to the expression of specific legislative provisions. Zou (2008) argues that whether or not the sentence pattern *you xia lie qing xing(xing wei)zhi yi* 'One of the following circumstances (actions)...' is preceded by a subject depends on the need for expression. Generally speaking, specialized laws tend to use sentence patterns with a subject, such as *the Teachers Law*, *the Civil Servants Law* and *the Banking Law*, while non-specialized laws are not suitable for sentence patterns with a subject because the legal subject of the legal relationship is indefinite. A similar situation exists in *de*-constructions, when the legal subject is indefinite, the sentence pattern 'VP + *de*' is often used, and when the legal subject of the law needs to be clarified, the sentence pattern 'NP + VP + *de*' is often used.

Secondly, from cognitive perspective, 'Agent + Action + Object' is a cognitive framework (*gestalt*) (Shen, 1999, pp. 5-6). In the sentence pattern 'NP + VP + *de*', both the agent (NP) and the action (VP) are present, which is a complete subject-predicate clause, usually indicating the self-referring of *de*-constructions. While in sentence pattern 'VP + *de*', only the action (VP) is present, and the agent (NP) is not, in this case, the 'VP + *de*' construction is usually used to refer to the person who performs the act, i.e. to the agent (NP) in *transferred-referring*. For example:

(3a)勾结外国，危害中华人民共和国的主权、领土完整和安全的，处无期徒刑或者十年以上有期徒刑。(《刑法》第102条第1款)

gou jie wai guo, wei hai zhong hua ren min gong he guo de zhu quan、ling tu wan zheng he an quan *de*, chu wu qi tu xing huo zhe shi nian yi shang you qi tu xing.

(3b) *Anyone who* colludes with a foreign country to endanger the sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of the People's Republic of China shall be sentenced to life imprisonment or imprisonment for a term of not less than ten years (Paragraph 1 of Article 102, *Criminal Law*).

In example (3a), the *de-construction* refers to the person who performs the act by the two verb phrases *gou jie...* 'colludes with...' and *wei hai...* 'endangers...', in which the *de-construction* is used in its *transferred-referring*.

In legislative provisions, it is generally necessary to specify the applicable conditions of a legal norm, which is the reason why *de*-constructions are used in its self-referring in most cases.

#### (b). Linguistic Expressions of De-Constructions

In CCLP, there are 7589 hypothetical conditions, of which 7423 (97.81%) are marked by *de*-constructions, 22 (0.29%) by hypothetical conjunctions *ruguo* 'if/where' plus *de*-constructions, 8 (0.11%) by the adverb *fan/fanshi* 'any/whatever' plus *de*-constructions; 67 (0.88%) by hypothetical conjunction *ruguo* 'if/where' and 10 by adverbs *fan/fanshi* 'any/whatever'.

Based on the possibility of fulfillment of the hypothetical condition, hypothetical clauses can be semantically classified into four sub-types: possible hypothetical clauses, realistic hypothetical clauses, counterfactual hypothetical clauses, and subjunctive hypothetical clauses (Zhang & Ma, 2010). In legislative provisions, the hypothetical condition has a universal space-time nature, indicating that whoever commits the act described in the legislative provisions will enjoy the corresponding rights or be subject to the corresponding legal sanctions, and therefore it expresses the possible meaning in the real hypothetical clauses.

Zhang (2014) studies 21 hypothetical conjunctions in modern Chinese, such as *ruguo* 'if/where', *yaoshi* 'if', *yao* 'if', *ru* 'if', *yidan* 'if', *ruo* 'if', *jiaru* 'if', *ruoshi* 'if', *tangruo* 'if', *wanyi* 'if', *jiaruo* 'if', *tang* 'if', *jiashi* 'if', *ruruo* 'if', *tangshi* 'if', *sheruo* 'if', *guozhen* 'if', *tanghuo* 'if', *jiading* 'if', *tangran* 'if', *jiashu* 'if' and their use in four hypothetical clauses, and concludes that all the 21 hypothetical conjunctions can be used in possible hypothetical clauses, and 5 hypothetical conjunctions *ruguo* 'if/where', *yaoshi* 'if', *jiaru* 'if', *tangruo* 'if', and *jiaruo* 'if' can be used in the four hypothetical clauses (pp. 71-72).

First of all, about 98% of hypothetical conditions in legislative provisions are expressed by *de*-constructions, why? The possible reasons are as follow: i) it may be attributed to the characteristics of Chinese language, where *de*-constructions can be used as noun phrases and are widely used; ii) it is influenced by the traditional Chinese laws,

where *zhe*-constructions are widely used in the traditional Chinese legislative provisions (Chen, 2004b), and the *de*-constructions are the substitute for the *zhe*-constructions (Yu, 1990); and iii) the post positioning of *de*-constructions in legislative provisions meets the need for the expression of hypothetical conditions. Dong (2003) argues that when *de*-construction is modifying the head word, then the complex noun phrase appears only in the context of the hypothetical.

Secondly, hypothetical conditions in CCLP are expressed by clauses introduced by hypothetical conjunction *ruguo* 'if/where' 67 instances (0.88%), and by hypothetical conjunction *ruguo* 'if/where' with *de*-constructions 22 instances (0.29%). For example:

(4a) 全国人民代表大会会议每年举行一次，由全国人民代表大会常务委员会召集。**如果**全国人民代表大会常务委员会认为必要，或者有五分之一以上的全国人民代表大会代表提议，可以临时召集全国人民代表大会会议。(《宪法》第 61 条第 1 款)

quan guo ren min dai biao da hui hui yi mei nian ju xing yi ci, you quan guo ren min dai biao da hui chang wu wei yuan hui zhao ji. **ru guo** quan guo ren min dai biao da hui chang wu wei yuan hui ren wei bi yao, huo zhe you wu fen zhi yi yi shang de quan guo ren min dai biao da hui dai biao ti yi, ke yi lin shi zhao ji quan guo ren min dai biao da hui hui yi.

(4b) The National People's Congress meets in session once a year and is convened by its Standing Committee. A session of the National People's Congress may be convened at any time **if** the Standing Committee deems it necessary or when more than one-fifth of the deputies to the National People's Congress so propose (Paragraph 1 of 61, *Constitution*).

(5a)**如果**是国家财产、集体财产遭受损失的，人民检察院在提起公诉的时候，可以提起附带民事诉讼。(《刑事诉讼法》第 101 条第 2 款)

**ru guo** shi guo jia cai chan、ji ti cai chan zao shou sun shi **de**, ren min jian cha yuan zai ti qi gong su de shi hou, ke yi ti qi fu dai min shi su song.

(5b) **If** losses have been caused to State property or collective property, the People's Procuratorate may file an incidental civil action while initiating a public prosecution (Paragraph 2 of Article 101, *Criminal Law*).

Example (4) is hypothetical condition clauses introduced by hypothetical conjunction *ruguo* 'if/where'. The hypothetical conjunction *ruguo* 'if/where', when introducing a hypothetical condition, can be positioned either at the beginning of a clause or before a predicate. In example (5), the hypothetical clause is expressed by a combination of hypothetical conjunction plus the *de*-construction.

According to Zuo (2008), *ruguo* 'if/where' or similar words are the easiest to mark the hypothetical meaning, and the presence or absence of *ruguo* 'if/where' or similar words before *de*-constructions does not change the logical relationship expressed in the sentence (p. 14). However, the presence of *ruguo* 'if/where' or similar words before *de*-constructions emphasizes the hypothetical meaning, and the absence of *ruguo* 'if/where' or similar words does not (Zuo, 2008, p. 14). This is also true to *de*-constructions in legislative provisions.

Thirdly, in CCLP, 10(0.13%) of hypothetical conditions are expressed by clauses introduced by adverbials *fan/fanshi* 'any/whatever', and 8(0.11%) by the combination of adverbials *fan/fanshi* 'any/whatever' plus *de*-constructions. For examples:

(6a)**凡是**伪造证据、隐匿证据或者毁灭证据的，无论属于何方，必须受法律追究。(《刑事诉讼法》第 54 条第 4 款)

**fan shi** wei zao zheng ju、yin ni zheng ju huo zhe hui mie zheng ju **de**, wu lun shu yu he fang, bi xu shou fa lu zhu jiu.

(6b) **Anyone who** falsifies evidence, conceals evidence or destroys evidence, regardless of the party to which it belongs, must be prosecuted under the law (Paragraph 4 of Article 54, *Criminal Procedure Law*).

In example (8), the hypothetical condition is expressed by the collocation of '*fanshi* + VP + *de*'. As Zuo (2008) suggests, the addition of the hypothetical conjunction *ruguo* 'if/where' or similar words before the *de*-constructions does not change the logical relationship expressed in the sentence, but merely serves to emphasize the hypothetical meaning. Similarly, the addition of the adverb *fan/fanshi* 'any/whatever' before the *de*-constructions does not change the logical relationship expressed in the sentence, but only provides a degree of emphasis.

According to Zhou (2009), legislative language is the product and outcome of the long-term integration of legislative activities and the language, and is the most rigorous, standardized, concise, commonplace and clear compared with the language of other registers. From the discussion above, it can be seen that when *de*-constructions are modifying the head word, the postposition of the word *de* indicates the hypothetical meaning, which can satisfy the needs of expressing hypothetical conditions in the legislative provisions (Zuo, 2008; Dong, 2003). The addition of the hypothetical conjunctions *ruguo/ru* 'if/where' or the adverb *fan/fanshi* 'any/whatever' before the *de*-constructions would result in a repetition of the hypothetical meaning marker. In order to make the legislative language more standardized and concise, it is proposed to delete the hypothetical conjunctions *ruguo/ru* 'if/where' or the adverbs *fan/fanshi* 'any/whatever' before the *de*-constructions in legislative provisions. At the same time, from a rhetorical point of view, legal discourse also tends to use negative rhetoric (Pan, 1991), without the need to deliberately add hypothetical

conjunctions or adverbs for emphasis.

### B. Linguistic Expressions of Post-Conditions

In CCLP, there are 481 *danshus* ‘provisos’ in total, accounting for only 6.77% of the total number of provisions. In terms of the sub-categories of *danshus*, there are 289 *exclusionary danshus* (242 exclusion of the cases, 10 exclusion of legal subjects and 37 exclusion of legal objects), 134 obligatory *danshus* (78 positive obligation and 56 negative obligation) and 64 authorization *danshus* (37 positive freedom and 27 negative freedom) in CCLP respectively.

#### (a). The Linguistic Expression of the Exclusionary Danshus

The main function of *exclusionary danshus* is to express exclusions and exceptions or negations to the provisions in the main clause of legislative provisions. There are three usages of *exclusionary danshus*, namely the exclusion of abstract provisions, the specific matters and the specific subjects (Liu, 2017). The above three usages of *danshus* correspond to the *exclusionary danshus* in this paper, namely the exclusion of the cases, legal objects and the legal subjects. The *exclusionary danshus* are usually expressed by sentence patterns *dan/danshi... de chuwai* ‘except as otherwise provided for...’ or *dan/danshi...chuwai* ‘however, except for...’, etc.

(7a)信息披露义务人披露的信息应当同时向所有投资者披露，不得提前向任何单位和个人泄露。**但是**，法律、行政法规另有规定的**除外**。(《证券法》第 83 条第 1 款)

xin xi pi lu yi wu ren pi lu de xin xi ying dang tong shi xiang suo you tou zi zhe pi lu, bu de ti qian xiang ren he dan wei he ge ren xie lu. **dan shi**, fa lü, xing zheng fa gui ling you gui ding **de chu wai**.

(7b) The information disclosed by the parties bound by disclosure obligation shall be disclosed simultaneously to all investors and shall not be disclosed in advance to any entity or individual, **except as otherwise provided for** in laws and administrative regulations (Paragraph 1 of Article 83, *Securities Law*).

(8a) 股东可以用货币出资，也可以用实物、知识产权、土地使用权等可以用货币估价并可以依法转让的非货币财产作价出资；**但是**，法律、行政法规规定不得作为出资的财产**除外**。(《公司法》第 27 条第 1 款)

gu dong ke yi yong huo bi chu zi, ye ke yi yong shi wu、zhi shi chan quan、tu di shi yong quan deng ke yi yong huo bi gu jia bing ke yi yi fa zhuan rang de fei huo bi cai chan zuo jia chu zi; **dan shi**, fa lü, xing zheng fa gui ling you gui ding bu de zuo wei chu zi de cai chan **chu wai**.

(8b) Shareholders may make capital contributions in money, or in kind, intellectual property rights, land use rights and other non-monetary property that can be valued in money and can be *transferred-referring* in accordance with the law; **however, except for** property that cannot be used as capital contributions under laws and administrative regulations (Paragraph 1 of Article 27, *Company Law*).

In example (7), the *danshu* employs the sentence pattern *dan/danshi...de chuwai* ‘except as otherwise provided for...’, which is mainly used to express the exclusion of the case. In example (8), the *danshu* is expressed by the sentence pattern *dan/danshi...chuwai* ‘however, except for...’, excluding the legal objects or the legal subjects.

#### (b). The Linguistic Expressions of Authorization Danshus

The proportion of authorization norms has increased incrementally with the evolution of the laws. In modern laws, the authorization norms are of primary importance (Zhang, 2018). The acts prescribed by authorization norms can be sub-categorized into negative freedom and positive freedom. Negative freedom is the freedom of the legal subject free from the interference of others, and is often expressed in normative documents by sentence patterns *dan/danshi...bu shou qinfan* ‘but/however/provided that...shall not be infringed’ or *dan/danshi...bu shou ganshe* ‘but/however/provided that...shall not be affected’, etc. (Zhu & Ye, 2015, p. 248).

(9a) 营利法人的权力机构、执行机构作出决议的会议召集程序、表决方式违反法律、行政法规、法人章程，或者决议内容违反法人章程的，营利法人的出资人可以请求人民法院撤销该决议。**但是**，营利法人依据该决议与善意相对人形成的民事法律关系**不受影响**。(《民法典》第 85 条)

ying li fa ren de quan li ji gou、zhi hang ji gou zuo chu jue yi de hui yi zhao ji cheng xu、biao jue fang shi wei fan fa lü, xing zheng fa gui、fa ren zhang cheng, huo zhe jue yi nei rong wei fan fa ren zhang cheng de, ying li fa ren de chu zi ren ke yi qing qiu ren min fa yuan che xiao gai jue yi. **dan shi**, ying li fa ren yi ju gai jue yi yu shan yi xiang dui ren xing cheng de min shi fa lü guan xi **bu shou ying xiang**.

(9b) A capital contributor of a for-profit legal person may request the people’s court to revoke a resolution which is made at a meeting of the governing body or executive body of the legal person if the procedure for convening the meeting or the voting method thereof is in violation of the laws, administrative regulations, or the legal person’s articles of association, or, if the content of the resolution violates the articles of association, **provided that** any civil juristic relationship already formed between the legal person and a bona fide third person based on such a resolution **shall not be affected** (Article 85 of *Civil Code*).

The *danshu* in example (9) uses sentence pattern *danshi...bu shou yingxiang* ‘provided that...shall not be affected’.

Positive freedom refers to the freedom that the legal subject achieves or preserves through positive acts, and are mostly expressed in normative documents by the clauses with words *keyi* ‘may’, *youquan* ‘to have the right to’, *you ...*

*de quanli* ‘to be entitled to...’, etc (Zhu & Ye, 2015, p. 248). Similarly, the *danshus* expressing positive freedom is often expressed by sentence patterns *dan/danshi...keyi* ‘but/however,...may’, *dan/danshi...youquan*, ‘but/however, to have the right to’, *dan/danshi you...ziyou* ‘but/however, to have the freedom to’ etc. For example (10) below:

(10a)凡在中华人民共和国领域外犯罪，依照本法应当负刑事责任的，虽然经过外国审判，仍然可以依照本法追究，**但是**在外国已经受过刑罚处罚的，**可以**免除或者减轻处罚。(《刑法》第10条)

fan zai zhong hua ren min gong he guo ling yu wai fan zui, yi zhao ben fa ying dang fu xing shi ze ren de, sui ran jing guo wai guo shen pan, reng ran ke yi yi zhao ben fa zhui jiu, **dan shi** zai wai guo yi jing shou guo xing fa chu fa de, **ke yi** mian chu huo zhe jian qing chu fa.

(10b) Anyone who commits a crime outside the territory of the People's Republic of China and is criminally liable in accordance with this Law may still be prosecuted in accordance with this Law although he has been tried in a foreign country, **but if** he has already been punished with a penalty in the foreign country, he **may** be exempted from or have his punishment reduced (Article 10 of *Criminal Law*).

### (c). *The Linguistic Expressions of Obligatory Danshus*

Positive obligation rules require the subject of duty to perform some positive act in order to satisfy the interests of the right holder, which reflects the necessity or burden of the subject of duty to perform some act in order to achieve the interests of others. In legislative provisions, positive obligations are usually expressed by the terms *yingdang* ‘shall’, *bixu* ‘must’, *you yiwu* ‘to be obliged to’, *you zeren* ‘to be liable for’, etc. (Zhu & Ye, 2015, p. 248). Similarly, the *danshus* expressing positive obligations are mainly expressed by the collocations of hypothetical conjunctions *dan/danshi* plus modal verbs, such as *dan/danshi...yingdang...* ‘but/however,...shall...’, *dan/danshi...bixu...* ‘but/however,...must...’, and sometimes also by the collocations of hypothetical conjunctions *dan/danshi* plus preposition, such as *dan/danshi...yizhao...* ‘but/however,...shall be followed’. See example (11) below:

(11a)除可以当场作出行政许可决定的外，行政机关应当自受理行政许可申请之日起二十日内作出行政许可决定。二十日内不能作出决定的，经本行政机关负责人批准，可以延长十日，并应当将延长期限的理由告知申请人。**但是**，法律、法规另有规定的，**依照**其规定。(《行政许可法》第42条第1款)

chu ke yi dang chang zuo chu xing zheng xu ke jue ding de wai, xing zheng ji guan ying dang zi shou li xing zheng xu ke shen qing zhi ri qi er shi ri nei zuo chu xing zheng xu ke jue ding de, er shi ri nei bu neng zuo chu jue ding de, jing ben xing zheng ji guan fu ze ren pi zhun, ke yi yan zhang shi ri, bing ying dang jiang yan zhang qi xian de li you gao zhi shen qing ren. **dan shi**, fa lü, fa gui ling you gui ding de, **yi zhao** qi gui ding.

(11b) The administrative organ shall make a decision on an administrative permit within twenty days from the date of receiving the application for an administrative permit, except where a decision on the administrative permit can be made on the spot. If a decision cannot be made within twenty days, it may be extended by ten days with the approval of the head of the administrative organ, and the applicant shall be informed of the reasons for the extension. **However**, where otherwise provided by law or regulation, the provisions thereof **shall be followed** (Paragraph 1 of Article 42, *Administrative Licensing Law*).

The *danshu* in example (11) uses the verb *yizhao* ‘shall be followed’.

Negative obligation norm (also known as *prohibitive norm*) means that the obligor must restrain himself from certain conduct in order to satisfy the interests of the right holder, as required by the prohibitive norm. Prohibitive rules are usually expressed by *bude* ‘shall not’, *buneng* ‘cannot’, *buying* ‘shall not’, *jingzhi* ‘to be prohibited’, *yanjing* ‘severely prohibited’, etc (Zhu & Ye, 2015, p. 248). Similarly, *danshus* expressing negative obligations are usually expressed by sentence patterns *dan/danshi...bude...* ‘but/however,...shall not...’, *dan/danshi...jingzhi...* ‘but/however,...to be prohibited...’, *dan/danshi...yanjing...* ‘but/however,...severely prohibited’ etc., or sometimes by other content words. For example (12) below:

(12a)地面第三人损害赔偿的诉讼时效期间为二年，自损害发生之日起计算；**但是**，在任何情况下，时效期间**不得**超过自损害发生之日起三年。(《民用航空法》第171条)

di mian di san ren sun hai pei chang de su song shi xiao qi jian wei er nian, zi sun hai fa sheng zhi ri qi ji suan; **dan shi**, zai ren he qing kuang xia, shi xiao qi jian **bu de** chao guo zi sun hai fa sheng zhi ri qi san nian.

(12b) The period of limitation for damages to third parties on the ground shall be two years from the date of occurrence of the damage; **however, in no case shall** the period of limitation exceed three years from the date of occurrence of the damage (Article 171 of *Civil Aviation Law*).

The *danshu* in example (12) uses the sentence pattern *dan/danshi...bude...* ‘however, in no case shall...’.

### C. *Interaction Between Hypothetical Conditions and Post-Conditions*

In CCLP, 206 instances of co-occurrence of hypothetical conditions and post-conditions are found in the same legislative provision, accounting for only 2.9% of the total number of provisions. The co-occurrence of hypothetical conditions and post-conditions are found in 33 laws, among which 113 instances (54.85%) in the Civil Code, 13 instances (6.31%) in the Civil Aviation Law and 11 instances (5.5%) in the Criminal Code. For example:

(13a) 数人为同一代理事项的代理人的，应当共同行使代理权，但是当事人另有约定的除外。(《民法典》第166条)

shu ren wei tong yi dai li shi xiang de dai li ren *de*, ying dang gong tong xing shi dai li quan, *dan shi* dang shi ren ling you yue ding *de chu wai*.

(13b) *Where* two or more agents are authorized to deal with the same matter for the principal, the agents shall collectively exercise the authority *unless otherwise agreed* by the parties (Article 166 of *Civil Code*).

(14a) 中华人民共和国缔结或者参加的国际条约同本法有不同规定的，适用国际条约的规定；但是，中华人民共和国声明保留的条款除外。(《民用航空法》第184条第1款)

zhong hua ren min gong he guo di jie huo zhe can jia de guo ji tiao yue tong ben fa you bu tong gui ding *de*, shi yong guo ji tiao yue de gui ding; *dan shi*, zhong hua ren min gong he guo sheng ming bao liu de tiao kuan *chu wai*.

(14b) *Where* an international treaty concluded or acceded to by the People's Republic of China contains provisions different from those of this Law, the provisions of the international treaty shall apply; *provided, however, that provisions* to which the People's Republic of China has declared reservations *shall be excluded* (Paragraph 1 of Article 184, *Civil Aviation Law*).

In general, there are 7110 articles in CCLP, and 7656 *de*-constructions and 481 *danshus* are found, but there is 206 co-occurrences of hypothetical conditions and post-conditions in total.

In other words, there are only 1.08 *de*-constructions, 0.07 *danshu* 'proviso' and 0.03 co-occurrence of hypothetical conditions and post-conditions in each article of legislative provision. The data above shows that: Firstly, as for *CONDITIONS* in legislative provisions, the frequency of the use of hypothetical conditions is much higher than post-conditions, and the former is 15 times of the latter. Secondly, on the whole, the frequency of use of *danshus* is too low. And thirdly, the co-occurrences of hypothetical conditions and post-conditions are even less frequent than *danshus*.

## V. CONCLUSION

This paper, based on a mini-corpus CCLP, has quantitatively described the linguistic expressions of *CONDITIONS* in Chinese legislative provisions and has found that: Firstly, hypothetical conditions are usually expressed by *de*-constructions (about 98%), and a few *de*-constructions are preceded by hypothetical conjunction *ruguo/ru* 'if/where' and adverb *fan/fanshi* 'any/ whatever'. The linguistic expressions of *de*-constructions include *ruguo...de* 'anyone who' or 'if/where ...', *fan/fanshi...de* 'if/where ...', etc. Secondly, post-conditions are mainly expressed by *danshus* 'provisos'. Specifically speaking, *Exclusionary danshus* are expressed by sentence patterns *dan/danshi...de chuwai* 'except as otherwise provided for...' and *dan/danshi...chuwai* 'however, except for...', etc. *Authorization danshus* are expressed by sentence patterns *dan/danshi...bushou yingxing* 'but/however/provided that...shall not be affected', *dan/danshi...bu yingxiang...* 'but/however/provided that...shall not affect...'; *dan/danshi...keyi* 'but/however,...may...', *dan/danshi...youquan*, 'but/however, to have the right to...', *dan/danshi you...ziyou* 'but/however, to have the freedom to...' etc. *Obligatory danshus* are mainly expressed by sentence pattern *dan/danshi...yingdang* 'but/however,...shall...', *dan/danshi... bude...* 'but/however, ...shall not...', etc. Thirdly, the frequency of use of *danshus* in legislative provisions is less than 7%, and the co-occurrence of hypothetical conditions and post condition is even lower (only 2.9%).

Suggestions for future legislation and amendments: Firstly, the frequency of the use of *danshus* should be increased to make exceptions, limitations and additions to the general principles prescribed in the main clause of legislative provisions. Secondly, the use of *de*-constructions should be standardized, i.e., deleting hypothetical conjunction *ruguo/ru* 'if/where' and adverbs *fan/fanshi* 'any/whatever'. Thirdly, the co-occurrence of *de*-constructions and *danshus* should be increased, so as to enhance the quality of legislative provisions.

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# Emotional Management of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*'s Main Character

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**Abstract**—This study aims to describe and reveal the main character's emotional management in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, a Penguin classics novel published in London in 1994. This study employs a descriptive qualitative technique and Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach. The research data was derived from the novel's narrations and portrayal of the main character. The study found that the main character's psychology employed a defensive mechanism to regulate all the emotions that arose. The main character in this work uses suppression, rationalization, reaction construction, regression, anger and indifference, and imagination. Repression serves as the main character's protection mechanism in the narrative. The main character demonstrated that he attempted to channel his melancholy into thankfulness and to turn his anxiety into rational thinking.

**Index Terms**—emotional management, psychoanalysis, the main character, *Robinson Crusoe*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Literature supports life within the context of social reality, which is why literary works serve a societal purpose. A human being's life as a social creature is constantly confronted with social difficulties that cannot be isolated from this life (Wellek & Warren, 1956; Arafah, 2019). According to Eagleton (1983), literature is an art form in the form of written writings. Onuekwusi (2013) defines literature as any inventive and beautiful work in words, whether oral or written, that investigates man as he tries to survive in his existential situation and gives his audience amusement, knowledge, education, and excitement. Literature is an art that expresses words' meaning and beauty (Arafah, 2018; Suliman et al., 2019). The use of words and phrases needs to be appropriately arranged to avoid the possibility of misunderstanding (Iksora et al., 2022). As for that, literary work becomes reading material readers can read in their spare time (Afiah et al., 2022). It means that literary work is an instrument to explore a broader perception of life anywhere in the world (Arafah et al., 2021).

From time to time, literature evolves. As it develops, many literary works and new research are growing in academic studies. Through literary works, students are willing to get positive impacts by reading, which affects their positivity because literary works contain cultural information from various sociocultural backgrounds (Arafah et al., 2020; Asriyanti et al., 2022). Aside from that, students can also improve their ability in writing using the cultural information they have found to create good quality writing (Arnawa & Arafah, 2023). Local values in literary works for academic spaces help students increase their concern for cultural heritage (Arifin et al., 2022). It indeed increases human awareness as literary work commonly puts environmental context into the story, such as protecting and preserving the environment from excessive exploitation (Manugeran et al., 2023). The student's achievement or positive impact comes from the students themselves and the environment (Mokoginta & Arafah, 2022), such as developing students' understanding of human experiences, language skills, and language style (Sunardi et al., 2018). The language style,

including the use of metaphor, is significant because literary work could only be an academic work with metaphors (Baa et al., 2023). Literature theory advanced fast in the twentieth century. The advancement in this era has changed people's life (Arafah & Hasyim, 2019), especially in the literature that allows readers to read literary works in the form of books and access online media (Angrawan et al., 2019). Literary work in a book or online media can be a medium for learning context as long as it is compatible with the material subject being taught (Arafah et al., 2023). Nowadays, literary work can easily be found in digital media, where people can access information (Hasyim & Arafah, 2023). The existence of digital media in this era gives internet users a simple tool to allow them to not only access information but also to communicate and share any content with people all over the world (Arafah & Hasyim, 2023a). As long as the information is used positively and still in the right corridor, digital media plays a vital role in this life (Arafah & Hasyim, 2023b). The science development also creates a new genre in literature called science-fiction (Suhadi et al., 2022). The development raises various transdisciplinary ideas, including sociology of literature, anthropology of literature, and literary psychology (Kaharuddin & Latif, 2017; Arafah, 2018).

Psychology is derived from the Greek words *psyche* (soul) and *-logia* (science). Psychology may be defined etymologically as the study of the soul. According to Atkinson et al. (1996), psychology is the science of life or the analysis of human behaviour. While according to Wellek and Warren (1963, p. 81), the psychology of literature may refer to the psychological study of the writer, his type as an individual, the study of the creative process, or the study of psychological types and laws presented within literary works, or, finally, the effects of scholarly works on their readers (audience psychology).

According to Aras (2014), an author reflects on life based on their intentions, perceptions, beliefs, and value judgments. The particular topic the author brings to his work portrays his style of character that later becomes how he brands himself based on the environment around him because language can also be affected by the environment (Hasyim et al., 2020; Takwa et al., 2022). The use of language in literary works closely relates to the environment, especially in the cultural background where literary works represent sociocultural events in daily life (Arafah et al., 2023; Yudith et al., 2023). Through this, the author allows the readers to feel and experience his feelings (Mutmainnah et al., 2022). The author leads readers through the doors of the unknown and unseen realms, arousing sentiments and emotions and assisting them in discovering the significance of life and existence. Text or discourse regarding social and cultural background makes the readers discover more knowledge only by reading (Arafah et al., 2020). The readers are then responsible for interpreting and conveying the meaning of messages based on their knowledge (Kuswanti et al., 2023). Therefore, putting the text as efficiently as possible is essential to avoid cross-cultural misunderstanding (Hasjim et al., 2020). As a result, both authors and readers can communicate through literary works effectively (Yulianti et al., 2022). According to Minderop (2010), the relevance of literature psychology is to completely grasp the core psyche of human beings and the influence that afflicts the character. Finally, this purpose combines psychology and literature as a composite substance.

Humans are social beings. We need other people in our lives; thus, while we live alone on a solitary island, we will encounter a variety of scenarios. In his novel *Robinson Crusoe*, Daniel Defoe describes how a man survives for 28 years on a deserted island. In order to face this kind of situation, the world has naturally provided the nature to be used that has a causal relationship with humans (Siwi et al., 2022). The novel character depicts the main character's personality. It is common to meet the behaviour of characters with unusual or absurd personalities portrayed by the author to raise the various feelings of the readers (Fadillah et al., 2022). The movie's narrative revolves around the life of a lone survivor of a sunken boat off the shore. Within 28 years, Robinson Crusoe was forced to confront the obstacles that forced him to learn to face real life. All of these factors influenced his actions. He persisted in his efforts to conquer all challenges. He battled depression on his own for over three decades.

According to Shigematsu (2018), in Defoe's first-person fictional autobiographies, he describes an individual's life as a true history that produces an illusion of the real. In reality, his novels depict 'the nature of psychology' and capture psychological truths via the consciousness of his characters. According to Novak (2000), while Defoe was undoubtedly concerned with depicting the social and political context in which his characters lived, "he was more interested in what went on in his characters' thoughts".

## II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The psychoanalysis of literary criticism evolved from Sigmund Freud's notion of psychoanalysis. Some fundamental concepts of Freud's theory include consciousness and unconsciousness, which are seen as personality traits related to impulses and anxieties. Personality traits are classified as id, ego, and superego.

The ego deals with the demands of reality, while the id and superego do their best. When the tension becomes too much, the ego must protect itself. It accomplishes this by automatically suppressing or twisting the impulses into a more acceptable and less dangerous shape. These tactics are known as ego protection mechanisms (Boeree, 1997). The defensive mechanism is activated by an urge or turning to feel to seek a substitute object—for example, violent impulses aimed towards other parties deemed safe for assault. The defensive mechanism is a trait that almost everyone possesses. This defensive system does not generally represent personality but can influence personality development. The goal of defensive mechanisms is to diminish or eliminate the unpleasant impacts of risk while a human rearranges an internal or external reality (Timmermann et al., 2009). Defence mechanisms include suppression, rationalization,

response creation, regression, hostility and indifference, and imagination.

Sigmund Freud suggested the process of repression, which had a unique position in psychoanalytic thinking for a time, maybe because it represented the most direct technique of avoiding the sensation of fear. The ego uses repression as an unconscious technique to inhibit upsetting or threatening thoughts from becoming conscious. Repression causes a person to be unaware of his anxiety-producing urges or to forget intensely emotional and terrible previous occurrences. A person with homosexual tendencies (the identification of which may cause anxiety) may therefore become entirely ignorant of such desires via repression; a person who has undergone a humiliating personal failure may become unable to recall the event through repression. If suppression were as simple as erasing the conflict and all its accompanying fears, it would be the ideal protective reaction, but this does not appear to occur. The anxiety alleviation provided by suppression is compensated for in other ways, such as response creation (Krech et al., 1974; Arafah & Kaharuddin, 2019).

Rationalization is how we generate self-justifying justifications for our undesirable conduct. It arises when the ego cannot accept the true motivation for an individual's conduct. The true purpose is substituted with a substitute motive with the objective of justification. Rationalization has two purposes: first, it reduces disappointment when we fail to meet a goal, and second, it provides an acceptable rationale for conduct. For example, instead of blaming others or the environment, someone who is late due to sleep may blame others for not waking him up or claim that he is weary because he is too busy with work. He should have been able to get up if a waker had been installed (Hilgard et al., 1975).

A reaction development known as thinking the opposite transforms an unwanted urge into its polar opposite. As a result, a youngster who is furious with their mother may become highly concerned with her and lavishly offer her care. An abused youngster may seek refuge with the abuser's father or someone who cannot tolerate homosexuality and may profess to loathe gays (Boeree, 1997).

Regression is a backward psychological movement while under stress. Every perspective related to psychology is mostly influenced by ego and miscommunication between one another (Purwaningsih et al., 2020). When we are upset or scared, our actions become more infantile or primary (Boeree, 1997). Some experts interpret regression in two ways. First, retrogressive conduct is like a tiny infant screaming and being overly spoiled to achieve a sense of security and the attention of others, just like a child who needs protection from his father from the environment that damages him/her (Sunyoto et al., 2022). Second, primitive regression occurs when an adult acts uncultured, loses control, and does not hesitate to fight (Hilgard et al., 1975). This situation arises when cultural value is not becoming the guideline for behaving (Takwa et al., 2022).

Anger is intimately linked to the stress and anxiety that can lead to property destruction and assault. Aggression can be directed directly or indirectly (direct and displaced aggression). Direct aggression is hostility directed directly toward the person or item, causing frustration. For adults, this type of aggressiveness is frequently verbal rather than violent. Displaced aggressiveness occurs when a person feels frustrated but cannot be satisfied to expose the source of frustration because it is unclear or untouched. The offender is unsure where to strike since he is enraged and needs to retaliate. The assault is occasionally directed against persons who are not culpable or are looking for scapegoats (Hilgard et al., 1975). Apathy is another type of reaction to frustration that manifests by retreating and acting as if it has resigned.

When someone has difficulty, sometimes the remedy is to join the realm of fantasy rather than reality (Andi & Arafah, 2017); for example, war troops frequently display pin-up females in their quarters. That represents the hungry individual imagining a nice dinner by gathering various pieces of the picture of dishes while his sex life is disturbed (Hilgard et al., 1975).

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive qualitative technique was employed in the study, along with Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic approach. The information came from Daniel Defoe's work *Robinson Crusoe*, released in 1994 by Penguin Popular Classic in London. The study data were gathered through the novel's narrations and characterization of the main character. The researcher collected several materials connected to the main character and emotional management using the library research approach. The data was researched and evaluated to gain comprehension and make connections with the research. The researcher applied the psychoanalytic technique to analyze the data, focusing on the ego protection mechanism.

### IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The ego uses repression as an unconscious technique to inhibit upsetting or threatening thoughts from becoming conscious. It takes the most direct method, avoiding the sensation of anxiousness. As a result of suppression, the individual is unaware of his anxiety-producing impulses or does not vividly recall emotionally and distressing previous experiences.

Then it occurred to me how well supplied I was for my subsistence and what my case would have been if it had not happened, which was a hundred thousand to one, that the ship floated from the point where she first struck and was driven so close to the shore that I had time to get all these things out of her. What would have happened if I had

continued living in the circumstances where I initially arrived on shore, without necessities of life or means to supply and buy them? (Defoe, 1994, p. 66).

The main character demonstrated in this part that he sought to hide the impulses of grief and the inconveniences of life that he encountered, which evolved into thankfulness. His life's tragic circumstance was replaced with appreciation since he was still alive. He pondered what if he, like ten other buddies, died at sea.

However, I was so ashamed of my horrifying conceptions of the item that I constructed nothing but bleak fantasies for myself, even though I was far away. Sometimes I thought it had to be the Devil, and reason agreed. For how could anything else in human form ever fit? What happened to the ship that brought them there? Were there any additional traces of footsteps? Furthermore, how could a guy have arrived there? (Defoe, 1994, p. 153).

The main character was terrified after discovering other human footprints on that island in chapter 18, "I Find the Print of a Man's Naked Foot." He was concerned that a wild person would capture and murder him. He attempted to redirect all of his concerns to a more rational mentality. He assumed that no other people could have travelled to this island because he had seen no traces of human presence thus far. He began to suspect that it was Satan. The main character sought to think about other things to distract himself from his worry. Rationalization ensues when the ego cannot acknowledge an individual's true motivation. The true purpose is substituted with a substitute motive with the objective of justification.

A little after noon, I found the sea calm, and the tide had ebbed so far out that I could come within a quarter mile of the ship. Here I found a fresh renewing of my grief, for I saw that if we had stayed on board, we would have all been safe, that is to say, we would have all gotten safe on shore, and I would not have been so miserable as to be left entirely destitute of all comfort and company, as I was now (Defoe, 1994, p. 52).

He discovered his ship was still powerful and floating in the afternoon following the storm that had trapped him on the island. It made him assume that if his buddies had elected to stay on board during the storm, they would have been saved, and he would have been with them. If they had lived, they might have been able to build a boat and travel to another populated island.

A reaction development known as thinking the opposite transforms an unwanted urge into its polar opposite. The researcher discovers a part in chapter 14, "I Travel Quite Across the Island," that depicts the main character's reaction development. I expressed sincere and heartfelt gratitude to God for revealing that I may be happier in my lonely position than I would have been in the liberty of society and all the world's delights (Defoe, 1994, p. 113).

The primary characters' anguish was palpable. They survived on that alien island alone, without even a single companion. He spent his days alone, feeling lonely. Fear gripped him; he did not know when he could leave the island or whether he would die there. These ideas caused him to attempt to relax and be grateful for what had occurred to him. He tried to think that everything had transpired due to God's will. He transformed his despair, loneliness, and fear into thankfulness to survive in his current condition.

Regression is a psychological journey back in time while under stress. Our actions tend to become more infantile or primary when difficult or scared. The main character regresses in Chapter 5, "I Go on Board in an Evil Hour".

The fact that I had no weapon to hunt and kill any creature for my nutrition or to protect myself against any other animal that could wish to kill me for theirs was particularly distressing. In a world I had nothing except a knife, a tobacco pipe, and a little tobacco in a box; this was all my provision, and it plunged me into such horrible mental agonies that I raced around like a maniac for a time (Defoe, 1994, p. 50).

After calming down, the main character began considering how he would live on that island. He knew that his salvation was the start of a future calamity. The essentials, such as food, beverages, and a comfortable place to reside, otherwise he would be devoured by wild creatures on the island. This mental instability rendered him unable to think clearly, so he rushed around like a lunatic.

Anger is intimately linked to the stress and anxiety that can lead to property destruction and assault. Aggression may be directed or moulded directly. The researcher discovers a part in Chapter 7, "I Build My Fortress," demonstrating misdirected or shifted hostility. It occurs when a person is frustrated but cannot explain the root of the displeasure due to not being clear or unaffected.

Because he is outraged and needs to react, the criminal is confused about where to hit. I rushed about the coast, wringing my hands and hitting my head and face, shouting in anguish and crying out. I was undone after vomiting with the large amount of salt water that had gone into my stomach and recovering a bit (Defoe, 1994, p. 71).

When the main character realized something horrible had occurred to him, he was puzzled, and his mind was in disarray. The main character believed that his and his companions' deliverance from the calamity was highly unjust. He was furious since he was the only one who had survived. He was abandoned on a strange island where there was no guarantee of a good life. The main character was outraged but did not know what to say; all he could do was scream and run away from what had happened.

The researcher then discovers a portion in chapter 2, "Pirates capture me," that depicts the main character's apathy. Apathy is another form of frustration reaction that results in apathy by withdrawing and acting as if he surrendered. Now I looked back upon my father's prophetic discourse to me, that I should be miserable and have none to relieve me, which I thought had now been so effectually brought to pass that I could not be worse than now the hand of Heaven had overtaken me, and I was undone without redemption. However, alas! It was only the beginning of my sorrow, which

will be revealed in the sequel to this novel (Defoe, 1994, p. 23).

In this novel, the main character mused. The main character remembered his father's warning and felt terrible about what he had done to his parents. However, remorse was futile, and he surrendered himself to the forecasts and fate he faced. With these reflections, I worked my mind up not only to resignation to God's will in the present disposition of my circumstances but also to a sincere thankfulness for my condition; and that I, who was still a living man, ought not to complain, seeing that I had not received the due punishment for my sins; and that I had received so many mercies which I had no reason to have expected in that place (Defoe, 1994, p. 132).

The main character's sympathies resulted from his frustration with what had occurred to him. He also believed this was God's retribution for his misdeeds. With this shame, he also recognized that God had given him a blessing in disguise and love. The main character's life was horrible, yet he was provided comfort while living on the island. Sometimes, entering the realm of imagination is the solution when someone has a problem. In this case, the answer is based on fiction rather than fact. Chapter 19, "I See the Shore Spread with Bones," depicts the main character's fantasy.

So I set it aside and then proposed that I would ambush them in some convenient place with my three double-loaded guns and, in the middle of their bloody ceremony, let fly at them, when I would be sure to kill or wound perhaps two or three at every shoot; and then falling in upon them with my three pistols and my sword, I had no doubt but that if there were twenty, I would kill them all. For a few weeks, this fantasy occupied my mind, and I was so full of it that I often dreamed of it, and at times, I felt like shooting at them in my sleep (Defoe, 1994, p. 166).

The main character's fantasy revealed that he was concerned and terrified after witnessing human bones spread over the coastline. He was concerned that the cannibals would discover him on the island. Like the other victims, he may be murdered and devoured by them. Every day, he worried about his fate. The main character began fantasizing about killing the cannibals alone with all the equipment he possessed. With the daydream, he could finally alleviate some of his anxiety.

Furthermore, I saw myself capable of managing one, no, two, or three savages to make them slaves to me, to do whatever I directed them to do, and to prevent them from ever causing me harm. I entertained myself for a long time with this situation, but nothing came of it; all my ideas and plots came to naught since no savages came near me for a long time (Defoe, 1994, p. 197).

The main character revealed his desire in Chapter 22, "I Hear the First Sound of a Man's Voice." The primary individual has lived alone on that lonely island for twenty-eight years. Despite his anxiety and loneliness, he hoped that one day he would be able to find a companion or a prisoner of wild people. He also dreamt of rescuing a human from cannibals and becoming friends with him on the island. He could go with the person he had spared, so he would not be alone and might be able to assist himself in escaping off the island.

## V. CONCLUSION

Daniel Defoe's work *Robinson Crusoe*, initially published in 1719, depicts the adventure and struggle of a man to survive on an island. The main character Crusoe's ship and his pals had an accident while they were trapped on an island, and it turned out that only he survived when the disaster occurred; all of his friends abandoned the ship. He encountered numerous things that challenged him mentally as a human being throughout his seclusion and battle to live on that island.

The researcher then investigates the main character's psychological changes, utilizing Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis technique. The researcher seeks to determine how the main character's emotional management works. The main character, Robinson Crusoe, endures 28 years alone on an island. During his battle, he elicited various feelings in his character. Even though his parents disagreed, he enjoyed sailing and exploring the world. He was usually lonely, unhappy, fearful, and apprehensive after being stuck on the island and experiencing all the pain there. His psyche then employed the defensive mechanism to control all the surfaced emotions. The defensive mechanism is activated by an urge or turning to feel to seek a substitute object. The defensive mechanism is a trait that almost everyone possesses. This defensive system does not generally represent personality but can influence personality development. The main character in this work employs suppression, rationalization, reaction construction, regression, anger and indifference, and imagination. Repression serves as the main character's protection mechanism in the narrative. The main character demonstrated that he attempted to channel his melancholy into thankfulness and to turn his anxiety into rational thinking.

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# Pedagogical Implications in EFL Classrooms: A Reflective Praxis of Vocabulary Strategies and Techniques

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**Abstract**—Teaching vocabulary is a challenging ordeal, not only because of the vastness of vocabulary but also because it takes much effort to enable the students to acquire the meaning with their correct usage. The study uses qualitative research to elaborate strategies that can be implemented in EFL classrooms to teach vocabulary-based content. The present study has highlighted the meaning of reflective praxis in the teaching-learning process and how the process of reflection ultimately has a desirable impact on both the teachers and the students. The researcher has adopted the pragmatic approach as the paper emphasizes the possible difficulties teachers and students can face in teaching and learning vocabulary. The article foregrounds problems and is followed by their practical solutions in pedagogy. The study proposes a problem-solving approach to teaching vocabulary in EFL classrooms. It focuses on improving the lexical competence of the learners, which is considered one of the most essential components of language building.

**Index Terms**—reflective praxis, lexical competence, pragmatic approach, remedies, practical implication

## I. INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary constitutes an intrinsic part of language skills (Ślebioda, 2013). It serves the purpose of garnishing the language, elevating it from its crude state to a sophisticated state. The teacher aims to incorporate various types of vocabulary into the teaching-learning process in an EFL classroom. One of the most essential types of vocabulary is receptive vocabulary. "Receptive vocabulary is the amount of words that learners recognize and understand when they are used in context, but which they cannot produce" (Elmahdi & Hezam, 2020, p. 559). Learners can decipher what it means when they read this vocabulary in context. However, the usage of this vocabulary independently in speaking and writing is not done by the learners. However, receptive vocabulary is significant for learners as they become proficient in deciphering different meanings of the same vocabulary terms in varying contexts.

"Productive vocabulary is the words the learners understand and can pronounce correctly and constructively in speaking and writing. It involves what is needed for receptive vocabulary plus the ability to speak or write at the appropriate time" (Elmahdi & Hezam, 2020, p. 559). Therefore, a combination of productive and receptive vocabulary is required to empower the learners to become versatile in comprehending a range of vocabulary terms, distinguishing among the different vocabulary-based phrases and using the vocabulary while speaking or writing.

The usage of vocabulary is necessary for the students to build their creative writing skills (Ševečková, 2016), enable them to understand the contextual differences between different vocabulary words, and appropriately use the vocabulary words in both spoken and written forms. "Vocabulary can be defined as the words of a language, counting single items and phrases or chunks of several words which convey a particular meaning, the way individual words do" (Workie & Feleke, 2020, p. 135). Students who become proficient in comprehending and using vocabulary in their practical lives are likely to make a good impression on their employers, clients or seniors in the long run (Kobylarek et al., 2022). It is evident that a student with a rich vocabulary fairs better in both academic and personal life as enriched vocabulary has a high propensity of letting that student be viewed as skillful. Vocabulary also gives a dynamic colour to spoken or written content, enabling students to avoid repetition in their academic compositions and conversations (Alam et al., 2022; 2021). For instance, synonyms are taught to the students so that they can avoid repetition if the same thing has to be conveyed. If the student has to talk about being 'surprised' multiple times in the same paragraph, then the student can use different words/phrases for this purpose, like 'taken aback', 'astonished' and so forth. For these purposes, it is essential to teach vocabulary to EFL classroom students using appropriate strategies and techniques (Alam et al., 2023; Alhawamdeh & Alam, 2022; Alam & Hameed, 2023).

Moreover, as far as the strategies and techniques are concerned, it is first and foremost essential to realize that the motivation among the students to learn or to do better in real-life occurrences is necessary. Ajmal et al. (2021) article extensively discusses the learner's internal and external motivation, emphasizing that external factors are more critical in developing motivation among learners. The role of the teacher is essential and can be significant in the process of motivating learners. Vocabulary is an essential component of language which allows one to share thoughts, emotions, ideas, and feelings irrespective of the language they speak or write. All skills of language are interconnected through

vocabulary to share information and ideas. Teaching vocabulary interactively poses numerous challenges to a teacher, especially in an EFL classroom where almost little exposure to language is available to the students in real-life communication (Alam, 2022). However, the teacher must overcome such obstacles to impart vocabulary-based information and instructional material to the students effectively. Not only is a proficient teacher expected to disseminate vocabulary-based instructional material to the students effectively, but it is also expected to enable the students to use that vocabulary in the long run practically. One of the most pertinent things to be taken into cognizance is that the teacher must refrain from teaching vocabulary to the students in a mundane manner. Monotony in learning often leads to rote learning, and rote memorization of vocabulary words, terms, or phrases hampers the longer retention of the contents. Hence, the teacher must make the lectures interesting enough to grab the students' attention towards the teaching-learning process. A vibrant atmosphere in the classroom can lead to productive learning with the most prolonged possible retention and application (Shibuya, 2020). Another vital aspect that the teacher must remember is that vocabulary can be taught without grammar. However, vocabulary usage in reading or writing can only happen appropriately with a basic knowledge of grammar. Using vocabulary in speech or written form without following the grammatical rules correctly is just like accumulating a cluster of words devoid of meaning. Precisely, vocabulary learning and its practical usage depend on grammar; therefore, vocabulary should be integrated with grammatical topics in EFL classrooms (Alam et al., 2020).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reflective praxis in pedagogy is the "one in which teachers and student teachers collect data about teaching, examine their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, and teaching practices, and use the information obtained as a basis for critical reflection about teaching" (Richards, 1996, p. 1). The teachers and learners must actively engage in the teaching-learning process by first getting acquainted with the instructional materials/contents, followed by their comprehension and ultimately moving towards reflecting the significance and the pragmatic usage of the grasped contents. To be more specific, it can be said that:

Academic or professional reflection involves learners making sense of their experiences in a range of ways by understanding the context of learning and the particular issues that may arise; understanding their contribution to that context, including past experiences, values/philosophies and knowledge; drawing on other evidence or explanation from the literature or relevant theories to explain why these experiences have played out or what could be different; and using all of this knowledge to re-imagine and ultimately improve future experience (Ryan, 2015, p. 16).

Teaching vocabulary to students is one of the most significant aspects of language acquisition, as language proficiency depends on vocabulary building and development to a great extent.

One of the reasons why vocabulary has been recognized as crucial to language use is because insufficient vocabulary knowledge can lead to difficulties in second language learning, such as misunderstandings, incomprehensible communication, lack of confidence and so on (Marques, 2019, p. 2).

Therefore, to overcome all such obstructions in learning English as both a second and a foreign language, teachers must impart vocabulary to the students by using the best possible teaching strategies and resources. Likewise, the students must make the desirable attempts to understand the instructional material imparted to them and learn the meaning of that material and its practical usage in daily conversations and written communication. One of the prerequisites of teaching vocabulary to students in EFL classrooms is the teacher's proficiency in the proposed area. The teacher should possess a deep knowledge of different vocabulary, including primary and advanced vocabulary. This prerequisite is expected out of a teacher so that the teacher can either increase or decrease the degree of difficulty level of the vocabulary-based instructional material depending on the student grade allotted to him. Once the instructional material based on vocabulary has been delivered to the students, the teacher must reflect on it so that the teacher can decipher the gap between what he has taught in the class and what the students have learned. The teacher must also possess the rationality to decide which method of teaching vocabulary will be most appropriate in a particular set of circumstances (Alam & Usama, 2023). For instance, some vocabulary terms can be easily taught through the technique of 'contrast'. The teacher can give the antonyms of the chosen vocabulary words to make them clear and understandable to the students. 'Happiness' can be explained as a vocabulary term to the students by giving its antonym, 'sadness'. Mime, expressions and gestures also play a crucial role in teaching vocabulary to learners (Alam, 2022). For instance, if the teacher has to teach 'funeral' or 'demise' as vocabulary words, the teacher can do so by taking the hat off his head with an expression of sadness. Through this technique, the learners can associate the meaning of the target vocabulary word with its symbolic gestures. Such techniques are valuable for ensuring a lively atmosphere in the classroom while teaching vocabulary to the students. Beyond the techniques that the teacher can incorporate to enhance the dissemination and the gradual learning of vocabulary in an EFL classroom, it is also essential for the teachers to take care of the constraints in the classroom. One of the recurrently observable constraints often faced by the teachers and the students in an EFL classroom is the insufficient time dedicated to teaching vocabulary. Some vocabulary terms are so extensive that they require a considerably more extended period for comprehension. Lack of sufficient time for learning such vocabulary words or phrases will likely diminish the students' possibility of proper vocabulary acquisition

(Echegoyen & Ezpeleta, 2021). Therefore, the teacher needs to learn the art of lesson planning in advance so that sufficient time can be allocated for learning vocabulary in the classroom.

Breaking large chunks of work into smaller parts is always one of the easiest ways of learning vocabulary. So, the teacher can introduce some programs in the EFL classrooms, like the 'vocabulary of the day' or the 'vocabulary of the week' program. In this way, only a limited number of vocabulary words or phrases are introduced in the EFL classrooms. Therefore, the learners are not overwhelmed with extensive vocabulary all at once, and the learners can instead learn the few words chosen for a day or a week (Alam & Alhawamdeh, 2022). Disseminating limited and controlled information to the learners within a pre-decided time framework ultimately helps the students learn the contents faster and retain those contents for a longer span of time.

'Learning through Gaming' is another exciting way of imparting vocabulary-based content to students. The learners can be acquainted with word games. Like they can be given a significant word, and they can be asked to use the alphabet of that word to construct as many words as possible. The learner can also be given a box of jumbled letters and then asked to identify as many words as possible that can be constructed from that box. Such games stimulate the interest of the learners to grasp new vocabulary terms.

Hyponymy can also be used as a technique for teaching vocabulary. Hyponymy "is the hierarchical relationship between the meanings of words, in which the meaning of one word is included in (under) the meaning of another word. For Example, the meaning of the word tiger is included within that of cat. In the sense of domestic cat, the word cat is a hyponym of the general word cat" (Oljira, 2017, p. 499). Hence, the teacher can use hyponymy as an effective technique of association for teaching vocabulary.

Lastly, the teacher needs to consider semantics while teaching vocabulary to the students. The vocabulary that the students use must not be devoid of coherent meaning, whether in the form of verb speech or written expression. All these factors contribute to developing an effective teaching-learning plan with the required strategies and techniques for successful vocabulary acquisition among the students.

### III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following objectives will be discussed in the present study to find out the ideas and reflective praxis of incorporating vocabulary in EFL classrooms:

- To develop a holistic and practical teaching praxis: By using suitable teaching strategies and techniques and developing a holistic teaching framework, students can learn vocabulary appropriately.
- To improve the cognitive ability of learners by using different strategies and techniques: The students' cognition can be enhanced if they learn the multi-faceted dynamics of the language, including vocabulary.
- To check the existing classroom practices of teaching vocabulary and devise robust strategies to maximize the learning outcomes.
- To develop critical thinking and comprehension among the learners: If the students are imparted the vocabulary contents of the language efficiently, it can develop critical thinking skills in the students as they can understand the usage of the same vocabulary word in different contexts.
- To engage learners in intensive comprehension by establishing a relation between word and their meanings.

### IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions have been addressed and foregrounded in the present study:

- What is the relevance of vocabulary teaching in EFL classrooms?
- Which techniques can the teacher use in the EFL classrooms to teach vocabulary efficiently?
- What are the complications that arise while teaching vocabulary to the students?
- How can the teachers minimize and ultimately eliminate the difficulties that occur while teaching English in EFL classrooms?
- How can the teacher generate interest in the students to learn vocabulary?
- Which aids can be employed in the classroom to make the teaching-learning process of the vocabulary-based content easier?
- What is the impact of vocabulary acquisition on the future academic and professional avenues of the students?

### V. METHODOLOGY

The present paper has been written by employing qualitative research. In order to collect the information, the researcher has referred to pertinent books, journals, articles, thesis and dissertation. A close reading of all the available resources has been done to discern the deeper meaning of the contents based on vocabulary teaching and learning. The researcher has attempted to understand the implication of the vocabulary-based techniques and strategies written in various sources like books and journals, following which the researcher has elaborated on those techniques or strategies idiosyncratically by giving novel examples and proposing original solutions to the prospective problems that may occur in the teaching and learning of vocabulary. Therefore, the researcher has analyzed the sources of information after close

reading in such a way that the evaluation of the contents mentioned in the sources has been done, and their practical significance and implication have been deduced by the researcher thereof.

## VI. PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES OF TEACHING VOCABULARY IN THE EFL CLASSROOMS

*Journals:* Journals can take various forms. They may be used as a notebook, single page, leaflet binders, or electronic platforms. Language teachers can maintain a journal through which essential observations of the teaching-learning process can be noted and later reflected upon. The journals can be written journals or audio journals. In the written journal, the teachers can manually note the vital information related to the classroom teaching-learning process. For instance, if the students find it challenging to comprehend specific vocabulary words or phrases, the teacher can note those words in the journal. Later, the teacher can use *the repetition technique and flashcards* in the class to teach those words again so that they become more apparent to the students. In this way, the comparatively difficult vocabulary terms can be understood by the students in a better way, thereby resulting in longer retention of those terms. Therefore, it can be said that "this teacher's journal entry reveals how she has used her journal: to describe how she presented a teaching activity, to identify some concerns she had about the lesson, and to remind her of alternative procedures to use in the future" (Richards, 1996, p. 9).

Journals can also be used to help students write the vocabulary word and then draw an image or anything related to that vocabulary word to enable learning through the technique of association. For Example, if the teacher wants the students to learn the word 'glistening', the students can be asked to draw a snowy scene in the journal using sparkly glittery colours. Through this drawing in the journal, the students can reflect upon the direct association between the target vocabulary word and its associated meaning.

*Lesson Report:* The teacher can prepare a lesson plan, and after the execution of the lesson plan in the class, the teacher can prepare a lesson report that shall encapsulate the degree to which the lesson objectives have been achieved. In the lesson report, the teacher must systematically write the things that must be followed while teaching vocabulary to the students. The teacher must choose appropriate words to teach vocabulary to the students. The words chosen must be according to the intellectual level of the students. The target vocabulary must be easy enough. The teacher must categorize the target vocabulary words according to their respective parts of speech, nouns or verbs, etc. The synonyms/ antonyms, the positive/ negative connotation and the usage of the target words in sentences are also supposed to be encapsulated in the lesson plan so that they can be taught to the students by complying with a systematized set of guidelines. Suppose the teacher chooses to teach the target vocabulary through literary passages. In that case, the teacher must aim to enable the students to comprehend the passages intensively to establish a relation between words and their meanings. For instance, if the teacher chooses to teach a literary passage in the class that is replete with vocabulary terms, the teacher shall first read the passage aloud in the class, followed by a discussion on the meaning of the passage and an explanation of the vocabulary words. Then, the teacher shall ask the students to employ those vocabulary terms in meaningful sentences. If the students find it challenging to use specific vocabulary words/phrases in sentences, then the teacher must write those words/phrases in his lesson report. The teacher can then use some teaching aids like flashcards or innovative panels, depending on their availability, to emphasize those words again. The re-teaching of those words can ensure the students' permanent acquisition of those words, thereby grooming their vocabulary and giving them a better command of the English language (Pranjic, 2021). Therefore, repetition of the least comprehended vocabulary words can lead to a better understanding among the students, enabling them to retain those words and boosting their language development.

*Video-Recording as a Strategy for Teaching Vocabulary:* In EFL classrooms, the teacher can use video recording as a strategy to reflect upon how much of the vocabulary content has been successfully imparted to the students along with its comprehension by the students. For Example, the teacher can choose to teach a literary passage to the students and ask the students to solve the vocabulary-based exercises derived from that passage. One of the vocabulary exercises can be multiple-choice questions for synonyms and antonyms. Suppose the students correctly choose the options from the multiple choices in the exercise questions. In that case, the teacher can ensure that vocabulary acquisition has occurred in the students. However, if the students find it challenging to choose the correct options in the exercise, then *remedial teaching* can be taken up by the teacher. In remedial teaching, the teacher can specifically take up the least understood synonyms and antonyms and ask the students to form meaningful sentences not only out of those words but also out of their synonyms and antonyms. Remedial teaching serves the function of enhancing vocabulary learning in the students. However, video recording has one obvious constraint. "For example, the presence of a recording device may be disruptive; recording devices often have a limited range (e.g., they may capture only students seated in the front row); and reviewing a recording is time-consuming" (Richards, 1996, p. 11).

*Contextual Teaching as a Technique for Teaching Vocabulary:* One of the most desirable techniques for teaching vocabulary in EFL classrooms is contextual teaching. Contextual teaching is meaning-focused in nature. The *fundamental principles* of the meaning-focused input strand are as follows; vocabulary learning happens through reading and listening; the material is most familiar to the learners; learners engage in reading and watching/listening for pleasure; learning is aided by the use of context and cumulative background knowledge; opportunities for large amounts of input (hence *extensive* reading and *extensive* listening) are available (Widodo et al., 2017).

The teacher can choose poetry and prose (fiction or nonfiction) to teach students vocabulary. In poetic compositions, there are often vocabulary terms/ words. When the teacher shall teach a poetic composition to the students in the class, the students shall read that and shall learn to derive the meaning of the vocabulary words through the context of the phrases in that composition. Moreover, poetry is almost always based on figurative language, metaphors, idioms, euphemisms and so on. It is replete in poetry, and therefore, teaching poetry to students shall enable them to comprehend the poems' connotative meaning. Hence, the students shall learn the difference between the poem's denotative and connotative meanings. The ability to understand the connotative meaning of the poem by grasping the idioms and metaphors in the poems shall serve the purpose of building vocabulary in students (Kobakhidze, 2021).

Furthermore, contextualization shall also enable the students to establish a connection between the different situational sentences used in a particular vocabulary-based exercise. For instance, 'Wood is used in the furnaces' and 'We got lost in the woods' are two sentences that employ the word 'wood' in their singular and plural forms. It is only after mastering the art of deciphering the meaning of the words through contextualization that students can understand that in the former sentence, 'wood' means timber, and in the latter sentence, 'wood' means forest. Contextual learning plays a crucial role in letting the students derive the meaning of the various vocabulary words appropriately.

*Use of Questionnaire/Rating Scales to Investigate the Students' Learning Preferences:* The teacher can prepare a questionnaire that shall encapsulate all the questions centred on students' preferences concerning vocabulary learning. Sample questions that can be used in the questionnaire are, "In English class, I like to learn vocabulary by reading", "I like to learn vocabulary by pictures, films and videos", "I like the teacher to explain all the vocabulary terms to us in the class", "I like to learn vocabulary by talking in pairs with my classmates", Five-point scale or seven-point scale can also be employed by the teacher to analyze the learning preferences of the students. Suppose most students claim that they like to learn vocabulary through reading. In that case, the teacher must ensure that the pedagogical material is primarily in the form of reading comprehension (either prose or poetry). Suppose the students find audio-visual aids like films, pictures or videos as more exciting sources of learning vocabulary. In that case, the teacher must use an intelligent classroom/ language lab to teach vocabulary to the students through these sources.

Moreover, if the students like interactive and like to learn vocabulary by interacting with each other in pairs, then the teacher must focus on *collaborative pedagogical techniques*. In that case, the students must be made to learn through collaborating. Hence, questionnaires pave the way for clarity for the teachers so that they can choose the ideal way of teaching vocabulary to the students out of the available options in the EFL classrooms.

*Modifying Pedagogy According to the Learning Style of the Students:* The students may have versatile learning styles irrespective of their background knowledge and information in the classroom. The teacher must recognize the most preferred learning style of the students in the EFL classrooms so that the pedagogy can be modified and implemented accordingly. For instance, some learners have an analytical learning style, some prefer a communicative learning style, and some prefer an authority-oriented one. "Learners with analytical learning style prefer a logical, systematic presentation of new learning material with opportunities for learners to follow up on their own" (Richards, 1996, p. 60).

Once the teacher recognizes that the students of a particular EFL classroom prefer an analytical learning style, the teacher can design his pedagogical material systematically, sequentially, coherently and logically. For instance, if the teacher has to teach 'phrasal verbs' as a topic of vocabulary in the classroom, the teacher must design his lesson plan in such a way that he first teaches phrases, followed by a lecture on verbs, and ultimately reach to the main topic, that is, phrasal verbs. In this way, the students shall be able to clearly distinguish between phrases and verbs and shall be able to intertwine the two concepts to understand phrasal verbs. Thus, an analytical style of teaching and learning vocabulary shall result in coherence and systematized learning of the vocabulary. The students shall then be asked to solve some phrasal verb exercises independently, giving them a sense of autonomy. This sense of autonomy shall further develop their confidence, thereby making them more particular about the vocabulary contents they have learned in the class. Some students prefer a communicative learning style. Such learners "need personal feedback and interaction, and learn well from discussion and group activities. They thrive in a democratically run class" (Richards, 1996, p. 60).

For such students, the teacher has to employ a communicative pedagogical style. For instance, the teacher can engage the students in a group discussion and encourage them to speak on any contemporary topic using the correct grammar and vocabulary in English. The students who use good vocabulary in the discussion should be appreciated. On the contrary, the students who fail to use the grammar and vocabulary in the discussion correctly should be given constructive feedback so that they work on their mistakes and avoid them in future classes.

*Technological Tools as a Teaching Strategy for Building Vocabulary in Students:* *Play and Learn* can be employed as a teaching technique by using technological applications like 'Kahoot' to enhance the student's vocabulary in EFL classrooms. However, it requires an intelligent panel in the classroom. Therefore, educational institutions with smart classrooms can use technological advancement efficiently to make the students imbibe universal vocabulary terms with varying degrees of difficulty. The teacher can create a quiz or a set of quizzes centred on vocabulary like 'one-word substitution quiz', 'phrasal verbs quiz', 'idioms quiz', 'homonyms quiz', 'synonyms and antonyms quiz' and so on. The teacher can display the quiz on the screen, and the students can choose the correct answers. This shall serve as a play-and-learn method, increasing students' interest in the learning process.

*Action Research as a Teaching Strategy for Teaching Vocabulary in EFL Classrooms:* Action research involves "implementing an action plan designed to bring about change in some aspects of the teacher's class with subsequent

monitoring of the effects of the innovation" (Richards, 1996, p. 6). Planning, Action, Observation and Reflection are the key elements of action research. For instance, if the teacher has to teach vocabulary to B.A. students who are taught English as a foreign language, the teacher is first supposed to examine the future problems while teaching vocabulary. One of the significant problems teachers face in teaching vocabulary is the vastness of vocabulary words. A vocabulary usually needs to be narrower to be entirely memorized by the students. This increases the chances of forgetfulness in the students regarding the vocabulary-based content. The next step involves selecting a suitable procedure for the teacher to collect information about the future problem to be resolved. For Example, the teacher can choose audio tapes for recording the classroom discussion. The teacher can then analyze the recorded classroom discussion and decide which sets of vocabulary words are complicated for the students to memorize. Finally, the teacher develops an action plan to ensure that the comprehension of those specific sets of words becomes more accessible for the students and that the students' forgetfulness of those vocabulary words is minimized.

The teacher can introduce the 'root words method' of learning vocabulary in that action plan. For instance, if the teacher deciphers through the audio tapes that the students find it challenging to memorize and retain the words that end with 'cide', and then the teacher can introduce it as a root word and explain its meaning to the students, that is, cide means killing/murder. After explaining the meaning of the root word, the teacher can introduce words like 'infanticide, uxoricide, patricide, fratricide' and so on. Since the students shall already learn the meaning of 'side', they can quickly learn that all these words are associated with death. After this step, the teacher can reflect on the significance of the action plan by analyzing if the students ultimately find it easier to decipher the meanings of the vocabulary words through the 'root words method'. If the comprehension of the vocabulary words becomes more accessible through this technique, then the teacher can continue using this technique. If not, the teacher can implement a second action research cycle. Therefore, action research is one of the most preferred methods to reflect on teaching vocabulary and seek better ways of teaching vocabulary to accomplish the teaching-learning objectives in EFL classrooms. Hence, it can be said that "taking action is also at the heart of the action research movement where the aim is to bring about change. Given the caveats about reflective practice, it is important to make the implicit explicit" (Campbell & Norton, 2007, p. 143).

*Polysemy as a Technique for Teaching Vocabulary:* Polysemy means the same word can have different meanings in different contexts. In this case, the teachers must teach the art of deciphering the meaning of a word through its context. "For example, in English, people talk about the "head" of a pin, the head of a person or the head of an organization" (Workie & Feleke, 2020, p. 139). The same word, 'head', has three different meanings when used in three different contexts. Hence, the language teacher must ensure that students are flexible in learning the meanings of the vocabulary words. In any condition, the students must not think that vocabulary has only a fixed meaning. They should instead be exposed to a range of contextual differences in the usage of the vocabulary terms to develop the ability to distinguish between the meanings of the same vocabulary terms concerning their respective contexts.

*Visuals as a Strategy for Teaching Vocabulary:* One of the biggest problems while teaching vocabulary is that some terms about an action/a verb cannot be easily explained through verbal communication. In such cases, the teacher must reflect on improvising the pedagogical style and using pictures to teach the meaning of such vocabulary terms to the students. For instance, the students can easily understand the word 'ploughing' if the teacher explains it exclusively through verbal communication. Nevertheless, if the teacher shows a picture of 'ploughing' being done on a piece of land by the farmers, the students will instantly grasp the meaning of this vocabulary term. Hence, visuals often stimulate the students' cognition levels, enabling them to comprehend the lesser known words instantly, without an elaborate explanation of them.

*Bilingual Method of Teaching Vocabulary:* Of course, most language experts have often belittled the bilingual method of teaching English. Nevertheless, it can sometimes be used by the teacher in the EFL classrooms if the teacher comes across some very eccentric words while teaching. For instance, 'acquit' means 'to let someone be free of a criminal charge'. It is not very feasible to display a picture to explain the word 'acquit'. So, in such a case, the teacher can explain the meaning of this word and other such distinctive words in his native language. Usage of bilingualism in an optimum way shall allow language acquisition. Instead, it shall lead to a better understanding of the lesser known and the lesser heard terms, thereby enriching the student's vocabulary.

*Organizing the Physical Space for Explicit Vocabulary-Based Instruction:* The physical space of the EFL classrooms can have cues that shall stimulate the students' cognitive abilities towards acquiring vocabulary terms and phrases in the target language.

Materials posted in the classroom remind students of the critical content being stressed in the class and the strategies you want them to apply. This informative material can include (1) *word walls* listing the vocabulary terms introduced paired with a reminder of the context, such as a copy of the first page of the story.... (Harris & Graham, 2011, p. 112).

Therefore, the physical space in the EFL classrooms can play a significant role in making the students glance at the vocabulary words of the target language that are aimed to be learners. A recurrent cursory glance at those words shall pave the way for their permanent registering in the students' minds.

## VII. FINDINGS

Vocabulary is one of the most essential components in acquiring English as a foreign language. This is because vocabulary has a profound impact on other language skills, like reading skills, writing skills, and speaking skills. Thus, vocabulary does not function as an isolated entity but has an evident connection to other language skills. If students have a good command over vocabulary, they shall naturally be able to comprehend the written contents by considering the meaning of the vocabulary words. Techniques like using flashcards, dictionaries, and online supplementary materials can positively impact students' overall learning outcomes. This also provides motivation and a culture of working together in the classroom to achieve the command of the contextual use of language in real-life communication.

Additionally, these strategies can be improvised at any level in any classroom irrespective of the nature of the classroom, i.e. heterogeneous or homogeneous (Martinson et al., 2020). The results of the student's performance can be very evident in front of them, and the teacher can measure quickly to identify whether remedial or diagnostic means can be used or not. The findings also reveal that strategies and techniques used by a teacher can be replaced or changed if it is not working for their class. E-learning tools and other classroom activities can be used or improvised by a pedagogue to achieve maximum learning outcomes. Good vocabulary acquisition shall also empower the learners to refine their speaking skills as they shall be able to use the vocabulary they learned in their academic or professional conversations. Furthermore, proficiency in vocabulary shall also enable the students to write the required content in a more decorated manner, thereby elevating the quality of their written skills.

## VIII. DISCUSSION

Even though teaching and learning vocabulary is mandatory for enhancing the students' language skills, teachers and students in EFL classrooms often face many constraints. These obstructions include lack of retention of vocabulary, inability to grasp the contextual differences of various vocabulary terms, inability to use the vocabulary terms in practical conversations and written forms of expression, lack of interest in learning vocabulary, the vastness of vocabulary, etc. All such constraints ought to be overcome by the teacher in the class so that vocabulary-based content can be successfully delivered in the class. If students display little interest in the EFL class centred on vocabulary acquisition and development, it is the inevitable responsibility of the teacher to generate interest among the students in the class. The teacher can do so by introducing stimulating teaching aids like pictures, flashcards, videos/video tapes and so on; therefore, an element of newness is created in the classroom pedagogical procedures. This novelty shall serve as the stimuli of interest for the students, thereby making them voluntarily interested in learning vocabulary (Kildé, 2022). For slow learners of the class, the teacher must opt for remedial teaching like repetition. For students with minimal grasping power, the teacher can use contextualization in the classroom. When taught through contextual teaching, students feel free from the monotonous routine of memorizing new vocabulary terms. Instead, they are made to read interesting compositions like prose or poetry, through which the vocabulary terms are introduced and explained. Hence, all the techniques and strategies elaborated in this paper shall serve their role efficiently if employed in the class for teaching and learning vocabulary.

## IX. CONCLUSION

Vocabulary is multi-dimensional. Vocabulary is crucial for various dimensions of language like giving a poetic touch to the writing, enabling the students to figure out the connotative meaning of the written contents, training the students to speak with novelty, empowering the students to convey large chunks of information with brevity, and letting the students be proficient in understanding the complex vocabulary-based contents quickly, even by merely listening to them. In order to ensure that vocabulary becomes a part of the student's learning permanently and concretely, with longer retention, the teacher can do away with the traditional methods of teaching vocabulary by dictation method. The teacher can, instead, choose the proposed strategies and techniques mentioned in the paper to make the pedagogical style of teaching and learning vocabulary more exciting and a more enjoyable experience in the EFL classroom.

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# The Dilemma of Utilising the Present Perfect Tense in English Writing by Arab English Learners

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**Abstract**—This study diagnoses the challenges of foreign language learners in using the present perfect tense when writing in English. Most foreign language learners fail to correctly write sentences using the present perfect tense and substitute it with the past tense. The researchers suggest an instructional program based on steps for teachers to solve the problem of the present perfect tense. The study sample is twenty students in the seventh grade in one of the government schools for girls. The researchers asked the participants to write sentences using the present perfect tense. After analysing students' sentences, the researchers detected many incorrect cases of using of the present perfect tense and highlighted the incorrect usage for discussion. The results show that most errors stemmed from Arabic words interfering with English. The present perfect tense presents more significant challenges for Arab students than the simple past tense. The study showed that students' native language influences English grammatical structure use. These results have significant implications for how the mother language affects EFL classrooms. The results also reflect the students' misunderstanding of the meaning of the present perfect since they are unfamiliar with the function of the present tense. Finally, teachers are part of the problem because they follow the traditional grammar teaching method, which focuses on structure rather than function. The researchers suggest a series of recommendations based on the study's findings.

**Index Terms**—grammar, English tenses, present perfect tense, challenges, foreign language learners

## I. INTRODUCTION

Arabic and English have significantly different grammar since they are not related linguistically. There are grammatical aspects of English language that do not exist in Arabic. Therefore, Arab students struggle with these features, particularly with applying certain tenses and functions.

Grammar is essential to learning a foreign language, although it is one of the most complex parts of a foreign language to remember. The speakers of the same language spontaneously understand the grammar system and know its word sound meanings and sentence structure (Elturki, 2014). According to Muktesh (1980) and Parrot (2010), every language possesses its unique grammatical categories, as well as its unique structure and meaning. They added that the differences between the two languages are unquestionably the source of the issue that leads to Arab students misusing or failing to understand the use of the present perfect.

Because grammar governs the structure of clauses, phrases, and words in any language, it helps foreign language learners to comprehend how words and their parts build sentences. Also, understanding grammar can assist students in enhancing their analytical and critical thinking abilities and learning how language functions help them understand the nuances of meanings, place patterns, and link different ideas. Grammar enhances fluency, strengthens communication, helps students think logically, and improves verbal accuracy. These abilities are crucial for many other aspects of learning and language use.

Tenses are one of the most essential aspects of English grammar for EFL students to learn. Language proficiency can be gauged by having students correctly identify the tense they should use in each sentence (Jubran et al., 2023). Students need to be able to write in the appropriate tenses because of the correlation between grammar and sentence quality. When teaching English grammar to foreign language learners, teachers struggle as they face complicated obstacles in teaching some concepts, specifically when to use the present perfect. Compared to studying English in an English-speaking country, the challenges of learning English in a non-English-speaking country may be more substantial.

Jordanian students spend years studying grammar, yet they still struggle with the present perfect, providing students with many challenges. According to Jubran (2021), learners of English as a foreign language at any level struggle with the perfect component tense. So, to solve these challenges of using the present perfect tense, the researchers suggest a program consisting of steps to follow when using the present perfect and past tense forms.

Many Jordanian students at all education levels lack the skills to write fluently using the present perfect tense when composing English sentences. Foreign language learners consider these challenges significant roadblocks that hinder them from correctly forming a piece of writing.

Among English language learners at one of the Jordanian schools, the problem of the present perfect is perpetual since it is a standard error which students make. Most schoolteachers teach the present perfect theoretically by demonstrating the grammatical features of the present perfect tense using carefully selected and tailored examples. This method of teaching present perfect tense leads students to merely memorise the form of the tense only without being able to use it in the proper context. Even if students do well on a grammar test, that does not mean they can write coherent and error-free sentences.

Therefore, this study suggests some steps to solve this problem in order to assist students in overcoming their difficulties with using the Present Perfect tense in English. Hopefully, the result of this study will help schoolteachers of Basic Grammar to make some additional practices or exercises about the present perfect in their teaching and learning activity.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the attempt to learn a foreign language, one encounters many obstacles in grasping the target language quickly (BaSaeed, 2013). Syntactic, semantic, and phonological are part of these challenges, according to Mayor (2012). Yet, there are peculiarities in the grammar structure, tenses, adverbs, and the timing of speech that distinguish one language from another.

In grammatical terms, tense indicates when an action took place and allows learners to express whether an effort is completed, in progress, or the future tense. Noam Chomsky claims that natural speakers can employ their innate knowledge of grammar to construct sentences, yet acquiring a language requires cognitive processes since linguistic activity is something only humans have experienced. Tense is, thus, a crucial feature that EFL students need to master to become proficient writers and speakers. However, most students have a great deal of difficulty with the correct use of tenses. Teachers also report the problem of providing students with adequate guidance on this aspect of grammar. However, learning tense can be particularly challenging for those learning English as a foreign language.

However, present perfect tense difficulties are among the most noticeable obstacles to learning a foreign language (Matter, 2001). Arab students of English have a hard time employing the present perfect because it does not allow them to use a verb tense that is naturally harmonious with English. Educators and scholars agree that Arabic language students often substitute the simple past for the present perfect tense when learning English because of the difficulties in understanding the present perfect tense (Fromkin et al., 2007). As a result, harmful Arabic interference affects how well Arab students may learn English by prompting them to search for a tense equivalent in their native tongue. Arabic speakers learning English are likely accustomed to borrowing and adapting the form and function of Arabic into English due to the absence of the present perfect in Arabic. Hence, native language interference hinders English proficiency. As a result, learners frequently make awful mistakes because they rely excessively on their first language. In addition, Arab English learners at all levels make this error. Due to the differences in verb tenses between English and Arabic, Sabra (2020) believes that one of the main reasons for errors is the inappropriate use of the interference of the student's mother tongue.

Abi Samra (2003) asserts that English language presents a range of tenses, including perfect (past and present), simple (past and present), and progressive. They deduce that the substantial disparity between the two systems leads Arab students to substitute the simple past for the present perfect tense. On the other hand, Arabic distinguishes between two tenses: the perfect, which describes an activity in the past that has already occurred, and the imperfect, which represents an ongoing action at present or implies future occurrence. These aspects are not relevant to the duration of an endeavour but rather to its completion.

A common cause of mother-language interference is a failure to grasp the functional and semantic nuances of the present perfect tense (Cakir, 2011; Cowan, 2008; Parrot, 2010; Ryding, 2005). Huddleston and Pullum (2002) assert that Arab EFL speakers either avoid or incorrectly employ the present perfect tense in favour of the simpler simple past. They said students do not realise that the present perfect tense is a hybrid of the present and the past (Jabak, 2007). When students do not know how to use a grammatical characteristic, it is often because of the influence of their first language. Consequently, they cannot think of a good analogy for the idea, and even if they know how to utilise the present perfect tense, they often get it wrong. This avoidance is due to a familiarity gap between the simple past and the present perfect tense (Cakir, 2011; Harmer, 2007; Leech, 2002). Moreover, Wahyuningtyas and Bram (2018) claim that learners of English as a Foreign Language keep comparing English to their mother tongue as they learn English. Learners learn grammar faster and easier if it is like their mother language.

Students of Arabic will have a similar level of difficulty grasping English present perfect tense. This challenge arises because Arabic does not distinguish between completed past activities and completed past acts that relate to the simple present rather than the present perfect, as is used in English.

As a result, Arabic students learning English will substitute the simple past tense for the present perfect tense.

### A. *Related Studies*

The difficulties Arab students face when using the present perfect have been investigated and documented at length in several publications.

Misuse of the present perfect is due to several issues, including the influence of the mother tongue, a lack of perfect tenses in Arabic, the methods used in teaching grammar, and a failure to grasp the grammatical and semantic structures of the tense. Several researchers have investigated the characteristics that affect the frequency with which the usage of the present perfect.

When students of a foreign language encounter a structure they don't recognise and often draw parallels to something they already know from their native language. Albalawi (2016) studied the errors committed by students at Arab universities that can be linked to influence from the students' mother tongues when composing a piece of writing consisting of 200–250-word numbers. The findings of the investigations led the researchers to conclude that one of these mistakes was in the use of English tenses since Arabic got in the way when they were writing in English. Similarly, Jubran (2021) examined Jordanian female university students' errors in writing English paragraphs. The study found that employing English tenses was one of the problems that emerged while attempting to write in English because Arabic interfered with their ability to write in English. Likewise, Cakir (2011) in his study notes that native Turkish speakers' interference with English remains a problem for Turkish students.

Similarly, Almuhammadi (2020) demonstrated that EFL educators consider grammar a cornerstone of the English language teaching system. He adds that grammar plays a significant role in learning to use EFL correctly and accurately. However, he adds that teachers must develop relevant practical skills for teaching grammar effectively.

Along the same line, Sholeha et al. (2020) and Hazzaa (2021) in their studies concluded that the absence of the present perfect tense in specific languages, such as the Arabic language causes difficulties and limits foreign language learners to use it. They added that those learners used English tense according to their understanding of their mother language.

According to Atashian and Al-Bahri's (2018) research, the incorrect usage of the perfect tense is the most common error, specifically the ones related to the present perfect. The researchers concluded that Arabs learning English as a second language struggle with the perfect tense because it doesn't have a similar verb in Arabic. Instead, it is often confused with the past simple.

### *B. Significance of the Study*

This study is significant because it examines how students' first language affects their foreign language grammar. Students will improve their command of the present perfect tense by highlighting how crucial it is to identify and address core issues. For example, Jordanian students use the present perfect in a way that is not the norm. So, teachers of English as a second language of the Arab world learn about this knowledge gap, shed light on it, draw attention to its importance, and develop new ideas and ways to deal with the possible reasons why people use the present perfect and other tenses incorrectly. Also, the study provides teachers with an instructional program based on steps to help EFL learners perform better in English grammar.

## III. METHODOLOGY

The researchers used a descriptive method, and the data were students' initial sentences, which showed severe problems in utilising the present perfect during writing in English. According to Brog and Gall (1990) and Cohen et al. (2011), the descriptive method allows analysis and explanation and provides a complete and precise description. Moreover, the illustrative method allows the researchers to portray the statistical data through percentages displayed in different graphs.

The study sample comprised twenty female students in the seventh grade in one of the government schools in Jordan; all are native speakers of Arabic. All the participants were from the same age range (13-14) years old and had been studying English for at least seven years.

To diagnose the problem of the present perfect in Jordanian English writing, the researchers created an instrument consisting of a single question and statement, each incorporating present perfect adverbs (such as "already" and "so far"). The researchers give the instrument to the students to assist them in constructing their sentences. The aim of giving them the question and the statement was to check their initial knowledge of using the present perfect correctly in written production. The researchers used these sentences as the study's tool. The followings are the question and the statement:

-What have you already done to pursue your goal in life?

-Describe what you have accomplished so far to make your parents proud.

Then the researchers analysed the errors of students' sentences in using the present perfect tense as they produced them. The participants provided 100 sentences with many present perfect errors. As a second correction, one university professor read the sentences and agreed upon the first correction. A schoolteacher did the third correction and approved the standard errors from the three correction stages. To calculate the percentage, the researchers used a percentage calculator (*Percentage Calculator*, n.d.). The following are some of the common errors taken from students' mistakes.

I have help them in the garden.

I did my home chores already.

I have not skip school never.  
 I have not disrespect my teachers lately.  
 I am been honest always.  
 I just got high marks recently.  
 I helped my friend all the time.

As seen from the above sentences written by students at their initial level, they struggle with verbs that indicate time. They sometimes fail to employ an auxiliary to specify whether the activity is occurring now or in the past. Also, their sentences include errors in producing present perfect more than the simple past.

IV. RESULTS

After correcting the students' sentences, the correction results revealed that most participants (85%) had problems using the present perfect tense, whereas (15%) correctly produced correct present perfect sentences.

As seen from Table 1 that 85% of students from the whole sample produced the present perfect incorrectly. 15% only accomplished forming the correct present perfect sentences.

TABLE 1  
 PERCENTAGE OF CORRECT VS INCORRECT PRESENT PERFECT USAGE

Tense	Percentage
The incorrect present perfect tense	85%
correct present perfect	15%

Table 2 indicates that 67% of students did not utilise the adverbials associated with the present perfect tense (yet, ever, recently, never, already, lately, and just). In contrast, they used the adverbial of the current perfect properly rated (18%) only.

TABLE 2  
 PRESENT PERFECT USE WITHOUT/WITH ADVERBS

Tense	Percentage
Absence of present perfect adverbs	67%
Using present perfect adverbs	18%

Table 3 reveals that 75%, which formed the most significant percentage, of the participants replaced the simple past instead of present perfect, 15% used correct present perfect, and 10% used unknown tense.

TABLE 3  
 SIMPLE PAST AND OTHER TENSES INSTEAD OF PRESENT PERFECT

Tense	Percentage
Simple past replaces present perfect	75%
Proper present perfect	15%
Unknown tense	10%

Table 4 indicates that 75% of students used the incorrect form of participle verb when using the present perfect, and 70% of the participants substituted the past tense of the verb instead of the participle. On the other hand, 65% failed to use the auxiliary subject agreement when writing a present perfect tense.

TABLE 4  
 TYPES OF ERRORS IN FORMING THE PRESENT PERFECT

Type of errors	Percentage
Past participle of the verb	75%
Past tense of the verb instead of the participle	70%
Incorrect use of subject-auxiliary agreement	65%

V. DISCUSSION

English tenses can function independently or with other tenses and additional aspects. For instance, the present perfect tense combines the present tense as a verb with the perfect tense aspect. This tense is one of the hardest English verb tenses to understand because there is no precise translation or equivalence in other languages. Because of its grammatical complexity, richness of semantic qualities, and theoretical justifications, this merge of tenses and aspects creates significant challenges for Arab students. Regarding the Arabic language, the two main tenses are present and past, and there is no equivalence of the present perfect in the Arabic language. Although this tense does not exist in Arabic, students cannot avoid using it in English. The participants provided sentences with many incorrect uses of the present perfect tense. The nonexistence of the present perfect tense in Arabic explains the highest ratio in Table 1. Table 1 shows that 85% of the participants do not utilise the present perfect, yet the lowest percentage (15%) employed the present perfect correctly.

Unlike English, Arabic has only two basic tenses, so students use the past or the present instead of the present perfect because they rely on the common tenses in both languages (present and past). For example, one of the participants' examples of the present perfect *I have love my parents already*, and *I loved my school since I was in grade 2*. They replaced the simple past or present tense because they could not demonstrate the differences between their mother and English languages. Surprisingly, the students admit that the present perfect is the hardest tense to use in the appropriate situation.

The present perfect tense is difficult for Jordanian students to use correctly, and they frequently do so for various reasons. One of these reasons is that the Arabic language lacks a present perfect equivalent, so the mother tongue interferes with finding one from the Arabic language, which affects how well they learn the present perfect (Al-Jouhani, 2019; Cowen, 2008; Murad & Khalil, 2015). Thus, the strong influence of the mother tongue is the major contributor to the incorrect use of the present perfect. Hazzaa (2021) and Rizka (2017) confirmed that ESL students' usage of the past tense in their native language affects their ability to employ the present perfect tense in English correctly.

These results support the findings of the study of Sholeha et al. (2020), who stated that the absence of a perfect tense in specific languages creates difficulties for English language learners who are native speakers of these languages.

Another reason that could contribute to the problem of the present perfect is the confusion of understanding the meaning and function of the present perfect tense. Cakir (2011) and Parrot (2010) assert that Arab learners avoid the present perfect because they do not recognise that the present perfect connects past events with the present rather than a past or present tense. Jabak (2007) and Leech (2002) assert that due to this misunderstanding of the meaning of the present perfect, students fail to use the present perfect correctly and avoid using it consciously. Finally, teachers are part of the problem of using present perfect because they don't give students enough opportunities to practice the perfect tense. Unfortunately, present perfect tense is typically taught in schools theoretically, with teachers illustrating its grammatical qualities through carefully chosen and customised examples. As a result, Students who are taught the present perfect tense in this manner will acquire the form but not the context. Also, students' ability to compose coherent and error-free sentences may not reflect their performance on a standardised grammar test. According to Nassaji and Fotos (2004), language learners who employ the grammar-translation strategy cannot communicate effectively in the target language. They added that teachers tend to favour the grammar-translation strategy because it allows them to teach the grammatical rules quickly and provides ample opportunity for practice using drills. Also, most teachers direct their students to look for time signals to help them select the correct tense.

As documented from correcting students' initial level examples, most errors occurred in the present perfect tense. The remarkable and surprising observing error regarding the present perfect is the absence of using the present perfect adverbials. Table 2 shows that using the adverbial of the present perfect properly rated (18%) while (67%) of students did not employ the adverbials (already, lately, ever, never, just, recently, and yet) linked with present perfect tense. In the present perfect, these adverbs are usually used in sentences to show the regularity or continuance of an action or activity. Consequently, this leads the researchers to conclude that students are not proficient with the present perfect tense, often confuse it with other verb tenses, and do not rely on its adverbials. Surprisingly, they trace these adverbials when identifying the type of the sentences. Usually, they rely on these keywords, yet they cannot master and use them in writing. Learning the many different verb forms in English is another challenging language component. The verbs in English have various forms by changing the verb to present, past, or perfect or adding some auxiliaries, such as have, has, will, etc. The incorrect usage of verb tenses leads to inaccurate representations of events in a foreign language.

Another challenge of the present perfect derived from students' sentences is the substitution of the simple past simple past for the present perfect. Table 3 shows that 75% of the participants used the simple past over the present perfect, yet 15% employed the correct present perfect. Unfortunately, the rest of the participants 10% used unspecified tenses. Some students may get the past and present perfect tense mixed up since the concept of the past tense is the same in both Arabic and English and this mixed-up help in explaining why this happens.

However, the present perfect tense does not exist in Arabic, so this is why students stopped utilising the perfect tense and started using the past tense. Such unusual uses of the present perfect tense may be attributable to language transfer, and this emphasises the idea that the target language (English language) inherits some features from the mother tongue. The higher the dissimilarity between the languages, the more errors result. Similarly, the study by Bulut (2011) concluded that the Turkish language, like the Arabic language, does not have a present perfect or similar tense, so students tend to substitute the present perfect by using the simple past. Along the same line, the results of the study of Nozadze (2012) attributed the problem of the present perfect replacement to the first language interference and methods of instruction.

Even after years of studying English, most students still mishandle the present perfect tense. Teachers contribute to the problem by providing insufficient practice of the present perfect tense while explaining its structure only by providing them with drills. Similarly, based on the studies of Abu-Joudeh et al. (2013) and Al-Jouhani (2019), they concluded that the nonexistence of the present perfect tense in Arabic forced learners to use different functions to convey it. They added that their first language limited their ability to use the present perfect; furthermore, they concluded that the students could identify the tense though they could not use the correct form. In addition, the students found it challenging to choose the proper verb forms connected to the tense, such as whether to use simple, past, or past participle.

As shown in the above tables, the correct usage of the present tense does not go beyond 15%, which means that most participants suffer when using this tense. The present perfect tense is difficult for both instructors to teach and students to master. Students of EFL should know how to distinguish between the present perfect and the past tense.

After diagnosing the participants' problem of the tense under investigation, the researchers suggested an instructional guide consisting of five steps to aid teachers and students in overcoming this dilemma. The steps included in this guide are as follows:

#### A. Step One

The teacher explains the purpose of both tenses (simple past and present perfect) by writing their respective structures and functions on the whiteboard. Then, he provides numerous examples of the past tense and present-perfect to the students and writes the answers on the whiteboard. Writing these questions and the answers assists students in grasping the meaning and realising the difference in using the two tenses.

To help the students use the perfect tense and form, the researchers provide two videos of both tenses under investigation. The following are two videos on distinguishing between past and present perfect.

- Present Perfect vs Simple Past (Easy Rules in a Cartoon) (Logus, 2022).
- Present Perfect vs Past Simple | English Conversation About Life Experiences (English Panda, 2021).

#### B. Step Two

In this step, the teacher evokes students' examples. These examples are past events and events that started in the past and continued to the present.

To help the students, the teacher writes these questions on the whiteboard and the answers to use in the third step. Some examples of these questions are:

- How long have you lived in this city? Present perfect
- How long have you studied English Literature? Present perfect
- Who was your first friend at school? Simple past
- What did you eat yesterday? Simple past

#### C. Step Three

In this step, the teacher asks students to identify each sentence's subject and verb about the sentences in step two. Then the teacher asks the students to change the verbs and the topics to construct new sentences.

#### D. Step Four

Now, students are familiar with the function, form, and how to make sentences using simple past and present perfect and can differentiate between them. The teacher asks students in pairs to ask and answer questions using the two tenses. The following are examples of the student's answers:

Student 1: what did you eat yesterday?

Student 2: I ate an egg and bread.

Student 1: What other cities have you visited in Jordan?

Student 2: I have seen Jerash and Irbid.

#### E. Step Five

In the last step, the teacher gives the students a review worksheet on using simple past and present perfect tense. Then all participants must recorrect the sentences of their initial levels.

## VI. CONCLUSION

It is common knowledge that Arabic and English grammar are not entirely interchangeable. Students learning English as a second language will continue to make grammatical errors, particularly with tenses because this is part of the learning process. This study seeks to identify students' difficulties with using the present perfect tense by analysing their sentences. Students believe this tense is more challenging to grasp and employ in conversation than basic tenses. Since students rarely engage this tense in English writing, they struggle when called upon to do so and cannot utilise it or recognise when it is appropriate.

This difficulty is due to the nonexistence of this tense in Arabic, which increases the problem of applying the present perfect correctly in context. This error causes the mother tongue to intervene to find a comparable tense of the present perfect in Arabic through translation (Murad & Khalil, 2015). Since the past tense is the closest tense to the present perfect in Arabic, this interference and translation are seen as a barrier to learning it. As a result, misunderstanding the present perfect causes inappropriate usage in the proper context. Unfortunately, teachers are making this problem worse because they only give a few drills as practice for the present perfect when they explain how it works. However, teachers need to be aware of how to prevent students from repeating the same errors and how to offer them effective alternatives. Teachers must concentrate on the tenses, like the present perfect tense, that cause the most misunderstanding among their students to help them to get more comfortable with the tense form and application. Also, teachers might direct their attention to situations in which the tense is typically employed and provide a range of

exercises that integrate these abilities. According to Garrido and Romero (2012), the prevalence of errors in particular tenses shows that students require assistance correctly utilising tenses' properties. They recommend adding extra comparison tasks for tenses with the most similar qualities and objectives to assist students in appreciating the importance of the component.

However, students need to spend more time practising the most challenging things because the inadequate opportunity for practising the present perfect determines low achievement in grasping this tense. Moreover, they must put more effort into practising all tenses in oral and written forms and various contexts.

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# Call for Papers and Special Issue Proposals

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