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Primary Language Teacher Development in the Aftermath of Emergency Remote Teaching

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Abstract—During the months of the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers were obliged to switch to emergency remote teaching all over the world. While this distressing experience and its after-effects have been extensively researched in the past five years, relatively scant attention has been paid to foreign language teachers, especially those working in the primary grades of public education. This study is intended to occupy this niche with data supplied by a large sample of primary language teachers in Hungary. The research questions are aimed at identifying (a) the obstacles with which the respondents were confronted, and (b) the potentially beneficial carry-over effects of their newly acquired competences upon their return to the ‘real’ classroom. On the basis of questionnaire and metaphor data analyses, it turns out that the lockdown period negatively affected the respondents’ mental and emotional well-being. On a positive note, however, emergency remote teaching enhanced their professional development in general, and their familiarity with the technological advances available to foreign language education in particular.

Index Terms—primary education, emergency remote teaching, teacher well-being, continuing professional development, metaphors

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Emergency Remote Teaching

In the recent history of education, and language teaching in particular, one of the most fundamental changes was induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Beforehand, the use of digital tools in education was essentially considered as an add-on, mostly restricted to word processing, the presentation of software programmes and playing games (Moorhouse & Yan, 2023). Although new pedagogical models that required the use of digital innovations, such as game-based learning, blended learning or flipped classrooms, had been steadily gaining ground, their application was far from being widespread.

However, emergency remote teaching (ERT) created a situation in which replanning the curriculum and introducing digital technologies were urgently required (Jimoyiannis & Koukis, 2023). While ERT affected around 1.2 billion students worldwide (UNESCO, 2022), a significant segment of them had limited or no access to the internet and digital devices. The situation was made all the more dramatic since teachers in many parts of the world lacked the digital competences suddenly needed in their work, but even the more knowledgeable were caught off-guard (Hodges et al., 2020). It may be argued with a fair degree of confidence that ERT offered a gateway to the spread of cutting-edge digital technology in education.

B. Teacher Well-Being

In their struggle to integrate new technology into their daily practice, teachers were shouldering not only professional, but also emotional and physical burdens never experienced before. They became susceptible to an increased level of job-related stress (MacIntyre et al., 2020), which often led to emotional exhaustion, burnout and a palpable sense of underachievement (Mercer, 2021). In many schools, teachers’ plight was further aggravated by an unsupportive work environment and a lack of parental cooperation (Sulis et al., 2023). In short, their sense of well-being was severely damaged during this critical period.

C. Continuing Professional Development

Against all odds, many teachers have been reported to exhibit continuing professional development during ERT (Chen, 2023a). The ability to reflect upon their emotional ups and downs helped them overcome the hurdles facing them in their daily work (Trust & Whalen, 2021). The teachers in Gregersen and MacIntyre’s (2024) study, for example, remark that

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their positive attitude towards challenges mitigated the depressing feeling of performing below par. Furthermore, quite a few teachers were found to demonstrate their agency by using the digital affordances surfacing in the drastically new educational environment (Lee & Jeon, 2024). Some of them even suggested that this situation had offered them a golden opportunity for self-reflective professional learning through exploratory classroom practice (Hollweck & Doucet, 2020). ERT accelerated the pace of adaptation that teachers needed to go through caused by the educational reforms and the rapid development of digital technologies (de Costa & Norton, 2017; Jiang & Zhang, 2021).

In the face of the rapid progress of technology, formalised training opportunities for teachers are still few and far between (Moser et al., 2021; Wong et al., 2022). While Gkonou and Miller (2021) stress that decision makers should provide practice-oriented training with a focus on curriculum development, Keese et al. (2022) draw attention to the importance of a self-paced learning format of distance education.

By the time educators returned to face-to-face teaching, the scenario had been significantly transformed. Digital tools had become part and parcel of the daily routine as teachers had gained confidence in using them. Recent studies offer a fairly positive picture of the state of affairs, including teachers' learning curve (Chen, 2023b; Jiang & Zhang, 2021), professional development (Scully et al., 2021), attitude changes (Jimoyiannis & Koukis, 2023) and coping strategies (Gkonou & Miller, 2021; MacIntyre et al., 2020). One of the questions that calls for further investigation is the way in which teachers use technology once they are back in the 'real' classroom (Keese et al., 2022; Lee & Jeon, 2024). Exploring teachers' post-pandemic use of digital technology, Moorhouse (2023) points out that learning management systems, digital notice boards, interactive digital worksheets/quizzes and interactive presentation software have become embedded in teachers' regular classroom practice.

As shown above, the effects COVID-19 exerted on education have been the subject of intensive research activities since the outbreak of the pandemic. In the literature, while secondary education has taken the lion's share of investigations, primary has played only second fiddle (Nikolopoulou, 2022).

D. Metaphor Analysis as a Tool to Understand Teacher Attitudes

As conceptual representations of deeper thought metaphors are considered ideal vehicles for understanding the world around us (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). They are shaped by the context of lived experience, culture and communication (Gibbs; as cited in Ellis & Ibrahim, 2021). In addition, metaphors are imaginative, have generative power and are able to express the inexpressible through a process of reflection (Craig; as cited in García et al., 2022). In Cameron and Low's (1999) view, metaphors are cognitive phenomena expressing the interaction between the mental and the linguistic. Kövecses (2017) highlights the way metaphors express the abstract domain of experience in concrete terms. Craig (2017) contrasts stock metaphors (trivial, unreflexive) with novel ones (expressive, with imaginative and generative power). Forcevill (as cited in Ellis & Ibrahim, 2021) argues that metaphors can go beyond verbal expression and include visuals or multimodality.

Metaphor analysis is often used as a research tool in educational literature too by virtue of helping to understand educational phenomena and render teacher beliefs explicit (García et al., 2022). Furthermore, it strives to unearth the deeper impacts of teachers' attempts to respond, both professionally and emotionally, to the challenges faced by them (Johnston, 1992). The scope of metaphor research in language education includes research on language teaching (Oxford et al., 1998), curriculum theories and teacher beliefs (de Guerrero & Villamil, 2002; Oxford, 2001), language learning beliefs (Kramsch, 2003), public speaking anxiety (Gao & Tay, 2023) and even the language education of pre-primary children (Ellis & Ibrahim, 2021). For the reasons mentioned above, metaphor analysis has been chosen to be an important research tool for the present study, too.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Aims

In view of the dearth of relevant research on the primary school sector, the present study intends to contribute to redressing this imbalance by placing primary education in focus. More specifically, it surveys how foreign language teachers in Hungarian primary schools responded to the challenges imposed upon them by the pandemic and how their teaching attitudes and practices changed in the wake of the experiences they had acquired during the ERT period. This study is based on the hypothesis that on the whole teachers were successful in harnessing these new experiences upon their return to 'normalcy'. Forming part of a comprehensive survey, the current study presents only a small segment of the results elicited from a questionnaire and a set of follow-up interviews.

B. Research Questions

The present study seeks to answer the following questions:

What obstacles did the respondents have to overcome when they were suddenly forced to switch from face-to-face to emergency remote teaching?

What competences and skills did they carry over upon their return to face-to-face teaching?

C. Research Design

Out of the 39 items in the questionnaire, a total of six questions have been selected for discussion in this study. After

the responses given to four questions have been presented and assessed, the data derived from the other two questions pertaining to metaphor analysis are examined. The data from these different survey sources should sufficiently ensure adequate and valid answers to the research questions posed above.

D. Research Context

(a). Research Team

The three authors of the present study are members of the childhood digital language teaching research group. The group has been entrusted to manage a project within the framework of the Research Programme for Public Education Development (<https://mta.hu/kozoktatas-fejlesztési-kutatási-program>), launched and financed by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences since 2021.

(b). Participants

In 2022, the questionnaire was forwarded to all Hungarian primary schools (N=2,487). Participation was voluntary and the potential respondents were assured that their identities would not be disclosed. Responding to the appeal, 706 teachers sent back the completed questionnaires, but the sample should not be regarded as representative of the entire population of foreign language teachers in Hungarian primary schools. Around two thirds of the respondents were teachers of English (64.2%), one third taught German (34.1%) while the remaining 12 respondents (1.7%) specialised in French, Russian, Slovak or Romanian. With the exception of 22 respondents (2.8%), the overwhelming majority (97.2) were qualified language teachers. Teachers with a minimum of ten years of experience constituted around 72% of the respondents, leaving merely 28% for their less experienced colleagues.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Level of Preparedness

As shown in Figure 1, about two thirds of the respondents felt completely or rather unprepared for the challenges as they were thrown in at the deep end in March 2020. When asked to specify the problems they had had to grapple with, they complained about the shortage of digital devices, inadequate coverage and unstable access to the internet in their school. Families were often not much better off as indicated by the following quotation: 'I had to realise that most of my students did not own the equipment needed for online learning.' However, even where these gadgets and Wi-Fi connection were readily available, teachers had to undergo an intensive learning process to survive under the new teaching circumstances and then try to integrate the freshly acquired competences into their time-honoured methodological knowhow. A terse response by one of the respondents is indicative of the experience that many of them shared: 'I had to start shooting indiscriminately and thus try and keep afloat'.

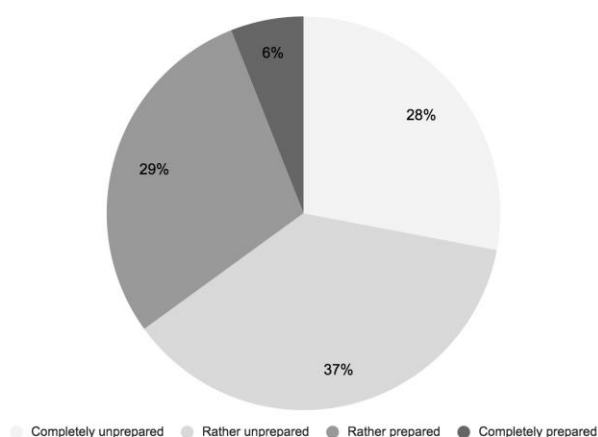


Figure 1. How Prepared for Teaching Online Were You at the Time of the School Lockdown?

B. Level of Anxiety

Not surprisingly, the data displayed in Figure 2 fit in nicely with those of Figure 1. Similarly, two thirds complained about a very high or high level of anxiety when compelled to suddenly leap from face-to-face teaching to ERT. After all, the more an individual constantly performs under par, the higher their level of anxiety is bound to rise. The following quotation was repeated almost word-for-word by several respondents: 'I was pretty much stressed because I had no idea how to achieve my educational goals.' Incidentally, a lack of digital skills combined with a nagging feeling of anguish is not unique to the Hungarian population; negative results during the ERT period have been reported in several other countries too, such as Austria (Kämpf–Winetzhammer, 2020), Croatia (Ivančan, 2022), Germany (Huber et al., 2020; Janßen et al., 2022), India (Hassan et al., 2020) and Italy (Ferri et al., 2020).

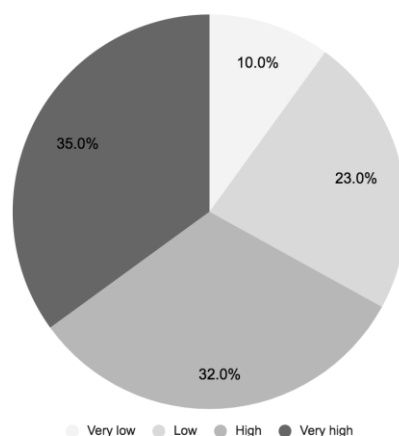


Figure 2. How High Was Your Level of Anxiety Because of the Sudden Switch to Online Education?

C. Level of Success

The answers given to this question reveal (Figure 3) that nearly two thirds of the respondents rated their work during the lockdown period as very successful or successful. One of them said that the best way to measure the outcome of her work is through the reaction of her learners: 'The children were looking forward to the German lessons and worked hard.' Another respondent admitted that 'fear from the unknown caused anxiety, but then it turned out that I was quite well-prepared.' To quote another one: 'We managed to pull out of the magic box competences that we had hardly ever used before.' In contrast, about one third of the respondents admitted that their work during the ERT period had been unsuccessful, and a small minority even viewed the online experience as an utter failure. The frustrated often attributed the fiasco to their inability to properly deliver the teaching material whilst noticing a slowdown in the children's learning progress.

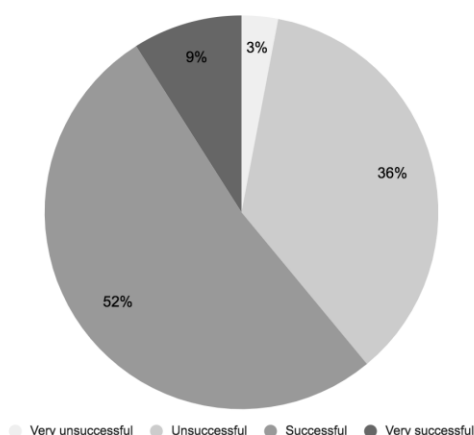


Figure 3. How Successful do You Judge Your Work During ERT?

D. Level of Professional Development

It was hypothesized that in spite of the hardships encountered, primary language teachers would regard the situation as an opportunity to revamp their methodological expertise and learn new tricks of trade. Indeed, this assumption was borne out by the data demonstrated in Figure 4: 73% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed. When asked to specify the positive professional gains produced by ERT, they claimed that parallel with the growth of their self-confidence they became less and less inhibited in trying their hand at state-of-the-art techniques. In addition to attaining digital competences, during the lockdown period they tended to resort to more authentic materials, conceive more creative tasks and give more challenging homework assignments than during the pre-Covid era. Many of them remarked that they kept using digital appliances and applications as they were back in the 'real' classroom, too. Some respondents pointed out that they had learnt how to adapt to children's dissimilar pace of progress while putting less emphasis on testing and pursuing a more learner-friendly approach. The fact that they were left on their own strengthened their belief in the need to cooperate with colleagues and learn from each other. The occasional in-service courses and webinars offered by professional organisations, publishing houses and language examination syndicates were also acknowledged.

It goes without saying that ERT imposed a heavy burden on teachers in general, but the plight of those who had to look after children with special needs or less supportive and capable families was particularly dire; this applied with particular force to teachers who were dealing with children in lower grades. In the final account, however, the overwhelming majority of the respondents reported finding large amounts of professional fulfilment once they had got accustomed to the exceptional circumstances.

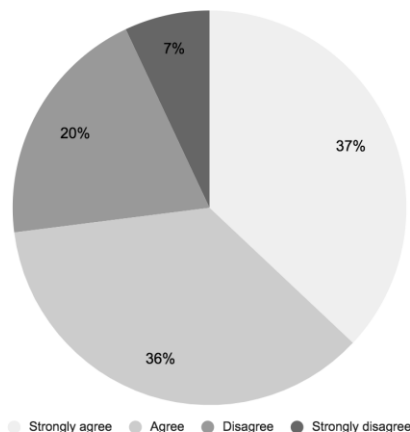


Figure 4. Did You Regard ERT as an Opportunity for Professional Development?

E. Metaphor Analysis

In the last two questions of the survey, the respondents were requested to supply metaphors to describe their experiences in the two periods under investigation. For the sake of clarification, they were also invited to add comments on their choice of metaphors. The ulterior motive for triggering metaphor use was to uncover their views that lay beneath their conscious zone.

The first item elicited metaphors to characterise the respondents' behaviour during the first wave of school closures in 2020 whereas the second one was aimed at inquiring about their impressions once they returned to 'normalcy' in 2022. The two triggers were formulated like this:

'At the beginning, online teaching was like a ..., because'

'By now, online teaching is like a ..., because'

For the two items respectively 499 and 478 metaphors were provided.

A combination of two research methods was applied to categorise the metaphors: 'Metaphor checking' (Armstrong et al., 2011) and 'Generalizing from the collected metaphors' (Cameron & Low, 1999). Metaphor checking was realised by dint of the respondents' explanations that generated emerging categories. This was followed by sorting the metaphors into ten labelled categories, which were further split into two subcategories: one that carried negative whilst the other positive connotations. In view of the large number of metaphors supplied, categorisation proved to be a useful method to enhance the process of analysis. Table 1 features the metaphor categories and the frequency of occurrences during ERT versus after ERT. In assessing the results, only the most frequently mentioned metaphors are scrutinised below.

TABLE I
METAPHOR CATEGORIES

METAPHOR CATEGORIES				
Metaphor categories	During ERT	Frequency	After ERT	Frequency
A. Autonomy				
Pressure, punishment, survival	45	50	20	28
Freedom, break, holiday	5		8	
B. Task or experience				
Work-related daunting task	32	59	29	63
Positive experience: adventure, fun, joy	27		34	
C. Novelty, professional development				
Negative attitude, rejection	4	20	6	102
Acceptance, alternative, new opportunity	16		96	
D. Upward and downward movement				
Depth, downward movement	40	46	2	15
Surface, height, upward movement	6		13	
E. System of colours				
Dark, black, misty	55	57	2	15
Light, colourful and transparent	2		13	
F. Unknown acquaintance				
Unknown, distant, frightful	57	57	5	34
Familiar, close, safe	0		29	
G. System, organisation				
Chaos	55	55	5	34
Order	0		29	
H. Feasibility:				
Mission impossible, unsolvable	31	31	8	125
Routine, natural	0		117	
I. Dream, story				
Nightmare, monster-like	98	102	27	36
Dream, memory	4		9	
J. Emotional impression				
Negative	22	22	6	26
Positive	0		20	
Total number of metaphors	499	499	478	478
Positive/negative distribution				
Number of negatives	439		110	
Number of positives	60		368	
Negatives in percentages	88		23	
Positives in percentages	12		77	

(Adapted From Arva et al., 2024)

In characterising the respondents' well-being during the ERT phase, Category I garnered the highest number of metaphors with a considerable preponderance of negative images. The frequent mention of 'nightmare' depicted the respondents' professional and emotional anguish caused by unfamiliarity with the methodology of online teaching, lack of digital appliances, inadequate support secured by the educational authorities, time pressure and their inability to deliver guidance to parents about how to cope with a situation wherein the teachers themselves would have needed guidance. On the other hand, negligible is the number of those who enjoyed having to work in an ERT mode in 2020; they appreciated that they did not 'need to travel to school and then back home' and the luxury of an effective way to discipline unruly kids: 'When someone misbehaved, I simply turned off their microphone and we carried on with the lesson'.

The runner-up in the frequency rank order is Category B that contains a roughly equal number of negative and positive metaphors. Those who felt that ERT was sheer suffering likened the experience to 'a hard nut to crack', 'a terrifying exam', 'an overloaded fast train' or 'a pain in the neck'. Those, on the other hand, who enjoyed teaching online came up with metaphors such as 'an adventure', 'a rollercoaster', 'smorgasbord', 'cakes on a bakery shelf', 'a beehive'. Perhaps the most visual metaphor refers to ERT as 'a cold shower which freshened me up from professional boredom'.

Occupying the third place in the during-ERT column, Category E comprises only negative metaphors with two exceptions. Needless to say, 'black' was the most frequently mentioned colour although 'misty purple' also expressed a gloomy state of mind. The comments to explain metaphor use are full of vivid descriptions of the respondents' hopeless attempts to deal with their difficulties during ERT. To quote a few instances:

'It was like wandering in a thick forest or jungle.'

'I felt like being locked in a hole with no exit in sight.'

'I walked down a dark corridor unable to find the light switch.'

'It was dark because I forgot to ask the children to turn on the light on their phones.'

This last quotation is suggestive of the missed opportunity to collaborate with the learners. On the other hand, the following remark hints at the potential of learning under pressure: 'This experience was like a discovery trip through the night.' There is only one reference to a light colour: 'In my wandering I saw a white board which was gradually filled up with content as a result of learning and routine'.

Speaking of the remaining seven categories, the negative-positive balance definitely tilts towards the negative. A short list of metaphors seems to verify this statement: 'leap into the unknown', 'dance with your legs tied', 'lack of order', 'jars knocked over', 'mixed salad', 'confusion of Babel', 'loss of autonomy', 'slavery'. A respondent likened the online classroom to 'an injured bird unable to fly', as opposed to the 'real' one where both teachers and learners could soar freely. Another respondent mentioned C-3PO and R2D2 from Star Wars as though the two characters were moulded together. Major concerns were voiced in the comments referring to 'lack of direction', 'no constructive feedback on our work', 'uncertain future', 'exhaustion', 'inadequate amount of non-verbal communication' and 'severe criticism from parents'.

Turning now to the after-ERT results, Category H takes the lead with a vast majority for positively charged metaphors. Even though online teaching was said to be a 'feasible alternative', most respondents found it easy to take up the daily routine once back in the 'real' classroom. Their relief was well reflected by the metaphors they created: 'a multiplication table', 'cycling', 'cooking', 'a comfortable dress', 'a spacious car', 'a cosy armchair', 'a well-oiled machine', 'a locomotive engine' and, perhaps most expressively, 'a cup of morning coffee'.

A similar dominance of positive metaphors is witnessed in silver medalist Category C. Except for one teacher, who said that online teaching looked like 'a deserted park better to be avoided', most respondents agreed that ERT had helped them acquire transferable skills, a view well represented by the metaphors they employed: 'a path waiting to be explored', 'a rucksack', 'a bottomless bag', 'a gold mine', 'a well-equipped kitchen', 'a huge building' and 'a secret lake'.

In third-placed Category B, the positive and negative metaphors are evenly distributed with the positive images slightly ahead, such as 'cakes', 'Paradise', 'games', 'rainbow', 'pyjama party', 'Netflix series' and 'marshmallow'. The adjectives 'sweet', 'colourful' and 'enjoyable' recall pleasant memories and reflect regained self-confidence. While quite a few respondents still considered online teaching 'a necessary evil', others preferred calling it a difficulty that could be transformed into an asset, such as the hardship of how to hold one's own in 'a sailing boat', 'an adventure park' or 'the gym' – once these skills have been learnt, they may offer sources of genuine pleasure.

To sum up the results shown in Table 1, during ERT negative connotations are in vast majority (88% versus 12%), whereas in the after-ERT phase a complete about-face in the respondents' metaphor use can be recorded (25% versus 75%). It cannot be stressed strongly enough that after the shock suffered in 2020 most of the respondents were gradually coming into their own by 2022, successfully integrating the newly acquired digital competences into their methodological knowhow.

IV. CONCLUSION

In order to be able to answer the two research questions, it is necessary to establish the extent to which the results of the four plus two survey questions (Questions 1–4 and Questions 5–6) interrelate and thus reinforce or weaken the validity of the survey results.

As pointed out in the previous sections, the ERT situation caught most of the respondents off guard. While online teaching before COVID-19 may well have been practised in the private and adult sectors, it was not at all common in the system of Hungarian public education. Since prior to the epidemic school teachers were not in a pressing need to harness digital elements in their classroom practice, their competence in this area was underdeveloped or even non-existent. Primary school teachers felt particularly vulnerable and because the switch to ERT was unexpected and rapid, many of them found themselves in a state of shock. As opportunities for professional training and support were slow in coming, the respondents reported suffering from a heightened sense of anxiety for months. The comments posted for the first four survey questions to describe the professional and emotional obstacles neatly overlap with the metaphors the respondents came up with during the ERT period.

On the credit side, both data sources indicate that the majority rose to the challenge and succeeded in adapting to the emergency situation, albeit with a bit of delay. Those who had a positive mindset not only recognised the opportunities that the digital world offered, but they were also willing to apply the newly acquired knowledge and skills with growing confidence. It is no exaggeration to assert that ERT effectively fostered the process of professional development.

In analysing the respondents' behaviour and well-being in 2022, a similar congruence between the two sets of questions may be observed. The survey data indicate that in a matter of two years attitudes towards the digital world underwent some kind of metamorphosis – a long overdue development. Thanks to the ERT experience, the respondents became better informed about the difference between going fully online and fitting certain digital elements into their daily routine. Perhaps even more importantly, alongside their teachers, the students also grew accustomed to the presence of digital tools in the classroom – and beyond. Even though a few respondents gave voice to their reservations about the suitability of digital tools in primary education and alerted to the dangers that their overuse might present, ERT pushed everyone to leave their comfort zone and revise their stock of outdated techniques. In sum, the aggregate data produced by the comparative analysis appears to be sufficient to give reliable and valid answers to the two research questions.

However, there are two issues that this study decided not to address. The first one is whether primary schools in Hungary – or anywhere else, for that matter – have become better equipped with all the paraphernalia demanded in the post-Covid age. The other concern has to do with teacher preparation. Have teacher training institutions at both pre-service and in-service levels built into their curriculum what the rapid advancement of technology requires from both teachers and learners? These are questions waiting to be answered by future research.

To conclude, the findings of the present study essentially coincide with those of the research conducted in several other countries. However, an area in which this survey may be considered unique is that it targeted foreign language teachers in primary schools, a segment of the educational hierarchy in which ERT and its after-effects had hardly ever been investigated before the pandemic. It goes without saying that COVID-19 had catastrophic consequences for millions of people all over the world – it is small comfort that, paradoxically, it helped teachers to catch up with the rapid progress of technology and thereby to upgrade and enrich their professional expertise.

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Examining the Effects of Presentation–Practice–Production and Task-Based Language Teaching on Speaking Proficiency of EFL Learners

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Abstract—Recently, task-based language teaching (TBLT), like many other pedagogical innovations, has been widely adopted and implemented in numerous language classrooms across Japan. However, in actual classrooms, many teachers still use drills and exercises or rely on the presentation–practice–production (PPP) framework to prevent the “fossilization of students errors”. This study aims to compare the effectiveness of PPP and TBLT approaches in Japanese EFL-speaking classes, focusing on accuracy and fluency development. The participants were Japanese EFL students, both male and female, with an average age of 20. They were randomly assigned to the PPP and TBLT groups. Evaluation of learners’ completion of the speaking pretest, immediate posttest, and delayed posttest activities in both groups revealed that both approaches had an impact on both immediate and long-term results (one week). In particular, TBLT lessons appeared to be more effective than PPP lessons in improving learners’ fluency. However, students in the PPP group outperformed those in the TBLT group in terms of accuracy on both the immediate and delayed posttests.

Index Terms—presentation–practice–production, task-based language teaching, accuracy, fluency

I. INTRODUCTION

Japan’s Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) launched the “Japan Vision 2020” initiative in 2013, emphasizing the urgent need to develop globally competent individuals with strong language and communication skills (MEXT, 2013). As part of this vision, English education in Japan aims to achieve a balanced development of the four language skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. However, despite years of English instruction, many Japanese students continue to struggle with basic communicative abilities, particularly in oral proficiency. This persistent challenge has led to ongoing discussions on effective pedagogical approaches that better support English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Japan.

Some researchers (e.g., O’Donnell, 2005) attribute this to the heavy reliance on the grammar-translation method in classrooms. Thus, in response to traditional approaches, communicative language teaching (CLT), also known as the communicative approach, has recently gained popularity among Japanese EFL teachers. These approaches, such as Content-based instruction and task-based language teaching (TBLT), are thought effective in enhancing students’ oral competencies. However, in actual classrooms, many teachers still adopt drills and exercises or rely on the presentation–practice–production (PPP) framework to prevent the “fossilization of students’ errors”. This reliance on established methods, despite the push for more communicative approaches, suggests a potential gap between theory and practice in Japanese EFL education. This gap highlights the need for further research that examines the practical effectiveness of different methodologies in real classroom settings.

Second language acquisition (SLA) research highlights that language learning is a developmental process that cannot be entirely controlled or predicted by teachers (Corder, 1967). To create optimal learning conditions, educators must understand how learners naturally acquire language. This study aims to address this issue by empirically comparing the effects of PPP and TBLT on Japanese EFL learners’ speaking performance. By analyzing accuracy and fluency outcomes through posttests and delayed posttests, this research seeks to determine which approach fosters more effective language acquisition in both the short and long term.

The findings of this study offer new insights into the efficacy of instructional methods in Japanese EFL classrooms, contributing to the ongoing discourse on bridging the gap between policy-driven recommendations and classroom realities. By providing empirical evidence on how different methodologies impact learners’ oral proficiency, this research has significant implications for improving English language education in Japan. Furthermore, this study builds on recent advancements in SLA and language pedagogy, reinforcing the need for evidence-based teaching strategies that align with the natural process of language acquisition.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. History of Language Instruction

Throughout history, educators have employed various approaches and methods to teach English. Each method was used for a certain period and then replaced by newer approaches. These diverse approaches have ranged from grammar-translation methods, which emphasized explicit grammar rules and translation exercises, to more communicative approaches that prioritize authentic language use and interaction. Other notable approaches include the direct method and the audio-lingual method, each with its own set of principles and techniques. Each approach had different focuses and purposes but shared the same goal: to help language learners achieve better proficiency in their second language (L2). Before focusing on the TBLT and PPP approaches, reviewing the important historical background of language instruction is essential (Gass, 2013; Celce-Murcia et al., 2014; Yule, 2014; Long, 1991; Long & Robinson, 1998).

B. Grammar Translation Method

Grammar translation has long dominated the SLA field. Grammar was viewed as the primary focus in L2 teaching in this method. The mastery of grammar structures was the main task, and its goal was to help students read the classics, translate from L1 to the target language, and pass standardized examinations. L2 learning is not designed to nurture students who can use language for communication.

C. Reform Approach

As a reaction to grammar translation, the reform approach was adopted. The teachers' focus was on phonetics. Phonetic training and oral language fluency were emphasized. Teachers taught students phonetics, and learners were expected to establish good speech habits through phonetic training.

D. Direct Method

Unlike the grammar translation method, in which communication was not important, another reaction called the direct method gained popularity. This approach focuses on speaking and listening. Educators believed that an L2 could be acquired in the same way as an L1. They stated that a language could best be taught using it actively in class, so they replaced textbooks in the early stages of learning.

E. Reading Approach

The decline in reading scores among students prompted the adoption of the reading approach. To select the language context, educators preferred a scientific and quantifiable approach in language classes. They argued that focusing solely on speech without a principled selection of content was not effective. Translation is once again a respectable classroom procedure, and reading comprehension is the only language skill that emphasized.

F. Audiolingualism

Several developments have led to the introduction of a new approach called audiolingualism. This approach focused on learning grammatical and phonological structures and prioritizing speaking and listening skills. The theory underlying audiolingualism is structural linguistics, in which language is viewed as a set of structures. Mimicry and memorization of dialogs are emphasized by assuming that language learning involves the formation and performance of habits.

G. Communicative Approach

Communicative Language Teaching has become popular in recent decades. This approach recognizes the teaching of communicative competence as its aims. Advocates of this approach focus on authentic language use in L2 classroom. Their interest is in communication and fluency, and discourse level functions rather than sentence level forms. Teachers view language as a meaning-based system for communication. The goal of language teaching is thought to be the learners' ability to communicate in the target language. Content-based instruction and TBLT are included in this approach.

H. TBLT Approach

TBLT emphasizes engaging learners in authentic, meaningful tasks that mirror real-world language use. According to recent research, TBLT involves learners completing purposeful, problem-oriented, and outcome-driven tasks that promote both linguistic and communicative competence (Mudinillah et al., 2024). These tasks are designed to prioritize meaning, present a communication problem to solve, relate to real-world activities, emphasize task completion, and assess performance based on outcomes (Ellis et al., 2019). This approach contrasts with traditional methods by focusing on the practical use of language in context, thereby facilitating more effective language acquisition.

TBLT focuses on the ability to perform such tasks or activities without explicit teaching about grammatical structures or forms. The primary aim is the creative and spontaneous use of language in meaningful tasks. Thus, TBLT teachers believe that learners learn the language by using it. The belief behind this approach is Long's interaction hypothesis conversational interaction facilitates language acquisition because it connects input (what learners hear and read);

internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention; and output (what learners produce) in productive ways (Long, 1996, pp. 451–452). We consider TBLT to be a typical student-centered approach.

I. Presentation–Practice–Production Approach

Unlike TBLT, PPP is often categorized in a traditional, teacher- or textbook-centered. In PPP, language learning is presented in stages: presentation, practice, and production.

According to Ellis et al. (2019), the presentation stage helps learners to “acquire” new linguistic knowledge or restructure knowledge that has been wrongly “represented.” In other words, the students’ interlanguage is believed to develop as new/appropriate input is explained to them at this stage. According to Skehan (1998), through this method, learners learn effectively in order.

In the PPP approach, the practice stage is divided into two stages: controlled and free. In the controlled practice section, students repeat the target items or forms presented earlier without thinking about when to use them. Gap filling or drilling of the target items exists. In contrast, in freer practice, students are expected to decide how and when to use the items and manipulate them when necessary. At this stage, students are believed to understand a form or item but require further practice. In the production stage, students are expected to be able to decide when and how to use items/forms that have been “learned” through communicative tasks such as role-play. Students are expected to acquire the language during this stage by using it in a natural context or activity. Recent studies have continued to explore the PPP approach in language teaching. For instance, Lakuana and Siojam (2020) found that applying the PPP in English classrooms helped students effectively perform free production activities.

J. TBLT Versus PPP

Some linguists have conducted interesting investigations comparing PPP and TBLT. For example, De la Fuente (2006) conducted research on vocabulary acquisition in Spanish learners by investigating the effects of three vocabulary lessons (one traditional PPP and two TBLT) on the acquisition of basic meaning, forms, and morphological aspects of Spanish words. The pedagogical approach employed did not influence immediate recall of the target vocabulary; however, it did have an effect on long-term retention. The study suggests that TBLT lessons can positively affect the long-time recall of vocabulary items for L2 learners.

Recent research has further explored the relative effectiveness of PPP and TBLT methodologies. Li (2020) examined the ongoing discussion surrounding these two approaches, emphasizing their respective advantages and drawbacks. The findings indicate that PPP provides a structured framework that supports exam preparation, whereas TBLT fosters authentic language use, making it more suitable for real-world communication. The study ultimately suggests that both methods offer valuable benefits, and instructors should select the approach that best aligns with their specific instructional goals.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Question

Building on previous studies, the current study investigates and compares the effectiveness of the PPP and TBLT approaches in Japanese EFL-speaking classes, focusing on accuracy and fluency development. The research addresses the following questions:

RQ1: Do PPP and TBLT approaches show any effectiveness in the context of EFL speaking?

RQ2: Do differences exist in accuracy and fluency between PPP- and TBLT-instructed students?

B. Participants

The participants in this study were 37 second-year (aged 19–21) Japanese EFL students from a private Japanese college. They were assigned to two groups—TBLT and PPP—based on their TOEIC L&R scores. The selection of participants was determined by class availability, and while the sample size was limited, it aligns with previous studies examining pedagogical interventions in similar EFL contexts (e.g., De la Fuente, 2006).

To ensure comparability, both groups consisted of A2 (CEFR) level students, with their English proficiency measured through TOEIC scores:

TBLT group: 19 students, TOEIC mean score of 499

PPP group: 18 students, TOEIC mean score of 366

Although the sample size is relatively small, the study aims to provide insights into instructional effectiveness and contribute to discussions on language pedagogy in Japanese EFL classrooms.

In terms of their learning background, all students have a similar educational history: they studied English for six years in junior high and high school, primarily using the grammar translation method and audiolingualism.

C. Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected during the second week of an eight-week course aimed at improving students’ speaking skills. The textbook, *Hajimete-no TOEIC Speaking*, was provided by the school, and both groups were taught by the same instructor to ensure consistency in instructional delivery. The lesson focused on Section 2, “Describing a Picture.” The

pretest was administered at the beginning of the class, where students completed a speaking task using a photo from the textbook. The teacher then conducted the lesson following either the PPP or TBLT approach. At the end of the lesson, students performed the same speaking task as a posttest. A delayed posttest was conducted one week later, using the same picture to assess retention. All tests were conducted on the same day to maintain uniformity in conditions. Additionally, as all students followed a fixed curriculum for their first-year studies, their exposure to English outside of class was expected to be relatively uniform, minimizing potential external influences on the results.

PPP group

Pretest (10 minutes) → PPP lesson (60 minutes) → Posttest (10 minutes) → Delayed Posttest (10 minutes/one week after the immediate posttest)

TBLT group

Pretest (10 minutes) → TBLT lesson (60 minutes) → Posttest (10 minutes) → Delayed Posttest (10 minutes/one week after the immediate posttest)

<Speaking test>

The students were shown a picture and asked to describe it in as much detail as possible. They had 30 seconds to prepare their responses and 45 seconds to speak about the picture. After recording, all data were transcribed and analyzed by the author. Since the coding and rating were conducted solely by the author, inter-rater reliability was not applicable in this study.

<Lesson Procedure>

Both classes were conducted by the author, and the same section was used but through different methods.

●PPP

Stage 1: Pretest

Stage 2: Lesson

Presentation (20 minutes)

Explanation of the picture description section. The teacher explained the speech outline and effective structure. Introduce grammar functions, new vocabulary/phrases, and their usages. Introduce useful expressions that students can use in this section.

Practice (20 minutes)

Use several photos and presenting model narrations for each photo. Students repeat each sentence and read aloud. After the look-up practice, the students memorize the model narration.

Production (20 minutes)

The students were presented with a new set of photos and asked to describe them within 45 seconds. After the output, they listened to model answers for each photo.

Stage 3: Posttest

Immediately after the lesson, the students took the same speaking test as in Stage 1.

Stage 4: delayed-posttest

One week after the lesson, the students took the same speaking test as in Stage 1.

●TBLT

Stage 1: Pretest

Stage 2: Lesson

Task 1 (20 minutes)

The students were presented with a photo. They brainstormed vocabulary items in pairs. The students made a speech (describing a photo) for 45 seconds (recorded), listened to their speech, and wrote it down. The students, as a pair, studied their own speech, and afterward, they listened to a sample speech. As they listened, they wrote and compared the sample with their own. After studying the sample answer, the participants (in pairs) discussed over their speeches and update if necessary.

Task 2 (20 minutes)

Team Competition Task: The students are divided into 4–5 groups. Two students (representatives) from each group approached the teacher and see the photo for 30 seconds. After studying the photo, they returned to their own group and described as much detail as possible. By listening to two representatives describe a photo, other members of the group drew a picture. After completing the picture, it was posted on the blackboard, and the teacher decides the team that drew the picture most accurately.

Task 3 (20 minutes)

Story retelling: Work on the same groups. One representative approached to the teacher, observed a photo, and listened to the model narration. After listening to the model, the student retells it to the next student, and the next student retells it to the next person. The final member of each group comes in front of the class and does the narration according to whatever he/she hears.

Stage 3: Posttest

Immediately after the lesson, the students took the same speaking test as in Stage 1.

Stage 4: delayed-posttest

One week after the lesson, the students took the same speaking test as in Stage 1.

D. Data Analysis

1. Fluency

The total number of words produced by each student for each test was counted as an indicator of overall fluency. Throughout the coding process, filled pauses such as “uh” or “er”, repetitions, and false starts are neither treated as errors nor counted as words.

2. Accuracy

To measure students' accuracy, we examined an error-free T-unit /total T-unit ratio. In this study, errors in the use of articles and third person singular are not counted as errors. A T-unit is an independent clause, or according to Hunt (1965, p.20), it is “one main clause with all subordinate clauses attached to it.” For example, “I bought a book but it was a wrong one.” is counted as two T-units, but “I brought a book whose title was Blue Moon.” is counted as one T-unit.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 shows the fluency mean scores of each class in the pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest. Both groups had improved fluency scores. As for the mean score, both were about the same in the pretest: TBLT M = 24.28 (SD = 5.9), PPP M = 24.72 (SD = 9.62). However, the TBLT class scored higher than the PPP class in the posttest: TBLT M = 61.32 (SD = 11.49), PPP M = 55.56 (SD = 11.97). As for the TBLT class, the mean score dropped by only 3.67 in the delayed posttest, whereas that of the PPP class dropped by 14.62: TBLT M = 57.65 (SD = 9.40), PPP M = 40.94 (SD = 10.43).

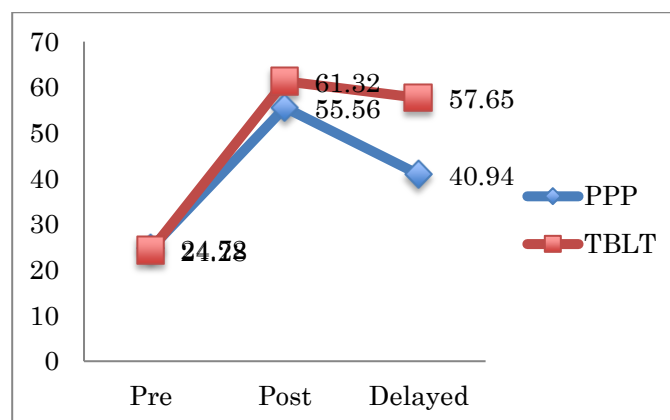


Figure 1. Fluency Mean Score for Each Class

Figure 2 shows the accuracy mean scores of each class in the pretest, posttest, and delayed posttest. Both groups also showed improved accuracy mean scores: TBLT Pre M = 0.67 (SD = 0.28)–Post M = 0.91 (SD = 0.09)–Delayed M = 0.81 (SD = 0.21), PPP Pre M = 0.6 (SD = 0.31)–Post M = 0.96 (SD = 0.13)–Delayed M = 0.92 (SD = 0.13). As for the mean score, the PPP class scored slightly higher and retained better than the TBLT class.

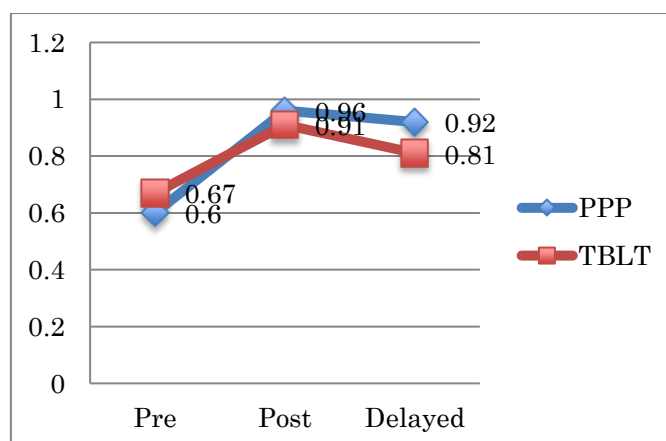


Figure 2. Accuracy Mean Score for Each Class

The first research question in this study was Do the PPP and TBLT approaches demonstrate any effectiveness in EFL-speaking contexts? The findings indicate that both the PPP and TBLT approaches had observable effects on speaking accuracy and proficiency skills. In large classes, improving speaking accuracy and fluency can be challenging. However, the results showed that both approaches proved to be effective to some extent. The delayed posttest was conducted only one week after the treatment. Thus, further studies are needed to examine the long-term retention of

accuracy and fluency. This short timeframe for the delayed posttest is a limitation of the current study, and future research should consider longer intervals, such as several weeks or even months, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of retention. Additionally, future studies could explore the impact of other factors on retention, such as learner motivation, learning styles, and the amount of exposure to English outside the classroom.

The second research question was Do differences exist in accuracy and fluency between PPP- and TBLT-instructed students? The findings revealed differences in both achievement and retention between the TBLT and PPP classes. While the PPP group demonstrated greater accuracy in speaking in both short-term and long-term assessments, the TBLT group showed improved accuracy in the immediate posttest but experienced decreased accuracy over the long term. The use of TBLT might have resulted in less focus on accuracy. However, if students notice and address form-related issues during task completion, they may mitigate this lack of attention to accuracy. Addressing this issue may involve providing explicit explanations about the necessity of accuracy or incorporating planned or prompted focus on form. Many researchers, including Nunan (2004) and Skehan (2003), suggest that in communicative approaches like TBLT, students are unlikely to develop high-level L2 skills if they do not pay attention to forms while completing tasks. This focus on form can be integrated in various ways, such as through pre-task planning activities that encourage learners to consider grammatical structures or through post-task feedback sessions that address errors and provide corrective input. Additionally, incorporating explicit grammar instruction alongside TBLT activities could be another effective strategy. It is also important to consider the type of tasks used in TBLT, as some tasks may naturally lend themselves to a greater focus on form than others. For example, tasks that require precise language use, such as giving instructions or making formal presentations, may encourage learners to pay more attention to accuracy.

Notably, the findings demonstrated that TBLT positively affected learners' fluency both in the short-term and long term. In this study, the total number of words produced by students was used to gauge fluency; thus, a higher word count indicated better fluency skills. Nevertheless, the lower fluency rate in the PPP class might stem from students focusing too much on accuracy. This trade-off between accuracy and fluency is a well-documented phenomenon in SLA research. Learners often prioritize one over the other, depending on the task demands and their individual learning styles. Further research could explore how learners' perceptions of accuracy and fluency influence their performance in different pedagogical contexts.

Overall, the results suggest that learners in the PPP approach tend to focus more on accuracy, which may hinder fluency development. In contrast, learners in the TBLT approach showed greater improvement in fluency but struggled with maintaining accuracy. As Takashima (2005) noted, while the communicative approach effectively improves language competency, in environments with limited L2 input, alternative methods are necessary to enhance students' accuracy levels. For example, rather than entirely abandoning the PPP approach in favor of task-based teaching, integrating PPP elements within the TBLT framework could be a viable solution. Alternatively, modifying TBLT to incorporate focused attention on specific features or forms during tasks may also be effective.

V. CONCLUSION

One of the ultimate goals of SLA research is to understand how learners' skills develop through various activities or approaches. In other words, SLA researchers and language teachers must investigate how teachers' interventions in learners' inner syllabi affect their learning processes. This study compared the efficiency of PPP and TBLT approaches in Japanese EFL-speaking classes in terms of accuracy and fluency development. The overall findings are as follows: (a) The PPP approach effectively improves learners' accuracy, and (b) The TBLT approach effectively enhances learners' fluency. These findings suggest that PPP may be more beneficial for initial stages of learning where accuracy is paramount, while TBLT may be more suitable for later stages when fluency and communicative competence are emphasized.

While the PPP approach tends to encourage learners to focus on accuracy, if the focus is on improving learners' fluency, teachers should consider implementing TBLT lessons. These findings have important implications for EFL instruction, particularly in contexts like Japan, where learners often have limited opportunities for authentic communication outside the classroom. The present study suggests that a balanced approach, incorporating elements of both PPP and TBLT, might be most effective in promoting both accuracy and fluency. For instance, teachers could use PPP activities to establish a solid foundation in grammatical structures and then transition to TBLT tasks to encourage more fluent and spontaneous language use.

While this study provides insights into the effectiveness of PPP and TBLT in EFL speaking instruction, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The sample size of 37 participants is relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, although efforts were made to control external variables—such as ensuring the same instructor taught both groups and administering the tests on the same day—factors like individual differences in motivation and extracurricular exposure to English could still have influenced the results. Future research with a larger sample size and additional measures to track learners' exposure to English outside of the classroom would be beneficial in strengthening the validity of these findings.

To further investigate the differential effects of PPP and TBLT on learner development, future research could focus on several key areas. Firstly, longitudinal studies are crucial to examine the long-term effects of these approaches on accuracy and fluency retention, and how these effects might vary across different learner groups (e.g., beginners vs.

intermediate). Secondly, investigating the impact of different task sequences within the TBLT framework, such as output-first approaches, on learners' complexity, accuracy, and fluency development will provide valuable insights into the nuances of this approach. Finally, exploring learners' perceptions and attitudes towards these different approaches is essential, as learner motivation and engagement play a critical role in language acquisition. This research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how different teaching approaches impact language learning and inform more effective instructional practices in diverse learning contexts.

APPENDIX

List of Abbreviations

CLT: Communicative language teaching

SLA: Second language acquisition

TBLT: Task-based language teaching

PPP: Presentation–practice–production

EFL: English as a foreign language

TOEIC: Test of English for International Communication

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A Study of Speaking Anxiety in the English Presentations of Chinese Non-English Major Postgraduates With a Special Focus on the Case of Stutterers

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Abstract—As knowledge of speaking anxiety associated with English presentation, an activity common to Chinese postgraduate students, and how it is perceived by stuttering students, remains inadequate, this study aims to explore the causes, effects and solutions of speaking anxiety in presentations of Chinese postgraduate students and the different perspectives of stutterers on speaking anxiety. Using a qualitative approach, this study interviewed twelve Chinese postgraduate students, two of whom suffer from stuttering. The findings are that the causes of speaking anxiety in non-stuttering participants are mainly features of learners, interpersonal connections, language challenges, background of learners and character of the presentation, and the impact is primarily on presentation performance. Coping strategies are student preparation, positive thinking and seeking the support of peers. Participants who stutter differ from those who do not stutter in that the main causes of anxiety are pronunciation disorders and fear of negative evaluation, and the effect of anxiety is exacerbation of stuttering. Their coping strategies are preparation of practice in order not to stutter and positive thoughts of pretending that they do not stutter. Future research could delve into the difficulties encountered by non-stuttering and stuttering learners in foreign language learning from cognitive and neurological perspectives.

Index Terms—foreign language speaking anxiety, Chinese postgraduate, presentation, stutter

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Research

General foreign language anxiety is common for students (Marwan, 2016; Tsiplakides & Keramida, 2009). Among foreign language anxiety in general, speaking in particular is one of the most anxiety-provoking skills in foreign language learning (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014; Luo, 2014) as students need to process language input and generate their ideas at the same time and oral practice activities might be challenging and frustrating to the process of learning (Alnahidh & Altalhab, 2020). Little research has focused on Chinese postgraduate students' speaking anxiety during presentations. Although communicative language teaching (CLT) has been introduced to China since early 1990s (Liao, 2000), there have been challenges in its application, such as students being more comfortable attending lectures on reading and grammar and taking regular exams, and CLT not being able to adapt to textbooks that focus more on grammar, reading and writing (Rao, 2013). As a result, most of the postgraduate students' previous English classes have focused less on speaking skills, which resulted in their insufficient speaking skills and experience in presentation. Presentations are commonly used in English classes at the postgraduate level, therefore speaking anxiety in presentations needs to be investigated.

The foreign language learning anxiety of learners with stuttering, a disorder that accounts for 0.72 percent (Craig et al., 2002) of the population, has rarely been studied. Much research has been conducted on the anxiety of people who stutter in their L1, revealing the negative effects of anxiety associated with stuttering in terms of schooling, sociability and psychology (Klompas & Ross, 2004; Hugh-Jones & Smith, 1999; Blumgart et al., 2014). García-Pastor and Miller's (2019) study which was inclusive of foreign language learning anxiety in stuttering learners found that stutterers had higher anxiety than non-stutterers on the skill of speaking. However, few studies have investigated foreign language speaking anxiety in stuttering learners during presentations.

B. Aim of the Research

The aim of this dissertation is to explore the speaking anxiety of Chinese postgraduate students in their presentations by examining the causes, effects and coping strategies in order to better understand the constraints on postgraduate students' speaking learning. In addition, the research also focuses on foreign language learning anxiety among stuttering

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learners, with the intention of helping them to learn better, and enhancing people's awareness and understanding of stuttering learners. Therefore, the research questions are:

- (1) What are the effects, causes and coping methods for speaking anxieties in giving presentations for non-English major postgraduate students in China?
- (2) Do the stutterers in the group experience language anxiety differently?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Foreign Language Anxiety

(a). *The Meaning of Foreign Language Anxiety*

Anxiety is defined by Rachman (2004, p. 3) as 'a tense unsettling anticipation of a threatening but formless event'. Anxiety is a negative emotion that can take the form of a variety of disturbing psychological states such as fear, nervousness, and exhilaration. Among them, foreign language anxiety is situation-specific anxiety, which is specifically related to the context of foreign language learning and occurs during the learning process (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; Chen & Chang, 2004).

Different researchers have different opinions on the question of whether foreign language anxiety is a result of language processing or a cause of foreign language learning difficulties. The debate between Sparks and Ganschow and MacIntyre represents mechanism, which supports the primary role of cognitive ability in second language learning, and contextualism, which supports the role of the learning environment and emotion on anxiety respectively (Zheng, 2008). Sparks and Ganschow (1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1995) argued for the Linguistic Coding Deficit Hypothesis (LCDH), which stated that the main cause of foreign language anxiety was the student's linguistic coding deficit, which was reflected in phonology, syntax and semantics. Language coding deficits were at the root of foreign language learning difficulties, while language anxiety was a side effect of language deficits. On the other hand, MacIntyre (1995a, 1995b) argued that anxiety was an important factor affecting foreign language learning and had a non-negligible impact on students' foreign language acquisition, rather than just being the result of deficiencies in language coding. MacIntyre pointed out that although Sparks and Ganschow's study illustrated that poor learners had low proficiency levels, i.e., lower language coding skills, this did not indicate that learning disabilities of poor students all stemmed from language coding deficits, as MacIntyre found that poor students also had higher levels of anxiety and therefore it was likely that anxiety was the main cause of foreign language learning disabilities. Saito et al. (1999) had a similar view to MacIntyre in that their study found that a large number of students had reading anxiety, and they presumed that it was unlikely that all of these students suffered from language coding disorders, so it could be inferred that not all of the anxiety was caused by language processing skills. Sparks et al. (2000), however, pointed out that the results of the reading study were not convincing because one of the main problems with this research was that it did not test and control for students' reading skill abilities, so it could not be inferred that the anxiety was not caused by language impairment. Furthermore, MacIntyre (1995b) argued that Sparks and Ganschow's LCDH perspective ignored the context of foreign language learning. Horwitz (2000) made his own argument for this, acknowledging that some cognitive or linguistic impairments may cause anxiety, but there are also anxiety and language processing deficits which are independent of each other. Such anxiety is not a side effect of language processing and can have a negative impact on foreign language learning.

The findings of previous research could be summarized as follows. Firstly, Coding difficulties are not the principal cause of students' foreign language difficulties and anxiety, as foreign language anxiety is common in foreign language learning classrooms (Von Worde, 2003; Marwan, 2016), but language learning difficulties exist only in a small number of students (DiFino & Lombardino, 2004). Therefore, anxiety is not only a side effect of coding disorders; there are many other factors in learning contexts that contribute to anxiety. Secondly, it is not only coding disorders but also affective factors such as anxiety which can interfere with foreign language learning in a non-negligible way. As Zheng (2008) stated, foreign language anxiety is a significant affective condition that may have an impact on learners' linguistic cognitive functioning.

(b). *Sources of Foreign Language Anxiety*

Young (1991, p. 427) summarized six causes of language anxiety from the previous literature, namely personal and interpersonal anxieties, learner beliefs about language learning, instructor beliefs about language teaching, instructor-learner interactions, classroom procedures and language testing. More recently, Luo (2012) has systematically identified four main causes of anxiety based on previous research: the classroom environment (which involves the role of the teacher, classroom practices, and relationships among the students in the classroom), learner characteristics (which includes competitiveness, perfectionism, fear of negative evaluation, low self-esteem and self-perceptions and learner beliefs), the target language and the uniqueness of foreign language learning process (which consists of speaking, listening, reading and writing). Specifically, the teachers' role as an authority figure in the classroom can create a tense atmosphere, as they spend most of the time talking and evaluating students' classroom performance rather than facilitating and encouraging learning, which can easily put students in a state of anxiety and tension (Chinpakdee, 2015; Young, 1991). Students also perceive classroom organization as having implications for foreign language anxiety, and they favour a relaxing, open and inclusive classroom environment and have their own

preferences for particular seating arrangements (Yan & Horwitz, 2008). Even the successful foreign language learners feel emotional challenge when confronted with their peers, especially the more talented ones, due to the anxiety generated by competition and comparison (Tóth, 2011). Some learners who have low self-esteem and low self-efficacy do not find themselves valued and are therefore more likely to be frustrated in the process of learning a foreign language (Jin et al., 2015; Cheng, 2001). Having positive beliefs about learning a foreign language is important, and the more positive the learner's attitude, the less negative emotions will be generated (Aslan & Thompson, 2021).

(c). Effects of Foreign Language Anxiety

Based on previous studies, anxiety affects learners in three main ways. First, anxiety negatively affects academic performance. Salehi and Marefat (2014) reported that language anxiety has a debilitating effect on foreign language test results, and Aida (1994) pointed out that anxiety adversely influences students' achievement in Japanese. Second, anxiety can lower students' social skills. Students in anxiety are reluctant to communicate in English and participate in classroom activities (Atef-Vahid & Kashani, 2011; Liu & Jackson, 2008; Rastegar & Karami, 2015). Third, anxiety can make learners psychologically unable to concentrate (Andrade & Williams, 2009) and emotionally lose their desire and motivation to learn (Liu & Huang, 2011). However, anxiety does not only contribute negatively to the learning of a foreign language. Marcos-Llinás and Garau's (2009) study suggested that anxiety does not necessarily lead to students' poor performance, as high-anxiety students also perform well. Also, anxiety can even promote students' progress by allowing them to have a sense of tension, a feeling that keeps them awake and motivated rather than being mentally depleted and bewildered (Brown, 2014). In general, various causes of anxiety may have different effects on students of varying abilities and personalities, which may be positive or negative. However, anxiety should not be promoted for the possible benefits it potentially provides to students. As Horwitz (2017) states, it is unethical to add anxiety to students, and motivation can be boosted by helping them plan learning goals and develop learning strategies, rather than inflicting anxiety.

(d). Students' Coping Strategies for Foreign Language Anxiety

By using an open-ended questionnaire to investigate students' strategies for dealing with language anxiety, Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004) summarized five types of strategies, namely, preparation, relaxation, positive thinking, peer seeking and resignation, with preparation being a behavioral strategy, relaxation being an affective strategy, and positive thinking and peer seeking being cognitive strategies. The first four types of strategies are frequently used by students (Marwan, 2007). Although Kondo and Ying-Ling have concluded how students deal with language anxiety, the effectiveness of these strategies has not been measured to give teachers clues on how to help students more effectively. Yasuda and Nabei (2018) used a 6-point Likert scale questionnaire on 158 Japanese university students to explore the effectiveness of these five types of strategies on foreign language anxiety. They found that relaxation and peer seeking had no role in the alleviation of language anxiety, and that comparison and positive thinking could positively influence it. However, setting only five questions in the questionnaire to explore the effects of the five strategies may result in insufficient data, and the learning habits and background of the research sample, i.e., Japanese university students, may also have influenced the discoveries. Therefore, based on the limitations of the methodology and the sampling, the findings may not be precise or may only be applicable to this learning context.

B. Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety in Different Classroom Contexts

Among the foreign language anxieties experienced by students, speaking is the most anxiety-provoking (Öztürk & Gürbüz, 2014; Luo, 2014). Students experience different levels of speaking anxiety in different activities (Young, 1990). Specifically, research has shown that among the activities performed in foreign language classrooms, students experience higher levels of speaking anxiety during presentations, being named by the teacher to answer questions and speaking tests, and lower levels of speaking anxiety when working in groups, working in pairs, playing games, performing dramas and singing (Liu, 2006; Hamouda, 2013; Adeel, 2011; Horowitz, 2019; Balgos, 2020; Passiatore et al., 2019).

In particular, presentation is the most common activity for postgraduate students, as teachers do not usually use questioning in postgraduate classes, and for non-English majors, speaking tests are relatively uncommon and assessment of speaking ability is usually in the form of presentations. Therefore, speaking anxiety in Chinese non-English postgraduate students' presentations definitely needs to be studied.

C. Anxiety in People Who Stutter

(a). A Definition of Stuttering

Stuttering is a common disorder (Reilly et al., 2013), and it is a developmental language disability that usually develops in children between the ages of 3 and 8 years, and usually resolves before puberty, but some people suffer from stuttering in adulthood as well (Gordon, 2002). According to Craig et al. (2002), the lifetime prevalence of stuttering is 0.72%, and this figure is supported by Yairi and Ambrose (2013) and is considered reasonable. Symptoms of stuttering are unconscious repetition of syllables, lengthening of syllables, and phonological hindrance (Gordon, 2002; Sommer et al., 2021).

(b). Foreign Language Anxiety Experienced by People Who Stutter

Stuttering may be related to phonological coding deficits (Pelczarski & Yaruss, 2014; Sasisekaran et al., 2006), which are reflected in both segmental and metrical properties (Coalson & Byrd, 2015). Skills in phonological/orthographic codes, along with syntactic and semantic codes in native language are the basis of foreign language learning in Linguistic Coding Differences Hypothesis (Ganschow & Sparks, 1996). Since language coding deficit is an important cause of foreign language learning anxiety (Sparks & Ganschow, 1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1995) and stutterers have great difficulty with this skill, it could be that stutterers, besides the anxiety and encoding problems experienced by all language learners, have an additional burden in terms of phonological encoding. It is therefore reasonable for stuttering and anxiety to have a strong association. According to García-Pastor and Miller (2019) and Miller (2020), people who stutter experience more anxiety about learning a foreign language compared to people who do not stutter, and this discrepancy is more pronounced in speaking skills. García-Pastor and Miller (2019) noted that students who stutter are very afraid of negative evaluation because they are not only worried about their English proficiency, but also about stuttering. One interviewee in their study stated that she was embarrassed about her stuttering. Miller (2020) pointed out that high levels of anxiety in people who stutter can bring about stronger physical and psychological responses. Physically, interviewees reported that their hearts beat faster, their faces turned red and they sweat; psychologically, they reported that stuttering caused them shame and embarrassment and that they were under greater mental pressure due to their greater risk of negative comments from their peers.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Design

Quantitative analysis is used in this study as it focuses on the depth of the data (Murray & Hughes, 2008). This research is conducted through semi-structured interview, which requires the framework and questions to be designed in advance, but allows the order of questions to be changed or relevant questions to be elicited during the interview (Dörnyei, 2007; McDonough & McDonough, 2014). The interview questions were designed based on the research questions. Two interview question lists were created as the research subjects included non-stuttering and stuttering learners. The list of interview questions for non-stuttering learners had three topics, namely the effects, reasons and solutions of speaking anxiety. Five questions were added to stuttering learners, including two on basic information about the stutterer and three on stuttering-related speaking anxiety, to help uncover different perceptions of stuttering learners in their speaking anxiety in presentations. These questions can be posed out of order and relevant questions can be added during the interview process.

B. Participants

A total of 12 students participated in this study. The 12 students are all postgraduate students, studying at universities in China, aged between 22 and 25. Their Chinese L1 and English L2. They all passed the College English Test Band 4 when they were undergraduates, which means they are at least at CEFR B1 level. All 12 respondents report suffering from speaking anxiety, and two of them also stutter. The respondents are all non-English majors. At the postgraduate level they all have compulsory public English courses, and presentation is an essential activity in English classes.

C. Procedure

All interviewees signed a consent form before the interview began. This semi structured interview was conducted in a one-to-one format and was recorded during the process with the consent of the interviewees. The language of the interviews is Chinese, as Chinese is the mother tongue of all the interviewees, and it allows the interviewees to escape language barriers that prevent them from expressing what they want to say clearly. Respondents 1-10 are people who do not stutter and respondents 11-12 are people who stutter. This semi structured interview was conducted based on the question lists, during which questions could be added or the order of questions could be adjusted as appropriate. The interviews lasted between 20-40 minutes. They ended with the interviewer expressing appreciation to the interviewees.

D. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used in this research. In this study, the coding scheme was inspired by a review of relevant literature (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018), for example the starting point for coding data on the causes of spoken language anxiety was referenced from studies by Young (1991) and Luo (2012), and for coding data on coping strategies was referenced from the study by Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004). As there were new data findings in this study, the coding scheme was modified based on the actual data (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018). The specific implementation of the thematic analysis was based on the phrases stated by Braun and Clarke (2006): firstly, the interview data was transcribed by the researcher; secondly, the data was systematically coded initially according to its characteristics (e.g. in this study the codes were: feelings of the heart, negative words describing one's abilities, interaction with the teacher, etc.); thirdly, the codes were synthesized into themes (e.g. in this study the themes were: main theme 'sources' with its sub-themes 'features of learners', 'interpersonal connections', 'language challenges', etc.).

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Sources of Speaking Anxiety in Presentations

The results of the interviews have similarities to those of Luo (2012) and Young (1991), with some additional findings. The organization and classification of the interview data is adapted from Luo's (2012) and Young's (1991) categories of sources of foreign language anxiety, which are broadly grouped into five categories, namely features of learners, interpersonal connections, language challenges, background of learners and character of the presentation.

(a). Features of Learners

1. Lack of Confidence

Self-confidence is an important factor influencing mindset and performance. All respondents mentioned a lack of confidence as a source of speaking anxiety, which could hinder performance at a true level. This is in line with Raja's (2017) statement that lack of confidence is the most prevalent source of public speaking anxiety. Comparisons with peers may contribute to the lack of confidence. Interviewee 2 stated: 'When I saw my classmate who excelled in the presentation before my sequence, I would envy his ability and feel inferior to myself instantly'. When seeing the charismatic performance of peers, learners can easily become attracted to their excellence and lose confidence by comparing what others are good at with what they are not good at.

2. Fear of Negative Comments

The majority of respondents reported that they were under psychological pressure due to the fear of receiving negative comments from teachers and peers. This is consistent with Kitano's (2001) argument that learners who are inclined to fear negative evaluations have a greater likelihood of reporting foreign language anxiety. However, interviewee 6 stated that she did not care about what others say about her because she was convinced that what others saw might only be one-sided, and that only she was the one who really knew herself. Her anxiety mainly came from her own negative perception of herself, i.e., not living up to the standards she had set for herself.

(b). Interpersonal Connections

1. Student-to-Teacher Interaction

Students see their teachers as people with authority, whose personality and attitude partly determine the level of anxiety of learners. Nine respondents supported this view. For example, interviewee 8 said that if he saw his teacher frowning during the speech, he would panic for fear that he had said something wrong. Students will sense the teacher's judgment of their performance based on their expressions and gestures while delivering a speech, and some sensitive students may also over-interpret the teacher's behaviour. This has similarities with Khusnia's (2016) study that the teacher's personality and conduct can have an effect on the students' mindset.

2. Student-to-Student Relationships

Respondents' perceptions of the effect of peer attention on anxiety levels were differed. Six felt that anxiety levels were lower when the audience had their heads down and were not staring at them closely, as this meant that their performance was not being noticed too much and there was less chance of being criticized, while three felt that the audience's disinterest in them increased their anxiety, fearing that the audience would find their presentation meaningless or unattractive. Although these external factors have different effects on learners, what is the same is that most learners place a lot of emphasis on how they are perceived by others and ignore how they feel about themselves.

(c). Language Challenges

Spoken English itself is a challenge for speakers. The differences between Chinese and English are much greater than the similarities (Zheng, 2018). Therefore, learners' challenges in language learning contribute to their anxiety. Vocabulary was a hindrance to presentation performance and could trigger anxiety. Interviewee 8 was afraid that people would not understand him because he could not say in English what he wanted to say in Chinese. Respondents would struggle with the inability to translate accurately between Chinese and English words, attributing this to their lack of English proficiency. In fact, conflicts in translation are inevitable due to cultural differences and semantic ambiguities between Chinese and English (Zhang, 2021).

(d). Learning Background

The majority of respondents reported that they were uncomfortable speaking at a podium in front of a crowd. For example, interviewee 7 stated that 'I'm used to being an audience and when I'm a speaker it's like I'm thrust from a corner of obscurity into the spotlight. It's disturbing'. For Confucian-influenced Chinese students, this public speaking context may seem overwhelming. Chinese students have a 'silent learning' style under Confucianism (Sit, 2013). As Wen and Clément (2003) stated, Chinese students seem to be more responsive to the perceptions of the public about their speech. In this culture of quiet learning, the lack of opportunities for self-presentation in the classroom can make Chinese students resistant and unconfident about speaking, which reinforces speaking anxiety. This is in line with Woodrow's (2006) finding that English learners coming from Confucian cultures experience greater anxiety than learners from other nationalities.

(e). Character of the Presentation

Respondents felt that the difficulty level of the presentation affected their level of anxiety. Most respondents noted that the level of anxiety increased with the complexity of the topic. However, interviewee 10 had a different view: 'I'm more worried about making mistakes on simple topics. It's too humiliating, and I have to be perfect to prove my ability'. The level of difficulty of the presentation task can affect the level of anxiety. Generally speaking, difficult topics are more anxiety-provoking compared to simple ones, as they require a higher standard of English language ability. However, for some people, easier subjects can also induce anxiety as more perfect performance is expected on them, and failures on simple tasks can lead to an underestimation of ability.

Some respondents also indicated that they would be much more concerned about presentation performance if it contributed to their final course grade. The source of this anxiety is then not only the presentation itself, but also the stress caused by the external consequences. Although this grading mechanism may make learners more motivated, they are less likely to enjoy the presentation and learn from it, and instead will be very concerned about whether the marks are up to scratch.

B. Effects of Speaking Anxiety in Presentations

All interviewees felt that speaking anxiety made their spoken English during presentations lower than their true level. For example, interviewee 5 felt that anxiety made her speak faster, forget words, and speak illogically. Anxiety hinders the performance of authentic English ability during presentations through its psychological and physiological effects on the speaker, which is consistent with Woodrow's (2006) findings that anxiety can have a negative impact on foreign language speaking performance.

However, respondents differed in their views on the implications of anxiety for future oral presentations. Two indicated that oral anxiety was a facilitator for future speaking, while six thought the opposite. For example, interviewee 10 noted that 'I am afraid that I am not competent enough, so I keep practising and in the process I feel that I am 'forced' to improve my speaking skills, so I will do better in my future presentations'; while interview 11 expressed that 'I don't like the feeling of anxiety, it makes me escape and give up. I like to study in a relaxed environment'. The different effects of anxiety on academic ability are related to the varying personalities of learners. Some have the ability to transform anxiety into motivation to learn, at which point it contributes to human growth (Brown, 2014); others do not know how to deal with anxiety and can easily get caught up in negative emotions, which in turn can lead to their resistance to oral learning.

C. Students' Coping Strategies for Speaking Anxiety in Presentations

As revealed through the interviews, the main strategies students use to cope with speaking anxiety are preparation, positive thinking and seeking the support of peers, all of which are types of strategies mentioned in Kondo and Ying-Ling (2004), with the former being behavioral strategy and the latter two being cognitive strategy. All three strategies are considered effective by the students in this study, which differs from Yasuda and Nabei's (2018) research where it mentioned the ineffectiveness of peer seeking. The reason for the difference could be the insufficient number of participants in this research or the diverse learning contexts and environments of the participants.

(a). Preparation

The majority of respondents believed that improving the English language skills was the most effective solution, which is in line with Maharani and Roslaini's (2021) findings, as the lack of confidence and fear of negative evaluation stem from low competence.

(b). Positive Thinking

Positive thinking can be beneficial for anxiety relief before and during a presentation. Interviewee 9 mentioned: 'If I tell myself I can do it, it seems like I can actually end up doing it'. Positive self-cueing may make for a better performance, as the speakers are able to identify and use their strengths. Being confident also makes one look attractive. Positive mental thinking during the presentation is also necessary. Interviewee 10's strategy was to ignore the mistakes he had already made in his presentation and encourage himself that he had already done a good job. For learners, slightly lowering the demands on themselves, not imprisoning themselves with the shackles of perfectionism and appreciating their own abilities will lead to a sense of achievement rather than anxiety.

(c). Seeking the Support of Peers

Respondents stated that sharing anxiety by talking to peers could ease the tension. Interviewee 8 mentioned that his anxiety was relieved when he talked to his classmates and realized that some of them were about the same level as him. Students are psychologically comforted as they develop a sense of empathy and understanding in talking to peers who are also experiencing anxiety. When the prevalence of speaking anxiety is discovered, their anxiety is alleviated as they perceive themselves as having similar abilities to their peers rather than inferior to them, which is one of the sources of speaking anxiety (Ansari, 2015). The importance of peer seeking was also mentioned by Siagian and Adam (2017), whose study revealed that the best strategy students found to overcome speaking anxiety was peer seeking.

D. Speaking Anxiety in Presentations from the Perspective of Stuttering Learners

Stuttering learners have some different perceptions compared to non-stuttering learners in terms of the effects, causes and coping strategies of speaking anxiety in presentations. The two interviewees have suffered from stuttering since childhood and stutter in both their mother tongue and English. Interviewee 11 indicated that stuttering was similar in both mother tongue and English, while interviewee 12 stated that stuttering was worse in English.

(a). Sources of Speaking Anxiety in Presentations in the Perspective of Stuttering Learners

Pronunciation difficulties and fear of negative evaluation are major sources of anxiety for stuttering learners. Pronunciation disorder is a feature of stuttering, and both interviewees reported getting stuck on some sounds which were difficult to produce. Interviewee 11 pointed out: 'I know how to pronounce the word 'student' and I can understand the phonetic symbols, but I can't say it as fluently as others, so I feel very impatient'. Phonological encoding disorder is a contributing factor to stuttering (Pelczarski & Yaruss, 2014; Sasisekaran et al., 2006), therefore articulation is a significant challenge for stuttering learners. Although non-stuttering learners also experience pronunciation problems when speaking, such as inability to pronounce appropriately due to dialect, it is not enough of a factor for them to be anxious.

Stuttering learners are afraid of negative comments from others, as the low self-esteem and inferiority associated with stuttering may make them more sensitive to the judgments of others. Interviewee 11 stated: 'I am afraid that my teacher will criticize me for not being serious because of my lack of fluency and this makes me very frustrated'. Learners who stutter have to work much harder to achieve the same level of fluency as learners who do not stutter, due to their phonological coding difficulties. Criticism from an authoritative teacher in the classroom may lead the stuttering learner into self-doubt and the belief of being a failure. Negative feedback from peers also causes concern for stuttering learners. Interviewee 12 mentioned that some of his peers could not help but giggle at his stuttering, which made him lose face. Stuttering learners may fear that their disorder will become a topic of conversation after class, leading to contempt and gossip among classmates, which may affect their social relationships. This is consistent with Miller's (2020) study that stuttering learners are more likely to be evaluated negatively and face greater emotional stress than non-stuttering learners.

Unlike the ten non-stuttering respondents, neither of the two stuttering respondents identified English language ability as a significant source of anxiety. It might be assumed that stuttering learners attribute all their underperformance to their stuttering and ignore their own English proficiency, which can lead them to become overwhelmed with anxiety about how to get rid of their stuttering at the expense of developing other aspects of their language skills.

(b). Effects of Speaking Anxiety in Presentations in the Perspective of Stuttering Learners

Speaking anxiety can exacerbate the degree of stuttering in learners who stutter, which is also mentioned by Naachimuthu and Kalpana (2022). Even non-stuttering learners are at risk of stuttering when stressed and anxious (Woodrow, 2006; Suleimenova, 2013), stuttering learners, who already have deficits in pronunciation and fluency, may stutter more severely during anxiety. Interviewee 11 noted: 'My stuttering is worse when I am anxious because the more I am afraid of stuttering and making a fool of myself during a speech, the worse I will do it'.

(c). Coping Strategies for Speaking Anxiety in Presentations in the Perspective of Stuttering Learners

Coping strategies for stuttering learners are mainly positive thinking and preparation, while seeking the support of peers, which is a strategy for non-stuttering learners, is not employed by them. The content of positive thinking differs for stutterers and non-stutterers. Interviewee 11 stated that he would imply that he was stutter-free. Stuttering learners expect themselves to achieve fluency in pronunciation and speech, the ability that non-stutterers already have, which means that they have to strive to have capacities that others can easily acquire. Preparation is also a strategy for stuttering learners to cope with speaking anxiety. Interviewee 12 mentioned: 'I will practice the parts that I will have difficulty with over and over again before I give a speech, in order not to make the stuttering so obvious'. Different from the non-stuttering learners, their preparation focused on how to alleviate their stuttering. Seeking the support of peers is not considered a strategy for learners who stutter, as it is difficult to gain empathy from non-stuttering peers, and the probability of finding peers in a class who also stutter is low. In addition, they may not be willing to actively share about their stuttering due to inferiority complex.

V. CONCLUSION

A. Summary of the Research

This study examines speaking anxiety of non-English major Chinese postgraduate students in presentations. The study also focuses on the speaking anxiety experienced by the stuttering group during speech, demonstrating the significant impact of stuttering on learners and speculating that learners who stutter may suffer from more anxiety due to phonological encoding disorders.

There are five causes of speaking anxiety in presentations for non-stuttering learners, respectively features of learners, interpersonal connections, language challenges, background of learners and character of the presentation. Stutterers are more worried about pronunciation disorders and negative comments. Pronunciation barriers are not mentioned as a

factor of anxiety by non-stuttering respondents, whereas stuttering learners are much worried about their it in speech, as phonological coding deficit is a factor of stuttering (Pelczarski & Yaruss, 2014; Sasisekaran et al., 2006). English language ability is not mentioned as a major factor in anxiety for stuttering learners, perhaps because they psychologically attribute almost all language learning impediments to stuttering. Speaking anxiety in speech has an impact on speech performance. Stuttering learners perceive that anxiety makes stuttering more severe. Strategies for coping with speaking anxiety include students' preparation, positive thinking and seeking the support of peers. Stuttering learners use preparation and positive thinking strategies. Compared to non-stutterers, stuttering learners perceive stuttering as a major factor affecting speaking learning and triggering anxiety, and suffer from a lack of understanding from their peers.

B. Implications for the Teaching

More attention should be paid by teachers to students' speaking anxiety as it may be manageable for some students, but for others who cannot deal with it well, it has detrimental effects on physical, psychological and academic performance. Teachers need to have the awareness that some students may be stuttering. As pronunciation difficulty is a key factor in presentation anxiety for stuttering students, teachers could get to know in which pronunciations they stutter before the speech and then provide special guidance to them. It is also important for teachers to guide the class to recognize that stuttering is a normal disorder which is not humiliating and instruct stuttering students to accept themselves rather than being self-hating.

C. Suggestions for Future Research

There are two suggestions for future research. Firstly, there could be more participants in order to obtain more generalized findings. More research methods could also be used, such as combining questionnaires, interviews and diaries of students to gain more comprehensive data. Secondly, more scientific knowledge, such as explanation of stuttering in neurogenic, psychogenic and developmental aspects (Ward, 2010; Mendez, 2018), could be applied to help gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between stuttering and foreign language anxiety. More research is also needed on stuttering and phonological coding disorders to explore the possible relationship between stuttering and language coding deficit hypotheses.

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Exploring the Role of Grammar Instruction in English Language Teaching: Evolving Approaches and Emerging Trends in Modern Instruction

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Abstract—This paper explores the evolving role of grammar instruction in English Language Teaching (ELT), examining contemporary trends and methodologies that influence its integration into language classrooms. Focusing on student preferences, the study investigates the effectiveness of both traditional grammar teaching methods and the incorporation of modern, technology-enhanced approaches. Through an analysis of survey data from students across various ELT contexts, the research highlights the continued importance of explicit grammar instruction, while also recognizing the growing appeal of hybrid approaches that combine explicit and implicit learning. The findings emphasize the increasing use of digital tools for grammar practice, showing how technology can support autonomous learning and provide personalized feedback. The paper argues for a balanced approach to grammar teaching, combining structured, rule-based instruction with communicative tasks and technological resources. It concludes with recommendations for future research and teaching practices, emphasizing the need for adaptable, student-centered methodologies in grammar instruction to address the diverse needs of modern learners.

Index Terms—grammar instruction, English language teaching, technology integration, hybrid approaches, language learning

I. INTRODUCTION

Grammar, the structural foundation of language, has long been a cornerstone in the teaching and learning of English. The significance of grammar in English Language Teaching (ELT) remains profound despite the evolving methods and pedagogical philosophies that have emerged over time. While the nature of language instruction has evolved, grammar continues to occupy a central place in shaping learners' linguistic capabilities, acting as both a guide and a framework for effective communication. This is especially true in a globalized world where English is a bridge between diverse cultures, and its mastery is often perceived as a crucial tool for academic, professional, and personal advancement.

Historically, grammar instruction was synonymous with rote memorization and the rigorous application of rules. Language learners would painstakingly memorize conjugations, tenses, syntax, and vocabulary, all while translating sentences between their native languages and English. The Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), which dominated much of the 19th and early 20th centuries, was built upon the premise that explicit, rule-based learning of grammar was essential for language mastery. This approach emphasized accuracy and structural correctness, often at the expense of communicative ability (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Despite its drawbacks, the method laid the foundation for grammar's integral role in language learning, as it sought to provide learners with the tools needed to analyse and comprehend language systems.

The dissatisfaction with such methods led to the emergence of newer, more communicative approaches to language teaching in the latter half of the 20th century. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which gained prominence in the 1970s, marked a paradigm shift by emphasizing fluency over accuracy. In CLT, grammar was seen not as a set of rigid rules to be learned in isolation, but as a functional tool to facilitate communication in context (Canale & Swain, 1980). As Larsen-Freeman (2000) notes, this shift emphasized the importance of meaning and interaction rather than strict adherence to grammatical correctness, marking a crucial departure from the form-focused methods that had come before. In CLT, grammar was still recognized as essential but was integrated into more meaningful, interactive practices that prioritized communication.

Even with the rise of communicative approaches, debates regarding the teaching of grammar continued. Many linguists and educators began to question how grammar should be approached in modern classrooms (Vimal & Pillai, 2024). The pendulum swung between two extremes: one advocating for a complete de-emphasis of grammar, suggesting that learners would naturally acquire grammatical rules through exposure to language, and the other arguing that explicit instruction was necessary to ensure accuracy and linguistic competence. Ellis (2006) argued that a balance between explicit and

implicit grammar teaching methods was essential, as both play critical roles in different stages of language acquisition. Explicit instruction allows for immediate comprehension and application, while implicit learning fosters internalization and natural usage over time.

The importance of grammar is not limited to the mastery of sentence structure or the application of rules; it extends to a deeper understanding of how meaning is constructed in language. Grammar, when taught effectively, enables learners to produce language that is not only structurally correct but also contextually appropriate. This has become even more important in the age of global communication, where the ability to use language accurately and appropriately is crucial for success in academic, professional, and social settings. With English as a lingua franca in many international contexts, speakers must be able to navigate the complexities of grammar to communicate effectively with people from diverse linguistic backgrounds (Jenkins, 2006). As such, grammar instruction must evolve to address not only the traditional concerns of accuracy and structure but also the need for learners to use English flexibly and creatively in various communicative situations.

Moreover, with the rapid technological advancements, teachers now have access to a wide array of resources that facilitate more interactive grammar instruction. Learning platforms, interactive games, and virtual classrooms allow for more flexible and personalized approaches to grammar teaching. These tools enable learners to practice grammar in diverse contexts, receive instant feedback, and foster a more autonomous form of learning. Technology also allows for the integration of multimodal resources—such as videos, podcasts, and interactive quizzes—that reinforce grammatical structures while providing learners with an opportunity to engage with authentic use. As Godwin-Jones (2018) observes, the role of digital tools in ELT is indispensable, providing learners with an immersive environment where grammar can be practiced in dynamic, interactive ways.

Despite these innovations, questions remain about the most effective methods for teaching grammar in modern ELT. Should grammar be taught explicitly or implicitly? How much attention should be given to grammar in a communicative classroom setting? Should teachers focus on the accuracy of grammatical structures or prioritize fluency and communicative competence? These are just a few of the questions that contemporary ELT practices must grapple with as they seek to balance grammar instruction with the demands of communicative competence. It is clear that while the importance of grammar has not diminished, how it is taught must evolve to meet the needs of today's diverse and digitally connected learners. As Thornbury (1999) aptly puts it, "Grammar is a tool, not a goal," emphasizing that its role should be to facilitate communication rather than to stifle it.

This paper aims to explore these evolving approaches to grammar instruction and to examine emerging trends in modern ELT that seek to integrate grammar more meaningfully into communicative practice. By considering the historical context of grammar teaching, examining contemporary pedagogical approaches, and investigating the role of technology in grammar instruction, this paper will provide a comprehensive understanding of how grammar is taught today and how it can continue to evolve to meet the needs of learners in the 21st century. According to Ilankumaran M. and P. Venugopalan (2012), the importance of grammar in English Language Teaching is undeniable, but its role must be understood within the broader context of changing teaching methodologies and the demands of a globalized world.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The role of grammar in English Language Teaching (ELT) has long been a subject of extensive research and debate. Numerous scholars have contributed to the evolving understanding of how grammar instruction can be effectively integrated into language teaching to enhance communicative competence. While there has been significant progress in refining grammar instruction strategies, a closer look at the works of various authors offers valuable insights into the continuing evolution of this field.

According to Anu and Deepa (2025), language is a crucial aspect of human knowledge. One of the notable contributions to the grammar debate is from Pienemann (1998), who proposes a teachability hypothesis that suggests learners acquire grammatical structures in a fixed developmental sequence. This theory implies that grammar teaching should align with learners' developmental stages, ensuring that learners are exposed to structures they are ready to understand. Pienemann's approach emphasizes the importance of timing in grammar instruction, suggesting that overly complex grammatical structures should not be introduced prematurely. This aligns with the idea of providing grammar instruction that is relevant to the learner's current language proficiency and gradually scaffolding their knowledge.

Similarly, Nassaji (2007) highlights the importance of grammar in fostering both fluency and accuracy. He presents a case for explicit grammar instruction within communicative tasks. While communicative approaches focus on fluency, Nassaji argues that accuracy, achieved through focused grammar instruction, is necessary for learners to produce grammatically correct sentences, even in communicative settings. This perspective addresses the balance between implicit and explicit grammar teaching, emphasizing the role of grammar as both a tool for communication and a skill that requires practice and correction. Nassaji's work suggests that grammar teaching can be both explicit and integrative, with grammar lessons linked to real-life language use, creating a more holistic learning experience for students.

Another important perspective comes from Swan (2005), who critiques the trend of downplaying grammar instruction in favour of communicative methods. Swan advocates for the necessity of clear and structured grammar teaching in the early stages of language learning. He argues that an over-reliance on implicit learning strategies can leave gaps in learners' understanding, particularly about complex structures. Swan's critique is especially relevant in the context of modern ELT,

where there has been a shift toward communicative methods, often at the expense of grammar instruction. Swan's work underscores the value of a structured approach to grammar, one that provides learners with the foundational knowledge needed to communicate effectively.

In a similar vein, Borg (2003) examines the role of teacher cognition in grammar teaching. He investigates how teachers' beliefs and perceptions about grammar instruction shape their teaching practices. Borg's study found that many teachers hold conflicting views about the role of grammar in language learning, often feeling pressure to focus on communicative tasks while still recognizing the importance of grammar. This tension between communicative competence and grammatical accuracy is a common theme in the literature. Borg's work emphasizes the importance of aligning teachers' understanding of grammar instruction with effective pedagogical strategies to provide a more balanced approach to language teaching. Furthermore, Borg's research highlights the need for professional development to support teachers in reconciling these competing priorities.

Additionally, Celce-Murcia (2001) offers a comprehensive view of grammar teaching by exploring the role of grammar within communicative language teaching (CLT). In her work, she advocates for integrating grammar instruction into communicative activities rather than teaching it in isolation. Celce-Murcia suggests that grammar should not be treated as a discrete component of language learning but as something that underpins successful communication. By embedding grammar into real communicative tasks, learners can better understand its functional role in language use. Celce-Murcia's work is significant because it emphasizes a shift toward integrating grammar with other language skills, including speaking, listening, and writing, as part of a holistic approach to language teaching.

In contrast to the traditional focus on explicit grammar instruction, Schmidt (1990) presents the Noticing Hypothesis, which argues that learners acquire grammar most effectively when they consciously notice the forms and structures, they encounter during language use. According to Schmidt, noticing is a critical step in language acquisition, as learners need to be aware of the grammatical features in the language to internalize them. This theory has led to the argument that explicit grammar instruction is unnecessary if learners are provided with opportunities to notice grammar naturally through exposure to language in context. Schmidt's work brings attention to the role of implicit learning in grammar acquisition and highlights the importance of raising learners' awareness of grammatical structures as part of their language development.

Moreover, Harmer (2007) introduces the concept of "focus on form" in language instruction, which blends explicit grammar teaching with communicative language tasks. Harmer's approach suggests that grammar should not be taught in isolation but should be embedded within communicative activities that require the use of the language. This approach combines the strengths of both traditional grammar instruction and more communicative methods. Harmer's model allows for the integration of grammatical accuracy and fluency, acknowledging that both elements are important for effective language use.

Together, the works of these authors represent a broad spectrum of perspectives on grammar instruction in ELT. They highlight the ongoing debate about the role of explicit versus implicit grammar teaching, the need for integrating grammar into communicative contexts, and the evolving nature of grammar as a tool for effective communication. As the field of ELT continues to evolve, these insights will remain instrumental in shaping grammar instruction that meets the diverse needs of learners in a dynamic global context. According to Ilankumaran M. and P. Venugopalan (2012), the continuing dialogue between traditional and modern approaches to grammar teaching will undoubtedly inform future pedagogical practices, ensuring that grammar remains a central component of language learning.

III. THE EVOLUTION OF GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION IN ELT

The role of grammar in English Language Teaching (ELT) has been a subject of extensive research and debate for decades. Grammar's traditional position as the foundation of language instruction is being reconsidered in the face of modern teaching methodologies that prioritize communicative competence over strict rule application. According to Ilankumaran M. and R. Abilasha (2018), a significant body of literature has explored the evolving relationship between grammar and language teaching, recognizing that the role of grammar instruction has transformed over time, as both the theory and practice of language teaching have advanced. While new methodologies continue to shape the pedagogical landscape, grammar remains a vital element of language education, albeit within a broader, more integrated approach.

A. Historical Perspectives on Grammar Teaching

Historically, grammar teaching was primarily viewed as the cornerstone of language instruction. Early language teaching methods, such as the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), relied heavily on explicit grammatical explanations and focused largely on accuracy and form. This method, popular in the 19th century, emphasized grammatical rules, translation exercises, and rote memorization of language forms (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Though effective for fostering an understanding of the structural aspects of language, the GTM was often criticized for its failure to produce communicatively competent speakers. It led to an understanding of language as an abstract system of rules, disconnected from its real-world use in communicative situations. Scholars like McArthur (1992) have argued that, although GTM was instrumental in laying the foundation for grammar instruction, its emphasis on form over function created a barrier to fluent communication in a second language.

With the decline of the Grammar-Translation Method, linguists and educators began seeking more flexible and dynamic approaches to language teaching. One notable shift occurred with the rise of the communicative approach in the late 20th century. This new direction called for an emphasis on interaction, fluency, and meaning, where grammar was seen not as a set of rules to be memorized but as a tool to facilitate effective communication. The introduction of communicative competence as a key objective of language teaching encouraged educators to integrate grammar into contexts where students could learn through experience and practice, rather than memorization alone (Hymes, 1972). This shift in emphasis sparked ongoing debates about how best to balance grammar with the demands of communicative proficiency.

B. The Shift From Explicit to Implicit Grammar Teaching

The dichotomy between explicit and implicit grammar teaching methods has long been a key point of discussion in the field of ELT. In response to the limitations of traditional methods, researchers such as Nunan (2003) have explored the efficacy of implicit learning in grammar acquisition. Implicit grammar instruction relies on learners' exposure to language in context, through reading, listening, or speaking tasks, and encourages them to infer grammatical rules without direct explanation from the teacher. This approach has been seen as more natural, mirroring the way children acquire their first language, where language exposure leads to unconscious grammar learning (DeKeyser, 2007). The goal of implicit instruction is to enable learners to internalize grammar naturally, focusing on communicative tasks rather than explicitly teaching grammar rules.

However, implicit instruction alone does not address all the needs of learners. Several scholars have argued for a more balanced approach that combines explicit and implicit methods, with a focus on the developmental stages of language acquisition. Auerbach (1993) argues that while implicit learning is valuable for language fluency, explicit grammar instruction is necessary for learners to gain a clear understanding of specific language features. Auerbach's research highlights the importance of guiding learners toward understanding the "why" behind grammar rules, which can lead to a deeper internalization of language structures.

C. The Role of Grammar in the Context of Global English

In recent years, the rise of English as a global lingua franca (ELF) has added complexity to the conversation about grammar in ELT. In this context, grammar instruction has moved beyond traditional native-speaker norms. Seidlhofer (2011) explores the idea that English learners around the world now communicate across cultures with varying levels of proficiency, often without adhering strictly to native-speaker grammatical standards. This has led to a shift in the perception of what constitutes "correct" grammar in English. As such, the role of grammar in ELT is now increasingly understood in terms of communicative effectiveness rather than linguistic perfection.

The implications of this shift are profound. If the goal of English teaching is to prepare learners to communicate in global contexts, then grammar instruction must be flexible, allowing for varied, non-native models of language use. According to Mauranen (2012), the idea that there is a single, "correct" form of English grammar is becoming increasingly outdated. Instead, the focus is on how learners can express themselves clearly and appropriately in diverse global settings. In this light, grammar instruction must balance the need for foundational knowledge with the awareness that language use is shaped by context, purpose, and audience.

D. Technology and Grammar Instruction

As technology continues to reshape the landscape of education, its impact on grammar instruction has become a critical area of exploration. The increasing availability of digital platforms, language learning apps, and online resources has opened new possibilities for teaching grammar in more engaging and interactive ways. According to Stockwell (2012), digital tools have the potential to enhance grammar learning by providing immediate feedback, interactive exercises, and authentic language materials. These tools allow learners to practice grammar in context, receive real-time corrections, and engage in self-paced learning, making grammar instruction more personalized and adaptable to individual needs.

Moreover, digital resources often incorporate multimedia elements, such as videos, interactive games, and quizzes, which make grammar learning more dynamic. These elements encourage learners to engage with grammatical structures in a variety of ways, improving retention and understanding. For example, platforms such as Duolingo and Babbel offer interactive grammar exercises that blend form-focused learning with communicative tasks, allowing learners to practice grammar in the context of real-world conversations. Additionally, online tools such as Grammarly provide learners with the opportunity to correct their written language in real-time, helping them refine their grammatical accuracy outside of the classroom (Godwin-Jones, 2018).

E. Recent Trends and Emerging Approaches

The integration of grammar instruction into task-based, communicative activities is another emerging trend in contemporary ELT. Rather than treating grammar as an isolated component of language learning, many educators now see it as a tool to facilitate communication. The focus is on grammar as a means of supporting effective communication, rather than as an end goal in itself. This approach aligns with the view that language learning is not just about acquiring grammatical accuracy but also about being able to use the language in meaningful, real-life contexts. This idea is supported by Biber et al. (2002), who argue that grammar should be taught in a way that supports learners' ability to interact with the language naturally and spontaneously, making language use the central focus of instruction.

In line with this shift, the use of corpus linguistics has emerged as an influential tool in grammar instruction. Corpus-based methods allow teachers and learners to analyse authentic language use, uncovering patterns and structures that emerge from real-world communication (Flowerdew, 2013). By engaging with corpora, learners can observe how grammar functions in actual language use, enabling them to see grammar not as a set of isolated rules but as a fluid component of communicative interaction.

The literature on grammar in English Language Teaching illustrates a dynamic evolution from rigid, rule-based instruction to more flexible, communicative approaches. While grammar remains a crucial element of language instruction, its role is increasingly seen as one of facilitating communication rather than promoting perfection. Modern approaches to grammar teaching prioritize the integration of grammar into authentic communication, both in the classroom and beyond. Moreover, emerging technologies and the global use of English as a lingua franca continue to shape the way grammar is taught, challenging traditional assumptions about what constitutes “correct” grammar. As the field evolves, it will be crucial to continue exploring ways to make grammar instruction more responsive to learners' needs and the diverse contexts in which English is used.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study exploring the evolving role of grammar in English Language Teaching (ELT) aims to identify trends in modern instruction methods, analyse the effectiveness of emerging grammar teaching strategies, and understand the attitudes of both educators and learners. This research is grounded in qualitative methods, providing an in-depth investigation into teaching practices. The section outlines the research design, data collection procedures, data analysis, and statistical analysis, offering insights into the dynamics of grammar teaching and modern pedagogical approaches.

A. Research Design

The study employs a qualitative case study methodology to offer a detailed examination of grammar teaching practices within three diverse ELT classrooms. By focusing on teachers' methods, classroom interactions, and student responses, this design allows for a comprehensive understanding of the changes in grammar teaching over time. The case study methodology ensures that the data collected reflects the nuanced contexts in which teaching occurs, allowing for comparisons across varied settings. Additionally, the methodology is tailored to uncover the complexity of grammar teaching as it is influenced by evolving educational theories and practices, ensuring that the findings apply to real-world classrooms (Larsen-Freeman, 2015).

This research adopts an interpretivist approach, emphasizing understanding participants' experiences and perspectives regarding grammar instruction. Such an approach helps capture the intricacies of classroom interactions and the impact of emerging methods on both teaching and learning.

Research Questions

The study revolves around several key research questions designed to understand the current practices of grammar instruction:

- A. What strategies do teachers use to integrate grammar instruction in communicative language teaching?
- B. How do teachers perceive the significance of grammar in students' overall language proficiency?
- C. What role does technology play in grammar instruction in the ELT context?
- D. What challenges do teachers face in balancing grammar instruction with communicative language tasks?
- E. What are students' perceptions of grammar instruction in comparison to other aspects of language learning?

These questions guide the exploration of grammar teaching strategies and provide a framework for evaluating the factors influencing modern ELT practices.

B. Participants

The study involves three teachers of English as a Second Language (ESL) working in different educational environments two in public secondary schools and one in a private language institute. These teachers were selected based on their experience with teaching grammar and their willingness to participate in the research. They represent diverse teaching contexts, which enriches the study by capturing a range of pedagogical practices.

For the student cohort, approximately 90 students 30 from each teacher's class were involved. The participants ranged in proficiency levels, from elementary to advanced, ensuring a balanced representation of students' needs and expectations regarding grammar instruction.

C. Data Collection Methods

The data collection strategy was designed to capture both teachers' instructional strategies and students' responses to grammar teaching. The following methods were employed:

Teacher Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the three teachers to explore their perspectives on grammar instruction. The interviews were open-ended to allow teachers to express their views freely, offering insights into their teaching philosophies, approaches to grammar instruction, and the challenges they face. Additionally, the interviews focused on the use of technology in grammar teaching and the integration of grammar with communicative language tasks. The interview questions covered areas such as:

- A. "What methods do you use to teach grammar, and why?"
- B. "How do you integrate grammar teaching with communicative tasks?"
- C. "In what ways has technology affected the teaching of grammar in your classroom?"
- D. "What do you believe is the role of grammar in language acquisition?"

Classroom Observations: Classroom observations provided an empirical foundation for understanding grammar teaching practices. The researcher conducted observations of the three teachers during grammar-focused lessons, using a structured observation schedule to record details of the classroom dynamics. The key focus during the observations was as follows:

- A. The type of grammar instruction (explicit or implicit)
- B. The degree of student engagement during grammar lessons
- C. The integration of communicative activities with grammar teaching
- D. Use of technology and multimedia in grammar instruction
- E. Teacher-student interactions during grammar-focused activities

Student Surveys: A survey was distributed to the students to gather their perceptions on the effectiveness of different grammar teaching methods. The survey focused on their preferences regarding explicit versus implicit grammar instruction, satisfaction with various teaching strategies and their views on the integration of technology in grammar lessons. Questions in the survey included:

- A. "Do you prefer learning grammar through explicit explanations or practice in communicative tasks?"
- B. "How often do you use technology to practice grammar outside of class?"
- C. "Do you believe grammar is important for effective communication in English?"

V. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the interviews, observations, and surveys were analysed through qualitative methods, employing thematic analysis to identify key patterns and emerging trends in grammar instruction. Thematic analysis was conducted in several stages: data familiarization, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, and finalizing the interpretation.

Interview Analysis: Responses from the teacher interviews were transcribed and analysed for recurring themes. Key themes identified include the perceived role of grammar in communicative competence, the use of technology, and challenges related to grammar teaching. A cross-case comparison was conducted to identify commonalities and differences across the three teachers' perspectives.

Observation Analysis: Classroom observations were analysed using a coding framework that categorized teaching methods, student engagement, and the integration of grammar into communicative activities. A notable finding was the variation in how each teacher balanced explicit grammar teaching with opportunities for students to practice grammar in context.

Survey Analysis: Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the survey responses, providing insights into students' preferences and perceptions. Frequency distributions were calculated to determine how students responded to key questions about grammar instruction, such as the preferred teaching method and satisfaction with grammar lessons. This analysis revealed trends such as students' preference for contextualized grammar practice over explicit instruction and a strong interest in using digital tools for grammar exercises.

A. Statistical Analysis

To complement the qualitative analysis, statistical analysis was conducted on the student survey data. The survey data collected from the students were analysed using descriptive statistics, focusing on frequency distributions, means, and percentages to identify patterns in their perceptions and preferences regarding grammar instruction. The analysis aimed to evaluate students' preferences for explicit versus implicit grammar instruction, the role of technology, and the perceived importance of grammar in language learning. Below is a summary of the findings, followed by the statistical analysis.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION PREFERENCES AND TECHNOLOGY USE

Survey Question	Option	Number of Responses	Percentage (%)
1. Grammar Instruction Preference			
Prefer Explicit Instruction	Yes	65	72.2
Prefer Implicit Instruction	Yes	12	13.3
Prefer a Combination of Both	Yes	13	14.4
2. Frequency of Technology Use for Grammar Practice			
Use Daily	Yes	55	61.1
Use Weekly	Yes	20	22.2
Use Occasionally	Yes	10	11.1
Do Not Use Technology for Grammar Practice	Yes	5	5.6
3. Importance of Grammar in Communication			
Consider Grammar Very Important	Yes	57	63.3
Consider Grammar Moderately Important	Yes	28	31.1
Do Not Consider Grammar Important	Yes	5	5.6

B. Analysis of Findings

The data indicates a strong preference for explicit grammar instruction. A majority of the students (72.2%) expressed that they prefer grammar to be taught explicitly, with clear rules and explanations. This finding aligns with previous studies (Smith, 2017), which indicate that students often feel more confident when grammar rules are clearly explained and practiced in structured ways. However, a smaller proportion (13.3%) indicated a preference for implicit grammar instruction, which suggests a smaller but significant group of students who favour learning grammar through exposure and usage in communicative contexts.

In terms of integrating both explicit and implicit approaches, 14.4% of students expressed a preference for a combination of both methods. This suggests that there is an emerging understanding among students that grammar can be more effective when both approaches are integrated, as proposed by Williams (2020).

When it comes to the use of technology for grammar practice, 61.1% of students reported using digital tools such as grammar apps, online platforms, and interactive websites daily. This demonstrates that students are increasingly inclined to utilize technology outside of the classroom to reinforce their grammar knowledge, in line with recent trends in educational technology integration (Godwin-Jones, 2018). Furthermore, 22.2% of students indicated that they use technology weekly, while 11.1% use it occasionally. Only 5.6% of students do not use technology for grammar practice at all, suggesting that digital tools have become an essential resource for most learners. The survey highlighted the importance of grammar in effective communication. A substantial 63.3% of students considered grammar to be "very important" for communication, while 31.1% viewed it as moderately important. Only 5.6% of students did not perceive grammar as significant. This finding reflects the growing awareness among students of the role grammar plays in achieving communicative competence (Jones, 2019).

C. Statistical Analysis and Interpretation

The data gathered through the survey was analysed using descriptive statistics to provide an understanding of the patterns and trends in student preferences. The following insights can be drawn from the data:

Explicit Grammar Instruction: The overwhelming preference for explicit grammar instruction (72.2%) suggests that students feel more confident and comfortable when grammar is presented in a structured and clear manner. This finding reinforces the idea that clarity in grammar instruction is essential for student success, as noted by Thornbury (2018).

Technology Integration: The frequent use of technology (61.1% using it daily) shows that digital tools play a significant role in grammar practice. The high percentage of students who utilize technology suggests that online platforms and apps have become integral to students' learning routines, offering a flexible and interactive way to practice grammar.

Grammar's Role in Communication: The strong belief in grammar's importance for communication (63.3% deeming it "very important") highlights that students value grammar as an essential component of effective communication. This contrasts with earlier trends where grammar was sometimes seen as a secondary aspect of language learning. Today, grammar is regarded as an indispensable tool for achieving fluency and accuracy in English.

The statistical analysis of the survey data has provided valuable insights into the evolving attitudes of students toward grammar instruction in the ELT context. The preference for explicit grammar instruction, the growing role of technology, and the recognition of grammar's importance for communication all underscore the shifting dynamics in language teaching. These findings suggest that teachers should continue to refine their approaches to grammar instruction, ensuring that both traditional and modern methods are used in a complementary manner. The use of technology, in particular, offers new opportunities for reinforcing grammar skills outside the classroom, further enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and findings of this study were derived from the survey data collected from 90 students across three diverse ELT classrooms. As outlined in the methodology section, the students' responses were analysed to gain insights into their perceptions of grammar instruction, their preferences for grammar teaching methods, and their use of technology in grammar practice. This section presents the outcomes of the data analysis, highlighting the key trends and patterns observed in the responses. The findings reveal important information about student attitudes toward grammar teaching and the influence of modern methodologies in ELT classrooms.

A. Preference for Grammar Instruction Method

One of the most significant findings from the survey was the clear preference for explicit grammar instruction. The majority of students (72.2%) expressed a preference for grammar to be taught explicitly, with clear explanations and rule-based instruction. This result aligns with traditional pedagogical approaches that emphasize the importance of providing students with clear, structured rules for understanding grammar (Thornbury, 2018). Students appear to feel more confident and secure when grammar rules are presented in an overt manner, which helps them understand the mechanics of the language.

However, 13.3% of students expressed a preference for implicit grammar instruction, which typically involves learning grammar in context through exposure to language use and interaction, rather than through formal explanations. These students seem to value learning grammar organically by engaging in communicative tasks, suggesting a preference for

approaches that integrate grammar instruction with real-life language use (Smith, 2017). A smaller subset (14.4%) favoured a combination of both explicit and implicit methods, indicating a desire for balanced approaches that allow for flexibility in the teaching and learning process.

B. Frequency of Technology Use for Grammar Practice

The survey results also indicated a high frequency of technology use for grammar practice. The majority of students (61.1%) reported using digital tools, such as grammar apps and online platforms, on a daily basis to practice grammar outside of class. This reflects the increasing integration of technology into language learning, providing students with opportunities for individualized practice and feedback (Godwin-Jones, 2018). Students appreciated the convenience and accessibility that digital tools offer, as they allow learners to engage in grammar practice at their own pace, outside of the traditional classroom setting.

Additionally, 22.2% of students reported using technology weekly, while 11.1% used it occasionally. A small percentage (5.6%) of students indicated that they did not use technology for grammar practice at all. This demonstrates the growing reliance on digital resources among students, but also highlights that a minority of students may not be fully utilizing these tools to enhance their learning.

C. Importance of Grammar for Communication

The results regarding the perceived importance of grammar for communication revealed that the majority of students (63.3%) view grammar as "very important" for effective communication. This finding underscores the significance that students place on understanding grammar structures as a means to achieve fluency and accuracy in language use. Grammar is no longer perceived as an isolated system of rules but is considered a fundamental aspect of communication competence (Zhang, 2018).

A smaller proportion of students (31.1%) viewed grammar as "moderately important," indicating that they recognize its value but may prioritize other aspects of language learning, such as vocabulary and pronunciation. Only 5.6% of students considered grammar "unimportant," suggesting that there is still a minority of learners who may not fully appreciate the role that grammar plays in achieving clear and effective communication.

D. Variations in Student Preferences

While the majority of students expressed a preference for explicit grammar instruction, it is worth noting that a significant number (14.4%) preferred a hybrid approach that combines both explicit and implicit methods. This finding suggests that students may not view grammar teaching methods as mutually exclusive but rather as complementary. The preference for a combination of approaches aligns with the idea that a balanced and flexible teaching style can address the varied needs of students and provide them with opportunities to understand grammar both conceptually and in practical contexts (Williams, 2020).

The relatively low preference for implicit grammar instruction alone (13.3%) suggests that while students may appreciate learning grammar in context, they still desire some form of explicit explanation to fully grasp the language rules. This preference emphasizes the need for teachers to integrate both explicit instruction and opportunities for language practice, thereby fostering a more comprehensive understanding of grammar.

E. Use of Technology in Grammar Instruction

Another significant finding of the study was the clear connection between the use of technology and student engagement with grammar practice. The majority of students who used digital tools on a daily basis reported a higher level of engagement and motivation in practicing grammar. This finding reflects broader trends in language education, where technology is increasingly seen as a tool to enhance language learning, providing students with immediate feedback and personalized learning experiences (Jones, 2019).

The data also revealed that students who used technology regularly felt more confident in their grammar abilities and were able to apply grammar rules more effectively in communicative tasks. This suggests that the use of technology can complement traditional teaching methods by providing students with additional opportunities to reinforce and apply grammar knowledge.

F. Student Perceptions of Grammar's Role in Communication

The survey responses highlighted that students consider grammar to be an essential component of communication. This finding is particularly significant given that earlier studies have suggested that grammar is sometimes seen as a secondary aspect of language learning, with communicative competence taking precedence (Richards, 2017). The high percentage of students (63.3%) who view grammar as "very important" for communication reflects a shift in attitudes, where grammar is increasingly seen as integral to effective communication and fluency in English. This result challenges the notion that grammar teaching should be downplayed in favour of a focus on communicative tasks. Instead, the data supports the idea that grammar is a vital component of language proficiency and should be explicitly taught alongside communicative activities to help students develop both accuracy and fluency (Thornbury, 2018).

The findings suggest that there is a strong preference among students for explicit grammar instruction, highlighting the importance of clear, structured explanations of grammar rules. However, the desire for a balanced approach that integrates

both explicit and implicit methods reflects the growing recognition that grammar instruction should be flexible and adaptable to different learning contexts. Additionally, the high frequency of technology use for grammar practice underscores the role of digital tools in supporting students' learning outside of the classroom, providing opportunities for personalized practice.

Furthermore, the results indicate that students consider grammar to be a crucial aspect of language learning and communication. This reinforces the idea that grammar teaching should be a central focus in ELT classrooms, as it contributes to both accuracy and communicative competence.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study has shed light on the evolving perspectives and preferences of students regarding grammar instruction in English Language Teaching (ELT). The findings clearly indicate that students still predominantly favour explicit grammar instruction, recognizing its importance in understanding and applying language rules accurately. However, there is also a noticeable shift towards integrating both explicit and implicit approaches, as students appreciate the flexibility of learning grammar in context while benefiting from clear, structured explanations. The increasing use of technology in grammar practice further illustrates this shift, as digital tools provide students with the opportunity to engage in self-paced learning and immediate feedback, making grammar practice more accessible and interactive. Additionally, the research confirms that students view grammar as an essential component of effective communication, not just as a set of rules but as a foundational skill for achieving fluency and accuracy. This underscores the importance of balancing grammar instruction with communicative tasks, ensuring that learners can apply their grammatical knowledge in real-world contexts. As the study suggests, there is no single approach that can address all learners' needs; instead, a hybrid method combining explicit teaching with practical application and technological support is the most effective strategy. Therefore, educators are encouraged to embrace a diverse range of methods, ensuring that grammar instruction remains relevant, engaging, and effective in the contemporary ELT classroom. The study highlights the need for further exploration into how technology can be better integrated into grammar instruction, as well as how hybrid approaches can be implemented to create a more dynamic and comprehensive learning environment for students. Ultimately, a balanced and flexible approach to grammar teaching will better equip students for the complexities of real-world communication.

For the future of grammar instruction in English Language Teaching (ELT), it is essential to adopt a more balanced and adaptable approach that integrates both traditional methods and modern technological tools. Educators should consider incorporating a combination of explicit grammar teaching with contextualized, communicative activities that allow students to practice grammar in real-life scenarios. This blended approach would cater to diverse learning styles and ensure that students not only understand grammar rules but also apply them effectively in communication. Additionally, the integration of digital resources such as grammar apps, online exercises, and interactive platforms should be encouraged to enhance independent learning and provide immediate feedback, further supporting student engagement and progress. Teachers must also stay abreast of the latest research on grammar acquisition and continuously adapt their teaching methods to meet the evolving needs of their students. Professional development programs focusing on the innovative use of technology in grammar instruction could prove invaluable in equipping educators with the necessary tools and strategies. Furthermore, more research is needed to explore how technology can be seamlessly incorporated into grammar teaching to create a more interactive, dynamic learning environment. By focusing on a student-centered approach that combines theory, practice, and technology, future ELT classrooms can foster a deeper, more meaningful understanding of grammar.

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Representation of Muslims in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*: A Critical Discourse Analysis

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Abstract—The novel *Falling Man*, like Don DeLillo's other works, is thematically concerned with the symbolic aspect of terrorist violence as portrayed in the media. Furthermore, DeLillo's story investigates the potential of rewriting individual identity, as well as the tendency of people to establish their identities using a community mindset. This article examines the portrayal of Muslims in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*, focusing on their difficulties during the period that saw the rise of terrorism. Although the image of Muslims in literature is becoming increasingly prevalent, their portrayals are sometimes reductive or stereotypical. The current study intends to investigate the intricate and subtle portrayals of Muslims, as well as the underlying ideas that affect these representations. A qualitative study design was used, with five passages carefully chosen from *Falling Man*. The study adopts an eclectic paradigm that examines text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice by combining Fairclough's (2003) three-dimensional framework with Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis and manipulation method (2006). The findings show that the non-Muslim character's speech uses specific narrative and discursive tactics to obfuscate Muslims' genuine experiences, maintaining dominant preconceptions while occasionally upsetting them. The analysis reveals that the portrayal of Muslims in *Falling Man* is multifaceted and challenges popular prejudices. Finally, the novel uses discourse analysis to show the relationship between language, identity, and power, offering a critical evaluation of society's opinions of Muslims and the larger political framework in which they operate.

Index Terms—CDA, literature, stereotype, ideology, identity

I. INTRODUCTION

Falling Man is a novel that is written by American writer Don DeLillo. Published in May of 2007, his portrayal of Muslims in literature is a multifaceted one, frequently shaped by Orientalism, a Eurocentric viewpoint that critiques non-Western civilizations. This has resulted in both favorable and unfavorable stereotypes and misrepresentations of Muslims. However, contemporary literature is seeing a transformation as authors from varied backgrounds, particularly Muslims, confront these preconceptions. They provide intricate and diverse portrayals that emphasize the agency, resilience, and complexity of Muslims' experiences.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) serves as a mechanism that interrogates stereotypes and underscores the many experiences and intricacies of Muslims. Negative stereotypes frequently perpetuate Orientalist notions, depicting Muslims as docile, mute, downtrodden, or victims of patriarchal dominance. Thus, CDA has become especially pertinent in analyzing the depiction of Muslims, since they frequently encounter stereotypical and adverse representations in media and public dialogue, sustaining biases and supporting societal inequities.

Moreover, the adjective "critical" underscores the uniqueness of language in exercising socio-political power. Language serves as an essential instrument for social interactions and communication, presenting researchers with the problem of comprehending and applying Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a theoretical framework for their studies. Although it is valuable for examining power dynamics, ideologies, and social practices via language and discourse, its intricate nature and interdisciplinary roots render consistent application and comprehension difficult.

The absence of clarity and set rules for employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a framework results in discrepancies and differences in its implementation across research. Nonetheless, CDA serves as an appropriate framework for elucidating concealed issues within discourses, especially in literary discourse, which frequently encompasses implicit concerns such as the portrayal of Muslims. This issue has been a prominent subject in literary studies; nonetheless, a deficiency persists in the literature about the portrayal of Muslims in novels through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

This study seeks to examine the stereotyped portrayal of Muslims in media and literature from the 18th to the 20th centuries. The depiction is consistent and simplistic, frequently erasing Islamic characteristics and rendering them voiceless, resulting in a detrimental representation. This misconception disregards the varied experiences, beliefs, and contributions of Muslims, along with their empowerment and inclusion in society. A discursive analysis is required to critically examine the tactics employed in the novel and to foster a more nuanced representation that honors their identities, agency, and rights.

Prior research on the representation of Muslims in literature frequently generalizes conclusions and lacks comprehensive investigation. This study seeks to address this gap by analyzing *Falling Man*, a novel by American writer Don DeLillo, to attain a more profound comprehension of the language used to portray Muslims.

Research on the representation of Muslims in literature, especially in Don DeLillo's novel *Falling Man*, has yielded substantial contributions. Nonetheless, there exist deficiencies and constraints; notably, there is an insufficient emphasis on critical discourse analysis and its related frameworks. Furthermore, prior research has not thoroughly employed critical discourse analysis to examine the portrayal of Muslims in *Falling Man*.

The study seeks to examine Don DeLillo's employment of ideologies and discursive methods in his novel *Falling Man*, particularly in the portrayal of Muslims, to fulfill its aims.

This study rigorously examines *Falling Man* to enhance literary discourse on the representation of Muslims. It highlights the difficulties posed by prejudices and power disparities, arguing for more inclusive representations. The research is crucial for educators and students of literature and linguistics, since it reveals the connection between language, representation, and social reality, promoting a more nuanced comprehension of varied societies. It enhances the ongoing discourse over the representation of Muslims in literature.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Billig (2003) asserts that language is inherently biased and perpetually shaped by ideological forces. Critical Discourse Studies (CDS), formerly referred to as Critical Language Studies, is an interdisciplinary methodology that integrates theory, practice, and analysis. The focus is on analyzing various linguistic and non-linguistic signs and meanings, with the main aim of critically evaluating and highlighting tactics that create and sustain uneven power dynamics through discourse. CDS analysts focus on the factors that influence discourse, where prevailing ideologies are either upheld or challenged, and where conflicting and contradictory ideologies coexist. Applied Linguistics, formerly referred to as Critical Language Studies, constitutes a paradigm, methodology, and analytical approach.

Wodak and Meyer (2001) assert that Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a social scientific methodology that investigates the influence of language on power dynamics, ideologies, and social structures. It seeks to reveal concealed power dynamics and the perpetuation of social inequity via rhetoric. CDA acknowledges discourse as a domain where power dynamics are sustained and reproduced, analyzing how language fortifies and legitimizes social inequalities. The three-dimensional approach suggested by Fairclough analyzes text, discourse practice, and sociocultural practice to comprehend the integration of language within social institutions. CDA utilizes power theories from Gramsci and Foucault to comprehend the hegemonic characteristics of discourse and the relationship between power and knowledge.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Sampling

The present study now explains the methodologies for executing a critical discourse analysis about the portrayal of Muslims in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*. The process begins with an exhaustive reading of the work, followed by a comprehensive review of prior research pertinent to the study's focus.

B. Research Design

The study uses an exploratory research design with a qualitative method to deeply explore the insights of collected data. This type of research focuses on non-numerical data, such as case studies, interviews, discourse, or written data, and relies on meaning beyond words and expressions. Qualitative studies are actions that position the observer inside the world, enhancing their awareness of it through material and interpretive practices. The current study is qualitative, as it thoroughly examines the written text expressing the representation of Muslims in Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*.

C. Analytical Framework

What follows are the approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis used in this study.

Context-Based Analysis (CBA) is a recognized methodology for linguistic, semiotic, and discourse analysis, employing several classification techniques. Nonetheless, these techniques exhibit significant characteristics. CDA is optimally regarded as an instructional framework or institution, employing diverse methodologies from distinct perspectives. The methodologies of Fairclough (2003) and Van Dijk (2006) were selected for this study due to their congruence with the aims of assessing novel excerpts. Notwithstanding the common viewpoint, CDA is most appropriately regarded as an educational framework or institution. Consequently, CDA serves as an essential instrument for comprehending and examining diverse forms of speech.

(a). Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Approach

Kareem (2019) asserts that Fairclough's three-step method for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a critical framework for examining texts and dialogues. This approach, established in 1989 and improved upon in 1996, perceives language as a discourse and social activity, integrating text, social processes, and context. Fairclough's paradigm underpins CDA research and is linked to three supplementary stages, facilitating the ongoing advancement of CDA research. His model is regarded as the main concept in the discipline.

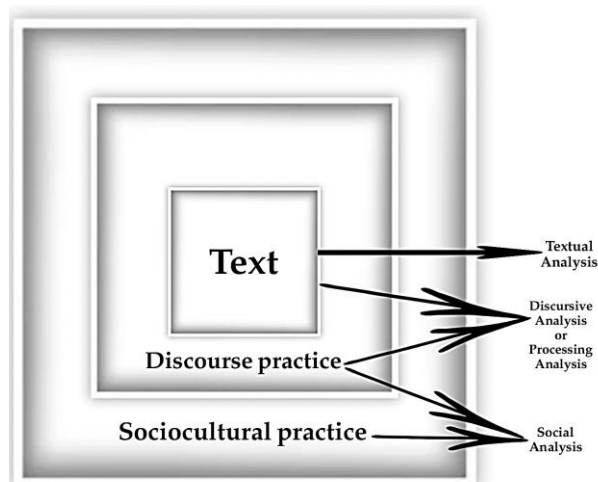


Figure 1. Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Approach of Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough (2001) underscores the description stage as a selected process in analyzing formal language components of texts, encompassing both visual-verbal and visual texts. This phase enables researchers to choose suitable linguistic attributes for their data. It pertains to grammatical usage within the pertinent social context and can be categorized as linguistic. The second stage examines the processes of text creation and consumption, focusing on the link between text and interaction.

The text examines the process of discourse analysis, emphasizing the situational context and intertextual backdrop. Fairclough (1995) elucidates that the interpretation stage examines meanings and understandings in language, whereas Fairclough (2001) delineates the explanation stage, the third phase, which concentrates on the concealed ideologies of “power behind discourse” that govern power dynamics and remain obscured throughout the process. The discursive choices of the participants are perceived as reactions to social constraints in a specific context.

Critical analysis seeks to comprehend the formation of sociocultural practices and ideological patterns. Contextual analysis indicates that intertextual and situational contexts are essential for interpretation. Fairclough's technique serves as a comprehensive framework to link following models, while Fairclough's three-dimensional model and Van Dijk's Model of Critical Discourse Analysis and Manipulation (2006) are utilized in this study to elucidate sociocultural practices and ideological tendencies.

(b). *Van Dijk's Approaches*

1. *Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach*

Hart (2010) asserts that Teun Van Dijk is a prominent player in both the Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA) and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). SCA employs diverse theories to examine social sciences. Its principal duty is to forge connections between literary and cognitive frameworks as well as social systems. Van Dijk's SCA framework is crucial for comprehending the intellectual representations and processes of individuals. A constructive text encompasses the interplay between social structures and social cognition. Van Dijk's SCA, as an analytical tool grounded in formal text linguistics and cognitive science, examines the interplay between cognition, discourse, and society. It examines stereotypes, racial discrimination, the abuse of elite power, and the resistance of marginalized communities, emphasizing the concept of framing and conventional psychological memory models.

Van Dijk contends that discourses are socially formed and affect societal functioning via a cognitive interface, encompassing mental representations of language users as both individuals and social entities. Discourse is shaped by individuals' cognitive processes, collective knowledge, and personal experiences, serving as both a manifestation and conveyance of social cognition and a means of social interaction. Local and global social structures influence speech via ideologies, collective knowledge, and the personal mental frameworks of social members, who interpret communicative occurrences as context models in their subjective manners (Van Dijk, 2015a).

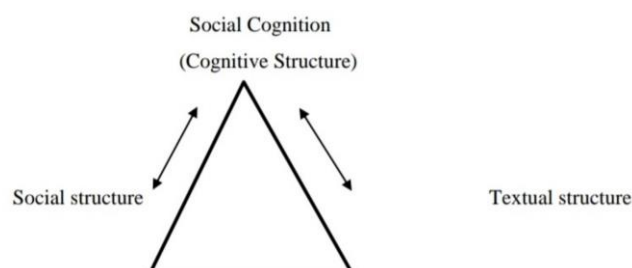


Figure 2. Triangle of SCA (Adopted From Hart, 2010, p. 15)

According to Hart (2010), the triangle representing textual and social structures in social cognition elucidates the connection between these two structures. Van Dijk's research delineates three categories of memory: short-term, long-term, and semantic. It is inappropriate to consider the components of Social Cognitive Analysis (SCA) in isolation, as they are interconnected. Van Dijk distinguishes between episodic memory, which retains personal memories, and social and semantic memory, which encompass broad knowledge and facts.

2. *Van Dijk's Ideological Square Approach*

Van Dijk (2000a) used critical discourse analysis to elucidate the social dynamics between power and ideologies inside discourse. He contended that news texts are governed by the dominant power and that ideologies can influence any spoken or written expression. A group wields social power when it can affect the beliefs and behaviors of other groups. Van Dijk differentiated between coercive power, which depends on force, and persuasive power, which is founded on knowledge, information, or authority.

Van Dijk's "ideological square" comprises four fundamental principles for the analysis of ideology: accentuating positive attributes of ourselves, stressing negative aspects of others, downplaying negative traits of ourselves, and minimizing positive qualities of others. This ideological framework facilitates a favorable representation of in-groups while adversely portraying out-groups through polarization.

3. *Van Dijk's Discourse and Manipulation Approach*

Van Dijk's 2006 book, *Discourse and Manipulation*, scrutinizes the ideological assumptions inherent in news coverage of Muslim women, focusing on techniques of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation. Manipulation is the act of mentally influencing the views of readers and listeners, characterized as discursive, unlawful domination within society, and cognitive control. In discourse, manipulation underscores both advantageous and detrimental characteristics, whereas in society, it reinforces social disparity. Mind control impairs cognitive processes and generates distorted mental perceptions of social reality. Van Dijk perceives manipulation as a consequence of power exploitation within a society characterized by interactions among various social groups. He proposes methodologies for the analysis of research data across all linguistic tiers. The strategies are as follows:

(1). *Actor Description*

The semantic method entails utilizing the ideals of speakers to characterize actors, frequently depicting out-group members in a bad light, while in-group individuals are represented neutrally. This diminishes favorable characterizations of group members while accentuating unfavorable ones. The description also encompasses details regarding the individual's role, status, and relationships (Van Dijk, 2006; Van Dijk, 2000).

(2). *Authority*

Speakers employ a pragmatic approach to substantiate their arguments by referencing authority, which may pertain to individual or national sovereignty, a legitimate assertion of political power. Authority can be reinforced by factors like official organizations, institutions, public leaders, and social media, according to Van Dijk (2006).

(3). *Burden*

The syntactic strategy is defined by self-evident and assumed premises, exemplified by the statement, "It is unfair that ratepayers in the London area should bear an excessive portion of the financial burden created by those individuals." This form of argument offers adequate support for the conclusion.

(4). *Categorization*

This semantic approach classifies persons into distinct categories, including immigrants, workers, and citizens, particularly when phrases related to class or position are utilized, as seen by the example "There are sellers in Britain, but many of them are not opportunity seekers".

(5). *Comparison*

The in-group is shown favorably, but the out-group is depicted unfavorably using a semantic technique, as demonstrated in Van Dijk's 2006 study, which straightforwardly compares individuals slain in Iraq to those in other nations.

(6). *Consensus*

This semantic technique is employed when a society faces threats, such as during war, immigration, or terrorism, exemplified by the assertion "It is crucial to address the influx of immigrants".

(7). *Counterfactual*

Syntactic methods, such as "If they didn't run, they might die," illustrate probable consequences in specific scenarios, enabling humans to present absurd results while contemplating alternatives (Van Dijk, 2006; Van Dijk, 2000).

(8). *Disclaimers*

Syntactic techniques, as articulated by Van Dijk (2000), entail portraying oneself and others in an ideologically equitable fashion, accentuating the favorable attributes of one group while minimizing the unfavorable characteristics of the other, thus averting attitudinal ambiguity and preserving a positive image.

(9). *Euphemism*

Rhetorical figures can alleviate the effects of harsh language by circumventing unfavorable judgments and impressions of the positive in-group. This semantic mitigation method is frequently rationalized by considerations of

politeness or ideological motives. For instance, a writer may employ “very muted” rather than more severe terminology to characterize oppressive regimes, as Enright contended in 1986.

(10). *Evidentiality*

Evidentiality is a technique employed by speakers to bolster the veracity of their assertions by supplying requisite evidence or proof. This can be accomplished through alternative types of evidentiality or by referencing an authoritative source. This morning, the prime minister announced, exemplifying the application of evidentiality in communication (Van Dijk, 2000).

(11). *Example/Illustration*

The semantic technique in discourse enhances the likelihood of an assertion, hence increasing its persuasiveness. The statement, “The New York Times reports a girl who could remain in Russia without a passport,” exemplifies a particular concept (Van Dijk, 2000).

(12). *Generalization*

This semantic strategy generalizes characteristics such as the benefits and drawbacks of in-group membership, including immigration, by abstracting public traits. This aids in deriving general principles from particular instances, exemplified by the assertion “The majority of immigrants seek asylum” (Van Dijk, 2000).

(13). *Hyperbole*

Hyperbolic assertions serve as a rhetorical device to amplify semantic significance by emphasizing the attributes of others while minimizing our own. Exaggeration occurs when an inflated term is employed to characterize an extraordinary event, such as the Holocaust, or when a government representative describes a truce as a perilous risk (Van Dijk, 1995a).

(14). *Implication*

Speakers frequently refrain from overtly articulating thoughts or beliefs for pragmatic or contextual purposes, enabling audiences to infer implicit information from common knowledge. This method enables listeners to deduce absent information, such as “impoverished individuals” signifying a requirement for assistance. Van Dijk (2006) and Van Dijk (2000) provide additional evidence for this assertion.

(15). *Irony*

The term “unexpected discovery” serves as a rhetorical tactic to critique a situation when the reality diverges from the professed assertion. It is comically attributed to refugees who were already aware of their intention to stay in a country, emphasizing that the two are distinct (Colebrook, 2004).

(16). *Metaphor*

Metaphor is a rhetorical device that renders abstract and unfamiliar concepts comprehensible and tangible. It entails juxtaposing abstract notions such as immigration threats with refugees and floods or characterizing asylum seekers as “parasites.” The analysis of metaphors examines the relationship between these meanings and cultural means of expression, ensuring that the metaphor accurately communicates the desired message (Hussein & Abdullah, 2016).

(17). *National Self-Glorification*

The speaker’s pragmatic approach entails highlighting the favorable attributes of their nation, advocating for its traditions and beliefs, and fostering a congenial atmosphere. This method, termed national self-glorification, is exemplified by the assertion “Britain has always had the best tourism in the world,” perceived as a means to promote the speaker’s national interests (Malesevic, 2019).

(18). *Norm Expression*

The syntactic approach entails the objective and systematic elucidation of a subject, as articulated in Van Dijk’s 2006 assertion, highlighting the significance of an impartial perspective on asylum seekers.

(19). *Number Game*

News articles employ numerical data to establish objectivity and trustworthiness, as evidenced by Van Dijk’s 2000 study. This method is frequently employed to characterize terrorist acts, as shown by a bombing resulting in 30 fatalities and several injuries.

(20). *Polarization: Us-Them Categorization*

Syntactic strategies denote the cognitive mechanisms employed to differentiate between two disparate categories, exemplified as the assertion “The good people who contributed to the country should not be exploited by the bad people” (Van Dijk, 2006).

(21). *Populism*

Populism is a leader-follower relationship in which a leader promotes the views, needs, and objectives of their followers. This interdependence is apparent when a spokesman declares that individuals must cover their bills. Populism includes several political positions that highlight the moral integrity of the populace (Madrid, 2012).

(22). *Presupposition*

A pragmatic strategy is speakers assuming the veracity of a statement when it is not explicitly articulated, exemplified as the inquiry, “Where is your car?” This indicates the presence of the car. A presupposition is the assumption made by a speaker when uttering a sentence, distinct from the actual assertion, or a prerequisite that must be fulfilled for a specific state of events to occur.

(23). *Vagueness*

Ambiguity is a practical tactic employed to express doubt in communication. It entails employing ambiguous formulations with indistinct referents or imprecise sets, such as “Numerous terrorist attacks were executed in various cities in Iraq,” together with hazy quantifiers, nouns, and adverbs. This strategy is frequently employed by individuals to evade failure and to circumvent providing vague answers (Van Dijk, 2000).

(24). *Victimization*

In communication, speakers and writers employ a semantic strategy termed “positive in-group description” and “negative out-group description” to provoke animosity towards a particular organization or elicit sympathy for victims, exemplified by phrases such as “ISIS killed numerous innocent individuals and motorists in the Iraqi deserts”.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The extracts below are from Don DeLillo’s *Falling Man* that can be analyzed according to Fairclough’s (2003) three-dimensional model and Van Dijk’s model of CDA and manipulation (2006). These extracts are rich for critical discourse analysis, providing a foundation to explore how the novel constructs and represents Muslim identities, terrorism, and Western cultural hegemony.

1. *“There was a woman behind it, facing him, with police tape wrapped around her head and face, yellow caution tape that marks the limits of a crime scene.”*

This extract refers to Keith Neudecker, the protagonist, who survives the World Trade Center collapse. Keith’s disoriented state and fragmented interactions throughout the novel signify the broader theme of post-trauma detachment.

The textual analysis dimension in Fairclough’s three-dimensional model focuses on the language, word choices, and imagery within the text. There are many terms and phrases that help to see how the author represents Muslims, such as “police tape wrapped around her head and face,” which suggests a metaphorical “marking” of identity, linking the woman to criminalization and control. The “yellow caution tape” symbolizes suspicion and danger, commonly associated with crime scenes. “Crime scene” connotes culpability or investigation, reinforcing a sense of scrutiny and marginalization. “Facing him” implies a direct interaction, yet the visual obstruction “tape” introduces a sense of distance or alienation. Thus, the language constructs the woman as a visual representation of societal fear and suspicion. The use of the metaphorical markers “police tape” and “crime scene” embeds meanings of surveillance and restriction, consistent with post-9/11 Islamophobic narratives. The word choice isolates the woman as both a victim “wrapped in tape” and a suspect who is linked to a crime scene.

The discursive practice dimension examines how the text draws on or reproduces existing discourses and ideologies. Post-9/11 surveillance and criminalization are reflected in the image of the woman wrapped in caution tape and reflect broader cultural narratives that criminalized Muslims, especially women, after 9/11. Stereotypes of Muslim women in that imagery echo cultural profiling, where Muslim women are seen as hyper-visible symbols of threat or oppression.

To this end, the scene reproduces societal fears tied to race, religion, and gender, particularly the racialized association of Muslim identities with crime or terrorism. It also engages with the gendered framing of Muslim women as either oppressed victims or complicit in cultural threats, a recurring trope in post-9/11 media and political rhetoric. The fragmented interaction mirrors the disconnection between Western perspectives and Muslim identities, emphasizing how narratives of “othering” are sustained.

The social practice dimension analyzes how the text connects to broader societal ideologies and power structures. Islamophobia reflects the pervasive suspicion directed at Muslims in the aftermath of 9/11, with Muslim women symbolizing both cultural difference and perceived danger. Cultural profiling is seen in the metaphor of the police tape, which reinforces how Muslim identities were socially “marked” as objects of fear and control.

Thus, the image of the woman trapped by caution tape parallels how Muslim women were socially constrained by stereotypes, such as being viewed solely through their religious or cultural affiliations. It reflects the power dynamics of post-9/11 societies where state surveillance and public suspicion disproportionately targeted Muslims, reinforcing cultural hierarchies. The broader narrative serves as a critique of these social practices, presenting the caution tape as a metaphor for systemic marginalization.

The text employs the following manipulative strategies that align with Van Dijk’s CDA on manipulation:

1. **Symbolism:** the police tape functions as a manipulative symbol that connects the woman to crime and suspicion, embedding societal prejudices within the reader’s subconscious.
2. **Foregrounding and Obscuring:** These are found in that the woman is presented as central, “facing him,” with her identity obscured (“wrapped in tape”), reflecting the dual processes of hyper-visibility and erasure experienced by Muslim women in the public sphere.
3. **Emotional Appeal:** Emotional appeal is in the imagery that evokes a sense of discomfort and alienation, manipulating the reader’s emotional response to mirror societal anxieties.
4. **Stereotype Reinforcement:** This is found in the metaphor of the crime scene that reinforces racialized stereotypes about Muslim women, manipulating perceptions through association.
5. **Caution and Criminalization of Identity:** These can be found in that the woman in this extract is marked by police tape, signifying that she is within a crime scene, which metaphorically relates to how Muslim women were criminalized in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Again, the yellow caution tape is a symbolic marker of

suspicion and restriction, illustrating how Muslim women, often perceived as threatening or dangerous, were seen through a lens of fear and control.

6. **Hypervisibility:** The police tape around the woman's face also suggests a hypervisibility that is forced upon Muslim women, where their identities are scrutinized and marked in the public sphere. This is consistent with post-9/11 narratives, where Muslim women were subjected to intense public attention and cultural profiling, often portrayed as either victims of their own culture or as subjects of suspicion due to their religious and cultural affiliations. The image of a woman "wrapped" in caution tape visually echoes the limiting perceptions of Muslim women during this period, often trapped between stereotypes of oppression and racialized fear.

Overall, the extract is tied to the research on the representation of Muslim women. It delves into the criminalization and marginalization of Muslim women. These themes are key in analyzing how Muslim women were depicted in the wake of 9/11—either as victims of oppressive regimes or as threats to Western security. As well as the woman's depiction in this scene—offering help but still distant and being marked by caution tape—can be analyzed through the lens of gendered vulnerability and stereotyping, concepts central to both CDA and your research focus.

2. *"It was a matter of simple coincidence, or not so simple, that a card might arrive at this particular time bearing the title of that specific book."*

This statement is narrated by the omniscient narrator and occurs in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks early on in the novel. It is situated in the narrative when Keith is trying to navigate his disoriented state, return to normalcy, and process the trauma of surviving the World Trade Center collapse.

From a three-dimensional perspective, the phrase "simple coincidence, or not so simple" reflects a subtle tension, suggesting an interplay of chance and significance. That mention of "that particular book," which refers to *The Revolt of Islam*, an 1818 poem written by Percy Bysshe Shelley, at such a pivotal moment—three days after the planes were flown into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon—evokes a deliberate connection between the cultural discourse surrounding Islam and the trauma of 9/11. *The Revolt of Islam* itself, as a literary work, carries symbolic weight. Though Shelley's poem is not directly about Islam, its title juxtaposes Islam with concepts of rebellion, a framing that resonates with the post-9/11 ideological association of Islam with resistance or insurgency.

The act of including this reference shows how literary and cultural texts contribute to shaping perceptions of Islam. Postcards, as forms of communication, seem innocuous but can carry ideological underpinnings—in this case, the juxtaposition of Islamic references with chaos and trauma reinforces broader cultural discourses that associate Islam with unrest. The timing of "three days after the planes" foregrounds Islam in the cultural consciousness, highlighting how public and private narratives interweave after traumatic events to create cultural stereotypes.

On a societal level, this scene reflects how cultural products (e.g., Shelley's poem) can be reinterpreted or mobilized to reinforce Islamophobic narratives in the post-9/11 context. The arrival of this postcard ties into a larger ideological framework, where Islam becomes a symbolic marker of danger or rebellion in Western discourse.

From Van Dijk's Model of CDA and Manipulation (2006), there are various discursive strategies, including:

1. **Presupposition and Implication:** These are found in the whole statement, suggesting that the arrival of the postcard might not be coincidental. This subtle implication prompts the reader to question the neutrality of Islam's mention, potentially reinforcing the idea of Islam as inherently linked to chaos.
2. **Framing:** Found in the postcard's arrival and juxtaposed with "three days after the planes," which frames Islam in a context of recent trauma, manipulating readers to perceive the two as interconnected.
3. **Polarization:** This extract subtly polarizes the discourse, positioning Islam as "other," while evoking themes of rebellion and unrest through Shelley's title.
4. **Symbolism:** The postcard becomes a symbol of the intrusion of Islamic imagery into Western consciousness, reinforcing narratives of incompatibility or threat.
5. **Contextual Anchoring:** By situating the postcard in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, the text anchors Islam within a framework of global insecurity. This reinforces manipulative ideologies where Islamic identities are viewed as antithetical to Western stability.

Overall, this extract is highly relevant as it ties Islamic representation to post-9/11 trauma. It reflects the discursive strategies employed in *Falling Man* to show how Islamic references, even when innocuous or literary, are reframed in the light of suspicion, fear, and manipulation. Analyzing this passage with Fairclough and Van Dijk's models highlights the subtle ways Western texts construct Islam, contributing to the broader discourse that your paper investigates. By linking *The Revolt of Islam* to this pivotal moment, DeLillo critiques how Western narratives of trauma and terrorism manipulate perceptions of Islam, reinforcing its association with rebellion and chaos.

3. *"If God let this happen, with the planes, then did God make me cut my finger when I was slicing bread this morning?"*

This extract is spoken by Lianne Neudecker, wife of protagonist Keith Neudecker. It occurs during a post-9/11 conversation when Lianne is reflecting on the tragic events of the attacks and questioning divine will. The setting is intimate, within a domestic or contemplative space, emphasizing personal reflection amid the societal upheaval caused by the attacks.

From the textual analysis, the phrase "If God let this happen" introduces divine agency and responsibility for tragedy, reflecting religious and existential questioning. Furthermore, the phrase "with the planes" shows a metonym for the 9/11

attacks, emphasizing how planes became symbols of terror in Western consciousness. The question “did God make me cut my finger” reflects the juxtaposition of a personal, mundane event with a catastrophic global tragedy, which creates irony and dissonance. Moreover, “slicing bread this morning” symbolizes everyday normalcy, contrasting sharply with the extraordinary scale of the 9/11 attacks.

To this end, the text uses a rhetorical question to frame Lianne’s internal conflict, making the reader ponder the logic behind assigning divine causality. The juxtaposition of the planes and cutting bread creates an absurd comparison, subtly critiquing deterministic religious narratives that attribute all events to God. The tone conveys confusion and irony, reflecting the disorientation and existential crisis many felt post-9/11.

From discursive practices, there is an examination of how the statement draws from and contributes to larger cultural narratives. The statement critiques simplistic religious explanations for suffering, questioning whether Divine Will governs all events. Furthermore, the reference to “planes” situates the statement within the cultural discourse of 9/11, where Islam and divine justification for terrorism became highly contentious topics. The mention of “slicing” bread highlights the persistence of mundane routines even in the face of unimaginable tragedy, a recurring theme in post-9/11 literature. So, the discourse challenges deterministic religious narratives, suggesting that not all suffering has a divine purpose.

Social Practices connects the statement to broader societal and ideological frameworks. Islamophobia and post-9/11 narratives are shown in which the planes indirectly evoke Islam, tying the religious discourse to broader stereotypes and ideological associations prevalent after the attacks. Moreover, the existential crisis reflects the societal struggle to find meaning in random events, a common response to large-scale tragedies. Challenges the tendency to ascribe universal causality to divine will, reflecting secular or critical perspectives on religion.

Thus, the extract critiques how religious frameworks were used to explain or justify 9/11, calling attention to the societal tendency to oversimplify complex events. It highlights the dissonance between personal suffering and collective trauma, reflecting the broader societal struggle to reconcile the two.

Van Dijk’s Manipulation (2006) perspective shows that this rhetorical question could demonstrate manipulation through normalization—linking the profound tragedy of 9/11 to mundane personal events, thereby trivializing or reshaping perceptions of the event. The discursive strategies identified are:

1. **Irony:** This can be found in the trivial comparison between the catastrophic 9/11 attacks “with the planes” and the mundane “cut my finger,” which adds an ironic tone. This strategy diminishes the seriousness of divine intervention, questioning the logic of attributing events to God’s will and challenging the religious interpretations of tragedy.
2. **Implication:** can also be found in the reference to planes, which indirectly evokes 9/11, subtly associating the event with the broader ideological and political discourse surrounding the attacks, which often involved Muslims. Such strategies allow readers to infer larger religious and political implications without explicitly stating them, making the discourse open to interpretation.
3. **Rhetorical Question:** The use of a rhetorical question draws attention to the perceived randomness of Divine Will and encourages the audience to reflect on the logic behind attributing blame or causality to God. Moreover, it provides critiques, determines religious narratives, and invites the reader to question ideological justifications for suffering.
4. **Juxtaposition:** Found in the mundane contrasts to the catastrophic, emphasizing the randomness of suffering and challenging proportional explanations for tragedy.

Overall, these strategies manipulate the reader’s perspective, prompting critical engagement with societal and religious ideologies. The extract encapsulates the tension between personal experiences and broader cultural narratives, making it a vital piece for analysis in your research.

4. *“What about the people God saved? Are they better people than the ones who died?”*

This extract is said by Lianne Neudecker, exposing her internal struggle to make sense of the 9/11 tragedy and her own doubts about Divine Will and moral hierarchies.

This extract illustrates a critical social issue—the moral hierarchy often implied in post-tragedy narratives. Through a discourse lens, it interrogates societal judgments and the ideological framing of victims and survivors. From a textual analysis perspective, “God saved” implies divine intervention, embedding a deterministic worldview that suggests God actively decides who lives and dies. “Better people” reflects a moral judgment, suggesting that survival could be tied to worthiness, introducing an implicit moral hierarchy. “The ones who died” refers to the victims of the 9/11 attacks, highlighting their vulnerability and situating them as part of the broader discourse of tragedy. Thus, this criticizes the deterministic worldview that assigns divine purpose to survival or death. The rhetorical structure challenges readers to reflect on the fairness and logic of such beliefs.

In discursive practice, the extract engages with cultural and religious narratives that seek to explain tragedy through divine intervention, questioning whether survival implies moral superiority. The line reflects the existential struggles faced by survivors and society at large, grappling with the randomness of death and the morality of divine justice. Furthermore, moral hierarchies are shown by suggesting that survival might imply moral superiority, so the text critiques societal tendencies to impose value judgments on victims and survivors.

In social practice analysis, the extract reflects societal struggles to find meaning in the randomness of death and survival, particularly in the context of 9/11, where the scale of loss challenged traditional religious and cultural narratives. It critiques the tendency to moralize tragedy, questioning whether divine justice can or should be used to explain survival. Power dynamics are also found by questioning divine justice, so the statement challenges religious authority and deterministic worldviews, reflecting a broader societal shift toward secular or critical perspectives on tragedy. The extract also reflects post-9/11 cultural anxieties, where the randomness of survival and death disrupted traditional narratives of morality, justice, and divine intervention.

From Van Dijk's point of view, the excerpted question might reflect ideological manipulation by suggesting a moral dichotomy in divine actions, which could perpetuate certain biases when analyzed in other contexts of the novel.

1. **Polarization:** This is the first strategy found in the extract. The question introduces a division between those who "survived" and those who "died," potentially reflecting a deeper ideological judgment on morality and worthiness. Polarization underscores societal tendencies to assign moral superiority to survivors or victimize those who perished, reflecting post-9/11 discourses on the value of human life.
2. **Presupposition:** Presupposition can be identified since the question presupposes that God actively chose who to save and who to let die, reinforcing a deterministic view of divine intervention. By embedding this presupposition, the narrative engages the audience in a moral debate, inviting them to reflect on religious interpretations of such events.
3. **Generalization:** This is the third strategy used. The framing suggests that divine favor might play a role in survival, generalizing beliefs about religious determinism and its impact on society. This strategy reflects the complexities and inconsistencies in theological explanations for tragedies. The author criticizes this generalization, highlighting its ethical and logical inconsistencies.

5. *"This is the purpose of religion, to return people to a childlike state. 'Awe and submission', her mother said."*

Said by Nina, Lianne's mother, the excerpt reflects her intellectual critique of religion during a conversation. Nina is a character who frequently voices skepticism and progressive views about societal and cultural constructs, including religion.

Focusing on textual analysis, "purpose of religion" frames religion as functional, suggesting it has a deliberate and singular aim. "Return people to a childlike state" reflects the use of metaphor to emphasize dependency, naivety, and vulnerability, portraying religion as regressive. "Awe and submission" are strong emotional and behavioral terms that depict religion as promoting passivity and reverence without critical engagement. Therefore, this extract critiques religion's role in fostering dependency and compliance, particularly in contexts where such traits could lead to societal control or ideological manipulation.

From the discursive practice analysis, religious criticism resonates with post-9/11 cultural anxieties about religious fundamentalism, where Islam was often portrayed as requiring "submission." Moreover, Nina's perspective reflects a broader cultural critique of institutional and ideological authority, positioning religion as a tool for control. To this end, this discourse aligns with broader societal critiques of religion's role in promoting compliance, reflecting anxieties about its influence in shaping ideologies and behaviors.

In the social practice analysis, the extract critiques the role of religion in societal control, reflecting post-9/11 anxieties about religious ideologies, particularly those found in Islam. It indirectly challenges deterministic religious narratives, questioning the relationship between faith, agency, and societal values. Furthermore, by framing religion as a tool for control, the statement critiques the power structures that use faith to foster compliance and dependency, resonating with broader cultural fears about the misuse of religious authority. The critique reflects a shift toward secular, intellectual perspectives that question the role of religion in shaping societal norms and individual behaviors, particularly in the context of post-9/11 cultural trauma.

There is also an interpretation of the possible benefits of the discursive strategies within the narrative and their contribution that shapes the representation of religion, tragedy, or groups such as Muslims.

1. **Authority:** The statement is framed as the opinion of the narrator's mother, invoking her authority to critique religion. Leveraging an authoritative voice lends credibility to the critique of religion's role in fostering submission and compliance.
2. **Legitimization:** Religion is portrayed as a tool for control, legitimizing this critique by appealing to the social consequences of religious practice (e.g., "awe and submission"). It challenges readers to question the societal function of religion, particularly in the context of events like 9/11.
3. **Exaggeration/Minimization:** The description of religion reducing people to a "childlike state" exaggerates its controlling aspects, minimizing its potential benefits or complexities. This strategy reinforces the narrative's critique of religion as simplistic and regressive.

Using these strategies, the main ideas of the novel can be summarized in three points. First, contextual relevance: while the text does not explicitly mention Muslims, these strategies create an ideological framework that resonates with post-9/11 discourses, where Islam and Muslims were frequently positioned as central to debates about religion, violence, and societal values. Second, in critiquing determinism, the strategies collectively question deterministic religious narratives that attribute events like 9/11 to divine will, indirectly challenging ideologies often linked to Islamic fundamentalism in public discourse. Third, engaging readers by using implication, rhetorical questions, and

presuppositions, the text invites readers to critically engage with religious and ideological assumptions without overtly stating them, making the critique more subtle and thought-provoking.

V. CONCLUSION

In Don DeLillo's *Falling Man*, the representation of Muslims can be reflected through a discourse analysis perspective. This is done by examining how language, power dynamics, and cultural narratives are used to shape the identities and experiences of the characters, focusing on Muslims, who are the core of this study. The study shows the importance of CDA in literature to reveal or uncover underlying power relations and ideologies in order to demonstrate its effectiveness in studying and analyzing the way in which the marginalized groups are presented in literary works. CDA clarifies how these negative stereotypes, images, and misrepresentations of Muslims serve specific ideological purposes. These images are drawn to portray Muslim societies as ignorant. This portrayal shows that Muslims need Western countries, and their intervention is a necessity to modify these images.

Depending on the model adopted, the language of the novel reflected in the extracts clarifies how the novel represents ideological structures and power dynamics and their influence on Muslims. The language reflected in *Falling Man* plays a vital role in drawing the images of Muslims with multifaceted and nuanced identities. Muslim characters dealt with cultural expectations, societal pressures, and personal aspirations that reflect and illustrate the complexity and the suffering of their identities that were drawn and engraved by both their heritage and previous stereotypes. Dialogues within the work reveal internal and external suffering and conflicts. Underlying tensions between contemporary realities and traditional values are reflected by the interaction of characters.

Don DeLillo's novel actively challenges the deep images or stereotypes about Muslims because, according to these images, they are either passive people or are presented as bad people. The novel's core underscores the intersectionality of gender, religion, and politics in presenting and shaping the lives of Muslims.

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Arabic-English Code-Switching as a Means of Communication Among Speakers of Different Arabic Varieties

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Abstract—Researches have shown that code-switching (CS) between Arabic (L1) and English (L2) is used as a common method of communication among Arab speakers descended from various Arab nations. Recently, the issue of Arabic-English CS has seized the attention of the researchers in the field of sociolinguistics. As a social phenomenon, Arabic-English CS has become a convenient tool for communication among the speakers of different Arabic varieties. According to previous research, Arabic-English CS appeared as a communication strategy either between Arabic-English bilinguals or Arab English learners. Yet, the functions of Arabic-English CS among the speakers of different Arabic varieties who have different proficiency levels in their Standard Arabic language were not enough discussed in the literature. Thus, this study investigated the phenomenon of Arabic-English CS as a significant communication device among speakers of different Arabic varieties and also explored how the proficiency level in the Standard Arabic language, along with the difficulty of understanding some Arabic varieties caused the process of Arabic-English CS. The study data followed three different data methods: interviews, observations and questionnaire. Eighty- seven Arabic speakers aged 18 – 50, who are non-English bilinguals participated in the study. Data analysis revealed that Arabic-English CS is a functional interactional device for the speakers who belong to different Arabic varieties. Also, the level of use/ occurrence for Arabic-English CS varied considerably according to the different factors related to interaction setting, linguistic knowledge of the interlocutors and the cause of the dialogue.

Index Terms—Arabic-English bilinguals, code-switching, communicative strategy, sociolinguistics

I. INTRODUCTION

In the past few decades, code-switching has been an interesting point of discourse among researchers interested in multilingual speech phenomena. For instance, Blom and Gumperz (1972) investigated how residents of a Norwegian community employed two dialects, each for a particular purpose. As a form of communication technique employed by multilingual or bilingual speakers for diverse requirements, the code-switching phenomenon has evolved in multilingual and bilingual cultures (Zainal Ariff, 2012). Arabic-English code-switching (CS) does not necessarily mean being truly bilingual in the two languages. Even though some bilingual studies associated with Arabic-English CS showed that CS comes off with the intention to develop bilingual “linguistic competence” in the two languages, other studies showed that Arabic-English CS also functions as a significant communication method, especially among the speakers of various Arabic varieties and with different levels of speaking proficiency in English. Moreover, the difficulty to use the Standard Arabic language or understand some Arabic varieties leads the process of Arabic-English CS to a more convenient communicative process, particularly among the speakers of different Arabic varieties who are not English bilinguals.

This study seeks to explore how CS contributes to a meaningful communication practice among the speakers of different Arabic varieties. The significance of this study lies in the fact that Arabic-English CS can be a helpful strategy to carry out a stable communication activity in the real-life situations where the communication between two different varieties of Arabic speakers fails.

II. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND KEY CONCEPTS: AN OVERVIEW

The literature review will briefly present and discuss, first, CS as a linguistic activity and how it is considered as a bilingual phenomenon or a communication strategy between interlocutors. The other significant part of the literature review will present some sociolinguistic studies of Arabic-English CS between speakers of different Arabic varieties and investigate how Arabic-English CS was used as a strategy for achieving various linguistic or communicative purposes.

A. Definition of CS

CS has been broadly used and defined in a variety of different studies. According to AL-Rowais (2012), CS is the interchangeable use of two different languages without adopting the words and phrases of the one language into the linguistic system of the other language. Thus, CS, as a general linguistic term, is different from “borrowing” in which

words and phrases are syntactically and morphologically transformed into the system of the other language. In a detailed description of CS, Basnight-Brown (2009) asserted that CS is the successive production of two different languages, but with preserving the diverse structural features of both languages. Further, Barbara and Almeida (2012) added that code switching is the capacity to transition from one language to another during verbal exchanges. In a bilingual person's speech collection, code switching is "considered as a communicative phenomenon of constantly switching between two languages" (Ja'afa & Maarof, 2016, p. 212).

B. CS and Developing Bilingualism

Although CS was treated as an "insignificance and inappropriate" phenomenon that was associated with "linguistic interference" from one language to another (Alkhatib, 2003), where some scholars observe CS as a specific performance, in which speakers develop *linguistic competence* and become bilingual in two languages. In supporting that claim, Duran (1994) concluded that CS, particularly at the early stages of developing bilingualism, includes "interlinguistic" processes that are necessarily for "bilingual acquisition". Likewise, Bullock and Trobio (2009) asserted that CS, primarily "intra-sentential CS" is associated with "bilingual competence," which language users developed through the progressive uses of two languages (p. 8).

C. CS as a Communication Strategy

CS does not only develop the processes of growing an Arabic-English bilingual, but it also functions as a significant communication strategy between Arab English learners. Thus, Kumar and Narendra (2012) introduced CS as "a communicative approach" that enhances the students' proficiency of the second language, in which the students' English CS facilitates and creates instances for using the second language. Othman (2006) also argued that CS was used as a communicative tool for performing different social purposes. In a further support, Abu-Melhim (1991) stated that CS, particularly Arabic-English CS has become a precise communication system among speakers who are from various Arabic dialects.

D. Sociolinguistic Studies of Arabic-English CS

Recently, the topic of Arabic-English CS has seized the attention of a large number of sociolinguistic researchers. As a social phenomenon, Arabic-English CS has generally become a crucial part for communications between speakers of different Arabic varieties. For instance, Hussein (1999) concluded in his study that Arabic-English CS occurred principally for two reasons: the lack of "Arabic equivalents" in scientific fields and "familiarity of formulaic English expressions (greetings, apologies, compliments, etc.)" (p. 288). Additionally, Bassiouney (2009) investigated Arabic-English CS and declared that CS was used as strategy to "fill in lexical gaps" between two languages, particularly when speakers were unable to maintain the appropriate use of one language during communications.

Even though some sociolinguistic studies observed Arabic-English CS as a social bilingual phenomenon that mostly occurred among bilinguals, other studies asserted that Arabic-English CS represents a more communicative tool, particularly when it occurred between people who speak different Arabic varieties. For example, Elsaadany's (2003) study showed that Egyptian Arabic-English CS among speakers of different Arabic dialects, including "Jordanian, Sudanese and Moroccan and Egyptian speakers," was not only considered as a bilingual event, but was also "a very useful communication resource," (p. 92), especially in "facilitating comprehensibility and showing friendliness and intimacy" (p. 93). Similarly, Jdetawy (2011) concluded in his study about Arabic-English CS among university Arab students in India, from different Arab countries, that Arabic and English languages were interchangeably used during the daily conversations, apparently in the forms of "intra-sentential, inter-sentential code-switching" (p. 113).

In the previous studies such as Hussein (1999), Bassiouney (2009) and Alkhatib (2003), Arabic-English CS was limitedly observed as a strategy for compensating and satisfying significant linguistic inabilities of Arab English learners, such as finding the appropriate vocabulary equivalents or preserving the use of the given language during communicative interactions. On the other hand, Abu-Melhim (1991) and Jdetawy (2011) presented the phenomenon of Arabic-English CS as a communication method between Arab English learners. However, Elsaadany (2003) and Othman (2006) investigated the different processes of CS in communications between Arabic-English bilinguals, specifically using the Egyptian and Shami Arabic varieties, along with English.

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It was clear that Arabic-English CS occurred among different Arab English speakers. Still, most of the previous sociolinguistic studies on Arabic-English CS did not present the relationship among Arab speakers' proficiency level in their Standard Arabic language and its impact in creating, preventing or even increasing the rate of CS among speakers of various Arabic varieties. According to some previous studies of CS, Arabic-English CS also appeared as a communication strategy either between Arabic-English bilinguals or Arab English learners.

Although Arabic-English CS, as a general communicative phenomenon, has been studied in the literature review, the functions of Arabic-English CS among the speakers of different Arabic varieties who have different proficiency level in their Standard Arabic language were not enough discussed in the previous sociolinguistic studies. Therefore, the researcher of this paper is motivated to investigate the phenomenon of Arabic-English CS as a significant

communication device among speakers of different Arabic varieties, and how the proficiency of Standard Arabic language, along with the difficulty of understanding of some Arabic varieties can impact the general process of Arabic-English CS.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study was based on three different data collection methods: interviews, observations and questionnaire. The initial plan for the interview was to include at least 15-20 participants who are not English bilinguals and speak different Arabic varieties. Unfortunately, only four participants agreed to participate in the interviews. Later on, the author included observations and questionnaire for more data collections. For the observations, the author attended different Arab gatherings as a participant-observer; the gatherings were in international Arab restaurants as well as in coffee shops that are more commonly visited by Arabs.

V. DATA COLLECTION

Three methods of data collection were employed for the purpose of this study as outlined below:

A. Interviews

Four online semi-structured interviews were held and recorded where only four participants were interviewed. The interviewees were from Saudi Arabia, UAE, Oman and Libya. None of the four participants were English bilinguals. The participants were not informed about the topic of the research, because researcher did not prefer to lead the participant to perform CS, instead, the author was more interested in investigating how Arabic-English CS occurred consciously and subconsciously. Each interview lasted for 15 minutes, and the topics were around the general social and educational experiences of the participants.

B. Observations

For the purposes of collecting more data about CS among Arab English speakers, the author has joined a variety of different Arab gatherings, as an observer-participant, both on the campus and outside the campus. The strategies for collecting data were through observing and taking notes. For validity, the observer did not participate in any types of interactions that may trigger to the process of Arabic-English CS. Also, the data of the observations were analyzed soon after the end of each observed session.

C. Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of three parts, in which the first part was devoted to the collection of the participants' personal data such as age, country, education and proficiency levels both in the Standard Arabic language as well as in the English language. The second significant part included various closed-ended statements about Arabic-English CS, in which the researcher is attempting to collect different participants' responses. The last part includes two open-ended questions that required the participants to indicate first the possible factors behind their CS and then to provide some examples from their own Arabic-English CS.

VI. PARTICIPANTS

Eighty-three Arab English speakers, who are not English bilinguals, have participated in the survey questionnaire. Most of the participants were from Saudi Arabia, while the others were from different Arab countries such as Libya, Sudan, Yemen, Morocco, Syria, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Egypt, and Tunis. The data of the survey were collected through three different ways: Facebook, website links, and email invitation. The age of the participants was ranging between 18 – 50 years. Only one participant was a Ph.D. holder; more than half of them were BA holders. Fourteen participants were MA holders, and only one participant was a secondary school student.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

As the author mentioned earlier, it was semi-structured interviews, in which the conversation topics and questions were around previously planned issues related to the social and educational experiences of the interviewees. As a matter of fact, the reasons the author limited the interviews to address only such topics were based on the strong hypothesis of Nilep (2006) in which CS is considered as a "social-intercultural" phenomenon that is necessary in increasing the mutual understanding among the speakers from different cultures.

Arabic-English CS was present in the speech of the four interviewees. The author started the interviews by using the Standard Arabic language in welcoming the participants and asking general questions. The purpose of using Standard Arabic in conversation was to investigate the ability of the interviewees to use and maintain the Standard Arabic in their responses. Only one participant was able to respond in Standard Arabic language and maintain its use until the author switched to English language. The other three participants chose to start their responses by using their respective Arabic dialects before they decided to switch to English and then went back and forth between Arabic-English, i.e., CS.

Based on the interviews, Arabic-English CS performs different functions, which are related either to social and educational experiences or some other communication purposes such as stressing one's ideas, giving clarifications, comparing Arab and Western lives and even ending the conversations. The following chart presents examples for different dialectal Arabic-English CS:

TABLE 1
EXAMPLES OF DIALECTAL ARABIC-ENGLISH CS USED BY THE INTERVIEWEES

<i>(ish batsawi in the summer)</i> What is your plan for the summer?	Najdi Arabic-English CS
<i>(mush?aref exactly kef to manage it)</i> I don't know exactly how to manage it	Libyan Arabic-English CS
<i>(aderasamali is very challenging)</i> My major is very challenging.	Emarati Arabic-English CS
<i>(ana yet here last year)</i> I came here last year.	Omani Arabic-English CS

Mostly the interviewees did not demonstrate an excellent level of proficiency in English language. After listening to the recordings several times, the author was able to track some grammatical and pronunciation and even words choice mistakes. For examples, the verbs to be deletions and subject verb agreement were among the errors, which were committed, especially when the participants code switched from Arabic to English. As for the pronunciation errors, the negative transfer of the Arabic [b], [f] were present; therefore, words such as "program" and "favor" were mispronounced as "*brogram" and "*fafor".

To collect more data about the factors of Arabic-English (hereafter A-E) CS and whether it occurred as a strategy for communications among different speakers of Arabic varieties or a mere tendency for A-E CS between A-E bilinguals. The author joined different Arab gatherings; especially the ones that are visited by costumers from all over the world. Accordingly, International Arab restaurants and coffee shops as Starbucks were the suitable places for observations. The author attended as a quite listener and the author did not plan to participate directly in any sort of activity, instead the author preferred to walk around and take notes. In the second observation held in Starbucks, the author attended as a participant-observer; thus, the author was not directly engaged in conversation, but the author was more interested in observing the participants and taking notes.

In those observed settings, A-E CS existed to serve a variety of social, religious and linguistic goals. Arabs used A-E CS mainly when explaining social topics such as economic issues, revolutions, social inequalities. CS was also present in discussing the different religious concerns such as fundraising and charities. Moreover, there were instances where A-E CS was used, as a tool to fulfill the Arab speakers' inabilities to use the proper English or Arabic terms when communicating. For example, the Arabic word "elmani" was used instead of "secular" in a sentence like he is *elmani*.

To further understand code-switching among different nationalities, a survey was conducted and the results of each statement is outlined in Table 2. 51.35% of the participants are EFL teachers, while 21.62% are ESL teachers in the US. On the other hand, 10.81% are EFL students and 16.22% are ESL students in the US, which means that more than half of the participants are not English bilinguals or even semi-bilinguals. Only 15.79% participants live in a native English-speaking country, while 76.32% of them live in places where English is a foreign language. 7.89% classify themselves as residents of countries where English is spoken as a second language such as the Yemeni only participant who is pursuing his master study in India.

TABLE 2
CODESWITCHING AS A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

Questionnaire	Analysis of The Participants' Responses
How often do you code-switch from Arabic to English?	(21.62% all the time, 62.16% sometime, 13.51% rarely, 2.70% never)
How often do you code-switch from English to Arabic?	(13.51% all the time, 67.57% sometime, 16.22% rarely, 2.70% never)
I switch to a language with which my addressee is more comfortable.	(0%strongly disagree, 2.70% disagree, 18.92%neither agree nor disagree, 54.05%agree, 24.32% strongly agree)
I prefer to switch to English when my addressee is not familiar with my Arabic dialect.	(2.70%strongly disagree, 13.51% disagree, 8.11%neither agree nor disagree, 59.46%agree, 16.22% strongly agree)
I feel more comfortable to use English than Arabic when I talk to someone from another different Arabic dialect.	(5.26%strongly disagree, 23.68% disagree, 21.05%neither agree nor disagree, 44.74%agree, 5.26% strongly agree)
I prefer to switch to English when discussing personal or social things with an Arab friend from other country.	(5.26%strongly disagree, 28.95% disagree, 18.42%neither agree nor disagree, 36.84%agree, 10.53% strongly agree)
I switch to English even when my addressee is from the same Arabic dialect.	(0%all the time, 65.79% sometime, 26.32% rarely, 7.89%never)
I use Arabic-English code switching in the general daily conversation.	(10.81%strongly disagree, 13.51% disagree, 18.92%neither agree nor disagree, 56.76%agree, 0% strongly agree)
I think Arabic-English code switching is an effective tool for communication, especially when communicating with people from different Arabic varieties.	(7.89%strongly disagree, 7.89% disagree, 15.79%neither agree nor disagree, 52.63%agree, 15.79% strongly agree)
Arabic-English code switching is a more appropriate model in academic and professional settings, whereas using "Arabic or English only" can increase the possibilities of misunderstanding.	(7.89%strongly disagree, 15.79% disagree, 28.95%neither agree nor disagree, 39.47%agree, 7.89% strongly agree)
I think Arabic-English code switching among Arab speakers of different Arabic dialects is considered as strong evidence of true bilingualism.	(15.79%strongly disagree, 21.05% disagree, 28.95%neither agree nor disagree, 31.58%agree, 2.63% strongly agree)
In my opinion, Arabic-English code switching among Arab speakers of different Arabic dialects is a more communicative strategy for the better understanding.	(7.89%strongly disagree, 15.79% disagree, 21.05%neither agree nor disagree, 52.63%agree, 2.63% strongly agree)
I prefer to use Arabic-English code switching with my Arab addressee, particularly when conversing in front of English native speakers.	(5.26%strongly disagree, 15.79% disagree, 21.05%neither agree nor disagree, 44.74%agree, 13.16% strongly agree)

Based on the participants' responses on the seventh and eighth statements of the survey about linguistic proficiency either in Standard Arabic language or English language, 47.37% of the participants were considered to have an excellent level of proficiency in Standard Arabic language. On the other hand, only 28.95% appeared to have an excellent proficiency in English language. Also, 5.26% of the participants seemed to have an average level of proficiency in Standard Arabic language, whereas only 10.53% had an average level of proficiency in English language.

This chart includes a summary of the results of the participants' answers for the other significant closed-ended statements (from 8-20), which were specifically addressing the phenomenon of A-E CS between the participants with including some possible purposes.

In the last part of the survey, the participants were required to indicate their possible factors behind using A-E CS and present some examples. According to the participants' responses, A-E CS was used as communication strategy to fulfill a variety of purposes, including avoiding misunderstanding, socializing with friends from different Arabic dialects, clarifications, creating better understanding, supporting thinking, explaining religious and political issues, facilitating communications, simplifying the difficult Arabic dialects, delivering the messages quickly, having more privacy in front of English native speakers, expressing difficult expressions and comforting the addressee through making the conversations easier to understand.

TABLE 3
EXAMPLES FOR THE PARTICIPANTS' A-E CS

Examples for the Participants' A-E CS
(Iba?h Khaleek confident today) Oh man, be confident today.
(Addars needs more modifications leltullab) The lesson needs more modifications for the students.
(The test kan marrah difficult) The test was very difficult.
(Yellah go ahead) Please, go ahead.
(Please, I like coffee bas without milk) Please, I like coffee but without milk.

VIII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the qualitative and quantitative data analyses, A-E CS appeared as a communication and interaction strategy that performs a variety of distinctive functions in the interviews, observations and in the participants' responses of the open-ended questions of the questionnaire. It was also clear that the participants were at different levels of

proficiency in the English language, which means that CS does not only occur between bilinguals. Furthermore, the different functions, which A-E CS has succeeded in performing, indicate that A-ECS cannot be pejoratively considered as a negative *linguistic interference*. Instead, it is interactive use of two languages for achieving a more meaningful communication.

According to Al-Mamari's (2011) study of diglossia, Arabic is described as "a diglossic language" that has a one "high Standard variety" and other "low spoken" dialects. In the Arab Muslim world, the Standard (Classical) Arabic language used in the holy Quran and the prophet's traditions are considered "the high texts," which are rarely used in the daily conversations among Arab speakers, because it has a high frequency and more familiarity in the religious sectors. Hence, the difficulty of understanding some Arabic varieties such as the Yemeni and Tunisian Arabic, as the Yemeni and Tunisian participants stated earlier, leads to A-E CS among speakers of the various Arabic dialects.

CS is becoming a more communication strategy, particularly between Arab English speakers who naturally speak different Arabic dialects. Thus, 80% of the participants support the use of English in their CS, especially if their addressees are not familiar with their Arabic dialects and prefer to use English instead.

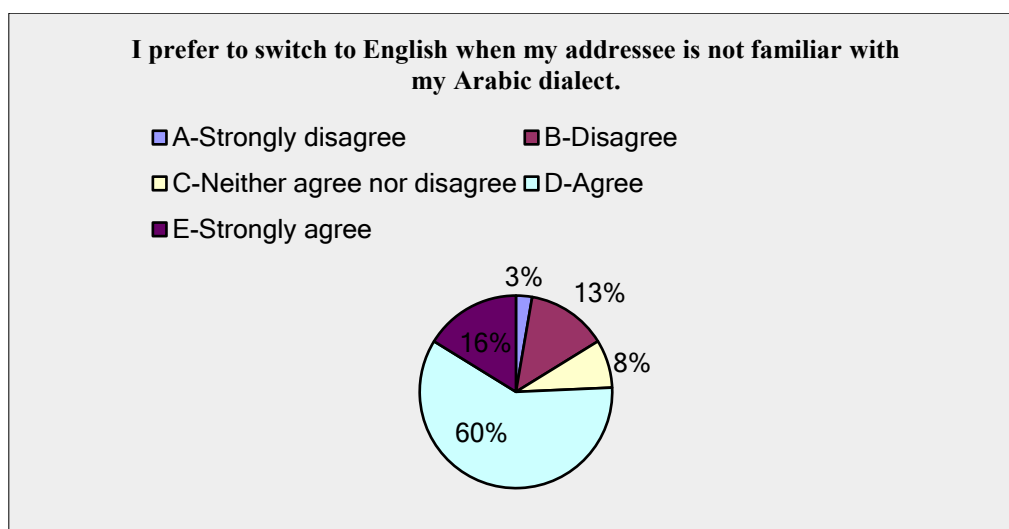


Figure 1. Preference to Switch to English

Even in the observations, A-E CS occurred between Saudi speakers who belong to the Najdi and Gizani Arabic dialects in Saudi Arabia, which have distinctive pronunciations and vocabulary system. For example, a Gizan people welcome each other saying "Mahu masawi alyum," while, in the Najdi dialect, they say instead "Ish ulumakum alyum," both dialectal expressions mean in English "how are you guys today?"

A-E CS, as a communication strategy, does not only exist among Arab speakers of the different Arabic varieties, but it even occurs between the Arab speakers of the same Arabic dialects. 65.5% of the participants tend to code-switch with their Arab interlocutors who speak the same dialect. On the other hand, only 26.3% of the total participants rarely used CS in such a situation. As it was early indicated, A-E CS is not only used between speakers who can demonstrate a high level of proficiency in Arabic and English. Based on the data analysis of the questionnaire, observations and interviews, the participants showed varied levels of competency. Therefore, one can conclude that A-E CS has developed to be a communicative interaction tendency between Arab English speakers, instead of its being a bilingual phenomenon or pejorative instances of linguistic interference.

IX. CONCLUSION

Some sociolinguistic studies still consider A-E CS as a bilingual phenomenon that occurs among speakers who are bilinguals or semi-bilinguals in the two languages. In addition, other studies also conclude that A-E CS is classified as the pejorative uses of the languages, in which the speakers negatively transfer from one language to another. In contrast, the findings of this study demonstrate that the uses of A-E CS among the speakers of different Arabic varieties perform a variety of communication purposes such as avoiding misunderstanding, socializing with Arab friends, providing clarifications, creating better understanding, supporting thinking, explaining religious and political issues, facilitating communications and simplifying the difficult Arabic dialects, emphasizing and contextualizing cues, using technical terms, showing politeness and avoiding taboo expressions.

The limitation of this study was also present in the researcher's main concentration to study only A-E CS as a communication phenomenon, particularly among the diglossic Arabic environments, in which the Arab speakers themselves naturally (colloquially) speak different Arabic varieties. Therefore, the results showed that A-E CS occurred in different structural forms such as intra-sentential CS as in (All the students are fee *nafs el-ṣaff* which means *in the same class*), and inter-sentential CS as in (*lish ma elt* "don't do that," which means why you didn't say don't do that).

The other limitation of the study appeared in the limited qualitative data collection when discussing the linguistic proficiency of the participants, particularly in the interviews. Unfortunately, only four participants were interviewed, which made the validity of the results somehow questionable. Although the questionnaire included parts in which the participants indicated their proficiency level both in the Standard Arabic and the English language, interview is still the most appropriate method for testing the participants' proficiency. Therefore, it is recommended to increase the numbers of interviews for the better understanding of the relationship between the participants' proficiency in the Standard Arabic language and the frequency of Arabic-English CS.

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher is highly motivated to conduct a future study that investigates the relationship between A-E CS and the phenomenon of *diglossia* on the different Saudi Arabic dialects, especially the degree of using A-E CS, as a communication strategy among Saudis. In Saudi Arabia, Standard Arabic language has its own clear presence as the higher prestigious Arabic variety, remarkably in the religious fields. Nonetheless, there are other Saudi dialects that are considered as the lower prestigious "alamiah dialects" such as Bedouin, Hadari, Higazi, Asiri, Fifi, and the other south Arabian dialects.

Finally, the results of this study showed that CS is still employed inadvertently, despite its disfavor. Thus, conducting a future research on the uses of Arabic-English CS in a classroom setting is necessary to study the pedagogical implications of code-switching and how they can be incorporated in any potential teaching practices for advancing foreign and second language research and teaching practice into the instructional process.

APPENDIX

Arabic-English Code-Switching as a Means of Communication Among Speakers of Different Arabic Varieties

A Survey

1. I am from:

☐ A- Saudi Arabia. ☐ B- Kuwait. ☐ C- UAE. ☐ D- Qatar. ☐ E- Oman. ☐ F- Yemen. ☐ G- Egypt. ☐ H- Libya. ☐ I- Morocco. ☐ J- Algeria. ☐ K- Tunisia. ☐ L- Syria. ☐ M- Iraq.

2. Age:

☐ A-18-25 ☐ B-26-39 ☐ C-40-50 ☐ D-50+

3. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

☐ A-Secondary School ☐ B-Diploma ☐ C-BA ☐ D-MA ☐ E-Ph.D.

4. Now, I am better classified as:

☐ A-EFL student. ☐ B-ESL student. ☐ C-EFL teacher. ☐ D-ESL teacher
EFL = (English as a Foreign Language) / ESL = (English as a Second Language)

5. I live in a country where English is spoken as:

☐ A- Foreign Language. ☐ B-Second Language ☐ C- Native Language

6. I think my proficiency in the Standard (Classical) Arabic Language is:

☐ A- Excellent ☐ B- Very good ☐ C- Good ☐ D-Average ☐ E-Poor

7. I think my proficiency in English language is:

☐ A-Excellent ☐ B-Very good ☐ C-Good ☐ D-Average ☐ E-Poor

8. How often do you switch from Arabic to English?

☐ A-All the time ☐ B-Sometime ☐ C-Rarely ☐ D-Never

9. How often do you switch from English to Arabic?

☐ A-All the time ☐ B-Sometime ☐ C-Rarely ☐ D-Never

10. I switch to a language with which my addressee is more comfortable.

- ☐ A-Strongly disagree
 ☐ B-Disagree
 ☐ C-Neither agree nor disagree
 ☐ D-Agree
 ☐ E-Strongly agree

11. I prefer to switch to English when my addressee is not familiar with my Arabic dialect.

- ☐ A-Strongly disagree
 ☐ B-Disagree
 ☐ C-Neither agree nor disagree
 ☐ D-Agree
 ☐ E-Strongly agree

12. I feel more comfortable to use English than Arabic when I talk to someone from another different Arabic dialect.

- ☐ A-Strongly disagree
 ☐ B-Disagree
 ☐ C-Neither agree nor disagree
 ☐ D-Agree
 ☐ E-Strongly agree

13. I prefer to switch to English when discussing personal or social things with an Arab friend from different country.

- ☐ A-Strongly disagree
 ☐ B-Disagree
 ☐ C-Neither agree nor disagree
 ☐ D-Agree
 ☐ E-Strongly agree

14. I switch to English even when my addressee is from my same Arabic dialect.

- ☐ A-All the time
 ☐ B-Sometime
 ☐ C-Rarely
 ☐ D-Never

15. I use Arabic-English code switching in the general daily conversation.

- ☐ A-Strongly disagree
 ☐ B-Disagree
 ☐ C-Neither agree nor disagree
 ☐ D-Agree
 ☐ E-Strongly agree

16. I think Arabic-English code switching is an effective tool for communication, especially when communicating with people from different Arabic varieties.

- ☐ A-Strongly disagree
 ☐ B-Disagree
 ☐ C-Neither agree nor disagree
 ☐ D-Agree
 ☐ E-Strongly agree

17. Arabic-English code switching is a more appropriate model in academic and professional settings, where using "Arabic or English only" can increase the possibilities of misunderstanding.

- ☐ A- Strongly disagree
 ☐ B-Disagree
 ☐ C-Neither agree nor disagree
 ☐ D-Agree
 ☐ E-Strongly agree

18. I think Arabic-English code switching among Arab speakers of different Arabic dialects is considered a strong evidence of true bilingualism.

- ☐ A-Strongly disagree
 ☐ B-Disagree
 ☐ C-Neither agree nor disagree
 ☐ D-Agree
 ☐ E-Strongly agree

19. In my opinion, Arabic-English code switching among Arab speakers of different Arabic dialects is a more communicative strategy for the better understanding.

- ☐ A-Strongly disagree
 ☐ B-Disagree
 ☐ C-Neither agree nor disagree
 ☐ D-Agree
 ☐ E-Strongly agree

20. I prefer to use Arabic-English code switching with my Arab addressee, particularly when conversing in front of English native speakers.

- ☐ A-Strongly disagree
 ☐ B-Disagree
 ☐ C-Neither agree nor disagree
 ☐ D-Agree
 ☐ E-Strongly agree

21. Why do/did you use Arabic-English code switching?

22. Based on your experiences of Arabic-English code switching, could you please give some written examples?

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The Effectiveness of 21st Century Competency Assessment Model and HOTS in Improving Writing Skills: An Experimental Research

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Abstract—The Research examines the effectiveness of a 21st Century Competency and Higher-Order Thinking Skills (HOTS)-based writing assessment model in improving students' writing skills. The research employs an experimental design with two groups: an experimental group that participated in HOTS and 21st Century Competency-based learning, and a control group that followed conventional learning methods. Data were collected through pre-test and post-test evaluations to measure students' writing abilities across various text types, such as observation report texts, biographies, procedures, explanations, editorials, and articles. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 24 and Microsoft Excel. The findings reveal a significant difference in writing skills between the group using the HOTS and 21st Century Competency-based assessment model and the control group. The Mann-Whitney test indicated that the significance value for the post-test across all text types was 0.000, which is less than 0.05, meaning H0 was rejected and a significant difference was observed. The HOTS-based learning approach proved to be more effective in enhancing students' writing skills, as it encourages critical and creative thinking, enabling students to produce more structured and meaningful writing. These findings support the theory that a 21st Century Competency-based approach, which integrates higher-order thinking skills, can lead to significant improvements in students' writing abilities.

Index Terms—21st century competency assessment model, HOTS-based education, experimental design, writing skills

I. INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 21st-century skills have become essential for students to compete and succeed in an increasingly complex and dynamic world. Critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (4C) are key demands in modern education, with particular emphasis on the development of Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS). In the context of language learning, writing skills are a crucial aspect that requires higher-order cognitive abilities such as analysis, evaluation, and creation, in line with the revised Bloom's Taxonomy. According to previous experts, such as Trilling and Fadel (2002), Voogt and Roblin (2012), Jia et al. (2016), Motalebzadeh et al. (2018), Prayogi and Estetika (2019), Kasihani and Sentana (2020), Suyitno et al. (2021), and Barnes et al. (2022) as concluded that students must master skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication, which are vital for navigating the rapidly changing global landscape. Meanwhile, the revised Bloom's Taxonomy emphasizes cognitive processes like analyzing, evaluating, and creating, which are fundamental for developing advanced writing skills in language learning.

However, various studies indicate that students' writing skills are often at a low to moderate level, particularly in their ability to produce analytical, critical, and creative writing. One of the primary causes of this issue is the assessment approach, which remains focused on basic aspects such as grammar and vocabulary, without adequately incorporating HOTS based assessments that encourage deeper and more comprehensive thinking. According to previous experts such as Dappen et al. (2008), Brookhart (2010), Sumarni et al. (2018), White (2019), Ghanizadeh et al. (2020), Sumiati et al. (2020), Setiawan et al. (2021), and Herunata et al. (2021) stated that higher-order thinking involves mastering complex

assessment skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving. Higher-order thinking goes beyond mere recall of facts and emphasizes the application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information.

The 21st-century competency assessment model based on Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) offers an alternative that can be implemented in writing instruction to encourage students to think more critically, creatively, and reflectively. This model emphasizes active student engagement in the writing process, urging them not only to master the technical aspects of writing but also to construct arguments, analyze information, and produce original and meaningful written works. According to Aryana et al. (2024), this model aims to involve students in active learning and authentic assessment processes. Writing through HOTS-based assessment pushes learners beyond basic skills and focuses on higher-level processes such as analysis, synthesis, and creative expression (Yulianto et al., 2019; Ghanizadeh et al., 2020; Edi Puryanto et al., 2020; Herunata et al., 2021; Setiawan et al., 2021; Aryana et al., 2024).

Although this assessment model shows promise, empirical research is still required to validate its effectiveness, particularly in the context of writing instruction (Aryana et al., 2024). This research aims to examine the extent to which the 21st-century competency and HOTS-based assessment model can enhance students' writing skills, both in terms of content and the quality of their critical thinking. Through this experimental research, the research outcomes are expected to make a significant contribution to the development of evaluation methods better aligned with the demands of 21st-century competencies while simultaneously improving the quality of writing instruction in senior high schools.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a True-Experimental Design with a pretest-posttest control group design across three schools. The effectiveness is tested based on Pre-Test and Post-Test scores from experimental and control groups for various text tasks, including observation report and biographical texts for Grade X, procedural and explanatory texts for Grade XI, and editorial texts and articles for Grade XII.

The population of this research comprises all high school students in the Bandung Raya area, West Java, Indonesia, specifically students from Cimahi Senior High School, Padalarang Senior High School as the experimental groups, and Ngamprah Senior High School as the control group, totaling 1,260 students. These students are currently researching the Indonesian language subject with a focus on writing skills.

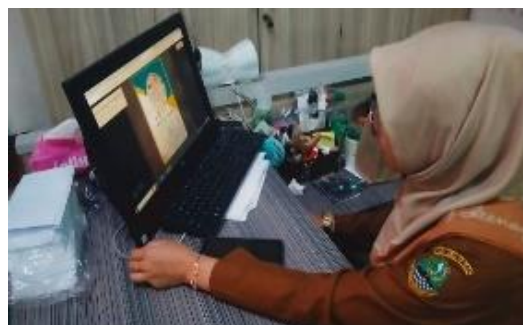
The sample was selected using cluster random sampling, with two classes randomly chosen from the population. One class was assigned as the experimental group, and the other as the control group. The Research involved 420 students, with 35 students in each group from Grades X, XI, and XII at Cimahi Senior High School, Padalarang Senior High School, and Ngamprah Senior High School, depending on subject availability at the research sites.

Data collection in this research involved written tests (pre-test and post-test), observation, and questionnaires. Data analysis used inferential statistics, primarily the t-test, to identify significant differences between pre-test and post-test results for both groups (experimental and control). Normality and homogeneity of variance tests were conducted before the t-test to meet statistical assumptions. Additionally, the Likert scale results from the questionnaires were analyzed descriptively to assess students' perceptions of the HOTS-based assessment model's effectiveness.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The primary field trial for the experimental class was conducted offline over six weeks, using the 21st-century competency and HOTS-based writing skills assessment model, with two-hour weekly sessions. Prior to the trial, the researchers held discussions and provided teachers with guidelines on using the model for assignment tasks in each class.

The assessment model product was accessed by Indonesian language teachers at Cimahi Senior High School and Padalarang Senior High School through a provided link <https://bit.ly/ebook4b4d21> and link *Flipbook* <https://bit.ly/flipbook4b4d21> with keywords "4b4d21". The following presents the documentation of the briefing provided to Indonesian language teachers at Cimahi Senior High School West Java Indonesia and Padalarang Senior High School West Java Indonesia before conducting the primary field trial for the experimental and control classes with Indonesian language teachers at Ngamprah Senior High School.





Padalarang Senior High School



Cimahi Senior High School

Figure 1. Directions to Indonesian Language Teachers

The primary field trials were conducted at Cimahi Senior High School, Padalarang Senior High School and Ngamprah Senior High School from February 1st to February 16th, 2024. The field trial activities were adjusted to the schedules of the Indonesian language teachers at each school. The following presents documentation of the implementation of the writing skills assessment model during the primary field trials in the experimental classes Cimahi Senior High School and Padalarang Senior High School and the control class Ngamprah Senior High School.



Cimahi Senior High School (Pre-Test)



Cimahi Senior High School (Post-Test)



Padalarang Senior High School (Pre-Test)



Padalarang Senior High School (Post-Test)



Ngamprah Senior High School (Pre-Test)



Ngamprah Senior High School (Post-Test)

Figure 2. Implementation of Pre-Test and Post-Test

A. Text of Observation Report Results

1) Pre-Test

a) Normality test

The normality test employed in this research was the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, conducted at a significance level of 0.05. The decision criteria were as follows: if the significance (sig.) value exceeds 0.05, the data follows a normal

distribution; however, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, the sample originates from a non-normally distributed population. The results of the normality test, performed using SPSS 24 software, are presented in the table below.

TABLE 1
NORMALITY TEST OF PRE-TEST DATA FOR OBSERVATION REPORT TEXT

Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control	0,169	35	0.013
Experiment	0.103	70	0.064

The significance value is $0.452 > 0.05$, so H_0 is accepted, indicating no significant difference in the initial writing skills of observation report texts (LHO) between students using the 21st-century competency and HOTS-based model and those using the conventional model. According to Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012), and Field (2018), the Mann-Whitney test is appropriate for comparing independent groups with non-normally distributed data, with significant results indicating a meaningful difference.

b) Test of differences between two means

The results of the normality test indicated that one of the classes originated from a non-normally distributed sample. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney test was employed to analyze the difference between the two means for the Pre-Test data on the ability to write observation report texts. The decision criteria were as follows: if the significance (sig.) value exceeds 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted; however, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, H_0 is rejected. The table below presents the results of the two-mean comparison test conducted using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 2
MANN-WHITNEY TEST OF PRE-TEST DATA FOR OBSERVATION REPORT TEXT

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0,452	H_0 accepted
Experiment		

The significance value is $0.452 > 0.05$, so H_0 is accepted, indicating no significant difference in the initial writing skills of observation report texts (LHO) between students using the 21st-century competency and HOTS-based model and those using the conventional model. Field (2018) states that the Mann-Whitney test is suitable for comparing two independent groups when the data is not normally distributed, with a significant result showing a meaningful difference.

2) Post-Test

a) Normality test

This research utilized the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess data normality. The test was conducted at a significance level of 0.05, with the following decision criteria: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than 0.05, the data is considered normally distributed; whereas if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, the sample is deemed to originate from a non-normally distributed population. The table below presents the normality test results obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 3
POST-TEST DATA NORMALITY TEST OF OBSERVATION RESULT SHEET TEXT

Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control	0,104	35	0.200
Experiment	0.110	70	0.035

The control class yielded a significance value of 0.200, which is greater than 0.05, while the experimental class had a significance value of 0.035, which is less than 0.05. Based on the testing criteria, the control class data follows a normal distribution, whereas the experimental class data does not. Given that one dataset is not normally distributed, the Mann-Whitney non-parametric test was applied to assess the significance of the difference. The decision rule states that if the significance value exceeds 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, whereas if it is less than or equal to 0.05, H_0 is rejected. According to Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012), the normality test is used to determine whether a dataset originates from a normally distributed population.

b) Test the difference between two means

The normality test results indicated that one of the classes originated from a non-normally distributed sample. As a result, the Mann-Whitney test was employed to analyze the difference between the two means for the Post-Test data on the ability to write observation report texts (LHO). The table below presents the results of the two-mean difference test conducted using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 4
MANN-WHITNEY TEST POST-TEST DATA TEXT OBSERVATION RESULT SHEET

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.000	H_0 rejected
Experiment		

The significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates a significant difference in biographical writing skills between students using the 21st-century competency and HOTS-based model and those using the conventional model. Voogt and Roblin (2012) highlight that this model fosters critical, creative, and collaborative thinking, enhancing skills like writing. Brookhart (2010) asserts that HOTS develops analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, essential for writing biographical texts. Brown et al. (2014) emphasize that HOTS-based methods are more effective than conventional approaches in developing high-level skills like writing.

B. Biography Text

1) Pre-Test

a) Normality test

In this research, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed to assess data normality. The test was conducted at a significance level of 0.05, with the decision criteria as follows: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than 0.05, the data is considered normally distributed; however, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, the sample is derived from a non-normally distributed population. The table below displays the normality test results obtained through SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 5
PRE-TEST DATA FOR BIOGRAPHY TEXTS

Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control	0.191	35	0.002
Experiment	0.094	70	0.200

Referring to the table above, the control class has a significance value of 0.002, which is less than 0.05, while the experimental class has a significance value of 0.200, which is greater than 0.05. According to the testing criteria, this indicates that the control class data is not normally distributed, whereas the experimental class data follows a normal distribution. Since one of the datasets does not meet the assumption of normality, the Mann-Whitney non-parametric test was employed to assess the significance of the difference between the two means.

b) Test the difference between two means

The normality test results revealed that one of the classes originated from a non-normally distributed sample. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney test was applied to evaluate the difference between the two means for the Pre-Test data on the ability to write Biography texts. The decision criteria are as follows: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted; whereas if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, H_0 is rejected. The table below presents the results of the two-mean comparison test conducted using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 6
MANN-WHITNEY TEST OF BIOGRAPHY TEXT PRE-TEST DATA

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.276	H_0 accepted
Experiment		

Based on the table above, the significance value is $0.276 > 0.05$. According to the testing criteria, H_0 is accepted, meaning there is no significant difference in the initial writing skills in biographical texts between students who participated in learning using the 21st-century competency and HOTS-based writing skills assessment model and students who participated in learning with the conventional writing skills assessment model. Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012) state that normality tests such as Kolmogorov-Smirnov are crucial for determining the data distribution. If the data does not meet the assumption of normal distribution, non-parametric methods such as the Mann-Whitney test are more suitable for analysis because they do not rely on a specific distribution.

2) Post-Test

a) Normality test

This research employed the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess the normality of the data. The test was conducted at a significance level of 0.05, with the following decision criteria: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than 0.05, the data is considered to be normally distributed; however, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, the sample is assumed to come from a non-normally distributed population. The table below presents the normality test results obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 7
POST-TEST DATA OF BIOGRAPHY TEXT

Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control	0.181	35	0.005
Experiment	0.117	70	0.018

As shown in the table above, the significance values for both the control class (0.005) and the experimental class (0.018) are less than 0.05. Based on the testing criteria, this indicates that neither dataset follows a normal distribution. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney non-parametric test was employed to assess the significance of the difference

between the two means. According to Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012), normality tests, such as the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, play a crucial role in evaluating data distribution. When the normality assumption is not met, non-parametric methods like the Mann-Whitney test are more suitable for analysis, as they do not depend on specific distribution assumptions.

b) Test the difference between two means

The normality test results indicated that both classes were derived from non-normally distributed samples. As a result, the Mann-Whitney test was used to examine the difference between the two means for the Post-Test data on Biography text writing skills. The decision criteria are as follows: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted; whereas if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, H_0 is rejected. The table below presents the test results obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 8
MANN-WHITNEY TEST POST-TEST DATA OF BIOGRAPHY TEXT

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.000	H_0 rejected
Experiment		

The significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates a significant difference in biographical writing skills between students using the 21st-century competency and HOTS-based assessment model and those using the conventional model. Voogt and Roblin (2012) note that this model enhances critical, creative, and collaborative thinking, improving skills like writing that require analysis and structured ideas. Brookhart (2010) states that HOTS develops abilities in analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, crucial for writing biographical texts with narrative structure and critical reflection. Brown et al. (2014) emphasize that HOTS-based methods are more effective than conventional approaches in improving high-level skills like writing.

C. Procedure Text

1) Pre-Test

a) Normality test

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed in this study to assess data normality. The test was conducted at a significance level of 0.05, with the following decision criteria: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than 0.05, the data is considered normally distributed; however, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, the sample is classified as originating from a non-normally distributed population. The table below presents the normality test results obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 9
PRE-TEST DATA FOR PROCEDURE TEXT

Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control	0.141	35	0.074
Experiment	0.133	70	0.004

As shown in the table above, the control class has a significance value of 0.074, which is greater than 0.05, indicating a normally distributed sample. In contrast, the experimental class has a significance value of 0.004, which is less than 0.05, suggesting that its sample is not normally distributed. Given that one of the datasets does not meet the normality assumption, the Mann-Whitney non-parametric test was applied to assess the significance of the difference between the two means. Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012) emphasize that normality tests play a key role in selecting the appropriate statistical analysis method.

b) Test the difference between two means

The normality test results indicated that one of the classes was derived from a non-normally distributed sample. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney test was employed to analyze the difference between the two means for the Pre-Test data on procedural writing skills. The decision criteria are as follows: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted; however, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, H_0 is rejected. The table below presents the test results obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 10
UJI MANN-WHITNEY DATA PRE-TEST TEKS PROCEDURE

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.484	H_0 accepted
Experiment		

Referring to the table above, the significance value is 0.484, which is greater than 0.05. According to the testing criteria, this result leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis (H_0), indicating that there is no significant difference in the initial procedural writing skills between students who participate in learning using the 21st-century competency-based writing skills assessment model incorporating HOTS and those who engage in learning through the conventional writing skills assessment model.

2) Post-Test

a) Normality test

This research employed the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess the normality of the data. The test was conducted at a significance level of 0.05, with the following decision criteria: if the significance (sig.) value exceeds 0.05, the data is considered normally distributed; however, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, the sample is classified as originating from a non-normally distributed population. The table below presents the normality test results obtained using SPSS software.

TABLE 11
POST-TEST DATA NORMALITY TEST FOR PROCEDURAL TEXTS

Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control	0.146	35	0.055
Experiment	0.088	70	0.200

As presented in the table above, the significance value for the control class is 0.055, which is greater than 0.05, and the significance value for the experimental class is 0.200, also exceeding 0.05. Based on the testing criteria, both datasets are considered normally distributed. Consequently, the next step is to conduct a homogeneity of variances test. Ghasemi and Zahediasl (2012) emphasize the importance of normality tests in selecting the appropriate statistical analysis method. When the assumptions of normality and homogeneity are not met, alternative statistical approaches, such as the Mann-Whitney test or t-test, should be applied.

b) Homogeneity test

The homogeneity of variance test is conducted to determine whether the data from two normally distributed groups exhibit equal variance. This test is performed at a significance level of 0.05, with the following decision criteria: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than or equal to 0.05, the data sample is considered homogeneous; however, if the sig. value is less than 0.05, the data sample is classified as non-homogeneous. The table below presents the results of the homogeneity of variance test, obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 12
HOMOGENEITY TEST OF PROCEDURE TEXT VARIANTS

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.002	not homogeneous
Experiment		

Based on the table above, the significance value is 0.002, according to the testing criteria that the variance of the two sample groups is not homogeneous. Therefore, the next step is to test the data for the difference in the two averages of the t^1 -Test.

c) Test of differences between two means

Based on the results of the normality test and the homogeneity of variance test, it was found that both classes came from samples that were normally distributed and not homogeneous, so that the test for the difference in two means for the Post-Test data on the ability to write procedural texts using the t^1 test. The testing criteria are if the sig. value > 0.05 then H_0 is accepted while if the sig. value ≤ 0.05 then H_0 is rejected. The following is a table of test results using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 13
 T^1 TEST POST-TEST DATA OF PROCEDURE TEXT

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.002	H_0 rejected
Experiment		

The significance value of $0.002 < 0.05$ indicates a significant difference in procedural writing skills between students using the 21st-century competency and HOTS-based assessment model and those using the conventional model. Brookhart (2010) explains that HOTS, including analysis and synthesis, is essential for writing clear procedural texts. Voogt and Roblin (2012) note that 21st-century learning integrated with HOTS enhances skills in problem-solving, critical thinking, and producing structured works like procedural texts. Brown et al. (2014), and Hoang (2024) show that conventional methods are less effective in engaging critical thinking compared to HOTS-based approaches.

D. Explanation Text

1) Pre-Test

a) Normality test

This study utilized the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess the normality of the data. The test was conducted at a significance level of 0.05, with the following criteria: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than 0.05, the data is considered to follow a normal distribution; however, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, the sample is deemed to originate from a non-normally distributed population. The table below presents the normality test results obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 14
PRE-TEST DATA FOR EXPLANATORY TEXT

Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control	0.152	35	0.039
Experiment	0.092	70	0.200

As shown in the table above, the significance value for the control class is 0.039, which is less than 0.05, indicating that the sample is not normally distributed. In contrast, the significance value for the experimental class is 0.200, exceeding 0.05, meaning the sample follows a normal distribution. Given that one dataset does not meet the normality assumption, the Mann-Whitney non-parametric test was employed to analyze the significance of the difference between the two means.

b) Test the difference between two means

The normality test results indicated that both classes were derived from non-normally distributed samples. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney test was applied to examine the difference between the two means for the Pre-Test data on explanatory writing skills. The decision criteria for the test are as follows: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H₀) is accepted; however, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, H₀ is rejected. The table below presents the test results obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 15
MANN-WHITNEY TEST OF PRE-TEST DATA FOR EXPLANATORY TEXT

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.384	H ₀ rejected
Experiment		

Referring to the table above, the significance value for the difference test of the two mean Pre-Test scores in students' explanatory text writing skills is 0.384, which is greater than 0.05. Based on the testing criteria, the null hypothesis (H₀) is accepted, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the initial explanatory text writing skills between students who participated in learning using the 21st-century competency-based writing skills assessment model with HOTS and those who were taught using the conventional writing skills assessment model.

2) Post-Test

a) Normality test

This study employed the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess data normality. The test was conducted at a significance level of 0.05, with the following decision criteria: if the significance (sig.) value exceeds 0.05, the data is considered normally distributed; however, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, the sample is classified as originating from a non-normally distributed population. The table below presents the results of the normality test performed using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 16
POST-TEST DATA FOR EXPLANATORY TEXT

Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control	0.140	35	0.080
Experiment	0.081	70	0.200

As shown in the table above, the significance value for the control class is 0.080, which is greater than 0.05, while the significance value for the experimental class is 0.200, also exceeding 0.05. Based on the testing criteria, both the control and experimental class samples meet the assumption of normality. Consequently, the next step is to conduct a homogeneity of variance test.

b) Homogeneous test

The variance homogeneity test is conducted to determine whether the data from two normally distributed groups exhibit homogeneity. This test is performed at a significance level of 0.05, with the following decision criteria: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than or equal to 0.05, the data sample is considered homogeneous; however, if the sig. value is less than 0.05, the data sample is deemed non-homogeneous. The table below presents the results of the variance homogeneity test using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 17
HOMOGENEITY TEST OF PROCEDURE TEXT VARIANTS

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.000	not homogeneous
Experiment		

Based on the table above, the significance value is 0.000 according to the test criteria that the variance of the two sample groups is not homogeneous. Therefore, the next step is to test the data for the difference between the two averages, the t^1 test.

c) Test of differences between two means

The results of the normality and variance homogeneity tests indicate that both classes originate from normally distributed samples but do not meet the homogeneity assumption. Therefore, the t-test was employed to analyze the difference in means for the post-test data on explanatory text writing skills. The decision criteria for this test are as follows: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than 0.05, H_0 is accepted; however, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, H_0 is rejected. The table below presents the test results obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 18
TEST -T¹ POST-TEST DATA EXPLANATORY TEXT

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.000	H_0 rejected
Experiment		

The test of the difference between the two means for Pre-Test data on explanation text writing skills shows a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference between students using the 21st-century competency and HOTS-based writing assessment model and those using the conventional model. Voogt and Roblin (2012) highlight that 21st-century education integrates critical thinking, collaboration, and communication, essential for writing explanation texts. Brookhart (2010) states that HOTS, which includes analysis, evaluation, and creation, is crucial for explanation writing. Derewianka (2015) and Carey et al. (2024) emphasize that writing explanation texts requires both conceptual understanding and the ability to communicate ideas logically, skills fostered through HOTS-based learning.

E. Teks Editorial

1) Pre-Test

a) Normality test

This study employs the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess the normality of the data. The test is conducted at a significance level of 0.05, with the following criteria: if the significance (sig.) value exceeds 0.05, the data is considered normally distributed; however, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, the sample is classified as originating from a non-normally distributed population. The table below presents the results of the normality test obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 19
EDITORIAL TEXT PRE-TEST DATA

Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control	0.152	35	0.040
Experiment	0.165	70	0.000

Referring to the table above, the significance value for the control class is $0.040 (< 0.05)$, while the significance value for the experimental class is $0.000 (< 0.05)$. Based on the testing criteria, both the control and experimental class samples originate from a population that is not normally distributed. Consequently, to analyze the significance of the difference between the two means, a non-parametric approach, specifically the Mann-Whitney test, was employed.

b) Test the difference between two means

Based on the results of the normality test, it was obtained that both classes came from samples that were not Since the data is not normally distributed, the Mann-Whitney test was utilized to assess the difference between the two means for the pre-test data on editorial text writing skills. The decision criteria state that if the significance value exceeds 0.05, H_0 is accepted, whereas if it is ≤ 0.05 , H_0 is rejected. The table below presents the test results obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 20
MANN-WHITNEY TEST OF EDITORIAL TEXT PRE-TEST DATA

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.317	H_0 rejected
Experiment		

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the significance value is $0.317 > 0.05$. In accordance with the testing criteria, H_0 is accepted, meaning that there is no significant difference in the initial ability of editorial text writing skills between students who take part in learning using the 21st century competency-based writing skills assessment model and HOTS and students who take part in learning with the conventional writing skills assessment model.

2) Post-Test

a) Normality test

This research employs the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess data normality. With a significance level of 0.05, the test criteria state that if the significance value is greater than 0.05, the data follows a normal distribution. Conversely, if the significance value is ≤ 0.05 , the sample is considered to originate from a non-normally distributed population. The table below presents the normality test results obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 21
POST-TEST DATA ON OBSERVATION RESULT SHEET TEXT

Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control	0.130	35	0.146
Experiment	0.106	70	0.048

Referring to the table above, the significance value for the control class is 0.146, which exceeds 0.05, indicating a normally distributed sample. In contrast, the experimental class has a significance value of 0.048, which is below 0.05, signifying a non-normally distributed sample. As one of the data sets does not meet the assumption of normality, the Mann-Whitney non-parametric test is employed to assess the significance of the difference between the two means. According to Gibbons and Chakraborti (2010), the Mann-Whitney test is a suitable statistical method for comparing two independent groups when the normality assumption is not satisfied.

b) Test the difference between two means

The normality test results indicate that one of the classes originates from a sample that is not normally distributed. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney non-parametric test is applied to evaluate the difference between the two means for the post-test data on editorial text writing skills. The decision rule for hypothesis testing states that if the significance value exceeds 0.05, H_0 is accepted, whereas if the significance value is 0.05 or lower, H_0 is rejected. The table below presents the test results generated using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 22
MANN-WHITNEY TEST OF EDITORIAL TEXT POST-TEST DATA

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.000	H_0 rejected
Experiment		

The comparison of Post-Test data on editorial writing skills shows a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference between students using the 21st-century competency-based and HOTS assessment model and those using the conventional model. Hyland (2002) emphasizes the importance of genre mastery and high-level thinking strategies in writing. The competency-based approach helps students grasp editorial text structure, content, and style. Brown et al. (2014) note that conventional methods often fail to engage critical and creative thinking, while 21st-century approaches offer a more meaningful learning experience. Voogt and Roblin (2012), Yulianto et al. (2019), Sumiati et al. (2020), Suyitno et al. (2021), Khoiri et al. (2021), and Aryana S. (2024) highlight that 21st-century education integrates critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills, essential for writing editorial texts with logical and in-depth opinions.

F. Article Text

1) Pre-Test

a) Normality test

This study employs the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess the normality of the data. With a significance level set at 0.05, the decision criteria are as follows: if the significance value is greater than 0.05, the data follows a normal distribution; however, if the significance value is 0.05 or lower, the data is considered to originate from a non-normally distributed population. The table below presents the normality test results obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 23
PRE-TEST DATA OF ARTICLE TEXT

Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control	0.177	35	0.007
Experiment	0.115	70	0.023

Referring to the table above, the significance value for the control class is 0.007, which is less than 0.05, and for the experimental class, the significance value is 0.023, also below 0.05. Based on these results, both the control and experimental class samples are derived from a population that does not follow a normal distribution. Consequently, the appropriate method for analyzing the difference between the two means is a non-parametric approach, specifically the Mann-Whitney test. This test is suitable for comparing two independent groups when the normality assumption is not met, ensuring a more reliable statistical analysis of the data.

b) Test the difference between two means

The results of the normality test indicate that both the control and experimental class samples do not follow a normal distribution. As a result, the Mann-Whitney test was employed to analyze the difference between the two means for the Pre-Test data on students' article writing skills. In this study, the Mann-Whitney test was conducted based on the following hypothesis: if the significance (sig.) value is greater than 0.05, then the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, suggesting no significant difference between the groups. However, if the significance value is less than or equal to 0.05, H_0 is rejected, indicating a statistically significant difference in article writing skills between the two groups.

TABLE 24
MANN-WHITNEY TEST PRE-TEST DATA ARTICLE TEXT

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.678	H_0 accepted
Experiment		

Based on the results of the comparison of two means for the Pre-Test data on students' writing skills in article texts presented in the table above, the significance value is $0.678 > 0.05$. According to the testing criteria, H_0 is accepted, meaning that there is no significant difference in the initial writing skills in article texts between students who participated in learning using the 21st-century competency-based and HOTS assessment model and those who participated in learning with the conventional writing skills assessment model. According to {Formatting Citation}, if the results of statistical tests indicate no significant difference between the two groups, other factors such as teaching methods, learning motivation, or the learning environment may influence learning outcomes.

2) Post-Test

a) Normality test

In this study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was utilized to assess the normality of the data distribution. The test was conducted at a significance level of 0.05, with the following decision criteria: if the significance (sig.) value exceeds 0.05, the data is considered to be normally distributed; conversely, if the sig. value is less than or equal to 0.05, it indicates that the sample originates from a non-normally distributed population. The results of the normality test, as analyzed using SPSS 24 software, are presented in the table below. Ensuring the normality of data is essential in selecting the appropriate statistical analysis method for further hypothesis testing.

TABLE 25
POST-TEST DATA NORMALITY TEST OF ARTICLE TEXT

Class	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Control	0.090	35	0.200
Experiment	0.150	70	0.000

Referring to the table above, the significance value for the control class is 0.200, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the data follows a normal distribution. Conversely, the significance value for the experimental class is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, suggesting that the data is not normally distributed. Based on these findings and the established testing criteria, it can be concluded that while the control class sample meets the assumption of normality, the experimental class sample does not. Given that one of the data sets originates from a non-normally distributed population, the appropriate method for comparing the two group means is a non-parametric statistical test. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney test is employed to assess the significance of the difference between the two averages, as it is specifically designed for analyzing data that does not meet the assumption of normality.

b) Test the difference between two means

The normality test results indicated that both the control and experimental class samples were not normally distributed. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney test was employed to analyze the difference between the two means for the post-test data on article writing skills. In this study, the Mann-Whitney test was conducted based on the following hypothesis: if the significance value (sig.) is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted, implying no significant difference between the groups. However, if the significance value is less than or equal to 0.05, H_0 is rejected, indicating a significant difference. The subsequent table presents the detailed test results obtained using SPSS 24 software.

TABLE 26
MANN-WHITNEY TEST POST-TEST DATA ARTICLE TEXT

Class	Sig.	Interpretation
Control	0.000	H_0 rejected
Experiment		

The comparison of Post-Test data on students' article writing skills shows a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating a significant difference between students using the 21st-century competency-based and HOTS assessment model and those using the conventional model. The effectiveness of the competency-based and HOTS model in Indonesian language learning was evident, as students in this group outperformed those using the conventional model. Marzano (2007) states that a competency-based approach helps students systematically master specific skills, while Anderson and Krathwohl (2001), Setiawan et al. (2021), Herunata et al. (2021), and Aryana S. et al. (2022) note that HOTS fosters skills in evaluation, analysis, and creation, essential for writing article texts.

IV. CONCLUSION

This research concluded that the 21st-century competency-based and Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) writing assessment model is significantly more effective in improving students' writing skills compared to the conventional method. This effectiveness applies to various types of texts, such as observation reports, biographies, procedures,

explanations, editorials, and articles. HOTS-based learning encourages students to think critically, analyze, evaluate, and create, enabling them to produce more structured and high-quality writing. The HOTS-based approach also allows students to master high-level skills relevant to the needs of the modern world. This model integrates critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills.

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English Language Teachers' Speaking Assessment Beliefs and Practices in Malaysian Secondary Schools

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Abstract—This study examines the correlation between Malaysian secondary school English teachers' speaking assessment beliefs and their actual classroom practices within a classroom-based assessment framework. Adopting a quantitative research approach, data were collected from 98 teachers via a survey, and correlational analysis was employed to examine the strength, direction, and significance of the relationship between their beliefs and practices. The findings indicate that while teachers generally believe speaking assessment is important for developing students' communication skills, their actual practices do not always match these beliefs. A statistically significant moderate positive correlation was found between teachers' beliefs about speaking assessment and their frequency of using it; teachers who attached more importance to it, tended to use it more in practice. The results highlight the need for focused professional development and clearer guidelines to assist teachers in aligning teachers' assessment beliefs and practices. This alignment will promote more effective and consistent use of speaking assessments in the classroom.

Index Terms—speaking assessment, beliefs, practices, Malaysian English language teachers

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, education systems around the world have placed more emphasis on classroom-based assessments (CBAs) to assess student performance and inform teaching practices. Malaysia's shift from traditional centralised exams to CBAs has prompted significant reforms, particularly in language education. The Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013–2025) supports this transformation by promoting more holistic assessment practices aimed at enhancing student learning outcomes and preparing learners for real-world communication demands (English Language Standards and Quality Council, 2015). Within this framework, speaking assessment has gained prominence in English language instruction, given its critical role in fostering students' communicative competence and advancing their overall language proficiency (Lembaga Peperiksaan Malaysia, 2002).

Despite the strong emphasis on speaking assessment in educational policy, a significant gap remains between teachers' perceptions of its importance and the practical implementation in classrooms. Effective speaking assessment demands that teachers assess a range of linguistic and communicative skills, including pronunciation, fluency, and pragmatic skills (Luoma, 2004; Fulcher, 2012). However, many teachers express feeling insufficiently prepared to conduct comprehensive speaking assessments, frequently pointing to inadequate training opportunities and unclear guidelines as key obstacles (Majid, 2011; Rahman, 2014). Therefore, many teachers resort to conventional assessment techniques that prioritise writing skills over oral proficiency, even if they acknowledge the importance of speaking assessments in enhancing communicative competence (Aziz & Kashinathan, 2021).

This study is important because it fills a critical gap in the existing literature regarding the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their practices in speaking assessment. While previous studies have examined teachers' assessment knowledge and general practices (Crusan et al., 2016; Marzaini et al., 2023), the association between teachers' beliefs and practices about speaking assessment has received relatively little attention, especially within the context of Malaysian secondary schools. As Malaysia's educational assessment framework continues to evolve, it is essential to explore the factors that shape teachers' approaches to speaking assessment and determine the extent to which their beliefs either support or hinder

the successful implementation of their practices.

This study contributes to the existing body of research on language teachers' perceptions of assessment by investigating the relationship between their beliefs and practices. Comprehending this link helps guide the design of professional development programs focused on improving teachers' assessment literacy, especially in speaking assessment, which is still inadequately addressed in Malaysia (Nimehchisalem & Bhatti, 2019). The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and educators seeking to bridge the gap between educational innovations and practical classroom implementation, facilitating more effective integration of assessment reforms into everyday teaching practices.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Teachers' Speaking Assessment Beliefs and Practices

Teachers' approaches to instructional practices and assessment are heavily shaped by their underlying beliefs (Borg, 1997; Pajares, 1992). These beliefs strongly influence teachers' classroom practices, especially the strategies they use for assessing speaking skills. Teacher beliefs, which combine knowledge and practices, form a complex framework guiding instructional decisions (Borg, 2003). However, research shows that teachers' beliefs often do not align with their actual practices, both in general education and language assessment (Brown, 2002; Hill, 2017).

Teachers face many challenges in speaking assessments because they need to evaluate both language accuracy and communication skills. Luoma (2004) points out that effective speaking assessments include skills like making meaning, pronunciation, and fluency. However, these assessments are often underused due to practical issues such as time limits, large class sizes, and a lack of training (Majid, 2011; Fulcher, 2012). In Malaysia, teachers also struggle to keep up with changing standards and have to deal with updated curricula and shifting assessment policies (Jamil et al., 2025).

Mertler and Campbell (2005) define assessment literacy as the knowledge and skills needed to design, conduct, and interpret assessments effectively. This literacy is necessary for assisting teachers in addressing issues and effective teaching. Research indicates that numerous teachers lack adequate training in assessment, particularly in countries such as Malaysia where school-based assessments are still developing (Fook & Sidhu, 2006; Salleh et al., 2023). In the case of Malaysian secondary school teachers, a significant gap in knowledge related to speaking assessment persists. Teachers report difficulties in selecting suitable assessment methods and in effectively reporting assessment outcomes to students and parents (Majid, 2011; Rahman, 2014).

While teachers understand the importance of speaking assessment, they often find it difficult to evaluate students fairly and communicate the results clearly (Frey & Schmitt, 2007). This uncertainty can result in inconsistent practices because teachers' beliefs do not always match how they carry out assessments in the classroom.

Studies from Thailand and Hong Kong show that teachers encounter difficulties in adjusting to the shift toward more communicative language assessments, largely due to insufficient guidance and a lack of professional support (Cheng et al., 2004; Narathakoon et al., 2020). The situation is more problematic in Malaysia due to the pressure of centralised tests, which prioritise writing and reading comprehension over speaking (Malakolunthu & Sim, 2010). In Malaysia, the assessment of speaking skills has traditionally been overshadowed by a predominant emphasis on reading and writing in public examinations. This focus has often led to the marginalisation of oral communication skills. However, recent curriculum reforms aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) have highlighted the importance of developing oral communication among students (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2013). Despite this shift, the implementation of speaking assessment remains inconsistent and studies have reported several ongoing challenges including lack of training, time constraints, large class sizes, and teachers' limited confidence in assessing speaking (Kaur & Aziz, 2020; Jamil et al., 2025).

Furthermore, the level of assessment literacy among teachers, such as their knowledge, skills, and confidence in designing and implementing speaking assessments also mediates this belief-practice relationship. Teachers with strong beliefs but weak assessment literacy may struggle to implement effective speaking tasks, while those with high assessment literacy but rigid beliefs may still limit students' speaking opportunities. Thus, understanding teachers' beliefs about classroom-based speaking assessment is essential not only for interpreting their current practices but also for designing professional development programs that help bridge the gap between theory and practice. Encouraging reflective practice and providing ongoing support can help align beliefs with assessment methods that truly enhance learners' communicative competence.

B. Theoretical Perspectives

The theoretical perspectives of this study were drawn from teachers' cognition theory (Borg, 2003), Taylor (2013) Assessment Literacy Theory and the Standards for Teacher Competence in Educational Assessment of Students Measures of Assessment Literacy (NCME, AFT, NEA, 1990) in examining the underpinnings issue of the relationship between teachers' beliefs, and practices of speaking assessment. Borg's (2003) Teachers' Cognition Theory highlights how teachers' knowledge, belief and experiences influence their classroom practices and the assessment of speaking skills. In speaking assessment, a teacher's past learning, training, and professional experience may influence how they judge students' spoken performance, what they focus on (e.g., fluency, accuracy), and how confident they feel in assessing speaking tasks. Taylor's (2013) Assessment Literacy Theory emphasises that teachers need specific

knowledge and skills to carry out effective language assessments. This includes understanding the nature of spoken languages, being familiar with different types of speaking tasks and knowing how to interpret students' performance fairly and accurately. To guide the practical aspects of speaking assessment, the standards for teacher competence in educational assessment of students (NCME, AFT, NEA, 1990) outlined seven areas that teachers need to be competent in. The seven standards include, choosing and developing appropriate tasks, scoring and interpreting results, using results to inform instructions, grading fairly, communicating results clearly and recognise unethical assessment practices. In the context of speaking assessment, these standards support teachers in ensuring that assessments are meaningful, consistent, and ethical. By combining these three perspectives, the study investigates how teachers' beliefs align with their actual classroom practices when assessing speaking in Malaysian secondary schools.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Questions and Hypothesis

This study examines the relationship between Malaysian teachers' speaking assessment beliefs and practices using Borg's (2003) teacher cognition framework, which explains how teachers' beliefs and experiences shape their practices, and Taylor's (2013) language assessment literacy model, which emphasises the role of both cognitive understanding and contextual factors in language assessment. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the Malaysian secondary school English language teachers' speaking assessment beliefs?
2. What are these teachers perceived speaking assessment practices?
3. What is the relationship between the teachers' speaking assessment beliefs and practices?

This study hypothesised that there is no significant relationship between English language teachers' speaking assessment beliefs and practices scores.

B. Research Design

This was a quantitative study with a correlational design. The sampling, data collection, and analysis methods are presented in this section. The study involved 98 participants, who were English language teachers from secondary schools in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. These teachers were graduates in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), English language, or related subjects, with teaching experience ranging from novice to senior levels. Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants with specific knowledge and experience relevant to the study's goals, ensuring they had practical experience with classroom-based speaking assessments.

C. Instruments

The instrument utilised to collect the data was a self-administered survey questionnaire that was developed from Zhang and Bury-Stock's (2003) Assessment Practice Inventory. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: (a) Speaking Assessment Beliefs, which included questions measuring teachers' beliefs about the objectives, ethics, and outcomes of speaking assessments; and (b) Speaking Assessment Practices, which assessed teachers' perceived (i.e., self-reported) speaking assessment practices, such as how they conduct assessments, select assessment strategies, grade students, and share results. A 5-point Likert scale, with 0 representing strongly disagree and 5 representing strongly agree, was used to record the responses. The survey yielded information about teachers' beliefs and practices regarding established standards of assessment literacy (NCME, AFT, & NEA, 1990).

D. Data Collection Procedures

The survey was given to all participants, who were informed about the purpose of the study and gave their consent. Participants took the test and answered the questionnaire in a single session. The test and questionnaire were conducted through face-to-face administration. Data collection was finished from 11th May to 1st June 2019. Descriptive statistics, such as mean and standard deviation, were calculated, and Pearson correlation analysis was performed to examine the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their self-reported practices.

E. Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the university's ethics review board. Participants were informed about the study's goals and objectives in addition to a promise that the information they provided would be kept private. Prior to the survey, all respondents provided their informed consent. Additionally, participants had the choice to leave the study at any time. To preserve participant anonymity, data collected were anonymised and stored securely.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the study's findings, focusing on the beliefs and practices of Malaysian secondary school English teachers about speaking assessment. The analysis answers the research questions by outlining teachers' beliefs, reviewing their reported practices, and exploring the connection between them. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis are used to summarise the data and highlight important features.

A. Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

The items in the survey were examined for internal reliability. The objective of the test is to verify if the participants consistently responded to the survey. Table 1 displays the reliability statistics of the speaking assessment belief and practice questionnaire. With a Cronbach's Alpha ranging from 0.906 to 0.774, the subscale that focused on teachers' beliefs (7 criteria) showed strong internal consistency. Each item in this subscale contributed positively to the overall reliability. The subscale for teachers' practice (7 criteria) also ranged from 0.933 to 0.751 contributed positively to the overall reliability. The high internal consistency of the questionnaire suggests that it is a reliable instrument for examining teachers' beliefs and practices.

TABLE 1
RELIABILITY STATISTIC OF SPEAKING ASSESSMENT BELIEF AND PRACTICES QUESTIONNAIRE (N = 98)

No.	Criteria	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	
			Belief	Practice
1.	Choosing the correct method	14	.868	.751
2.	Developing speaking assessment	10	.853	.806
3.	Administering speaking assessment	12	.864	.906
4.	Using speaking assessment results for classroom instruction and students' improvement.	6	.886	.876
5.	Validating grading procedures	15	.906	.933
6.	Communicating speaking assessment results	5	.774	.800
7.	Recognising ethical consideration in speaking assessment	4	.873	.781

Regarding the first research question, the results indicate that Malaysian secondary school English teachers hold strong beliefs about the importance of speaking assessments, particularly in terms of evaluating students' communicative competence (Table 2).

TABLE 2
TEACHERS' ASSESSMENT BELIEFS AND PRACTICES (N = 98)

No.	Criteria	Belief				Practice			
		Min	Max	M	SD	Min	Max	M	SD
1.	Choosing the correct method	3.00	5.00	4.02	.375	2.64	5.00	3.51	.488
2.	Developing speaking assessment	2.67	4.89	3.87	.396	1.78	5.00	3.80	.563
3.	Administering speaking assessment	2.08	5.00	3.84	.436	1.33	5.00	3.51	.677
4.	Using speaking assessment results for classroom instruction and students' improvement.	2.00	5.00	3.65	.617	1.00	5.00	3.36	.771
5.	Validating grading procedures	1.40	4.87	3.63	.544	1.20	5.00	3.24	.806
6.	Communicating speaking assessment results	1.80	5.00	3.82	.534	1.40	5.00	3.56	.771
7.	Recognising ethical consideration in speaking assessment	2.25	5.00	4.19	.661	2.00	5.00	4.06	.840

*Cut off points mean for Belief & Practice: low (1.00 – 2.33), medium (2.34 – 3.67), and high (3.68 – 5.00).

The mean score for beliefs regarding the significance of speaking assessments was high ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.43$), indicating that teachers mostly agreed on the importance of speaking assessments in teaching language. Teachers expressed strong agreement on the importance of selecting the correct method for assessing student performance ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.35$) and developing effective assessment tools to students' needs ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.39$). The results also highlighted a strong consensus among teachers regarding communicating the findings of the speaking test results ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 0.53$) and the ethical procedures ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.66$). It suggests that teachers show a high level of commitment to maintaining the integrity of the assessment process. The scores for utilising assessment results to enhance instruction ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 0.61$) and assessing the grading procedures ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.54$) were comparatively lower. This suggests that teachers feel less confident in these areas of speaking assessment.

The second Research Question was related to the teachers' perceived assessment practices. The findings reveal a misalignment between teachers' beliefs and their actual practices. While there is some consistency in the selecting the methods ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 0.48$), administering the assessment ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 0.67$), validating the grades ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 0.86$), communication of results ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 0.77$), and utilising assessment results to enhance instruction ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.77$), other areas of practice, such as ethical values ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 0.84$) and designing speaking assessment tasks ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.48$), were reported at notably medium levels. This discrepancy indicates that although teachers value speaking assessments, practical constraints, such as limited time and large class sizes, may prevent them from fully implementing effective speaking assessment practices.

B. Relationship Between Assessment Beliefs and Practices

The third Research Question tested the relationship between teachers' speaking assessment beliefs and practices. Pearson correlation analysis was used to study the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices regarding speaking assessment. The findings indicated a moderate positive correlation among all seven standards of speaking assessment ($r = .476$, $p < .001$). Teachers who hold a strong belief in the significance of speaking assessments are more inclined to implement these practices in their classrooms.

TABLE 3
PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN BELIEFS AND PRACTICES OF SPEAKING ASSESSMENT

		Belief	Practice
Belief	Pearson Correlation	1	.476**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	98	98
Practice	Pearson Correlation	.476**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	98	98

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

The positive correlation suggests that while teachers with stronger beliefs about speaking assessments are more likely to implement related practices, several contextual factors—such as time constraints, large class sizes, and inadequate training—limit the extent to which these beliefs are consistently reflected in their classroom practices. The findings support Borg's (1997) model of teacher cognition, which posits that while beliefs shape instructional decisions, contextual factors moderate the extent to which these beliefs are enacted in practice.

Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices in speaking assessment. The scatterplot displays the distribution of data points, showing how teachers' reported practices tend to increase with higher belief scores. The trend line indicates a positive association, suggesting that teachers who value speaking assessment are more inclined to implement corresponding practices in their classrooms.

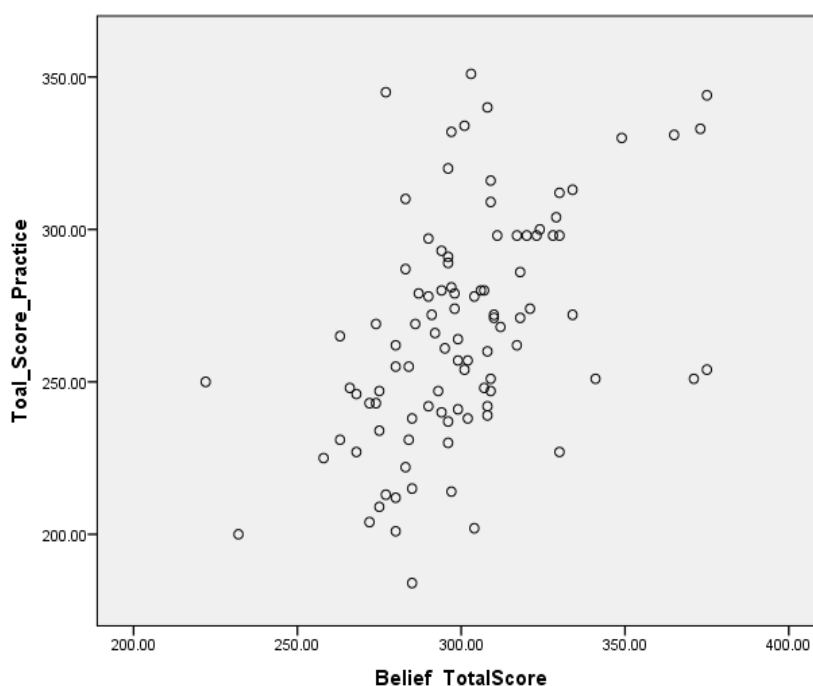


Figure 1. The Relationship Between Belief and Speaking Assessment Practice (Pearson's $r = .476$)

Figure 1 illustrates that while there is a noticeable upward trend, the data points are somewhat dispersed, reflecting variability in the extent to which teachers' beliefs translate into classroom practices. This variation may be attributed to factors such as logistical challenges and limited resources, which can affect teachers' capacity to fully implement their beliefs about speaking assessment in practice.

V. DISCUSSIONS

This study examined the relationship between the beliefs and practices of Malaysian secondary school English language teachers concerning speaking assessment. The results provide valuable insights into the challenges teachers face in aligning their beliefs with their practices. In this section, the findings are interpreted in light of previous research, highlighting both consistencies and discrepancies with the existing literature.

A. Teachers' Beliefs About Speaking Assessment

The results indicate that Malaysian teachers hold strong beliefs about the importance of speaking assessment in evaluating students' communicative competence. This finding aligns with previous studies that emphasise the role of speaking assessment in language education (Luoma, 2004; Fulcher, 2012). The high mean scores for administering speaking assessments suggest that teachers recognise its value in developing students' language skills, particularly in real-world communication settings. This is consistent with Luoma (2004), who argued that speaking assessments are essential

for assessing learners' ability to convey meaning effectively.

However, lower belief scores in areas such as ethical considerations and communicating assessment results reveal gaps in teachers' confidence regarding specific aspects of speaking assessment. These findings align with Frey and Schmitt (2007), who observed that teachers frequently encounter difficulties in understanding and applying ethical assessment practices. The variability in teachers' beliefs may stem from insufficient training or a lack of clear guidelines on effectively managing these aspects of assessment (Majid, 2011; Rahman, 2014). Such challenges can prevent teachers from fully embracing all dimensions of speaking assessment, suggesting a need for more comprehensive professional development in these areas.

B. Teachers' Practices of Speaking Assessment

The reported practices of teachers show a discrepancy between their beliefs and actual classroom implementation. While teachers generally believe in the value of speaking assessments, practical limitations hinder the extent to which these beliefs are realised in their practices. The results, which indicate lower scores for using assessment results to improve instruction and developing speaking assessments, are consistent with earlier studies in Malaysia that identified logistical barriers such as large class sizes and limited instructional time as significant challenges (Majid, 2011; Rahman, 2014). These limitations may lead teachers to pick quicker methods, like group assessments, which can make it harder for them to provide individual feedback to students.

The lower scores for developing speaking assessments support the findings of Narathakoon et al. (2020), who saw similar challenges for teachers in other Asian countries when changing assessment methods to fit communicative language teaching. This shows that the problem isn't just in Malaysia; it's part of a bigger challenge that schools face as they shift from traditional assessment methods to more communicative and student-centered approaches.

C. Relationship Between Teachers' Beliefs and Practices

The moderate positive correlation found here ($r = .476$) shows that while teachers' beliefs influence their practices, this influence is only partly visible in the classroom. The results suggest that teachers with stronger beliefs about speaking assessment are more likely to use related practices, but this link is limited by outside factors. This finding supports Borg's (1997) model of teacher cognition, which proposes that while beliefs significantly shape instructional decisions, contextual factors such as classroom environment, time, and available resources moderate how these beliefs manifest in practice.

The variation in correlation indicates how practical challenges hinder teachers from continuously implementing their views in the classroom. This finding corresponds to the research conducted by Brown (2002) and Hill (2017), which identified that teachers frequently encounter issues such as institutional policies, curriculum requirements, and various systemic obstacles while attempting to implement ideal assessment procedures. Malakolunthu and Sim (2010) observed that in Malaysia, centralised examinations emphasise reading and writing skills above speaking abilities. This emphasis restricts teachers' ability to conduct comprehensive speaking assessments.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

A. Findings

This study looked at how well Malaysian secondary school English teachers' beliefs match their perceived practices in speaking assessment. The results show that although teachers see speaking assessment as important, practical issues like time limits, large class sizes, and insufficient training make it hard to implement these beliefs in the classroom. There is a positive link between what teachers believe and what they do, but they will often be challenged by external factors.

The findings suggest that teachers need more support and resources to help them put their beliefs into action. Practical training and solutions to common problems in the classroom could make speaking assessment more effective. Clearer policies and guidelines are essential to help teachers conduct speaking assessments consistently and effectively. Well-defined frameworks can bridge the gap between policy expectations and classroom practices, minimising ambiguity and fostering more uniform implementation.

This study adds to the expanding body of knowledge on speaking assessment and highlights the importance of enhancing teacher training and refining policy guidelines. Future research should further investigate the factors influencing teachers' assessment practices to ensure that language assessment reforms effectively improve both teaching and learning outcomes.

B. Implications for Professional Development and Policy

The findings reinforce the need for focused professional development to assist teachers in integrating their beliefs with their practices. These training programs should cover more than just the technical aspects of conducting speaking assessments. They should provide teachers with practical strategies for managing large classes, making the best use of instructional time, and addressing ethical issues effectively. In addition, policymakers should develop clearer guidelines for implementing speaking assessments, especially in challenging areas like grading and giving feedback.

The results also indicate that ongoing educational reforms, such as those outlined in the findings suggest that ongoing educational reforms, like those in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (2013–2025), should not only revise assessment policies but also provide strong support for teachers. This support is needed to ensure that classroom practices match with

the objectives of the reforms and are implemented efficiently. Considering the study's limitations, subsequent research should investigate other factors that may affect teachers' speaking assessment procedures, including school culture, administrative support, and collaboration among teachers.

C. Recommendations for Future Research

While this study provides helpful insights, it has some limitations. First, the reliance on self-reported data can introduce bias because teachers might overstate or downplay their beliefs and practices. Second, the study was limited to one Malaysian state, which may restrict the generalisability of the findings.

Future research should include objective measures of assessment practices, such as classroom observations, and involve teachers from diverse regions. Investigating factors such as institutional policies, resource availability, and teacher collaboration will provide a more comprehensive understanding of what shapes speaking assessment practices.

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Building Bilingual Expertise: Evaluating Professional Development Program for Elementary Teachers in Taiwan

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Abstract—This study evaluates a professional development program for in-service elementary school teachers in Taiwan, focusing on bilingual education through the CLIL approach. The research aligns with Taiwan’s “Bilingual 2030” policy, aiming to enhance English proficiency and global competitiveness among the citizens. The six-credit, 108-hour program includes workshops, collaborative planning sessions, and micro-teaching activities. Using a mixed-methods approach with quantitative surveys and qualitative open-ended questions, the study found significant improvements in teachers’ understanding of bilingual education. Participants moved away from the belief that native-like English fluency and native speakers are essential for effective bilingual teaching, and recognized the benefits of using students’ first language flexibly. Teachers initially sought practical strategies and a deeper understanding of bilingual education, but upon completion of the program, their focus shifted to practical application, collaborative planning, and student motivation. The findings highlight the program’s success in enhancing teachers’ bilingual teaching capabilities for both English-teaching-related and non-English-teaching-related background teachers and underscore the need for ongoing support and resources. This study provides valuable insights for international audiences, suggesting that well-structured professional development programs can significantly improve teachers’ ability to deliver bilingual education. Continuous evaluation and adaptation are crucial to addressing educators’ evolving needs and ensuring sustained effectiveness.

Index Terms—bilingual education, CLIL, teacher professional development, Bilingual 2030 in Taiwan

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers’ professional development is essential to bring success to education. Education policies and new educational approaches must be accompanied by teacher preparation and professional development to realize the ideas and trends in the real classroom. Taiwan launched the “Bilingual 2030” (National Development Council, 2021) national development policy for two purposes: making Taiwan a more English-friendly region to attract international business and talent, and enhancing Taiwanese youth’s English proficiency to increase global competitiveness and mobility. Teaching English as a school subject in an English-as-a-foreign-language context is no longer sufficient to achieve these goals. In this background, bilingual education has begun to be promoted in schools of all levels in Taiwan.

Pre-service bilingual teacher preparation programs and in-service bilingual teacher professional development courses were launched shortly after the “Bilingual 2030” policy was released in 2018. It is estimated that by the end of 2030, 5000 pre-service teachers will graduate with an endorsement in bilingual teaching, and 50% of content teachers in elementary and secondary schools will receive on-the-job training in bilingual education (Ministry of Education, 2018). All authors of this paper teach at the same university that trains elementary teachers. Starting in 2020, the university has been offering a bilingual teaching endorsement program for pre-service teachers and a bilingual teaching professional development program for in-service teachers. This paper reports the latter, a six-credit, 108-hour professional development program for in-service elementary teachers (hereafter, the Program), and how in-service elementary teachers (hereafter, the Participants) in this program responded to the training.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Background and Rationale

Since the announcement of Taiwan's "Bilingual 2030" policy in 2018, there has been a significant push towards integrating bilingual education across all educational levels. This policy aims to transform Taiwan into a bilingual nation by enhancing English proficiency among its citizens, thereby increasing international competitiveness and attracting global talent. As part of this initiative, the government has recognized the necessity of equipping teachers with the skills and knowledge required to effectively deliver bilingual education. Research indicates that teacher preparedness is a critical factor in the successful implementation of educational reforms, underscoring the importance of comprehensive professional development programs (Wang & Lin, 2018; Hsieh, 2021).

Internationally, similar efforts have been undertaken to enhance bilingual education through targeted professional development. European countries within the CLIL Network have also invested in extensive teacher training programs to support bilingual education by integrating content and language learning objectives (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2016). Taiwan's approach aligns with these international efforts by emphasizing the need for teacher preparedness in delivering bilingual education. However, the local context presents unique challenges, such as the need for English proficiency among content teachers and the adaptation of CLIL methodologies to Taiwan's educational system. The professional development program described in this paper, a six-credit, 108-hour course, addresses these specific needs by providing in-depth training on CLIL strategies, practical teaching methods, and collaborative lesson planning.

In response to the "Bilingual 2030" policy, there has been an urgent need for bilingual teaching practices and professional development, especially at the elementary school level. Elementary school teachers, who play a crucial role in the foundational stages of education, require specialized training to adapt to the demands of bilingual instruction. Studies have shown that early exposure to bilingual education can significantly enhance language acquisition and cognitive development in young learners (Garcia & Wei, 2018). Consequently, the government and educational institutions have prioritized the development of both pre-service and in-service training programs to ensure that teachers are well-equipped to meet these new educational demands.

The implementation of these training programs has highlighted several challenges and areas for improvement. For instance, teachers need ongoing support and resources to integrate bilingual teaching methods into their classrooms effectively. Professional development programs, such as the six-credit, 108-hour course offered by the university mentioned in this paper, are designed to address these needs by providing in-depth training and practical strategies for bilingual instruction. Preliminary feedback from participants indicates a positive response to these programs, with teachers expressing increased confidence and competence in their ability to deliver bilingual education (Chen et al., 2022). However, continuous evaluation and adaptation of these programs are necessary to ensure they remain relevant and effective when meeting the evolving needs of educators and students alike.

This professional development program in Taiwan, while sharing common goals with international efforts, is tailored to address the unique challenges of the Taiwanese educational context. It aims to build a robust bilingual education framework by equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge, thus contributing to the global discourse on effective bilingual education practices.

B. CLIL Professional Development Demand

The professional development needs of elementary school teachers embarking on bilingual teaching, particularly through the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach, have been extensively documented in the research literature. CLIL, which integrates content and language learning objectives, requires teachers to possess a dual skill set: subject-specific expertise and language teaching proficiency. Research indicates that teachers often face challenges in balancing these dual roles, highlighting the necessity for targeted professional development programs that address both content and language instruction (Coyle et al., 2010). This is echoed by Mehisto et al. (2008), who emphasized that successful CLIL implementation relies on teachers being equipped with integrated pedagogical strategies and deep conceptual understanding of bilingual learning processes. Effective CLIL professional development programs typically include comprehensive training on CLIL methodology, strategies for integrating content and language, and techniques for assessing student progress in both areas (Lasagabaster & Doiz, 2016).

CLIL professional development programs are designed to equip teachers with the necessary pedagogical skills and theoretical knowledge to implement this approach successfully. These programs usually encompass workshops, collaborative planning sessions, and classroom observations. Key topics covered include scaffolding techniques, language support strategies, curriculum design, and the use of authentic materials to enhance language learning within content lessons (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). Additionally, many programs emphasize the importance of reflective practice and peer collaboration, encouraging teachers to share experiences and best practices. Studies have shown that teachers who participate in these programs generally report increased confidence in their ability to deliver CLIL instruction and a greater understanding of how to support students' language development within the context of content learning (Pérez-Cañado, 2016).

The effectiveness of CLIL professional development programs varies, with teachers' disciplinary backgrounds playing a significant role in their perceived usefulness. Teachers with a background in language teaching often find these programs beneficial as they provide strategies to integrate language skills into content areas, thereby enhancing their instructional repertoire (Morton, 2018). Conversely, teachers from content area backgrounds, such as science or mathematics, may

initially struggle with the language component but appreciate the practical techniques for embedding language support within their subject teaching. Research by Banegas (2020) indicates that while content teachers may require more time and support to adapt to CLIL, they ultimately recognize the value of the approach in making their subjects more accessible and engaging for students. Overall, CLIL professional development programs are seen as crucial for helping teachers navigate the complexities of bilingual education, though ongoing support and tailored training are essential to address the diverse needs of educators. To further explore the impact and outcomes of such professional development programs, this study addressed the following questions:

1. Upon completing the Program, how did the Participants change their understanding of bilingual education? Are there differences between English- and non-English-background teachers?
2. Upon completing the Program, what aspects of bilingual teaching did the Participants still think they needed?
3. Based on the study's results, what suggestions about bilingual teaching professional development for in-service elementary teachers can be provided?

III. THE PROGRAM

The Program was planned and based on guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education. The guidelines, originally developed by the Foreign Language Center at the National Cheng Kung University in Taiwan, include the hours, course contents, and some course materials. It is a 108-hour program delivered in three stages that adopts the CLIL approach to bilingual education in elementary and secondary schools. When finishing the coursework, participants are awarded a course completion certificate. A CEFR B2 level English proficiency is required along with course completion to get the bilingual education endorsement. The authors consulted the instructor's manual for the in-service bilingual teacher training program of MOE (Foreign Language Center, 2021), a resource prepared by the Foreign Language Center at the National Cheng Kung University for instructors in all teacher training institutes that offer this program.

Stage 1 was a 9-day (54 hours) intense session that started during the summer break. It was the stage to help the Participants build a core knowledge base of CLIL. Session contents included the foundation of bilingual education, English as a lingua Franca, CLIL methods and materials, CLIL task design, CLIL assessment, translanguaging, multimodality and scaffolding, etc. In the afternoons, teachers from different disciplinary backgrounds collaborated and practiced CLIL lesson planning. On the last day of this stage, teachers presented their CLIL unit plans and microteaching.

After the summer break, the new semester started in September. Stage 2 of the Program was delivered synchronously online in the fall semester to avoid the transportation hassles and time demand that in-person meetings would incur. Teachers and facilitators met for 2 hours each week for 18 weeks (36 hours total in Stage 2). Sixteen videos (15- to 25-min in length) filmed by internationally prominent bilingual education scholars were provided by the Foreign Language Center at the National Cheng Kung University for class discussion. The Participants also practiced CLIL in their own school settings and shared their classroom practice and reflection during the 2-hour online meeting.

In the last stage (3 days, 18 hours) that took place after the fall semester in the winter break, teachers presented their CLIL unit design and microteaching. Unlike stage 1 where unit plans and microteaching were practiced in interdisciplinary groups, stage 3 required that each participant develop a unit plan and present a microteaching individually. Table 1 shows the overall structure of the Program.

TABLE 1
COURSE SCHEDULE OF THE PROGRAM

Stage 1 (In-Person)		
Day	Morning Topic (9:00-12:00)	Afternoon Topic (13:00-16:00)
1	Introduction to Bilingual Education	Introduction to English as a Lingua Franca
2	Competence-Based Bilingual Education Curriculum Design	Competence-Based Bilingual Education Curriculum Design: Practice
3	Interactive and Instructional Language; Translanguaging	Interactive and Instructional Language; Translanguaging: Practice
4	Competence-Based Bilingual Education Activity Design and Material Development	Competence-Based Bilingual Education Activity Design and Material Development: Practice
5	Multimodality and Multimedia in Bilingual Education	Multimodality and Multimedia in Bilingual Education: Practice
6	Competence-Based Bilingual Education Task Design	Competence-Based Bilingual Education Task Design: Practice
7	Bilingual Education Exemplary Case Analysis	Bilingual Education Exemplary Case Analysis: Practice
8	Competence-Based Bilingual Education Assessment	Competence-Based Bilingual Education Assessment: Practice
9	Bilingual Teaching Unit Design and Microteaching Presentation and Feedback	Bilingual Teaching Unit Design and Microteaching Presentation and Feedback
Stage 2 (Online)		
Week	Speaker of the Pre-recorded Video	Topic
1	None	Introduction and Orientation
2-4	Nicos Sifakis (Greece)	- English as a Lingua Franca: Introducing the Concept - Integrating ELF within EFL: The Concept of ELF Awareness - Developing ELF-aware Activities in EFL Classroom
5-6	Yuen-Yi Lo (Hong Kong)	- Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Pedagogy - Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Assessment
7-10	Angel M. Y. Lin (Canada)	- Genre-based Pedagogy in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) - Genre-based Pedagogy in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): Advanced - Teaching CLIL through a Multilingual Lens: Translanguaging Pedagogy in CLIL - Using the MEC to Plan a Unit of Work in CLIL
11-13	Will Baker (UK)	- Intercultural and Transcultural Communication Through Global Englishes - From Communicative Competence to Intercultural Communicative Competence and Awareness - Intercultural Education in the Classroom
14-17	Inmaculada Pineda Hernández (Spain)	- CLIL Multimodality - CLIL & Multiliteracies - CLIL Multimodal Users - Gamification
18	None	Final Reflection
Stage 3 (In-Person)		
Day	Morning Topic (9:00-12:00)	Afternoon Topic (13:00-16:00)
1	Microteaching Lesson Plan Preparation	Microteaching Lesson Plan Peer Feedback
2	Microteaching Rehearsal Preparation	Microteaching Rehearsal Peer Feedback
3	Microteaching and Reflection	Microteaching and Reflection

After successful completion of the Program, participants who met the CEFR B2 English proficiency would be awarded the bilingual teaching endorsement. A three-year grace period was granted for participants who needed more time to reach the CEFR B2 English proficiency.

IV. METHODS

The survey research method was adopted to answer the first and second research questions. Participants were invited to voluntarily answer a survey, which was written in Chinese, at the start and end of the Program. Open-ended questions asked in the survey provide qualitative data to consolidate and complement quantitative data. A total of 66 participants completed both surveys. Research participants, instruments, and data analysis are described in what follows.

A. Participants

The Program as offered by the authors' university was for teachers from Taichung City and nearby counties including Nantou and Changhua. Some participants applied for participation voluntarily and some others were appointed by their schools to participate. All applications had to be approved first by the education bureau of the local government and then by the Ministry of Education.

Among the 102 participants who completed the Program successfully, 66 (56 females and 10 males) of them completed both surveys voluntarily. Most of them (76%) were either English teachers or had English Language Teaching as part of their pre-service teacher preparation. The number of years of teaching ranged quite widely: 29% no more than 5 years; 41% between 6 and 15 years; 30% more than 16 years. Regarding their English language proficiency, 59% of the participants were able to present proof of CEFR B2 or above English proficiency. It needs to be noted, however, that

classroom teachers, especially content teachers, in Taiwan are not required to take standardized English proficiency tests. The fact that some participants could not present a B2 English proficiency test result did not necessarily mean they did not have that level of English proficiency. Last, only 30.6% of the Participants had bilingual teaching experiences.

B. Instruments

A survey was developed by the authors to collect information from the Participants. The first of the three sections of the survey is personal information. The results of the nine items of this section were reported earlier above in description about the Participants. The second section consists of ten five-point Likert scale type items that are statements about bilingual education, including the purposes of bilingual education, factors that might influence the effectiveness of it, and who would be better bilingual teachers. The final section includes three open-ended questions where the Participants shared their professional development experiences in the Program. Please refer to the Appendix to see the complete survey.

This research adhered to ethical standards in accordance with guidelines for human subject research. At the beginning of the online survey, respondents were informed that their names would be recorded, but the survey results would be used solely for teaching and research purposes. It was explicitly stated that the respondents' identities and personal information would remain confidential and would not be disclosed in any reports or publications. Participation in the survey was entirely voluntary, and teachers were free to choose whether or not to participate. The study was conducted with the utmost respect for the privacy and autonomy of all participants.

C. Data Analysis

Simple frequency analysis was conducted to understand the background of the teachers who completed the survey both times voluntarily, including the distribution of gender, educational background, years of teaching, and English proficiency. Repeated ANOVA tests were conducted to answer research question 1, which is about possible changes in the Participants' understanding of bilingual education before and after the Program, and whether there are differences between English- and non-English-background teachers. Qualitative responses to the open-ended questions in the third section were analyzed deductively.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Section Two Results and Discussion

Results of the respondents' personal information in Section One are already reported in The Participants. Section Two contains ten five-point Likert-type scale items that are statements about bilingual education.

The line graph in Figure 1 illustrates the comparison between the pre-survey and post-survey responses to the 10 items in Section Two of the survey. The means of responses indicate a shift in perceptions or understanding about bilingual education before and after the program. Notably, all items show an increase in the post-survey. This comparison provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the program and how it influenced the participants' perspectives over time.

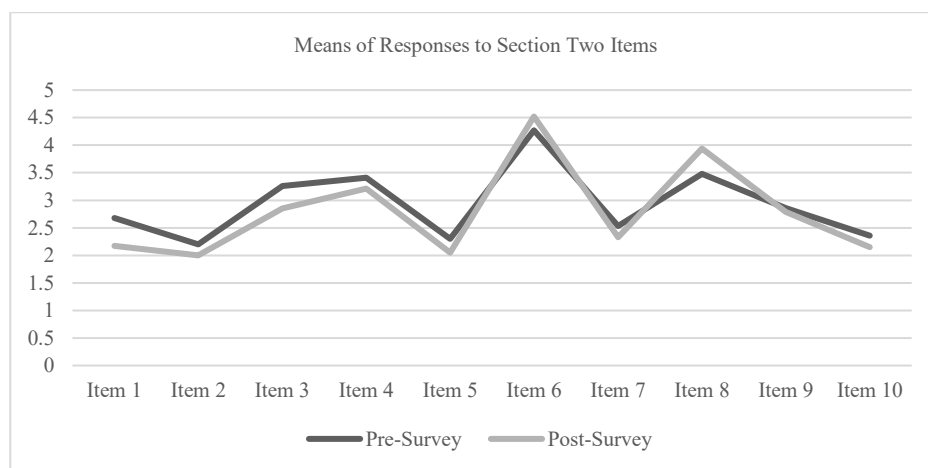


Figure 1. Means of Responses to the 10 Items in Section Two
(Note: Items 6 and 8 are reverse-coded items.)

Repeated ANOVA tests were conducted to examine the Participants' understanding about bilingual education before and after the Program and whether there were differences between participants with and without English background. Among the 10 items in this section, 5 items show significant differences in pre- and post-survey results, but no significant differences were found between English and non-English background participants (Table 2).

The repeated ANOVA test results demonstrated significant changes in the teachers' understanding of bilingual education before and after participating in the Program. The survey, consisting of 10 items in Section Two measured on a 5-point Likert scale, yielded five items (1, 4, 5, 6, and 8) that showed statistically significant differences. For Item 1

(Bilingual teachers need to have native-like English fluency), there was a significant decrease in agreement after completing the Program ($F = 8.708$, $p = 0.005$), indicating that teachers recognized that native-like fluency is not a prerequisite for effective bilingual teaching. Similarly, Item 4 (The teacher's level of English determines the effectiveness of bilingual education) and 5 (Bilingual lessons will be more effective if taught by English native speakers) also showed decreased agreement post-program, with F -values of 5.151 ($p = 0.028$) and 4.935 ($p = 0.031$), respectively. These results suggest a shift in perspective, where teachers began to see the value in bilingual education beyond the native speaker model. This aligns with Lo's (2020) findings that CLIL teacher development should include reflection on teacher identity and the deconstruction of native-speaker ideologies to fully embrace bilingual goals.

Conversely, items 6 and 8 showed increased agreement after the program. Item 6 (Students' first language can be used flexibly in bilingual lessons) had an F -value of 5.368 ($p = 0.025$), indicating a higher recognition of the facilitating role of students' first language in bilingual teaching. This change reflects an understanding of the pedagogical benefits of leveraging students' linguistic repertoire to enhance learning. Similarly, Item 8 (It is better for bilingual lessons to be taught by content teachers) had an F -value of 8.920 ($p = 0.005$), highlighting a shift towards recognizing the importance of content knowledge in delivering effective bilingual instruction.

The analysis also showed no significant interaction effects between pre-test and post-test responses based on the teachers' disciplinary backgrounds, with all interaction p -values above the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that the professional development program was effective across different teaching backgrounds, ensuring that both English teachers and non-English subject teachers benefited equally from the training.

TABLE 2
REPEATED MEASURES ANOVA RESULTS

Item	Pre vs. Post		Interaction	
	F -value	p -value	F -value	p -value
1	8.708	0.005	0.010	0.922
4	5.151	0.028	2.782	0.102
5	4.935	0.031	1.688	0.200
6	5.368	0.025	1.837	0.182
8	8.920	0.005	0.403	0.529

Note: Item 1: Bilingual teachers need to have native-like English fluency. Item 4: The teacher's level of English determines the effectiveness of bilingual education. Item 5: Bilingual lessons will be more effective if taught by English native speakers. Item 6: Students' first language can be used flexibly in bilingual lessons. Item 8: It is better for bilingual lessons to be taught by content teachers.

B. Section Three Results and Discussion

To analyze the written responses to the three open-ended questions in the pretest and post-test survey administered to 66 elementary school teachers, we employed an inductive content analysis approach. This qualitative method was chosen to allow for a detailed and nuanced understanding of the teachers' experiences and perspectives regarding bilingual teaching professional development. The analysis process began with the initial reading of all responses to gain an overall sense of the data. Subsequently, open coding was conducted, where key phrases and concepts were identified and labeled. These codes were then grouped into categories that reflected common themes and patterns across the responses. To ensure the reliability of the coding process, one of the authors and a research assistant independently coded a subset of the responses and then compared and discussed their codes to reach a consensus. This iterative process continued until all data were coded and categorized. The final step involved synthesizing the categories into broader themes that captured the essence of the teachers' experiences and insights. This method allowed us to systematically explore the specific knowledge and skills the teachers wished to acquire (Question 1), the support and resources they needed in the practice of bilingual teaching (Question 2), and the crucial factors influencing students' learning in bilingual lessons (Question 3).

Regarding Question 1 (What specific knowledge and skills about bilingual teaching do you wish to acquire), pre-test responses showed that teachers expressed a strong desire for practical teaching strategies, a deeper understanding of bilingual education, bilingual teaching methods, classroom management skills, and effective lesson planning for bilingual education. After completing the Program, teachers highlighted classroom practice and course design as the most important aspects of skills they wanted to grow more. For example, a teacher wrote, "*I want to learn more about how to plan suitable learning tasks to reinforce content area learning and encourage more English use.*" Another teacher wrote, "*I've learned a lot about the important concepts about bilingual teacher. I feel now I need to build or join a community of practice so that I can put these concepts and theories into practice.*" The shift from a broad desire for various skills to a focused emphasis on practical application and course design suggests that the Program successfully addressed the initial needs and helped teachers develop concrete skills. This indicates a significant improvement in their ability to implement bilingual education effectively.

Regarding Question 2 (What support and resources do you wish to have when practicing bilingual teaching), pre-test responses showed that teachers requested high-quality bilingual teaching materials, collaborative planning opportunities, professional development workshops, and mentorship from experienced bilingual educators. The post-test responses showed a continued need for collaborative planning and administrative support. More than half of the respondents mentioned the need for collaborating with other teachers to plan bilingual lessons and develop teaching materials. Additionally, teachers mentioned the importance of technological integration and support from parents and school

administration. The continued emphasis on collaborative lesson planning and the new mention of technological integration reflect evolving needs as teachers begin to apply their training. This underscores the necessity for ongoing support and resource availability to sustain effective bilingual teaching practices.

Regarding Question 3 (What do you think are the most influencing factors that might shape student's bilingual learning results), key factors identified in the pre-test survey included curriculum design, students' motivation, teachers' professional competency, and the learning environment. Post-program responses emphasized student motivation, the learning environment, and the attractiveness of course activities as crucial factors. These are common responses to this question in the post-program survey: *"how teachers raise students' learning motivation," "support from school administration and parents," "learning environment,"* and *"the teacher's passion and teaching strategies."* The increased emphasis on student motivation suggests that teachers have become more attuned to the affective aspects of learning, recognizing the importance of engaging and motivating students in bilingual education. This highlights a more holistic understanding of the factors influencing student success in bilingual settings.

The qualitative analysis of the pre-test and post-test responses indicates significant shifts in teachers' bilingual teaching perceptions and professional development needs following their participation in the Program. Initially, teachers sought a wide range of skills and support, which, according to post-test responses, were effectively addressed by the Program. Teachers now emphasize practical application, collaborative planning, and student motivation, reflecting a more refined understanding of bilingual education. These evolving teacher needs underscore the importance of sustained, practice-oriented professional development, as supported by Ball et al. (2015), who advocate for ongoing mentorship and feedback cycles in CLIL programs. These findings underscore the program's success in equipping teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge while also highlighting areas for ongoing support and resource provision to ensure sustained effectiveness in bilingual teaching.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of a bilingual teaching professional development program on in-service elementary school teachers' understanding and implementation of bilingual education. The investigation was guided by three research questions: (1) How did the participants' understanding of bilingual education change upon completing the program? (2) What aspects of bilingual teaching did participants still find challenging? (3) What suggestions can be made for future professional development programs based on the study's results?

The repeated ANOVA test results showed significant improvements in teachers' understanding of bilingual education, particularly in recognizing that native-like fluency is not essential for bilingual teachers and appreciating the importance of using students' first language in bilingual lessons. These changes indicate a shift from native-speaker-centric views towards a more inclusive and holistic approach to bilingual education. Importantly, no significant differences were found between English and non-English-background teachers, suggesting that the program effectively addressed the needs of teachers regardless of their training background.

The qualitative inductive content analysis revealed that before the program, teachers were primarily concerned with acquiring teaching strategies and resources. In post-program survey, the emphasis shifted to the practical application of these skills, collaborative planning, and the importance of student motivation. This shift indicates that the program successfully provided teachers with the foundational skills they sought and helped them recognize the ongoing need for collaboration and support in bilingual teaching.

Based on these findings, several implications and suggestions for bilingual teaching professional development for in-service elementary school teachers can be drawn. First, the topics in the Program are effective for the growth of bilingual teaching expertise, which include the foundation of bilingual education, English as a lingua franca, CLIL methods and materials, CLIL task design, CLIL assessment, translanguaging, multimodality and scaffolding, interdisciplinary and collaborative lesson planning, and microteaching. A recommended structure for such programs could be a six-credit, 108-hour course, as seen in the current study, which includes workshops, collaborative planning sessions, and micro-teaching. Second, it is fine to have teachers of different training backgrounds to participate in the same program as long as interdisciplinary groups are created for collaborative lesson planning practice. Last, participants in this study showed deeper and more comprehensive understanding about bilingual teaching, and more aspects of bilingual teaching preparation or practice became better understood after completion of the Program. This suggests that ongoing support and resources, such as access to bilingual teaching materials and mentorship from experienced educators, are crucial for sustained success. Furthermore, Cenoz and Gorter (2017) recommend incorporating translanguaging practices into professional development to help teachers use students' full linguistic repertoires as assets in bilingual instruction.

While the study provides valuable insights, it has limitations. One limitation is the relatively small sample size of 66 teachers, which may not fully represent the diverse experiences and needs of all elementary school teachers. Future studies could involve a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, which may be subject to biases. Future research could incorporate classroom observations and student performance data to provide a more comprehensive evaluation of the program's effectiveness and impact.

Overall, this study highlights the importance of well-structured professional development programs in enhancing teachers' understanding and practice of bilingual teaching. By addressing the identified needs and challenges, such programs can significantly contribute to the effectiveness of bilingual teaching in elementary schools.

APPENDIX. THE SURVEY

Section One: Personal Information 1. Your name 2. Gender: Female Male 3. Areas of study: English related Non-English related 4. Years of teaching: 5 years or less 6-15 years 16 years or more 5. English proficiency: CEFR B2 None
Section Two: Understanding about Bilingual Education (BE) 1. BE teachers need to have native-like English fluency. 2. BE lessons need to use English exclusively to reach the best BE goals. 3. Students' level of English determines the effectiveness of BE. 4. The teacher's level of English determines the effectiveness of BE. 5. BE lessons will be more effective if taught by native English speakers. 6. The students' first language can be used flexibly in BE lessons. 7. It is better for BE lessons to be taught by English subject teachers. 8. It is better for BE lessons to be taught by content area teachers. 9. The purpose of BE is to improve the English proficiency test scores of the country's citizens. 10. The purpose of BE is to make the English pronunciation of the country's citizens closer to that of the native English speakers.
Section Three: Professional Development Experiences in the Program 1. What specific knowledge and skills about bilingual teaching do you wish to acquire? 2. What support and resources do you need in the practice of bilingual teaching? 3. What do you think are the most influencing factors that might shape student's bilingual learning results?

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Khmer Language Status in a Vietnamese - Speaking Context: Teachers' and Students' Perceptions

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Abstract—This study explores the use and promotion of the Khmer language by Khmer teachers and students in schools, at home, and within the community to provide a comprehensive understanding of their linguistic practices. A five-point Likert scale questionnaire with an open-ended question was employed to elicit responses from 16 Khmer teachers and 60 Khmer students in an ethnic boarding junior high school in Vietnam. The study, besides, conducted semi-structured interviews to triangulate the study's data. The result showed that while teachers used more Khmer in the community, students used more Khmer at home, and Khmer was used the least at school by both groups. The study also discussed the participants' proposed approaches to promoting Khmer.

Index Terms—Khmer, Khmer teachers, Khmer students, minority language

I. INTRODUCTION

The coexistence of languages in a region is indispensable, and this phenomenon helps develop people with diverse language backgrounds in many ways. For example, by recognizing each other's language, people of different ethnicities can become closer and build and promote a constructive relationship between the two ethnic groups. An individual can have plenty of opportunities in society when he or she knows more than one language.

In recent years, scientists have begun to show that the advantages of bilingualism are even more fundamental than conversing with a broader range of people. Being bilingual makes an individual more innovative. "It can profoundly affect one's brain, improving cognitive skills unrelated to language and even shielding one against dementia in old age" (Bhattacharjee, 2012, p. 1). Sorace (2007) said, "In modern industrial societies, growing up with more than one language is regarded as special" (p. 193). Bilingual children develop the ability to control attention and ignore misleading information earlier than monolinguals, even when the two groups are operating with the same basic knowledge of the domain (Bialystok, 2007). Minority languages can also serve as sustainable tourism resources, which help strengthen the sense of pride and identity of minority members (Lonardi et al., 2020). However, at the same time, more languages have been lost for many reasons. For example, people stop speaking their minority and other languages for broader communication (Sallabank, 2012).

This phenomenon can be seen in many places, especially when their population is too small to preserve and promote their language in a majority-language society. Without preservation efforts, up to 90% of the world's 7,000 languages could vanish by the 21st century, with Indonesia losing 20 languages (Krauss, 1992). Another data was collected from Whaley (2003), who stated that at least half of the world's 6000-7000 languages would not exist or be on the brink of disappearing (cited in Grenoble & Whaley, 2005). Adinolfi et al. (2022) highlighted challenges in South Asian countries like India, Nepal, and Bangladesh, where language policies must balance local, regional, and international languages to promote educational equity. However, exclusionary bilingual policies risk language extinction.

This study was conducted because no previous research has explored how the Khmer language is spoken and promoted in Tra Vinh province, Vietnam. The Khmer population accounts for 31,62% of the provincial population (Nguyen, 2017). Thus, it was conducted to see how frequently Khmer people use Khmer in various contexts: at home, school, and in the community. In addition, it aims to see how they promote their language when they live in a context where their language is not used as an official language in the country's system. The result can be used to reflect on their current use and promotion of Khmer people, and from there, Khmer people can adjust themselves regarding the use and promotion of their language in such contexts. At the same time, the government can use the result to consider allocating more hours for teaching Khmer and opening more bilingual teaching classes for those in need. The following three research questions are devised to determine the study's aims.

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1. To what extent do Khmer students use Khmer at school, home, and community?
2. To what extent do Khmer teachers use Khmer at school, home, and community?
3. What do Khmer teachers and students think about how Khmer should be promoted?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Background

According to Thu Vien Phap Luat (2023), an online platform for Vietnamese law, to be considered a minority group, the group members are fewer in number than those in the leading group; a majority group is a group whose population accounts for over 50% of the national population. The Khmer minority group is one of the fifty-four minority groups in Vietnam (Thu Vien Phap Luat; Nguyen, 2019). According to Hai and Thanh (2020), Khmer people preserve solidarity and mutual assistance in their community and significantly contribute to the service of Buddhist pagodas. Pagodas and monks are greatly respected spiritual symbols of the Khmer community. Most Buddhist pagodas mainly teach Khmer to Khmer people (Fergusson & Masson, 1997). Recently, Khmer has been taught in state schools where many Khmer people reside. According to the Ministry and Training (2020), Khmer is taught in primary school for five years at Level A1, in secondary school for four years at Level A2, and in high school for three years at Level B to ensure all Khmer students are Khmer literate.

B. Khmer People

According to Nguyen (2017), “Tra Vinh có dân số chung là 1.015.284 người, trong đó dân tộc Kinh 686.009 người, chiếm tỉ lệ 67,56%; dân tộc Khmer 321.084 người, chiếm tỉ lệ 31,62%” [Tra Vinh has a population of 1.015.284 of whom the Kinh accounts for 686.009 people with 67,56%, and the Khmer makes up of 321.084 people with 31,62%] (p. 116). According to updated statistical information by Vietnam (2022), “Trà Vinh có gần 32% dân số là đồng bào Khmer, với khoảng 320.000 người sống tập tại các huyện Trà Cú, Cầu Ngang, Châu Thành, Cầu Kè, Tiểu Cần” [Tra Vinh constitutes approximately 32% of Khmer population with about 320.000 people gathering in Tra Cu district, Cau Ngang district, Chau Thanh district, Cau Ke district, and Tieu Can district]. Khmer people mainly reside in rural districts. It also added “tỷ lệ hộ nghèo Khmer giảm nhanh với mức bình quân hàng năm giảm 4,17% và đến cuối năm 2021, tỷ lệ hộ Khmer nghèo của tỉnh còn dưới 4%.” [The poverty rate of Khmer households showed an annual reduction of 4.17%, and it continued to show poverty rate reduction of below 4%]. This newspaper also informed that “Trà Vinh có khoảng 2.500 sinh viên, học sinh dân tộc Khmer theo học ở các bậc: Đại học, Cao đẳng, Trung cấp; duy trì khoảng 70.000 học sinh dân tộc Khmer ở bậc Mầm giáo, Tiểu học, Trung học Cơ sở, Trung học Phổ thông (chiếm 34% so với học sinh chung). [Tra Vinh has around 2.500 Khmer students at universities, and vocational schools, and 70,000 Khmer pupils attending state primary, secondary, and high schools, accounting approximately 34% of the overall national students].

C. Bilingual Education Context

Fishman (1976) stated that 110 countries worldwide implement bilingual education programs. When do people become bilingual? According to Levy (1985, p. 114), “The dominant economic group has voluntarily acquired second language ability as a form of cultural enrichment while those at the bottom of the economic ladder usually become bilingual due to conquest or coercion.” The statement can be true for many people who fall into this category. However, to promote bilingualism in a place, the government must promote it in the educational system, putting it into practice, as concerned by Gogolin (2021). In addition, it is challenging for minority people to grow up in a majority language context where they struggle to optimize their minority language education and use it in nonfamilial settings and schools (Leivada et al., 2023).

Bilingualism is a good sign to develop. Nonetheless, when a minority language meets a majority language, it is vulnerable; the majority can easily overshadow a minority in many forms. When languages come into contact, they often borrow words, phrases, and grammatical structures. Nevertheless, it tends to happen that when minority children are not educated in their language well, they borrow the majority language words or phrases during their communication in their language. This code-switching can be seen more in the works by Haspelmath (2009), Muysken (2020), Myers-Scotton (2017), and Winford (2010).

D. Awareness

Scheier and Carver (1981) defined awareness in two forms depending on which standard they adopt to control their behavior: public or personal. Fejfar and Hoyle (2000) referred to the personal form as the self from an opinion, while they regarded the public form as awareness of the self from the imagined look from other people. This study does not aim to explore the two forms differently but wants to use the participants' awareness as a general notion for languages used in their context.

E. Related Studies

The study emphasized the context of how minority languages are used and promoted by minorities, so this literature was reviewed mainly in Vietnam.

Nguyen (2021) studied eight college students with diverse language backgrounds (five ethnic minority groups in Vietnam Central Highlands). They have deemed bilinguals as those who speak their home language as L1 (minority language), talk to Vietnamese as L2 (the mainstream language), and study English as a foreign language at school. The researchers interviewed the participants about their language practices, beliefs, and management related to, e.g., value, usefulness, ethnicity, schooling, or bilingualism. It uncovered that the participants preferred to use their minority language and limited Vietnamese at home. However, their parents accepted a mixed language (Vietnamese and English) at home. At school, they chose Vietnamese to speak as their friends were mainly the Kinh (Vietnamese people), and others came from other minority language backgrounds. Moreover, Vietnamese is the means of instruction in all classes, so they must know and use it fluently.

Regarding language belief, they considered English and Vietnamese as functional languages and their mother tongue to show their ethnicity. Most of them regarded Vietnamese as more valuable than their language, but they still affirmed that their mother tongue was to help them keep their cultural value and ethnicity. Regarding language management, a person of a different language background must learn to speak his spouse's language after marriage. At home, their parents prefer family members to use their mother tongue for communication.

Nguyen (2019) investigated the trans-identity of a group of ethnic minority students (with different L1s) in Vietnam by conducting interviews with them. The participants were college students and their family members. The results showed that they saw themselves as having dual, multiple, and neutral identities. They tend to change their L1 (their first language/minority language) to Vietnamese (the majority language) rather than from Vietnamese to their minority/L1 language. Through this result, when ethnic people see themselves as dual or multiple identities, they can develop both their minority language and the majority at the same time.

Nguyen and Hamid (2018) explored the attitudes of 28 college students toward bilingualism and language policies. Participants spoke first languages like Rengao, Bahnar, and Jarai, with Vietnamese as their second language, and some also studied foreign languages such as English, French, and Laotian. Their study revealed that students viewed Vietnamese as the societal language, which overshadowed their minority languages, and they considered religion and community teachings as strategies for preserving their native languages. The study also noted perceptions of linguistic diversity, with some students acknowledging benefits like broader social connections.

In interviewing Vietnamese school students' bilingual identity and their parents regarding language practices and beliefs, Nguyen and Nguyen (2017) found that Vietnamese and English were both valued. Knowing Vietnamese helped foster cultural solidarity, while English provided them with opportunities for mobility. When envisioning their future, students prefer to study English and are aware of the instrumental value of bilingualism. Nguyen and Hamid (2016) explored a group of ethnic minorities in Vietnam's Central Highlands to see how they express their identity through their attitudes towards languages and maintaining their first language. The participants speak their home language as L1, Vietnamese as L2, and regard English as a foreign language at school. It revealed that the participants spoke of their minority as having cultural and ethnic values. One participant also said, "I spoke Vietnamese to the Kinh, and they did not know I was a minority, but when I spoke to my ethnic group, they recognized me".

Furthermore, most participants said they had to speak their minority language (L1) as much as possible. They even confessed that they spoke Vietnamese (the majority language) better than their mother tongue in speaking and writing. A person said he rarely spoke his mother tongue and was considered to have lost his roots. However, when asked about their perception of whether they should not know their minority language, they disagreed. Some other cases reported that they used Vietnamese as a common language to speak to other minority groups, and they considered knowing Vietnamese helped them make friends, widen their circle of acquaintances, have more comprehensive contact, and get a job.

The promotion of minority languages can also be found in many other studies. It can be helpful to provide adequate language policy directions to educate the minority language; it is essential to explore how society behaves toward that minority language and see how it is used in the educational system and how it is used in daily life (Gataullina et al., 2018). Likewise, Watson (2007) said governments play an essential role in preserving minority languages. Still, the task can be challenging because, at one time, a language is threatened due to the influence of the economy and politics. At the other time, globalization has led to uniformity in the languages used.

Furthermore, minority languages can be threatening in the multilingual context, and a unified national language can be proposed (Sharma, 2022). Like Watson, Giri (2011) posits that the government plays a decisive role in shaping the language policy to appropriately respond to local, national, and international languages. An individual's or a community's attitude toward their language and other languages can affect how they learn and use it, which can influence the status of a language (further development or extinction) (Yun, 2017).

To sum up, minorities found in literature tend to regard themselves as having dual or multiple identities. Because they fear losing their language, they are aware of preserving their minority language by prioritizing using it mostly with their family and/or community members. Next, simultaneously, they must be fluent in the majority language for other purposes. For example, they learn Vietnamese for educational, cultural, and social solidarity purposes. When they must learn a third language, such as English, they tend to learn it for instrumental values, such as improving their economic aspect and worldwide knowledge.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The study employed a mixed method, as guided by Edmonds and Kennedy (2016), using both quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data on the participants' perceptions. The questionnaire delivered to both groups of participants consisted of 15 closed-ended questions and one open-ended question.

B. Participants and Setting

The study was conducted in March 2023 at an Ethnic Boarding Junior High School in a rural district in southwest Vietnam. The study's participants recruited 16 Khmer teachers and 60 eighth and ninth Khmer graders at this school. This type of school enrolls 95% of Khmer students. It enrolls around 5% of Kinh students (Vietnamese students), who must be awarded standard grades in their fifth grade (at the elementary education level) to qualify for a secondary education seat in this school type. The education program in this school is like that of a regular public school; the only difference is that the students have Khmer lessons taught in school; this is just like teaching English as a foreign language subject in Vietnam.

C. Instruments

The study employed a Five-Point Likert scale questionnaire (written in Vietnamese) to collect the information from both groups of participants on a five-scale measurement (1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for no idea, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly agree). It has 15 closed-ended questions to elicit answers for the first two research questions. Then, the last open-ended question in this questionnaire aimed to elicit qualitative objective ideas from the two groups of participants to answer the third research question. The authors developed questionnaires based on Levy's (1985) concerns about the domination of the majority language over minority languages and Nguyen and Hamid's (2016) previous investigation of a minority used in various contexts, such as at home.

D. Procedure

The questionnaire was developed and handed to a senior Khmer teacher and a Vietnamese-speaking English teacher to receive their ideas about the questionnaire. The senior Khmer teacher has much hands-on experience working with Khmer people. The Vietnamese teacher of English has taught English to Khmer and Vietnamese students for over ten years, so they are considered qualified feedback-givers for the questionnaire. After receiving feedback, the authors removed two questions regarding Khmer used at home, such as talking with a spouse, girl, or boyfriend at home, as some participants might not get married or have a sweetheart. The questionnaire was then delivered to three Khmer colleagues for a trial survey to see their opinions about the questionnaire content and flow of the items in the questionnaire. When the survey went smoothly, the authors invited the participants to participate. They all accepted the invitation by writing their names on the questionnaire. The authors explained to the teachers and students that their responses were confidential and used only for this study's purpose.

E. Data Processing

After collecting all the data, the authors began processing the data using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, Version 22). The authors tested the internal reliability of both questionnaires and analyzed the individual responses for the mean scores. Then, the authors compared the mean scores of the two groups to see if there were any statistical differences between the two groups' opinions regarding Khmer spoken at school, at home, and in the community. Then, concerning Question 16 (open-ended question), the authors transcribed the responses based on themes and counted the number of similar responses to each theme for convenience. To triangulate the data, the authors also conducted four interviews with four randomly chosen students and four randomly selected teachers. The analysis focus of the interview responses was based on the topics displayed in the questionnaire.

The internal reliability of each set of questions for the student group is 0.878 (at school), 0.968 (at home), and 0.913 (in the community). The internal reliability for the teacher group is 0.936 (at school), 0.984 (at home), and 0.972 (in the community), which are all qualified for further analysis.

IV. RESULTS

A. The First and Second Research Questions

Table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of responses from students and teachers regarding using the Khmer language at school, at home, and in the community. In the table, 'St' represents students, and 'T' represents teachers.

TABLE 1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

At school	N of St	Min	Max	Mean (M)	SD	N of T	Min	Max	Mean (M)	SD
Q1. I prefer to speak Khmer with Khmer classmates/teacher in class whenever possible.	60	1.00	5.00	3.383	1.1802	16	1.00	5.00	3.062	1.1814
Q2. I prefer to speak Khmer with Khmer classmates and friends in recess.	60	1.00	5.00	3.416	1.2114	16	1.00	5.00	3.375	1.1474
Q3. I prefer to speak Khmer with Khmer classmates and friends at school events whenever possible.	60	1.00	5.00	3.116	1.1363	16	1.00	5.00	3.062	1.3400
Q4. I prefer to speak Khmer with Khmer visitors at school.	60	1.00	5.00	3.516	1.2280	16	1.00	5.00	3.500	1.1547
Q5. I prefer to speak Khmer with Khmer classmates' or friends' parents at school.	60	1.00	5.00	3.366	1.2346	16	1.00	5.00	3.562	1.3149
Total means:		3.360					3.313			
At home										
Q6. I prefer to speak Khmer with my parents at home.	60	1.00	5.00	3.616	1.3789	16	1.00	5.00	3.687	1.4008
Q7. I prefer to speak Khmer with my siblings/cousins at home.	60	1.00	5.00	3.750	1.3976	16	1.00	5.00	3.625	1.3601
Q8. I prefer to speak Khmer with my uncles/aunts/grandparents at home.	60	1.00	5.00	3.766	1.3450	16	1.00	5.00	3.625	1.3601
Q9. I prefer to speak Khmer with my Khmer neighbors at home.	60	1.00	5.00	3.583	1.3056	16	1.00	5.00	3.187	1.2230
Q10. I prefer to speak Khmer with other Khmer visitors to my home.	60	1.00	5.00	3.766	1.3066	16	1.00	5.00	3.437	1.4127
Total means:		3.697					3.513			
In the community										
Q11. I prefer to speak Khmer when meeting Khmer people in the streets.	60	1.00	5.00	3.616	1.1802	16	1.00	5.00	3.687	1.3022
Q12. I prefer to speak Khmer to other Khmer people at parties (e.g. weddings and birthday parties).	60	1.00	5.00	3.500	1.1860	16	1.00	5.00	3.375	1.3601
Q13. I prefer to speak Khmer in community meetings (e.g. village meetings and traditional village ceremonies).	60	1.00	5.00	3.133	1.2684	16	1.00	5.00	3.437	1.3149
Q14. I prefer to speak Khmer when meeting Khmer people in religious practice places (e.g. pagodas).	60	1.00	5.00	3.783	1.2768	16	1.00	5.00	3.875	1.3601
Q15. I prefer to speak Khmer with Khmer people in commercial places (e.g. markets and shops).	60	1.00	5.00	3.416	1.2661	16	1.00	5.00	3.562	1.3149
Total means:		3.490					3.588			

At first glance, the overall mean scores for students' use of Khmer are achieved as follows (at school: $M = 3.360$, at home: $M = 3.697$, and in the community: $M = 3.490$). The mean score for Khmer used at home is the greatest, showing that students have more chance to use their minority language at home, and no items are observed to have a mean score below 3.400, meaning they tend to agree with all the items in this group. The mean score for Khmer used at school is the lowest, with $M = 3.360$, showing that the students tend to have little chance to speak Khmer at school. "I prefer to speak Khmer with Khmer classmates and friends at school events whenever possible" has a minor agreement, with $M = 3.116$ and "I prefer to speak Khmer with Khmer visitors at school" shows the greatest in this group, with $M = 3.516$. Students seem to speak Khmer outside of school and at home, too. In this item group, "I prefer to speak Khmer in community meetings (e.g. village meetings and traditional village ceremonies)" has the least agreement in this item group, $M = 3.133$, meaning that they tend to be bewildered about the number of Khmer they use in such places. "I prefer to speak Khmer when meeting Khmer people in religious practice places (e.g. pagodas)" has $M = 3.783$, showing that they tend to speak more in religious practice institutions.

If the students have more opportunities to speak Khmer at home, the teachers tend to speak more Khmer in the community, with $M = 3.588$. The slightest agreement in this item group is "I prefer to speak Khmer to other Khmer people at parties (e.g. weddings)", with $M = 3.375$, suggesting that they tend to use less Khmer in public parties. The highest mean score is "I prefer to speak Khmer when meeting Khmer people in religious practice places (e.g. pagodas)", meaning that they tend to have more opportunities to speak Khmer in religious gatherings.

Like the students' responses, the teachers have less opportunity to speak Khmer at school, with an overall score of 3.313. The lowest mean score in this group belongs to "I prefer to speak Khmer with Khmer students in class whenever possible" and "I prefer to speak Khmer with Khmer colleagues in academic meetings/events whenever possible", with the same mean score of 3.062, indicating they have fewer opportunities to speak Khmer in class and academic gatherings. "I prefer to speak Khmer with Khmer students' parents at school" has the highest mean score, meaning they tend to speak Khmer with students' parents in that situation.

The overall mean score for Khmer used at home is 3.513, showing that the teachers tend to use more Khmer at home. The item with the lowest mean score is “I prefer to speak Khmer with my neighbors at home”, indicating they might speak both Khmer and Vietnamese.

Table 2 below displays the differences in the overall mean scores of the two participant groups regarding their use of Khmer at school, at home, and in the community.

TABLE 2
INDEPENDENT SAMPLES TEST FOR MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS

	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	
At school								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.283	.596	.168	74	.867	.04750	.28345	-.5172	.61229
Equal variances not assumed			.157	21.848	.877	.04750	.30238	-.5798	.67484
At home	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	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.000	.991	.513	74	.610	.18417	.35931	-.5317	.90010
Equal variances not assumed			.502	23.032	.620	.18417	.36667	-.5742	.94262
In the community	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	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.414	.522	-.313	74	.755	-.09750	.31166	-.7184	.52349
Equal variances not assumed			-.283	21.048	.780	-.09750	.34408	-.8129	.61796

Table 2 presents the differences between the two groups' mean scores regarding Khmer used in three places: school, home, and community. The indexes shown in Table 2, in terms of Khmer used at school with the p -value ($F = .283$), Sig. (2-tailed) of .867, in terms of Khmer used at home with p -value ($F = .991$), Sig. (2-tailed) of .610, regarding Khmer used in the community with p -value ($F = .414$), Sig. (2-tailed) of .755, all greater than a level of 5% significance ($p < .05$), which indicates that the mean scores obtained in the two groups are not statistically different.

B. The Third Research Question

Table 2 below shows the responses provided by the two groups of participants. The authors translated their responses into English, originally written in Vietnamese. The answers with “no idea” or left with “a blank” for this answer were not counted in the table. The themes were also developed based on their responses (six themes were found in the student group and five in the teacher group). The students' and teachers' responses were put into themes and counted for convenient analysis by giving each theme percentage.

TABLE 3
WAYS OF PROMOTING THEIR MINORITY LANGUAGE BY THE TWO GROUPS

Themes (students' responses with N= 60)	Number of responses	Sample texts
Education at school	1 (1.7%)	Offer Khmer classes at primary school.
Education in other places	1 (1.7%)	Pagodas.
Ministry of Education and Training	1 (1.7%)	Need to design Khmer textbooks and curricula, and other benefits for Khmer teachers to promote Khmer education.
Promoting communication in Khmer	42 (70%)	Use Khmer as a means of communication when they gather.
Promoting Khmer customs and culture	3 (5%)	Introduce Khmer customs to other people from different backgrounds.
Self-study	5 (8.3%)	Read books and make an effort to learn Khmer.
A need for more Khmer teachers	1 (1.7%)	Should be more Khmer teachers to teach Khmer.
Themes (teachers' responses with N=16)	Number of responses	Sample texts
Education at school	4 (25%)	Offer Khmer at school (from primary to high school education).
Education in other places	2 (12.5%)	Pagodas.
Promoting communication in Khmer	6 (37.5%)	Use Khmer as a means of communication when they gather.
Promoting Khmer as a second language	2 (12.5%)	Should make Khmer a second language.
Self-study	1 (6.25%)	Develop motivation to learn Khmer.

As observed, students promote Khmer by frequently using it in their daily conversations, making up 70% of the sample. Interestingly, the percentage for this theme in the teacher group is also the highest, accounting for 37.5% of the sample.

C. Interview Questions

To triangulate the data on the use and promotion of Khmer, the study also conducted semi-structured interviews with eight randomly selected participants (four from each group), all of whom agreed to participate. Three key questions guided the interviews: 'When do you speak Khmer?', 'Who do you usually speak Khmer with?' and 'What do you do to promote Khmer?'. The discussion, therefore, focuses on these three main points.

The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, as many participants were not proficient in English. However, Khmer was also used when speaking with some students who occasionally required explanations to ensure they fully understood the questions. Their responses were recorded verbatim, but unrelated data was later removed for clarity. Translations were provided to the participants for their feedback. The authors carefully read the English translations aloud to ensure the interviewees fully understood and accurately conveyed their intended meanings. All participants reviewed and agreed with the translated texts in Table 4 below.

TABLE 4
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS USED TO ASK THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS

Students	Teachers
<i>Interviewee 1</i> I use Khmer to communicate with people like parents and relatives. Introduce people to Khmer classes and make people curious about Khmer people's unique identity and traditions so they can learn Khmer.	<i>Interviewee 1</i> I speak Khmer with people who can always speak Khmer. Khmer people should try to use it as much as possible when they can.
<i>Interviewee 2</i> I tend to speak Khmer when I see the conversers know Khmer, and I speak Khmer with friends, parents, grandparents, and relatives. I teach people Khmer and try to make them believe that Khmer is an exciting and easy language to learn.	<i>Interviewee 2</i> I always speak Khmer with my parents, my neighbors, and anyone who can speak Khmer. I speak Khmer whenever I can. Then, I also send messages in Khmer to encourage people who know Khmer to use it.
<i>Interviewee 3</i> I use Khmer in the Khmer language subject class when talking to Khmer friends, and I usually speak Khmer to friends and Khmer teachers. I try to promote Khmer by posting Khmer texts on social networking platforms.	<i>Interviewee 3</i> I speak Khmer in my free time and break time. I use it to converse with friends and Khmer colleagues. I also teach Khmer and promote the use of it on social networking platforms when sharing Khmer customs, culture and tradition.
<i>Interviewee 4</i> I speak Khmer with my parents, siblings, neighbors, friends, and teachers, and I usually speak Khmer to my classmates and teachers. To promote Khmer, pagodas and ethnic boarding schools should be the places to promote it.	<i>Interviewee 4</i> I speak Khmer all the time except at work. However, sometimes, if I meet Khmer people at work, I like to use Khmer for our conversations. I usually speak Khmer with my neighbors and relatives. To encourage people to use Khmer, we must educate people on the importance of using Khmer if they must use it at home, so it is remembered. Parents should let their children speak Khmer from a young age, and if children learn it from a young age, it is easier for them to learn it later. Parents should take their children to temples to learn Khmer because temples are the best environment.

The study presents participants' responses to the interview questions to facilitate a more comprehensive discussion of the results. As observed, all interviewees agreed that they use Khmer to communicate with their relatives as much as possible. Many also suggested various approaches to promote its use, particularly in interactions with close family members. Additionally, they considered parents' role in encouraging their children to speak their minority language from an early age.

All responses aligned with the themes presented in the questionnaire. The results indicate that the participants were aware of the importance of their language, demonstrating self-awareness as described by Fejfar and Hoyle (2000). This self-awareness regarding language preservation plays a significant role in reminding and encouraging them to use their language actively. Some participants even suggested that the government introduce more Khmer language classes at the early education level in public schools. Furthermore, members of the Khmer minority highlighted the importance of religious institutions, where they can develop their language skills alongside their religious practices.

V. DISCUSSION

A. The First and Second Research Questions

The mean scores for each item group (school, home, and community) indicated no statistically significant differences between the two groups. Among students, the lowest mean score was observed in the school setting ($M = 3.360$), suggesting a neutral stance. For instance, Q3 ($M = 3.116$) reflected limited opportunities to speak Khmer at school events, while Q5 ($M = 3.366$) indicated that students rarely used Khmer with classmates and their friends' parents. Similarly, Q1

($M = 3.366$) suggested fewer opportunities to speak Khmer in class. These findings align with Nguyen and Nguyen (2017), who highlighted the tendency to prefer languages that provide immediate benefits.

Students had the greatest opportunities to speak Khmer at home ($M = 3.697$), followed by the community ($M = 3.490$), where Khmer was more commonly used. Interview responses supported the questionnaire findings, highlighting key themes such as speaking Khmer with fluent speakers and promoting its use in schools and monasteries. Consistent with Nguyen and Hamid (2016), the results emphasize that minority speakers value their language for its cultural significance and as an expression of their identity.

Like students, teachers had limited opportunities to speak Khmer at school ($M = 3.313$), as most educational materials—except for Khmer language textbooks—are in Vietnamese. Teachers primarily instruct in Vietnamese, requiring Khmer students to develop proficiency for adequate lesson comprehension. However, outside the classroom, teachers used Khmer more frequently, as reflected in Q4 ($M = 3.500$) and Q5 ($M = 3.562$), demonstrating their efforts to promote the language.

Teachers had more opportunities to use Khmer at home ($M = 3.513$) and in the community ($M = 3.588$). However, Q9 ($M = 3.187$) and Q12 ($M = 3.375$) indicated that they often spoke other languages with neighbours or at public gatherings, primarily due to the diverse linguistic backgrounds of those involved. Interview responses supported these findings, emphasizing teachers' efforts to promote Khmer through initiatives such as school-based programs and teaching in pagodas.

Although the Ministry of Education and Training (2020) introduced a Khmer education program, large-scale implementation remains limited due to the predominantly rural distribution of Khmer communities. As cultural hubs, pagodas and temples play a vital role in preserving Khmer identity, consistent with studies by Fergusson and Masson (1997) and Hai and Thanh (2020). In line with Nguyen (2021), the use of minority languages is context-dependent but remains essential for maintaining ethnic identity. Participants strongly emphasized the importance of preserving Khmer, recognizing that language is central to their cultural and ethnic heritage.

B. The Third Research Question (Open-Ended Question)

An open-ended question allowed participants to share their perspectives to enhance the study's data triangulation. Teachers and students suggested offering Khmer classes in Buddhist pagodas to promote and preserve the Khmer language. In southwest Vietnam, Khmer pagodas play a dual role as centers for religious practice and cultural preservation. This result is according to that of Nguyen and Hamid (2018). Religion can help protect minority languages. In this study, Khmer Buddhists believe that without pagodas, their culture, customs, and language are at risk of being lost. Pagodas also serve as spaces where Khmer people regularly speak their language, contributing to its preservation. Nguyen and Hamid (2016) suggest that strengthening minority language education can be achieved through additional language lessons, encouraging students to engage in self-directed learning, and integrating these languages into state school curricula. Bringing Khmer students together in shared classrooms can also help improve language proficiency and support sustainable linguistic preservation.

Interestingly, as seen in the result, both groups mainly suggest communicating in Khmer when they meet (70% in the student group and 25% in the teacher group). Such solutions help tackle the challenges mentioned by Leivada et al. (2023), who found that language speakers tend to prioritize their use of language when they have a chance. Finally, the current study also found that Khmer minorities promote Khmer culture, tradition, and customs as one of the approaches to promoting their minority language, as mentioned by Lonardi et al. (2020), who found that language and culture are intertwined and cannot be separated. Thus, preserving one's culture is also one way to preserve one's language.

To sum up, both the teachers' and students' views of using and promoting their minority language are much aligned. Although the mean scores of the two groups are slightly different, they have no statistically significant difference in terms of Khmer spoken at school, at home, and in the community. They tend to speak their language at home and in their community. The results of this study align with that of Nguyen (2021), who also found that the participants like to use their mother tongue and rarely speak the Vietnamese language (the majority) when they come in close contact with their group, which reflects the individuals' positive attitudes toward their language (Yun, 2017). Regarding Yun's idea, language attitude can motivate one's use and promote one's language.

VI. LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

A. Limitations

As with any study, certain limitations are unavoidable. This research is the first to be conducted in a rural district, focusing on a group of Khmer teachers and students at an ethnic boarding school. Consequently, the sample size is relatively small. Initially, we intended to conduct the study on a larger scale across the Mekong Delta; however, we could only carry out the research in a single province due to time and budget constraints. Ideally, future research could expand to examine Khmer students' and teachers' perceptions of language use and promotion in ethnic boarding schools nationwide. A broader sample would help improve the generalizability of the findings.

Additionally, this study captures the perceptions of Khmer teachers and students regarding their minority language, but the questionnaire may not fully represent Khmer people from diverse backgrounds.

Future research could examine policies designed to promote Khmer and other minority languages, particularly how they contribute to language preservation efforts in Vietnam. Another important area to explore is how Khmer students use their native language in different situations, whether with friends, teachers, or family members. Do they naturally begin conversations in Khmer, or is it a conscious decision? Which language do they feel most at ease using? When speaking Khmer, do they mix in Vietnamese words, or do they do the opposite when speaking Vietnamese? It would also be worth investigating how students feel about their Khmer language classes. Do they find these classes meaningful and effective? Do these Khmer language lessons align with what students hope to gain? Do they help reinforce their connection to the Khmer language and culture? These questions could provide insight into how language preservation efforts affect Khmer communities.

B. Conclusions

This study examines how Khmer teachers and students use and promote their minority language in different contexts. Conducted at an ethnic boarding junior high school in a rural area, the research found that both groups held relatively similar views on using and promoting Khmer. Students reported using Khmer most frequently at home, while teachers used it primarily in the community. The second most common setting for Khmer use among students was the community, whereas, for teachers, it was at home. Among both groups, Khmer was used the least in school. Despite these patterns, statistical analysis showed no significant difference between the two groups regarding their agreement on Khmer usage at school, home, and community. Both students and teachers recognized the importance of maintaining their minority language and were firmly committed to using it as often as possible in daily communication. The study also revealed a shared desire among participants to introduce Khmer as a subject in state schools as early as possible. The study also found that the participants in both groups wanted to bring the Khmer language subject to state schools as early as possible. To promote the language, related stakeholders should teach the Khmer language in places where religious practice is practiced, such as village temples and Buddhist pagodas. Parents can help children use their minority language from the earliest age. In addition, Gogolin (2021) mentioned it earlier - emphasizing the role of the government in preserving minority languages, too, so the government also plays a vital role (Giri, 2011; Watson, 2007). Finally, it is remarkable that both groups provided the study with many valuable ways to promote their minority language and minority language development, as Cohen and Wartofsky (2012) mentioned, such as using the language frequently in various contexts.

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The Distance Shot in the Poetry of Saadi Yusuf

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Abstract—This study explores the formation of cinematic snapshots in the poetry of the Iraqi poet Saadi Yusuf based on the axis of a stable distance shot. It aims to reveal the dimensions of these shots in his poetry and demonstrate how he utilizes this technique to enrich his poetic works with new approaches and contemporary visions. The descriptive-analytical approach was adopted to describe the overall structure of the studied texts and analyze them to discover their deep meanings. The study concluded that Saadi Yusuf's poetry exhibited a notable involvement with the technique of distance shots in cinema, which was prominent in his poetry in all its dimensions. The close, medium, and long shots, with their various nuances and branches, were employed in constructing his texts in a manner consistent with the nature of poetic art regarding themes, contexts, and roles associated with each type of these shots in cinema.

Index Terms—camera movement, drama influence, eliminating hunger, poetic shot, symbolism

I. INTRODUCTION

Saadi Yusuf is an Iraqi poet with a long-standing creative career that spans nearly seven decades (1952-2021). He is a prolific poet, having produced forty-three poetry collections. In addition, he is also a playwright, storyteller, novelist, autobiographer, and translator (Smadi, 2001, p. 18). "His poetic achievements are among the most significant contributions to modern Arabic poetry. His creative experience and practice have had a remarkable influence on shaping the modern features of Arabic poetry, to the extent that those achievements have become one of the essential components of poetic consciousness among our poets, whether contemporaries or followers. Through interaction with this achievement and awareness, the features of their own experiences are shaped, whether by emulating, developing, transcending, or even rejecting and striving to break free from its orbit" (Abdulla, 2005, p. 12).

His deep and exceptional life experience, marked by political affiliation, imprisonment, persecution, exile, and roaming across various countries worldwide, has profoundly shaped his political struggle, revolutionary stances, broad cultural knowledge, and commitment to human rights issues. All these aspects are reflected in his creative work in general and poetry in particular. Saadi has been distinguished by his constant love for innovation, embracing the adventure of creativity and pushing poetry to the farthest reaches of experimentation. This has become "a hallmark of his poetic journey throughout its evolution, with a rhythm that time only enhances, but never diminishes" (Abdulla, 2005, p. 13).

Because of his passion for experimentation, his work has produced an opened poem that welcomes new styles and forms. These enrich its vocative and expressive power, ensuring its vitality, renewal, growth, and evolution.

One of the most prominent aspects of this openness is his interaction with the seventh art, cinema, whose techniques are vividly reflected in his poetry. Saadi has mastered the montage poem, the snapshot poem, and the scenario poem. He, like other great poets, believes that the sublime poetic language is "the one that all arts share; you read it and feel as though you are watching a film, hear it as if in the presence of music, and contemplate it as if you are in front of a portrait. When its scenes are cut and inserted into another text, they carry a self-sufficient meaning" (Nasseer, 2000, p. 74).

In a previous study, the researcher examined the montage technique in Saadi's poetry. The current study aims to apply the method of distance shots to his poetry by focusing on the main types of distance shots found in his work and demonstrating his creative use of them in a way that aligns with the nature of poetic art. The study also explores how this technique enhances his creativity, revealing modern and innovative features in both structure and vision.

To achieve the objectives of this study, the practical section presents the distance shots in his poetry by analyzing their dimensions. It examines the close, medium, and long-distance shots as well.

Critics have been particularly interested in cinematic poetry. Numerous critical studies have emerged that approach poetic texts through a cinematic lens. Some of these studies focus mainly on using cinematic techniques in contemporary poetry, including employing cinematic shots in that type of poetry, the studies are outlined as follows:

In the study "The Poetry of Saadi Yusuf: An Analytical Study," Smadi (2001) briefly tackled in the poetic image chapter from the overall image, focusing on the cinematic shot, which is one form of the scenic image, in Yusuf's poetry.

In his study entitled "The Visual Formation in Modern Arabic Poetry," Safrani (2008), in the final section of his book (Visual Formation and Cinema), tackled the techniques of cinematic shot in modern Arabic poetry employing two key approaches: the axis of the distance shot and the axis of motion shot.

In the final chapter of his book (The Photographer Poet), Ajjour (2010) examined the manifestations of dramatic and cinematic techniques in contemporary poetry, highlighting their influence on its structure.

In the study "Dimensions of Cinematic Shot in the Poetry of Adnan Al-Sayegh", Balawi and Dorianord tackled the issue of cinematic shot in all its distance dimensions in that poetry.

In her study of the use of the contemporary Algerian poem for artistic genres techniques “Cinematic shot” as a model, Dawzi (2018) explored the formation of cinematic shots in contemporary Algerian poems, focusing on the axes of fixed-distance shots and motion shots.

The employment of cinematic shots in Ali Kanaan's poetry, “Khushkash Clouds as a Model”, Dorianord and Khudari (2021) reviewed the types of cinematic shots in his collection of poems.

In the cinematic techniques in poem: “Cinema Techniques in ‘A Non-Historical Dialogue of Athar Sinawi’s’ Anecdotes” Poem by Imad Qatari: A Stylistic Study” the researcher revealed in the first chapter the role played by the various technical cinematic shots in constructing the poetic scenario.

Due to its technical uniqueness and Saadi Yusuf's enduring ability to contribute, his poetry has been the subject of many critical studies. Some pioneering studies were presented in prior research. Therefore, to avoid repetition, the researcher will here shed light on many more recent studies that focused on Yusuf's study.

In “Text Temptation and Play Reading: A Study of the Strategy of Absence in the Poetry of Saadi Yusuf,” Abdulla (2005) focuses on this strategy. The researcher considers absence a fundamental element in Yusuf's poetry and that it forms a comprehensive textual strategy grounded in a specific poetic vision.

In Collage Technique in the Poetry of Saadi Yusuf, A collection of poem: (Prayer of the Pagan) as a model. Athari (2007) shed light on Yusuf's use of one of the techniques of visual art, the collage techniques constructing his poetic texts.

Textual thresholds in Saadi Yusuf's poetry: In the poem “How Akhdar bin Yusuf Wrote His New Poem as a Model”, Dukhi (2008) tackles textual thresholds, considering them one of the modern poetic features in Yusuf's poetry.

In the study “Alienation in the Poetry of Saadi Yusuf: A Cultural Reading”, the critic Attiyeh (2018) adopted a critical cultural approach to present a comprehensive picture of the alienation phenomenon in Yusuf's poetry.

From the above, it is evident that, to the researcher's knowledge, no study addresses the concept of “Cinematic Snapshot” in its precise scientific sense in Yusuf's poetry. Therefore, this research can be considered a novel, unprecedented pioneering work.

The cinematic snapshot is the cornerstone of everything displayed on the screen. It is not merely a tool for capturing events but an effective means of conveying ideas, emotions, and various perspectives. According to theorists of the seventh art, it is defined as “a sequence of continuous images captured in a single shot, or as part of a film between two transitions”.

Jean Mitry refers to it as “The film unit” while Christian Mitz calls it the “minimal segment” or “image unit of the film's structure” (Tourk, 2014, p. 189).

In other words, it is “a segment of the raw footage captured continuously without interrupting the scene or subject being filmed. The snapshot is defined from the moment the camera starts rolling in a specific position until it stops. Cinematic snapshots vary in length and size, and scenes or situations are constructed from these snapshots. The collection of these scenes or situations forms the film. Thus, the snapshot is a unit of cinematic language, just as the word is a unit of literary language” (Mursi & Wahba, 1973, p. 316).

Lotman emphasizes that “the snapshot is by no means a static concept nor a simple combination of one static image followed by another equally static one. For this reason, a snapshot cannot be equated with a single photographic frame, that small printed image on the filmstrip. The snapshot is a dynamic phenomenon. It incorporates movement within its boundaries, which can be of great significance at a given time” (Lotman, 2001, p. 46).

Cinematic snapshots can be classified into several categories based on various criteria, such as distance between the camera and the object, camera movement, and angle of the shot.

First: Distance between the camera and the object.

The foremost types of distance shot are:

- A- The long shot
- B- The medium shot
- C- The close shot

Second: The movement includes different types, such as:

- A- Horizontal movement in which the camera moves from right to left horizontally or vice versa.
- B- Vertical movement: The camera moves from top to bottom or vice versa.
- C- Tracking movement in which the camera moves along with the moving object, either on tracks or using a dolly (Herman, 2015).

Third: Camera angles in cinema, which determine how the viewer perceives the character or event, include: “five main angles: bird's-eye view, high angle, eye-level shot, low angle, and tilted angle” (Janet, 1981, p. 31).

The contemporary poet has shown a keen interest in the technique of the cinematic snapshot, incorporating it into the construction of his poetry in all its dimensions and various forms. This has led to the emergence of what is critically known as the “poetic snapshot,” akin to a cinematic shot where poetic language highlights meaning by focusing on the sensory and visual aspects, rendered in distinctive ways that align with the spirit of poetry and approach the language of cinema which relies primarily on visual image. The poetic snapshot aims to convey an emotional state, a visual scene, or a symbolic moment at a particular instant, immersing the reader into the heart of that moment and allowing him to experience it with intensity and clarity. “The concept of the cinematic snapshot corresponds to the idea of the individual poetic image, which is known as the smallest expressive unit that can form a poetic image representing a vivid artistic

photographic snapshot. Just as a cinematic film comprises a series of interrelated snapshots, a text is formed from a collection of interrelated poetic images or snapshots" (Safrani, 2008, p. 231), which intertwines to form extended, elaborate images that significantly convey the poet's expressive intent to the recipient in the shortest and easiest manner (Albotoush, 2024, p. 173). The poetic snapshot presents either a single image or a collection of images. Consequently, it appears in two forms in contemporary poetic texts:

- 1- As a partial image, the poetic snapshot serves as one of the fundamental building blocks of the text's overall structure. It is crafted like a cinematic single shot, representing the smallest unit contributing to the overall scene. Thus, "each filmed shot in cinematic art equates to a single poetic unit for modernist poets" (Balawi & Dorianord, 2019, p. 19).
- 2- As a form of the complete image, the poetic snapshot occupies the entire space of a poetic text or a whole poem. The reader or viewer receives it all at once. "Its elements and components are combined in a harmonious, interconnected relationship, creating a balanced entity that ultimately captivates the viewer and evokes deep emotions in him" (Ajjour, 2010, p. 339).

Some researchers refer to the poetic snapshot as the "cinematic snapshot (Smadi, 2001, p. 162) or "cinematic snapshot poem" (Dorianord & Khudari, 2021, p. 274). It is equivalent to the standalone shot in cinema and sometimes closely resembles a cinematic scene.

The poetic snapshot has several features, the foremost of which are:

- 1- Linguistic condensation

This is characterized by conveying ideas with the fewest words possible, capturing the intended meaning without unnecessary elaboration or excessive detail. It selects the most influential words, encouraging the reader viewer to interact, contemplate, and explore.

- 2- Focusing on the sensory and visual aspects

The contemporary poet shapes his poetic snapshots from a series of precise visual images and sensory details to convey the experience clearly through a strong visual impact on the recipient. This approach makes the reader live the poetic experience as if he is seeing it before his eyes or capturing the image perfectly in his mind as if he were watching it. In poetry, the snapshot plays the role of "dramatic imitation; it presents the vivid visual reality to the recipient, allowing him to grasp it as if it were happening before him. This makes him a part of the unfolding reality and helps him understand what lies beneath it" (Ahmed, 2023, p. 446).

- 3- Symbolism

In addition to its primary apparent meaning conveyed through sensory visual depictions, the poetic snapshot carries a symbolic significance that transcends the realistic dimension to more profound meanings.

Saadi Yusuf is considered one of the most influential contemporary Arab poets who employs cinematic techniques and incorporates them in his poetic texts. "Saadi's pictorial style was distinguished for borrowing cinematic shots of the camera to create poetic images. Some researchers consider this imaging pattern an artistic step of the modern poem toward drama as it provides profound implications to the image background that relies on the visual side, in contrast with the mental abstract counterpart" (Smadi, 2001, p. 162).

Whoever examines Yusuf's poetic snapshots discovers is skill in investing the cinematic elements in a way that aligns with the poetic spirit and techniques. "He achieved the aesthetics of synergy with cinematic art without the poetic art losing its distinctive original characteristics" (Dawzi, 2018, p. 139). Through this interaction, he infused his poetry with "new aesthetic values that amplified his adventurous spirit and propelled him to explore more open, dynamic, and technical methods" (Dawzi, 2018, p. 140).

With its varying dimensions (close, medium, and long), the fixed-distance shot appears to be the most prevalent and widespread form in his poetry. The following section of the study will explore this further.

The study adopted a descriptive-analytical approach that examines how poetic texts are constructed to resemble cinematic shot in Saadi Yusuf's poetry, illustrating their closeness or conformity to the borrowed form. This is achieved by deconstructing the general framework of these texts, tracing their minute elements and fine details, and analyzing them by eliciting their partial implications. This process reveals the overarching visions behind the overall structure, which unveils these texts' function and artistic value.

II. DISTANCE SHOTS IN THE POETRY OF SAADI YUSUF

"This shot's form is determined by the proximity or distance between the camera and the object" (Safrani, 2008, p. 231). It is divided into three major sections: close, medium, and long. Yusuf drew inspiration from the fixed-distance shot in cinema with all its main dimensions and incorporated it into his poetry. He often added other variations, such as the extreme close shot, medium-close shot, medium-long shot, and extreme long shot.

This section of the study will explore the distance shots in his poetry, examine how he employs them, analyze their dimensions, and uncover the underlying implications of this technique.

A. *The Close Shot*

It is the one that "appears large on the screen. For a person, it typically shows the head to the shoulders. For objects, it displays them in a large size, closer and larger than a medium shot. Some refer to this as the extreme close one" (Mursi

& Wahba, 1973, p. 71). In this type of shot, “the camera distance encompasses everything from shoulders and above. Nevertheless, the shot can also include details such as necessities or decoration furniture used for either filming or composition purposes or for thematic or storytelling aims” (Herman, 2015, p. 170).

The close shot is characterized by variety and distinction. One of the most notable types is the extreme close shot, also known as the big shot or the extreme big close shot. “This shot is taken in such proximity to the object that it fills the entire frame, such as a person’s face, or specific features, such as the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, or objects, such as a telephone receiver, a jewelry box, or a bouquet. This technique focuses on a particular detail, directing attention to it to intensify the dramatic effect, evoke emotions, generate interest in the dramatic event, or deepen the dimensions of a character. This shot is one of the most distinctive features of cinematic art that differentiates the film from the theater and the close shot” (Mursi & Wahba, 1973, p. 33). “It differs from the close shot by choosing a specific subject to be captured” (Safrani, 2008, p. 233). Since “it magnifies the object’s size hundreds of times, it tends to elevate the importance of things and often conveys a symbolic meaning” (Janiti, 1981, p. 27).

Saadi Yusuf utilizes close-ups and extreme close-ups to express deep emotions and depict dramatic events on both the public and personal levels, he says in his collection of the poem (Frank Life):

The train of death rushes between
Al-Washash camp or the Rasheed
military prison and the mourner’s song,
Our hands knock at the iron gate
pounding, pounded, pounding
pounding, pounded, pounding, pounded, pounding...
Does the train of death conceal us rushing
Until the bodies within it
dry out, becoming an iron grave?
The hands no more pound, no more pound,
No more.....
Breaths were fading, eyes grew cloudy, hands were dropping, and the military shirt was like a drenched rag.
(Yusuf, 2014, (4), p. 343)

The poet filmed a real-life incident that occurred in Iraq (1963); it was that of the death train when many revolutionary communist prisoners were transported from Rasheed prison to Nuqrat Al-Salman prison in a train called the “Death Train.” The intent was to eliminate them either by sealing the train cars so they would die of thirst and suffocation from the heat or by executing those who survived upon arrival at Nuqrat Al-Salman (Elewei, 2020). The poetic film reaches its climax when the train traps the prisoners, and they began to sense destruction and death. The scene opens with a moving shot of a train travelling from Rasheed prison to a terrifying unknown destination foreshadowed by its name: “Death Train”, and its funeral whistle: (Mourner’s Song).

The shot is followed by an extremely close one that fills the poetic screen, showing hands pounding on the train door, pleading insistently for the door to be opened:

Our hands
knocking at the iron gate
pounding, pounded, pounding
pounded, pounding, pounded.

We also notice that these hands seemed detached from the bodies, similar to the big shot, which serves as a variation of the close shot that focuses “specifically on the object, showing only heads, faces, hands and feet filling the screen.” (Herman, 2015, p. 170). Hands are considered “the most expressive parts of the body in cinema, and shots that isolate hands from everything around them can have the most significant dramatic impact” (Mariner, 1983, p. 96).

The continuous pounding of these hands and the persistent display of this shot on the screen suggest a long wait and passage of time. The second extreme close shot, where the hands stop pounding, reveals the exhaustion of these hands and the futility of their pleas as if they were knocking at a coffin:

The hands no more pound, no more pound,
No more.....

The poetic camera then shifts to the faces, showing the breaths gradually fading as a sign of the end: “The breaths were fading”.

The poetic camera then focuses through a big shot on the eyes that lost their spark of life: “The eyes grew cloudy”. The camera then moves slightly away to capture the bodies that have surrendered to death: “The hands were dropping”, wrapped in their military shirts soaked with sweat from the intense heat and the cramped space filled with a large number of prisoners: “The military shirt is now like a drenched rag”.

This poetic film highlighted the ugliness of rulers’ policies and their oppression in dealing with prisoners and opponents of revolutionaries, subjecting them to brutal torture and merciless killing.

The poem: (Haider is sleeping) from the collection: (Diaries of a Castle Prisoner) is one of the texts where Yusuf relies on the techniques of close and extreme close shots to intensify a specific moment, thereby creating dramatic suspense. He Says:

Like someone resting by sleep for two minutes
 Haider sleeps...
 Surrounded by flowers and long candles
 And the noise of people, murmuring
 And play cards for his sake (It is the Philippines)
 Haider, with his eyes closed
 On his lips something like a complaint, like a shade of blame;
 Haider had smooth cheeks
 In his finest elegance
 Clean
 Shiny
 Refined in grace as usual
 And he slept... (Yusuf, 2014, (4), p. 238)

The scene opens with a full shot of the poet's son, Haider, lying in his coffin. He appears as if he has just fallen asleep, not dead, suggesting the calmness emanating from his face: "Like someone resting by sleep for two minutes Haider sleeps...". The camera then zooms out slightly to give a wide shot of the environment surrounding the coffin, revealing the setting: "Flowers and long candles are spread around him and the noise of people, murmuring and playing for his sake, cards..... (It is the Philippines).

It seems that the environment and place are foreign to him; he died a stranger, far from his homeland and family, which adds harshness to the tragedy and the shock of loss. The camera then immediately shifts to a close shot of the deceased's face, highlighting the closed eyes as a symbol of death, which remains an unacceptable, unbelievable reality: "Haider, with his eyes closed". The camera then focuses on the lips, enlarging them on the poetic screen using the technique of extreme close shot to reflect the meanings of complaint and blame etched upon them. This enhanced dramatic effect by evoking a sense of sympathy and oppression from the silence of death, which gives no opportunity for expression: "On his lips, something like a complaint, like a shade of blame". The camera then zooms in on cheeks, allowing the viewer to feel how soft they are and how handsome Haider was, emphasizing the feelings of sorrow: "Haider has smooth cheeks".

To intensify this emotion, a full shot of the body highlighted Haider's elegance and overwhelming luxury: "In his finest elegance... Clean, shiny, refined in grace as usual".

We notice how the poetic camera, through the close shot and the extreme close one, can immerse us in the heart of the tragedy and bring us closer to the character, creating emotional intimacy. It instills in us the feelings and sensations stirred in the hearts of those who loved him. "Close shots are often reserved for moments of deep dramatic suspense" (Janiti, 1981, p. 28).

Saadi Yusuf uses close and very close shots in the same context in the poem: (Philippines) in his collection: (I am Berlini):

He says:

Bainy takes me to Haider. I see my son lying down, his face serene, sleeping deeply. The coffin has a glass cover.
 It was as if I saw a tiny mosquito on Haider's face. How can I keep it away?
 After a long time of forgetfulness, I remembered the opening surah (Al-Fateha); I recited it silently as if I were humming in a house of fire. (Yusuf, 2014, (6), p. 282)

The close shot of the deceased's face reflects its radiance as if he were in a deep sleep, indicating serenity in his new place. This is a sign of a good end, as they say. This suggests a good and virtuous life for the deceased: "I see my son lying down, his face serene, sleeping deeply".

The extremely close shot of the mosquito resting on his face magnified conspicuously, allows us to see it from a symbolic perspective. "It was as if I saw a tiny mosquito on Haider's face." The father's inability to remove this trivial creature from his deceased son's face "How can I keep it away" reflects his helplessness in the face of death that separated them; the glass barrier intensifies this symbolic meaning; "Because the close shot isolates objects from their spatial contexts and often expands them on the large screen, this type of shot suggests symbolic expansion" (Janiti, 1981, p. 28).

The symbolic dimension of the extreme close shot is evident in the poem: (The Wolf's Tattoo) from the collection: (Grandson of Imru'al-Qais) where Saadi says:

At the lower vertebrae,
 Of the tavern girl's back,
 At the intersection of this ilium
 And that other one:
 The blue wolf's tattoo expands...
 Sometimes, the blue wolf sneaks
 Under a silky-free shirt
 The tavern girl moves,
 Searching among patrons for the wolf...
 And among their cigarette ashes
 For embers of the eye,

And what if the snow falls now?
 Will she dance in the courtyard
 When it becomes white?
 Would she hurry to her room
 To keep warm
 under the blanket
 where the wolf moves? (Yusuf, 2014, (5), pp. 198-199)

The poetic camera focuses on a tiny part that forms a distinctive mark on the girl's body (the tavern girl). It is a tattoo located at the lower back at the intersection of the buttocks. By zooming in or enlarging the filmed portion many times, we can discern the shape of this tattoo, which depicts a wolf. The camera continues to spotlight the enlarged tattoo, which appears and disappears due to the girl's movement and her loose shirt rising and falling as she roams around the place searching for someone she sees as a real wolf, that is a man who preys on her being and devours her humanity to satisfy his desires. The large shot that captures the wolf tattoo on the girl's body serves as a symbolic icon, conveying the girl's intensified feelings. It reflects the image she holds of these men. Though she always seeks them out due to her pressing needs, she despises the beastly spirit within them that tears her apart with pain and misery each time. The blue color of the tattoo embodied the reality of that pain. This shot affirms what filmmakers say: "A large shot represents a significant movement within the dramatic framework" (Janiti, 1981, p. 28).

The snow feared to fall and fill the courtyard could symbolize an element of disappointment, as it prevents her from achieving her intended goal. It might be one obstacle that makes coldness, loneliness and desolation her inevitable fate.

B. The Medium Shot

"It is the one taken when the camera is placed closer to the object than in a wide shot, but not as close as in the close one that displays the body from head to knees" (Mursi & Wahba, 1973, p. 214). Sometimes, "it displays the whole body (head to feet), and the American shot to the middle of the thigh" (Jurno, 2009, p. 34). "It is a shot that focuses on the body and excludes the surrounding environment. This way, the body becomes the focal point where we can see the entire body or everything above the knee. This shot is most useful for developing relationships between individuals, even though it lacks the psychological focus that the close-up shot provides" (Mariner, 1983, p. 95). "Thus, the medium shot can capture the entire essence of the dramatic conflict in a scene because it can preserve facial expressions and body movements that are somewhat lost in a wide shot. This shot dramatically connects with the event, capturing elements within the medium shot's domain" (Herman, 2015, p. 168).

Saadi Yusuf adopted the medium shot technique, which embodies the physical dimensions of some characters in his poems whose poetic vision needs to focus on this aspect.

In poem thirteen of his collection of poems: (Poems of the Ancient Capital) Yusuf says:

In Exeter,
 Where you shield yourself from this universe
 with black pants,
 And from the black
 With lightning residing in your eyes,
 And from your eyes,
 with the hair that flutters
 In tranquility like waves...

.....

.....

.....

perhaps I pondered into the
 the expanse of your eyes,
 Or within the embrace of the pants
 That holds your hips firmly
 And I might run to the edge
 To be engulfed by waves of your hair

.....

.....

.....

How happy I am in this town!
 How deep desolation is in this town!
 How distant I am from you....
 Even though your mirrors

Are the garden's paths. (Yusuf, 2014, (4), pp. 279 – 280)

The poetic scene begins with a medium shot displaying the woman's body (shot's concern) from thighs to the top of the head:

Where you shield yourself from this universe with black pants,

And from the black
 With lighting residing in your eyes,
 And from your eyes
 With the hair that flutters in tranquility
 Like waves

The shot is taken from a low angle, below the hips: “where she shields herself from the universe with black pants”. This emphasizes the character’s dominance on screen and the significance from the poetic camera’s perspective, highlighting three parts of the woman’s body: (the hips, eyes, and hair). Each of these parts is a source of fascination for the filmmaker, who is obsessed with the physical connection with these parts. He was tempted by the shining eyes, which reflect a strong desire to break the barriers and feelings: “Perhaps I pondered into the expanse of your eyes”, longing to sneak the hands into the curves of pants where the hips reside to extinguish the fire burning: “Or within the embrace of the pants that hold your hips firmly”. longing for the position in which he enjoys the cascade of her curvy hair: “so I can approach the edge where your hair envelopes me with a wave”.

Through this shot, the poet captures the image of the woman who makes him happy despite his sense of estrangement and loneliness (which may be moral) from being away from her. This woman, who reflects his ideal image of a woman, resembles the ornamental plants in his garden:

“Even though your mirrors are the garden’s paths”.

This seems to be an image of a real woman he saw in Exeter, who dominated his imagination and emotions. This is reinforced by the smooth cut represented by lines of dots that follow the medium shot, which conveys the passage of time. The contrast of black and white in the shot reflects a duality of happiness and loneliness: “How happy I am in this town! How deep the desolation in this town is! How distant I am from you...”.

From his collection of poems: “The Poor House Balcony” Saadi says in the poem (The Occupation 1943):

We are the boys, barefooted of the neighborhood
 We are the boys, naked of the neighborhood
 We are the boys with bloated stomachs from eating clay
 We are the boys with decayed teeth from eating dates and pumpkin peels
 We are the boys who will gather in the morning,
 To greet you with green palm leaves
 From the grave of Al-Hasan Al-Basri to the beginning of Al-Ashar river...
 We will chant, “Long live!”
 We will chant, “Long live you!”
 And we will listen to the Scottish bagpipe
 And rejoice...
 Sometimes laugh at the beard of an Indian soldier,
 But fear mingles with our laughter, contradicts it...
 We chant Long live!
 We chant Long live you!
 And we extend our hands to you: Give us bread,
 We have been hungry since we were born in this village...
 Give us meat, gum, cans, fish
 Give us so that no mother expels her son,
 So that we don’t eat clay and sleep...
 We are the boys, barefooted of the neighborhood
 We don’t know where you came from
 And why did you come
 And why we chant: Long live you....

.....

.....

.....

And now, we will ask you: Will you stay long?

And will we continue to extend our hands to you? (Yusuf, 2014, (4), pp. 474-475)

The previous text takes the form of a live broadcast. It begins with a medium shot with a group of boys ready for a celebration. It is not a close shot because it shows the boys’ entire bodies from feet to head. “We are the boys, barefooted of the neighborhood, we are the boys, naked of the neighborhood”. It is not long because it details their features: “We are the boys, with bloated stomachs from eating clay, we are the boys with decayed teeth from eating dates and pumpkin peels”. The shot falls somewhere in between, revealing the extent of neglect, poverty, and deprivation these celebrants endure. They are barefooted, naked, and hungry. Their stomachs are bloated from eating inedible things like clay; poor nutrition damages their teeth. Yet they remained hopeful, their souls imbued with dreams of change. They welcome the newcomers with green palm leaves, hoping for a new life brimming with happiness, freshness, goodness, and generosity. The accompanying audio of that medium shot let us hear their chants as they prayed for eternity and survival for those

newcomers. They rejoiced upon hearing the music that accompanied them, which revealed their identity (British occupiers). They laughed at the beards of the Indian soldiers among them, which indicated inauthenticity, suppression, and terror. They voiced their simple and modest complaints and demands, which reflect the absence of basic necessities in their world. We chant:

Long live you
We extend our hands to you: Give us bread,
We have been hungry since we were
born in this village.... etc.

They here ask for everything that their rivers overflow with, blessings that are undermined by policies of starvation and deprivation imposed on the people of Iraq. Then we hear them proclaim their ignorance of where these newcomers came from and what they came for: "We don't know where you came from, or why you came or why we chant: Long live you?"

The poetic broadcast is abruptly interrupted by lines of dots filling the textual screen, indicating the passage of time; consequently, there is a shift in the stance of those boys, whose awareness of the danger posed by those newcomers has grown. Their presence on their land and constant humiliation have become a source of distress. "We now ask you: Will you stay long, and will we continue to extend our hands to you?"

Through the technique of the medium shot, the poet could illustrate the harsh conditions from which the people suffer due to oppressive governments, which made them believe that salvation would come with the arrival of the occupiers, only to find themselves falling into a darker and more severe form of tyranny.

The shot was taken from a low angle to convey the boys' stature: "We are the boys, barefooted of the neighborhood".

Despite their apparent weakness and oppression, it suggests the greatness of the role they will play in bringing about change, which will eliminate hunger, deprivation, plundering of the nation's wealth, and humiliation.

This will be achieved by confronting internal injustice or resisting the occupier, for they are the future generation. "As life becomes more valuable, the intensity of resistance and enmity proportionally increases" (Ghnam et al., 2024, p. 2099).

C. *The Long Shot*

Some cinema theorists believe that the long shot is one of "the most imprecise terms" (Janiti, 1981, p. 26). It varies depending on distance and the intended effect.

One of its most prominent types is:

1- The extreme long shot:

"It is taken from a great distance. It is almost always an exterior shot and often shows a lot of the location" (Janiti, 1981, p. 25). It is used "as a spatial frame to establish larger shots, and for this reason, it is sometimes called (an establishing shot)" (Janiti, 1981, p. 25). It usually presents large spaces such as landscapes, cities, or large rooms or to provide a visual context before switching to closer shots that focus on details. It can also "present a philosophical stance visually" (Mariner, 1983, p. 94).

2- The long shot:

"It is a shot taken from a distance and presents a flat piece of land or a general view of the nature extending in front of us" (Mursi & Wahba, 1973, p. 105). It aims to give the viewer a comprehensive idea about the environment, location, or relationship between the character and the place where he exists.

3- The wide shot:

It is a shot taken to capture the thing from a medium distance. It presents its entirety amid its general atmosphere. The image in such a shot displays the general view of all its content besides the movements linked to its characters. The shot may be taken internally for a great hall or externally for a large square or a general road. (Mursi & Wahba, 1973, p. 105)

Yusuf composes his poetic texts using the long shot technique in all its forms. This approach allows him to convey psychological and emotional states that individuals may experience, create a vivid natural landscape that serves as a visual framework for his writing, highlight a specific event, or present the nature of life in a particular place. To him, these poetic shots may act as mirrors that reflect his visions and implications.

In the (Tenth poem) of his collection: (Poems of the Ancient Capital), Saadi Yusuf says:

The house with the lone chimney
From which the smoke rises whenever
I watch it; the smoke
The house with the lone chimney
I content myself with a window
From which I sometimes see
Glean of Christmas lights
sometimes, I see shadows
And the clothes of a woman
Hung in the corner of the room
Or a table without dishes...

(The seagull passes):

In the depth,

I see A sunken ship. (Yusuf, 2014, (4), p. 274)

In constructing the previous text, the poet uses the long shot technique in cinema, where various elements are observed from afar as if seen through a cinematic lens or from a fixed perspective, away from the events. This creates a feeling of isolation and deep contemplation of the details that seem transient but carry profound existential implications.

The static and distant image of the house with the lone chimney, from which smoke rises, symbolizes a quiet yet isolated daily life.

The ordinary details captured through the window, such as the Christmas glow, shadows, a woman's clothes hung in the corner, or a dining table without dishes, seem mundane or unnoticed in daily life. However, the focus of the poetic camera gives them an exceptional dramatic value. The poet uses the window as a cinematic tool, akin to a lens that directs the viewer's eye to specific details without direct participation, where he remains a detached observer.

The glow of Christmas, occasionally visible, symbolizes a quiet life where joy remains sometimes elusive for the other party observer: "I content myself with a window through which I sometimes see the glow of the Christmas". The shadows signify the ambiguity that stifles the observer's role, killing any chance for the desired interaction and communication. "Sometimes, I see shadows". The Hung clothes and the table empty of dishes intensify the feeling of stagnation and absence: "And the clothes of a woman hung in the corner of the room, or a table without dishes..."

To subtly arrange the details of the shot, the poet-photographer employs the technique of deep focus, considered "a variation of the long shot. That tends to utilize multi-layered effects in the Mise-en-scene. The eye moves sequentially from the foreground of the image to the middle ground and then to the back ground. This technique simultaneously highlights elements at close, middle, and long distances" (Janiti, 1981, pp. 28-29). The technique shifts the reader-viewer's eye from one distance to another, ultimately directing his focus to a distant event imbued with dramatic weight. The farthest poetic screen presents an image of a seagull passing, unsettling the shot's tranquility and intensifying the feeling of breaking boredom and isolation: "The seagull passes". At the center of the screen (In the depth) an image of a sunken ship emerges, culminating in the feeling of detachment from the world: "In the depth, I see the sunken ship".

Through the long shot technique, the poet conveys a profound sense of isolation. Throughout the poem, he remains an observer, not a participant in the details that pass before him. The poetic shot here extends beyond the visual dimension but adds a deep emotional one exemplified by isolation and the loss the poet feels toward the world around him. The text shot achieves equilibrium between familiar everyday details and the profound symbols these details carry.

In the poem entitled (The 28th poem) from the collection: (poems of the Ancient Capital), Yusuf employs the long shot technique to depict a human's yearning to break free from isolation and bridge the gap between him and the outside world. He says:

Through the glass of the window misted by rain,
Dappled with droplets,
A pine tree looms in the distance,
The rain drops on the window clinging to the branches
They sketch a silhouette of distant pine,
And glow....

.....

.....

.....

I seem to hear Christmas bells.

Ringing softly in the room

Coming and going

At their leisurely pace.... (Yusuf, 2014, (4), p. 296)

Through the rain-covered window, the boundaries of the screen, whose surface reflects elements of the poetic shot at varying levels of proximity and distance, are delineated. Using a deep focus technique, we see in the foreground the raindrops spread widely "through the glass of the window, foggy and covered with droplets of rain".

In the background, a pine tree appears, its branches laden with drops: "A pine tree looms in the distance, the raindrops cling to the branches".

At a farther distance, at the very top of the screen, the raindrops glisten, outlining the shape of the luminous pine tree: "The droplets sketch a silhouette of distant pine, and glow ...".

This long shot seems to be a sensory visual reflection of a natural landscape that evokes calmness and contemplation. However, in reality, it transcends this physical dimension and holds a more profound meaning. The glass here is not just a window to the outside but a boundary between the inner self and the world. The distant pine tree is more than just a tree; it pulses with a notion that bridges the feeling of distance and invites the self to connect with its surroundings. Although it symbolizes separation, it also acts as a point of attraction, as if the self subtly and calmly interacts with the surrounding world through it. The clinging of raindrops from the window to the pine branches is another face of the connection, symbolizing the interaction between the interior and the outside, breaking the isolation barrier. Here, the close and distant elements connect, highlighting the role of rain and droplets as links between the outer and inner worlds. The raindrops

taking the form of a luminous pine shape represents the pinnacle of this connection and interaction, potentially reaching a state of integration that creates a sense of peace, tranquility, and rebirth. This is reflected in the subtle image of hearing Christmas bells at the end of the text: "I seem to hear Christmas bells ringing softly in the room, coming and going at their own leisurely pace..."

The poet made these bells a symbol of the oscillation of these feelings within the soul, which can be born in a minute and extinguished in another.

The choice of the pine tree as the Christmas tree, among all other trees, may enhance the idea of the rebirth that one experiences when bridges of communication extend to him from the outer environment, saving him isolation, loneliness, and desolation. "Heidegger's concept of the Dasein, where via his phenomenological approach, affirms how human beings cannot be dissociated from their environment" (Ibrahim et al., 2024, p. 789).

Yusuf employs the expansive wide shot in his poetry to present a comprehensive view of life's details in a particular place: a specific city, a market, a public square in a particular place, a café or special rituals of a particular community etc.

An example of this is found in his poem "Al-Aqaba" from the collection: "Eisha Bint Al-Basha":

Morning in Aqaba is always early
With a gentle coolness and trees wet with
Night's humidity.
The students in the narrow streets
Carry warm loaves filled with falafel balls
The fishery hangs (like sheep) tuna fish,
The barbers shake off their chairs,
From remnants of yesterday's hair.
Farmers in Aqaba (Egyptians) arrive at the market
with red radishes, mint, and coriander.
The Hammamat Street hasn't opened its café yet.

The old neighborhood now hums with people at midday heat. (Yusuf, 2014, (7), pp. 319-320)

This wide shot vividly portrays a vibrant scene of daily life in Aqaba. It captures the intricate details of the morning atmosphere in this coastal city through a series of images that gradually convey some of the daily events and various elements that shape this environment. Life rhythm begins early: "Morning in Aqaba is always early", quiet and serene. The moist fog and sight of the dew-laden trees evoke a sense of stillness and calmness that precedes the day's movement. They immerse the reader-viewer in the gentle morning humid breeze and the touch of leaves still bearing the night's remnants: "gentle coolness and trees wet with night's humidity".

The image of students walking through the narrow alley carrying warm loaves with Falafel balls relates to the simple communal lifestyle of the city's inhabitants. It reflects their life standards and elements of their local culture: "The students in the narrow streets carry warm loaves filled with Falafil balls".

The still image of the fishery, with fish hanging like sheep, hints at the stagnation and quietude that envelop the shops in the early morning. Life begins gradually at the start of the day, simultaneously revealing the nature of this coastal city where fish is an essential commodity.

The sight of barbers shaking off yesterday's hair from their chairs signals a transition from stillness to activity, creating a sense of time advancing and reflecting the communal aspect of the place.

The vibrancy and diversity of the people of Aqaba are characteristics of the city and the interaction of its inhabitants. This is vividly portrayed in the sight of Egyptian farmers selling radishes, coriander, and mint. These goods reveal the blending of traditions between the Jordanian and Egyptian cultures in general.

The image of Hammamat Street, with cafes yet to open, reflects the sense of anticipation that often accompanies early morning in many places. It also hints at the city's originality.

As the morning hours progress in the old neighborhood, the hum of life rises with the increasing heat that people have adapted themselves to live with. This shot reflects their resilience and ability to face life challenges despite conditions:

The old neighborhood now
humms with people in the midday heat.

The shot's atmosphere is rich with pungent scents: the smell of dampness, falafel, fish, radishes, mint, and coriander. These aromas show the simplicity of popular life and the modesty of living.

The early morning in this city consists of two states: stillness and motion, which the poet incorporated in capturing this shot. The static images that reflect tranquility are dampness, dew-laden trees, the fishery with fish hanging like sheep and Hammamat Street with its unopened cafes. The images capture movements: students walking in narrow streets with warm falafel-filled loaves, barbers brushing yesterday's hair from their chairs, Egyptian farmers selling radishes, mint, and coriander, and the bustling life in the old neighborhood.

Yusuf relies on the technique of wide shots when composing his texts, particularly in poems that focus on grand scenes. This approach encompasses broad details and various elements that help the reader-viewer understand the magnitude and intensity of the event by focusing on the scene as a whole rather than on fine details. In his poem (The Last Communist: Liberator of Baghdad) from the collection: (The Last Communist Only). He says:

Twenty thousand from the orchards of Samawa
 Came rushing forth
 And from gardens of Kut
 They bore Berne rifles.
 Racing Lada Cars with manual gearboxes
 And four-wheel drive
 Dust blurred the horizon
 The flags are red, barely visible amidst the stirred dust
 Dawn broke
 And the chant:
 Long live Baghdad!
 The last communist is here
 The communists have come,
 And liberated Baghdad! (Yusuf, 2014, (6), p. 152)

The poet employs the wide shot technique, starting with a large collective scene reflecting a mass movement. This broad sweeping image conveys a sense of magnitude where a large crowd surges forward carrying Berne rifles and driving Lada cars. This alludes to a revolutionary movement or a widespread popular action. The image resembles cinematic shots that depict moving crowds at crucial moments. The way the origin of the crowd is specified, the orchards of Samawa, and the gardens of Kut reflect their noble origin, which creates a sense of legitimacy for their movement. The Berne rifles and Lada cars indicate the time of this event.

The dust filling the scene: "Dust that blurs the horizon" reduces clarity, creating a sense of ambiguity and tension. This technique resembles the visual effects used in cinema, such as smoke, dust, fog, or clouds, to obscure some details and leave others visible, enhancing suspense and excitement.

The red flags reveal the identity of those rebels, uncovering their ideology. They are the communists of southern Iraq, who came from the orchards of Samawa and the gardens of Kut, and who, like communists of the world, adopted red flags as their symbol. The dust obscuring those red flags, "The flags are red, barely visible amidst the stirred dust," symbolizes the attempts to suffocate or obscure their principles by repression and marginalization.

The shot bursts with vitality and movement as the image merges with sound- the sounds of the throats raised in chant: "Long live Baghdad", heralding the birth of a new day and the triumph of this revolution. The poet has explicitly expressed that at the end of the text, indicating his presence among these crowds:

Dawn broke
 And the chant:
 Long live Baghdad!
 The last communist is here ...
 The communists have come.
 And liberated Baghdad.

The revolutionaries' resort to armed resistance, carrying rifles, came after their dissenting views and voices were silenced through oppression and intimidation. This reminds us of Safi Al-Din Al-Hali's words in his poem "Glory to He Who Take Risks" about the role of strength and courage in achieving greatness and honor, where he said: He who misses glory through the pen shall achieve it with the swords from which sparks fly (Al-Shora, 2024, p. 346).

III. CONCLUSION

The study came up with several results outlined in the following:

- Saadi Yusuf's poetry presents distinctive examples of how contemporary Arabic poetry interacts with the technique of the cinematic snapshot by utilizing its visual energy to enrich the poetic text with new tools of expression and modern innovative structures and styles.
- Yusuf borrowed the technique of the distance shot and employed it to construct poetic texts in all its main dimensions: close, medium, and long in addition to their sub-variations such as the very close, the medium close, the very wide shot, and the deep focus shot.
- Each type of poetic shot in Yusuf's work carries a specific significance or context, closely resembling the role or function of similar shots in cinema. His close and very close poetic shots capture the most dramatic moments, much like in cinema. Through these shots, he brought the reader-viewer to an intimate connection with his poems' characters, evoking feelings of empathy and solidarity. He gave some of his very close poetic shots symbolic dimensions comparable to those in cinema.

His medium shots, with their various forms, highlighted the physical dimensions of some characters in his poems, where the poetic vision dictated focusing on these dimensions. The themes of these shots created significant semantic cores.

His long shots conveyed certain psychological and emotional states that a person might experience at certain times, such as loneliness or isolation, with concentrated symbolism.

The very long shot served as a visual gateway to the world of the text. His wide shots reflected the rhythm of life in various cities and public places. He also used these shots to document some important historical moments for him.

The researcher would like to recommend the following:

- To expand the study of the distance shot in Yusuf's poetry by examining and analyzing more examples to uncover semantic dimensions and new visions. Yusuf's poetry abounds with this type of shot, but the researcher couldn't further examine more texts where this phenomenon is manifested due to constraints.
- To study the dynamic shot in Yusuf's poetry.
- To study camera angles in his poetry.

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Investigating EFL Learners' Reading Self-Efficacy and Reading Strategy Use: A Correlational Study

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Abstract—This study aimed to explore the level of Saudi EFL female senior high school students' reading self-efficacy beliefs and perceived use of reading strategies, and assess the correlational relationship between the two study variables. Using a quantitative research design, the study data were collected by administering two questionnaires: The Reader Self- Perception Scale (RSPS) questionnaire adapted from Henk and Melnick (1995), and the Survey of Reading Strategies (SORS) adapted from Li and Wang (2010). The two instruments were administered to 90 Saudi senior high school female students randomly selected from three different public schools in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The data were analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient and regression analysis to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and EFL learners' perceived use of reading strategies. The study findings revealed that Saudi senior high school students achieved more than moderate levels than high levels of reading self-efficacy, and that metacognitive processes were the most frequently used strategies among cognitive and compensation strategies. In addition, a positive relationship between students' reading self- efficacy and perceived use of reading strategies was detected in the data analysis. Pedagogical implications of the study findings and its recommendations were presented and discussed.

Index Terms—self-efficacy, reading strategies, cognitive strategies, metacognitive strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

Researchers from diverse fields of inquiry (e.g., Bandura, 1986, 1997; Schunk & Rice, 1991; Wong, 2005) have long examined the notion of self-efficacy and its impact on students' self-beliefs, and self-regulatory abilities to become efficient readers (Bandura, 1997). That is, students' sense of self-efficacy as readers, their passion for reading and motivation to get involved in reading tasks are all components of successful literacy learning environments (Wong, 2005). But it would be more interesting to observe how students' self-efficacious abilities can be projected in their perceived reading strategy use and whether readers' higher or lower self-efficacy levels correlate with their knowledge of reading strategies resorted to when reading English texts.

Given that English is an obligatory subject in Saudi high schools, senior high school students are obliged to pass English exams to secure college acceptance. Researchers and practitioners (e.g., Alharbi, 2015; Al-Qahtani, 2016; Rajab & Al-Sadi, 2015) have long noted that in the educational field many Saudi students find it hard to struggle to attain high proficiency levels in EFL classrooms, in general, and reading in particular. This incompetence in foreign language (FL) learning might be a result of some low self-efficacy and a lack of effective reading skills and strategies used in language classrooms. Thus, these problems often result in academic failures and negative reflections about learning English. Hence the numerous numbers of studies inspecting the relationship between self-efficacy and reading strategies in EFL contexts (e.g., Al Ghraibeh, 2014; Li & Wang, 2010; Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012; Tobing, 2013; Zare & Mobarakheh, 2011), the correlation between L2/FL reading self-efficacy and use of reading strategies got so little attention in the Saudi tertiary levels to the researchers' knowledge. Hence, our study aimed to fill this gap in previous research on the relationship between Saudi EFL students' level of reading self-efficacy and their perceived use of EFL reading strategies.

The significance of our study emerges from the importance of FL reading as an essential skill for Saudi EFL learners. Students with achieved EFL reading proficiency often embrace positive perceptions and attitudes towards their reading abilities. On the other hand, students with low reading self-efficacy and inadequate reading strategies might fail to attain academic achievements due to poor self-esteem and language learning difficulties. Investigations in EFL reading domains have shown that lack of exposure to the target language (Alharbi, 2015), lack of reading skills training and content familiarity (Al-Shumaymeri, 2006), limited teacher training programs (Alrabai, 2016), and limited vocabulary and unfamiliar reading topics (Al-Qahtani, 2016) are among the reasons behind students' difficulties in EFL reading

comprehension in various Saudi educational contexts. Hence, it is necessary to bear in mind the importance of observing and measuring students' self-efficacious abilities and reading strategies when setting up course objectives and learning outcomes of implemented reading courses and programs in the Saudi context.

Review of Related Studies

A considerable body of research has inspected the relationship between self-efficacy and other readers' factors, such as language learning strategies, gender differences, reading anxiety and reading attitudes. Other studies aimed to establish how strategic reading and self-efficacy are intrinsically related, and that students' reading performance can be increased by developing their self-efficacy (Schunk & Rice, 1991; Wong, 2005). Of the many studies investigating L2 reading comprehension and reading strategies (Jimenez et al., 1996; Kong, 2006; Sheorey & Mokhtari, 2001), a few studies, however, have been conducted in EFL contexts to investigate the impact self-efficacy beliefs have on the processes of language learning. Overall, results of these studies have shown a positive correlation between self-efficacy and strategic reading in EFL contexts (Alsuhailani, 2019; Li & Wang, 2010; Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012; Tobing, 2013; Wang & Pape, 2004; Zare & Mobarakeh, 2011).

For instance, Li and Wang (2010) conducted an empirical study on 182 sophomore English majors in the University of China to examine the relationship between self-efficacy from a motivational perspective and reading strategies from a cognitive perspective. The results of the two questionnaires administered revealed a significant and positive relationship between learners' self-efficacy and use of reading strategies, in general, and use of the three types in particular: namely: cognitive, metacognitive, and social/affective strategies. In addition, Li and Wang (2010) asserted that readers with high self-efficacy beliefs set goals, manage their reading time, monitor their reading during the process of inference making, note-taking, elaboration, grouping, deduction, and transferring.

Other reading studies have exhibited how reading self-efficacy beliefs are essential in increasing students' reading strategy use. For instance, Naseri and Zaferanieh (2012) conducted correlational research to examine the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs, reading strategy use, and L2 reading comprehension among a group consisting of 80 Iranian junior and senior students. After administering the Michigan Reading Comprehension Test, a Reading Strategy Use Questionnaire, and a Reading Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, the researchers identified which reading strategies were the most frequently used strategies. Moreover, the researchers found significant correlations between self-efficacy beliefs and reading comprehension, and between self-efficacy and L2 reading strategies. Li and Wang (2010) and Zare and Mobarakeh (2011) explored 45 Iranian high school students' reading self-efficacy and their use of reading strategies using two questionnaires on 7-point Likert-type scale. The results indicated how both self-efficacy and all types of reading strategies were positively correlated and that metacognitive strategies were most frequently used. In a different context, Muche et al. (2023) inspected the impact of metacognitive strategy use and self-efficacy at a moderate level, and problem-solving strategies at a high level. The study findings showed how participants used metacognitive reading strategies and self-efficacy at a moderate level, and problem-solving strategies as the most frequently used strategies compared to global and support reading strategies. In addition, a significant positive relationship was detected among all the study variables.

With regards to the Arabian context, Al Ghraibeh (2014) explored the predictive relationship between self-efficacy in reading comprehension, age, and meta-comprehension among EFL learners. A reading self-efficacy test, and a meta-comprehension test were administered to 63 participants randomly selected from enrolled students in a Saudi University. The results indicated that academic self-efficacy in the reading comprehension tests and age. In a different context, Alsuhailani (2019) inspected the relationship between 191 Saudi female students' use of reading strategies and their reading self-efficacy. Using two questionnaires (a SORS questionnaire (adopted Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002) and a self-efficacy reading self-efficacy questionnaire), and retrospective interviews, the study revealed that moderate-frequency use of both reading strategies and reading self-efficacy but a positively correlated relationship between the two factors. Also, the researcher found a significant difference between high self-efficacious versus low self-efficacious students in the overall use of reading strategies, although the two groups differed in their use of the subscales of reading strategies.

Despite the substantial amount of research in foreign language contexts that has been conducted to explore the relationship between self-efficacy and L2 reading strategies, there is still, however, a considerable lack of research examining the influence of these factors combined in the Saudi context. Also, although previous studies concerning the Saudi context revealed some interesting findings regarding the interactions of various variables in relation to students' self-efficacy, they did not fully address Saudi readers' strategy use in relation to their reading self-efficacy in high school level, which is the focus of our study. Hence, to address this lack of research, the present study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the level of Saudi EFL female senior high school students' reading self-efficacy beliefs and their perceived use of reading strategies?
2. Is there a significant relationship between Saudi EFL female senior high school students' reading self-efficacy beliefs and their perceived use of reading strategies?

II. METHOD

A. Research Design

This is a correlational study with a between-subject design since our study focused on examining the correlation

between English reading strategies and English reading self-efficacy across Saudi EFL female senior high school students.

B. Participants and Setting

The study participants involved 90 Saudi EFL female senior high school students of Natural Sciences concentration randomly selected from three public schools in Riyadh. The rationale behind our target for natural science majors was due to students' exposure to a variety of English materials they were required to read in their classrooms. These students, whose ages ranged between 17 and 19, had learned English for seven years as a subject in all the schools included and covered subjects and content areas using the Traveller 5 textbook in all of the three schools selected. All the students shared similar English background, although each class had a mixture of high and low English language proficiency (according to school proficiency test data) affecting all senior high school students. Three classes of students, each consisting of 35-40 students (and a total of 90 participants) participated in our study. Given the minimum necessary sample size in relation to the study variables should be equal to $50 + (8 \times 4) = 82$, our sample out-passed this range. Hence the sample size was determined to be large enough to conduct both simple and multiple correlation and regression analysis using the study data (Green, 1991).

C. Instruments

(a). Reading Self-Efficacy Questionnaire

The Reader Self-Perception Scale (RSPS) questionnaire devised by Henk and Melnick (1995) was adapted as baseline for reading self-efficacy questionnaire used in our study (see Appendix A). This scale has 4 subscales (Table 1) which allow us to measure different aspects of self-efficacy relevant to Bandura's (1997) four-sources model that affect self-efficacy: performance accomplishments (the history of success or failure, mastery experience), vicarious experiences (comparison to others' success), verbal persuasion (encouragement or discouragement received from other persons, social feedback), and particularly items 1, 5, 8, 12, 17, 18, 28, and 32 of their RSPS), and other items were rephrased and used while new items were added in our modified questionnaire into 20 instead of the 30-item scale of the original scale. This is due to the apparent overlapping of its statement items. e.g., 14 vs 20 of the original scale resulted in reducing the number of items in our modified questionnaire into 20 instead of the 30-item scale of the original scale. But these modified changes in our adapted reading self-efficacy questionnaire were discussed and validated with two experts who were actively involved in FL reading research in the English department at the time.

TABLE 1
SELF-EFFICACY CATEGORIES

Categories	Items
Observational Comparison	1-2
Mastery Experience	3-11
Psychological State	12-17
Social Feedback	18-19

(b). Reading Strategy-Use Questionnaire

Although constructed upon different studies in L2 reading strategies, the main resource for our strategy-use questionnaire is the survey of reading strategies (SORS) (originally constructed by Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2008), adapted and administered by Li and Wang's (2010) study, with 48 items scale to measure the use of different categories of L2 reading strategies (metacognitive, cognitive and compensation strategies). The scale constructed in the original study was reviewed while others statements were added from Shang's (2010) study to measure compensatory strategies (e.g., ignoring unknown words or phrases, using the structure of the text (titles, subtitles, content table), overviewing the text, and planning the reading process to ease the Understanding of the text). The final revised questionnaire contained 32 items (Table 2). Also, the final grouping of the statements can be seen in Appendix B.

TABLE 2
READING STRATEGIES CATEGORIES

Categories	Items
Cognitive	1-13
Compensation	14-21
Metacognitive	22-32

A comprehensive statistical analysis was used to validate the measurement tools used in our study. The reliability of the scale was tested by calculating the Cronbach's alpha (Table 3), a statistical tool that measures the internal consistency or reliability of the data. Values of Cronbach's alpha range from 0.00 to 1.00, in which 0.00 indicates no consistency in the measurements and 1.00 indicates perfect consistency. The internal consistency on the self-efficacy instrument was 0.893 while that of reading strategy-use instrument was 0.913; hence, these values are appropriate indicators of high consistency and reliability of our study instruments.

TABLE 3
INTERNAL CONSISTENCY CHECK

Instruments	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Self-Efficacy Questionnaire	0.893	19
Strategy-Use Questionnaire	0.913	32

Both reading self-efficacy and reading strategy-use questionnaires were first translated into Arabic by the researchers and five native Arabic experts in translation judged the translated versions. The two questionnaires were then tested for validity by providing them to four faculty raters to validate the language used, the items clarity, and the appropriateness of statements to measure the study variables. Furthermore, both questionnaires were pilot tested for validity by administering them to a different sample of 12 female students randomly chosen from other public schools. The results of the pilot study showed that the participants did not encounter problems to understanding and answering the items.

Hence, our study questionnaires were tested out and validated to be administered for the main part of the study.

D. Data Collection

Having obtained permission to conduct our study from the three designated public schools' administration in Riyadh, the researchers began conducting their main study. First, the female researcher introduced the study, explained the participants' roles in the data collection procedures (after assuring them that their participation was voluntary and their anonymity and confidential information were protected) and provided instructions concerning the questionnaires completion (Al-Shulayil & Alkhaleefah, 2025). Ninety students took part in the survey and completed both questionnaires. The participants were allowed enough time to carefully read the items and rate their responses according (as instructed by the female researcher). After the data collection stages were completed, the responses were cross-checked and calculated according to the assigned scales.

E. Data Analysis

After data cleansing, mean scores for all the scales and subscales were computed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Here, the scores for every scale in each question in the research instruments administered were added together independently and the values were used for further analysis. Furthermore, the sum of scales on reading strategy use was also calculated: values less than or equal to 53 were indicative of a low use of reading strategies, 54-107 as moderate use and values greater than 107 as high use of reading strategies. Correlation analysis was also used to compare the scores of scales on self-efficacy and reading strategies to determine the direction and significance of the relationship between senior high school students' reading self-efficacy beliefs and their perceived use of reading strategies. A linear regression model was developed to predict our students' self-efficacy given their perceptions on the reading strategies and vice versa.

III. RESULTS

Concerning the first research question (What is the level of Saudi EFL female senior high school students' reading self- efficacy beliefs and their perceived use of reading strategies?), the mean and standard deviations of the descriptive data analysis showed that students' self-efficacy beliefs with their perceived use of the reading strategies, as seen in Table 4, varied in results. Here, 39 (43.8%) of students had low self-efficacy, 38 (42.7%) displayed a moderate self-efficacy, while the remaining 12 (13.5%) showed high reading self-efficacy in using two words of reading strategies, 5 (5.6%) were high users, while the majority of the students (84.3%) reported using reading strategies moderately.

TABLE 4
FREQUENCY OF STUDENTS' LEVELS OF SELF-EFFICACY AND PERCEIVED USE OF READING STRATEGIES

Level	Reading self-efficacy	Reading strategy use
Low	39 (43.8)	9 (10.1)
Moderate	38 (42.7)	76 (84.3)
High	12 (13.5)	5 (5.6)

Also, the results show the participants' levels of reading self-efficacy as relatively high ($M=3.73$, $SD=1.00$), with all the subscales scores exceeding the 3.5 level.

TABLE 5
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF STUDENTS' SELF-EFFICACY (N=89)

Variables	M	SD	Cronbach's α
Observational Comparison	3.58	0.95	.662
Mastery Experience	3.88	0.69	.824
Psychological state	3.53	0.81	.677
Social feedback	3.84	0.92	.809

* $p<0.001$

As can be observed in Table 5, mastery experience and social feedback were higher compared to observational

comparison and psychological state ($M=3.88$, $SD=0.69$ and $M=3.84$, $SD=0.92$ vs $M=3.58$, $SD=0.95$ and $M=3.53$, $SD=0.81$), with a range of .35, but not statistically significant.

As revealed in students' responses to perceived self-efficacy statements (see Table 6), the highest rates respondents had was detected on the overall description of their English reading abilities where they gave more than average lowest score was spotted on the statement concerning reading aloud to siblings (item 17) ($M=2.94$, $SD=1.46$). Hence, the overall range of the questionnaire items was calculated as: $\text{Max } (4.33) - \text{Min } (2.94) = 1.39$.

TABLE 6
READING SELF-EFFICACY QUESTIONNAIRE WITH SUBSCALES GROUPING AND CORRELATION FOR APPROPRIATE SUBSCALE (N=89)

Observational Comparison	1	I read faster and better than my classmates.	3.52	1.17	.883**
	2	I understand what I read better than my classmates.	3.65	1.03	.847**
Mastery Experience	3	I can read and understand all the topics in English course book pretty good.	3.61	1.20	.756**
	4	When I read, I learn many new words.	3.48	.97	.493**
	5	I can identify the main idea of a reading passage.	3.84	1.08	.752**
	6	I can understand the writer's purpose in a text.	3.66	1.10	.715**
	7	I can finish my homework of English reading all by myself.	4.15	1.01	.619**
	8	I can read and understand short stories.	4.33	.72	.656**
	9	When my teacher asks a question about the text, I can answer.	4.09	.87	.522**
	10	I can read and understand English newspapers.	3.35	1.28	.699**
	11	I can guess the meaning of a difficult word while reading.	3.62	1.23	.618**
Psychological state	12	I enjoy reading.	3.69	1.22	.704**
	13	I like to read aloud.	4.13	1.37	.448**
	14	I think reading is easy for me.	4.01	1.03	.549**
	15	I feel good inside when I read.	3.57	1.28	.754**
	16	I would be happy if someone gave me a book as a present.	3.55	1.45	.645**
	17	I often read to my little sister or brother.	2.94	1.46	.626**
Social Feedback	18	People in my family think I am a good reader.	3.94	.99	.913**
	19	My teacher thinks I am a good reader.	3.74	1.01	.918**

**p < .01 level (2-tailed)

As for students' reading strategies (see Table 7), they consisted of three categories, namely cognitive, metacognitive and compensatory strategies. The mean values of reading strategy usage were larger than 3.5 (on a 5-point Likert scale). All three strategies were more frequently used on an item level, but metacognitive strategies were more frequently used at the group level than others ($M= 3.67$ vs 3.57 and 3.52 for cognitive and compensative strategies). This can be interpreted when considering that students might have perceived using isolated cognitive strategies to cope with some word and text-level difficulties, but might still reflected on their metacognitive choices and use of strategies in combination as part of their comprehension monitoring. But this explanation is again limited to what we can infer from their perceived responses to the questionnaire items, which might or might not reflect their actual strategy use in some direct elicitation methods (e.g., concurrent think-aloud reading tasks) which our study did not involve in its design.

TABLE 7
READING STRATEGIES QUESTIONNAIRE WITH SUBSCALES GROUPING AND CORRELATION FOR APPROPRIATE SUBSCALE (N=89)

Strategy	#	Statement	M	SD	Correlation
Cognitive	1	I can identify what type of text it is, such as a newspaper article, a scientific paper, or a novel.	4.00	.92	.390**
	2	I use the title to help me predict the content.	4.08	1.02	.617**
	3	I make up questions that might be helpful to help me understand what I read.	3.18	1.12	.611**
	4	I skim the whole passage quickly and then reading selectively according to my reading purpose.	3.67	1.22	.684**
	5	I write down some notes and keywords.	3.37	1.33	.521**
	6	I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text while reading.	3.35	1.22	.625**
	7	I re-read to recollect information of text while reading.	3.10	1.42	.536**
	8	I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.	3.44	1.14	.488**
	9	I use typographical aid (i.e. bold face) to identify and highlight key words while reading.	3.33	1.25	.658**
	10	I visualize information to help me remember what I read.	3.70	1.16	.502**
	11	After I read the text, I summarize it in my own words.	3.37	1.24	.615**
	12	I ignore words that I do not understand.	3.15	1.34	.192
	13	I use the content table and the diagrams to summarize the passage after reading.	3.30	1.37	.689**
Compensative	14	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	3.62	1.37	.535**
	15	I use my general knowledge to guess the meaning of the text.	3.67	1.08	.624**
	16	I use the context to guess the meaning of a difficult word.	3.78	1.15	.589**
	17	I use pictures and images to understand better.	3.89	.98	.463**
	18	When I do not understand some parts, I skip them and keep reading.	3.44	1.23	.412**
	19	I translate from English into Arabic to understand the passage.	3.56	1.28	.398**
	20	I try to guess what comes next in the text.	3.33	1.19	.567**
	21	I use my knowledge of the topic to help me understand the text.	3.67	1.11	.598**
Metacognitive	22	I preview the text before reading by looking at its organization.	3.78	1.05	.624**
	23	I have a purpose in mind when I read.	3.89	.98	.587**
	24	I adjust my reading pace according to the type of text.	3.67	1.12	.598**
	25	I pay close attention to reading when text becomes difficult.	3.44	1.18	.656**
	26	I try to remain focused on reading when distracted.	3.78	1.08	.634**
	27	I stop from time to time and think about what I am reading.	3.56	1.15	.678**
	28	I try to picture or visualize information to help remember what I read.	3.33	1.22	.598**
	29	I make deduction about the content of the passage from the title.	3.55	1.17	.545**
	30	I get rationalized when text becomes difficult.	3.67	1.20	.418**
	31	I change my reading speed depending on the difficulty and importance of a text.	3.96	1.14	.506**
	32	I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.	3.61	1.18	.589**

To find out the most popular reading strategies being reported the mean scores for every strategy usage were compared to overall reading strategy usage mean score. According to our results (Table 7), certain cognitive strategies (e.g., using the title to help predict the text content (M=4.08, SD=1.02), identifying the type of text (newspaper article, scientific paper, or a novel) (M=4.04, SD=.92) revealed some higher frequency meaning than other strategies.

As for the second research question (Is there a significant relationship between Saudi EFL female senior high school students' reading self-efficacy beliefs and their perceived use of reading strategies?), the results of the inferential analysis ($r=0.692$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$) revealed a strong positive relationship between the students' self-efficacy and their perceived use of reading strategies. Given the $p\text{-value}$ (0.000) is less than the alpha value (0.05), there is a significant relationship being detected between Saudi senior high school students' reading self-efficacy beliefs and their perceived use of reading strategies.

TABLE 8
PEARSON CORRELATION BETWEEN SELF-EFFICACY AND USE OF READING STRATEGIES

	Pearson Correlation	Self-efficacy
Reading strategy use	.692	Sig. (2-tailed) .000
		N 89

TABLE 9
LINEAR REGRESSION OF SELF-EFFICACY ON READING STRATEGY USE

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	30.179	5.454		5.534	.000
Self-efficacy	1.042	.116	.692	8.944	.000

Table 9 shows the results of the linear regression of self-efficacy on reading strategies which indicate that an increase in students' reading self-efficacy led to an increase in students' reading strategies (1.042).

IV. DISCUSSION

In answering the first research question (RQ1), the results of our study indicated that Saudi female senior high school

students exhibited more low and moderate levels than high levels of reading self-efficacy which might suggest their attitudes towards FL reading activities. This does not often lack assessing students' own beliefs on their reading abilities prior to reading instruction. Similarly, our findings revealed our students' moderate perceived use of reading strategies, as compared to other trait of reading strategy use. This has been expected since it's reported that most Saudi students in public schools do not often receive enough exposure to explicit instruction on a variety of reading strategies aimed at dealing with comprehension breakdowns at various levels (Alkhaleeah, 2017). In conclusion, Saudi students' awareness of reading strategies seems low or moderate since the majority have not been taught enough strategies to help them comprehend well on content.

Our results here are in line with those findings drawn from previous similar studies which revealed a moderate use of reading self-efficacy amongst FL readers (Alsuhaibani, 2019; Al-Qahtani, 2016; Alzahrani, 2009; Muche et al., 2023; Rajab & Al-Sadi, 2015). However, our results contradict those drawn from previous studies (e.g., Al Ghraibeh & Ali) that reported high levels in their students' reading self-efficacy beliefs that encourage motivation scores based on the tests administered to foreign language learners. But it is important to note that Al Ghraibeh's (2014) study focused on male language learners enrolled in undergraduate programs of a major university. Thus, researchers should students' high reading self-efficacy scores to various reasons, including FL learners' creating efforts to learn new Arabic words, their increased motivation, and high expectations of success in effective language learning programs of university levels. But given the different language-learning conditions and reading context of Al Ghraibeh's (2014) study, it is not surprising that our findings were inconsistent with those reported in his study.

As for the second research question (RQ2), our findings revealed a positive relationship between Saudi EFL students' reading self-efficacy beliefs and perceived use of reading strategies. As shown in the results from the two questionnaires (see Tables 8 and 9), students' perceptions of reading strategy use are impacted by their low to moderate self-efficacy beliefs. This has been seen as consistent with those findings reported by other studies (Alsuhaibani, 2019; Li & Wang, 2010; Mohammed, 2022; Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012; Tobing, 2013; Wang & Pape, 2004; Zare & Mobarakeh, 2011) which provided some positive relationship between reading self-efficacy and reading strategy use.

Notably, a comparison to previous research using similar questionnaires for reading self-efficacy is not straightforward, as two of the studies, namely Henk and Melnick (1995), and Zare and Mobarakeh (2011) provided some mean scores, and sums for scale. In Li and Wang (2010), the researchers used a 7-point Likert scale and Tobing (2013) used a 100-point scale to be administered in the Indonesian setting.

Nevertheless, it was possible to calculate mean values of self-efficacy for these two studies and the results showed that the rates of Saudi students were similar to those of Iranian senior high school students ($M=3.36$), as investigated by Zare and Mobarakeh (2011). Furthermore, our results revealed that metacognitive strategies were the most frequently used strategies; hence, consistent with those drawn from previous studies (Li & Wang, 2010; Zare & Mobarakeh, 2011), despite different types of questionnaires and different measurement analyzing the data were administered. However, the findings which showed metacognitive strategies being the most frequently used strategies contradicted those of Naseri and Zaferanieh (2012). This can be interpreted to consider participants' proficiency and reading abilities levels (as senior English major students) in past studies as opposed to the limited reading comprehension exposure of our high school students. This might explain the differences between our findings and those reported in Naseri and Zaferanieh (2012), for instance, wherein their participants were more cognitively engaged in their strategic reading than our subjects.

V. CONCLUSION

Conducted in the Saudi EFL setting, the aim of our study is twofold: exploring the level of Saudi EFL female senior high school students' reading self-efficacy beliefs and perceived use of reading strategies, and assessing the correlational relationship between the two study variables. Despite the low to moderate levels of reading self-efficacy and reading strategy use found in our results, the study still revealed a positive relationship between Saudi learners' reading self-efficacy and perceived use of reading strategies, and that metacognitive strategies were more frequently used than cognitive and compensatory processes.

A. Pedagogical Implications of the Study

The findings of our study provide insights to educators and practioners of the importance of enhancing students' self-efficacy in educational settings. Furthermore, the study findings suggest the need to develop target language instructors who help efficacious students in language classrooms. Hence, developing teachers who highly efficacious teachers should begin with cultivating positive self-efficacious language instructors. That is, highly efficacious teachers strive to encourage their students to develop some interests in their reading activities; for instance, to consistently motivate them by producing some enjoyable reading tasks that can help them become self-efficacious readers. For instance, Scott (1996), in a review of past studies on self-efficacy, drew special attention to some suggestions raised by Henk and Melnick (1995) for teachers who seek to promote positive reading self-efficacy for their students. First, individual differences, especially those exhibiting poor self-efficacy, should be treated with tolerable, desirable, and encouraging approaches. Second, teachers should raise their positive reinforcement and encourage students to perform tasks in less intimidating contexts. Third, language instructors should monitor their students' progress and provide frequent

justifications as to how their progress is taking place (Shang, 2010; Zare & Mobarakeh, 2011). Fourth, they should provide rich materials, resources of learning, and consonant support for language learners. Fifth, language instructors should carefully choose the most appropriate techniques to minimize, if not to eliminate, stress and anxiety that may impact students' language learning abilities. Finally, language instructors should try to create a friendly environment wherein group work and collaboration amongst students increase and enforce learners' motivation to learn (Henk & Melnick, 1995; Scott, 1996), as suggested by some previous EFL studies on reading self-efficacy (e.g., Shang, 2010; Zare & Mobarakeh, 2011; Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012; Jae-woo et al., 2016).

Also, our study findings advocate the need for language learning instructors to help language learners be strategic readers. This involves providing learners with explicit instructions on reading strategies by introducing and practicing specific effective strategies to deal with word and text difficulties in reading (Grabe, 2009; Paris, 2005). Any reading strategy, once introduced and practiced, should be used regularly and in combination with other strategies as a part of pre- during and post reading activities. By predicting, for instance, the text title, engaging in some reading monitoring, relating to prior knowledge, word inferencing, or summarizing text content, language instructors can help FL readers learn and practice their reading strategies in a variety of reading tasks and practices. helping them advance their reading efficacious abilities, as supported by previous research which examined positive relationship between FL learners' reading efficacy and their reading strategy use (e.g., Alsuhaibani, 2019; Fathi & Soleimani, 2020; Li & Wang, 2010; Mohammed, 2022; Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012; Shang, 2010; Zare & Mobarakeh, 2011).

In addition, our study results call for syllabus designers to play an essential role in making the process of language learning more accessible and facilitative for learners by incorporating language learning strategies in general and reading strategies in particular in the course materials (Alkhaleeliah, 2017; Al-Otaibi, 2004). By integrating appropriate strategies in language learning textbooks, teachers, especially those lacking teaching experience, will be empowered to improve their teaching methods. Moreover, incorporating reading resources that are varied, attractive, interesting, and accessible should be an important aim for syllabus designers. This should help Saudi students' cognitive awareness of the appropriate strategies to utilize and thus improve their self-efficacy and foreign language reading abilities, as has been proposed in previous literature (Alsuhaibani, 2019; Li & Wang, 2010; Mohammed, 2022; Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012; Shang, 2010; Zare & Mobarakeh, 2011).

B. Limitations of the Study

Our study is one of the few studies investigating the relationship between reading self-efficacy and reading strategies in the Saudi EFL context and its findings promote more awareness of this association of the two reading variables in EFL reading settings. However, this study is not without its limitations.

The first limitation concerns our study design which is correlational in its focus as it does not aim to test any causal relationships between EFL readers' self-efficacy beliefs and their perceived use of reading strategies. And since Zare and Mobarakeh (2011) have recommended that Saudi EFL readers should be trained in strategic reading activities and get involved in tasks aimed to assess their reading self-efficacy beliefs, our study results do not imply that causal relationships being implemented in our design.

The second limitation is about our participants who were Saudi female students only selected from three public schools. Thus, the researchers are cautious not to over generalize the study findings to include students from other domains (e.g., those in the Social Science) from other public schools. In addition, our study is limited to females as no male participants were involved in the data collection procedures.

Another limitation relates to the study instruments. Here, the validity of our study results reported relied on the respondents' own perceptions, but not their actual performance. If some think-aloud reading tasks, followed by retrospective interviews, had been incorporated in the study design, the data might have provided a more representative representation of students' reading strategic abilities in processing the text content. In other words, the data might have provided the researchers with better understanding of how students' self-efficacy beliefs might lead to their reading strategic competence. Unfortunately, we were not able to integrate mixed methods in our study design due to the time and subject-accessibility constraints.

And one remaining limitation is related to the measurement of self-efficacy over a short period of time. Our study, as in most similar studies (e.g., Naseri & Zaferanieh, 2012; Shang, 2010; Jae-woo et al., 2016; Zare & Mobarakeh, 2011) measured learners' reading self-efficacy over a short period of time; hence, our study did not examine whether Saudi students' beliefs and perceptions would have changed over a considerable period of time.

C. Recommendations for Further Research

The findings of the present study and its limitations provide insights for future reading research. Similar studies need to be replicated in different language learning contexts to extend our knowledge of how the integration of foreign language learners' reading self-efficacy and reading strategies might lead to significant improvements in students' L2 reading performance.

Conducting different empirical studies on language learners from different school levels (intermediate and secondary) is highly recommended. Future FL reading researchers should evaluate language learners' own perceptions and beliefs as readers by means of designing validated questionnaires to measure readers' abilities, their past reading experiences, their perceptions of what makes good readers, as well as their awareness and use of reading strategies. Moreover,

standardized reading tests, observations, and interviews should be considered when measuring reading variables to help observe the relationship between them and how they impact EFL learners' reading performance. The results gained afterward should help English reading instructors to develop some motivating learning environments that could impact their students' self-efficacious beliefs and strategic reading performance. Hence, results drawn from this line of research are paramount to determining if effective reading strategies may be acquired over time.

Furthermore, a large sample of participants (males and females) from different public and private schools, and varying language proficiency levels can certainly provide more insightful findings for future reading strategy use and reading-efficacy studies and help generalize those findings drawn. Also, extending future studies to include Saudi university-level students with varying reading abilities and attitudes can certainly provide us with illuminating data as to how Saudi EFL learners' reading comprehension can be impacted by various factors associated with the reader, the text, and/or the reading instruction in language classrooms.

APPENDIX A. SELF-EFFICACY QUESTIONNAIRE

#	Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I think I am a good reader. *					
2	I enjoy reading. *					
3	I can read and understand all the topics in English course book pretty good. +					
4	I like to read aloud. *					
5	When I read, I learn many new words. **					
6	I think reading is easy for me. **					
7	I read faster and better than my classmates. **					
8	I can identify the main idea of a reading passage. +					
9	I can understand the writer's purpose in a text. +					
10	I can finish my homework of English reading all by myself. +					
11	I feel good inside when I read. *					
12	I can read and understand short stories. +					
13	When my teacher asks a question about the text, I can answer.					
14	I would be happy if someone gave me a book as a present. +					
15	I can read and understand English newspapers. +					
16	I often read to my little sister or brother. +					
17	People in my family think I am a good reader. *					
18	My teacher thinks I am a good reader. *					
19	I understand what I read better than my classmates. **					
20	I can guess the meaning of a difficult word while reading. +					

APPENDIX B. READING STRATEGIES QUESTIONNAIRE

#	Statement	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
1	I have a purpose in mind when I read.					
2	I can identify what type of text it is, such as a newspaper article, a scientific paper, or a novel.					
3	I review the text before reading to know its characteristics like length and organization.					
4	I skim the whole passage to understand the general idea not the details.					
5	I use the title to help me predict the content.					
6	I browse the titles and the sub-titles to help me understand the main idea.					
7	I read the introduction and the conclusion paragraphs.					
8	I skim the whole passage quickly and then reading selectively according to my reading purpose.					
9	I write down some notes and key words.					
10	I change the text titles into questions in order to answer it while reading.					
11	I think about whether the content of the text fits my reading purpose.					
12	I critically analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text while reading.					
13	I reclassify and reorder information of text while reading.					
14	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.					
15	I decide what to read and what to ignore while reading.					
16	I make detailed plans for reading to improve my reading abilities.					
17	I don't try to find the meaning of every single word in a text.					
18	I think about what I know to help me understand what I read.					
19	I read aloud when the text becomes difficult.					
20	I use typographical features like bold face to identify and highlight key words while reading.					
21	I change my reading speed depending on the difficulty and importance of the text.					
22	I use dictionaries and encyclopedias to help comprehend the passage.					
23	I visualize the information in my mind to help remember what I read.					
24	I translate from English into Arabic when I read.					
25	After I read a text, I summarize it in my own words.					
26	I ignore words that I do not understand.					
27	I use word formation (prefix, suffix) to guess the meaning of unknown words.					
28	I use semantic knowledge (synonym, antonym) to guess the meaning of unknown words.					
29	I use the content table and the diagrams to summarize the passage after reading.					
30	I predict what will happen next while reading.					
31	I try to predict what the writer is going to say.					
32	I check to see if my guesses about the text are right or wrong.					

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Integrating Kutai Malay Identity Into Global Citizenship Education Through Linguistic Landscape

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Abstract—This study examines the representation of Kutai Malay (KM) in school environments and how the linguistic landscape can be utilized as a medium for teaching KM while nurturing Global Citizen Education (GCE) values. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research documented and categorized 1,183 signs in public junior high schools according to language type (monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual) and contents that deliver GCE values. Focus group discussions with 16 KM language teachers were conducted to explore

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the integration of GCE principles into their teaching practices. The findings revealed a concerning representation of KM, comprising only 6.8% of the linguistic landscape, highlighting the urgency of utilizing this landscape as a medium for teaching and representing KM in schools. Although teachers are enthusiastic about incorporating GCE values into KM instruction, they encounter significant challenges, including limited resources and insufficient knowledge of GCE principles. Additionally, the integration of local wisdom, such as proverbs and traditional poetry, remains inadequate. Leveraging the linguistic landscape for teaching and preserving Kutai Malay is urgent. The study identifies limitations, including the underrepresentation of KM language in the schoolscape environment and a lack of local wisdom content in KM material, especially relating to the use of the school linguistic landscape as media for teaching KM and GCE. It recommends enhancing the representation of KM language in the school linguistic landscape and integrating GCE into teaching KM to empower students to embrace their cultural heritage, develop global citizenship skills, and foster inclusivity while preparing them for local and global challenges.

Index Terms—Global Citizenship Education, linguistic landscape, Kutai Malay, cultural identity, Indonesia

I. INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, nurturing global citizens who appreciate and embrace cultural diversity has become more imperative than ever. Global citizenship entails a comprehensive understanding of the interdependence of nations, along with an appreciation for cultural pluralism and an unwavering commitment to social justice, equality, and environmental sustainability (Radhouane & Maleq, 2020). This multifaceted approach incorporates moral, socio-political, and practical dimensions of citizenship, which are essential for creating a harmonious global society (Aydin et al., 2019). To effectively cultivate such citizens, it is crucial to develop competencies based on cosmopolitan values. These include a sense of responsibility toward the global community, an openness to diverse perspectives, and a commitment to compassion and empathy (Jooste & Heleta, 2016). Within this framework, educators play a vital role by fostering a global community characterized by democracy and multiculturalism, actively resisting forces that undermine cultural appreciation (Camicia & Franklin, 2011). Recognizing and valuing cultural diversity—while understanding the complex interconnections shaping these differences—are essential steps toward achieving educational objectives aligned with global citizenship (Lupinacci, 2017).

Integrating elements of local culture into educational practices enhances students' learning experiences and contextualizes their understanding of identity within a broader global framework (Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). Emphasizing local identity within Global Citizenship Education (GCE) aligns with UNESCO's framework, which highlights the significance of cultural diversity and local context in fostering global awareness and engagement. GCE is also closely linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—a comprehensive plan of 17 global objectives endorsed by 193 UN member states aimed at promoting human well-being, environmental sustainability, peace, and global partnerships, with a key target focusing on equipping all learners with the knowledge and skills for sustainable development by 2030 (UNESCO, 2015). This study specifically investigates the potential of the linguistic landscape as a pedagogical tool to incorporate the Kutai Malay (KM) identity into GCE for junior high school students in Kutai Kartanegara, addressing concerns about the preservation of local languages in light of Indonesia's capital relocation (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022; Bety et al., 2023).

The KM language confronts significant challenges, including the marginalization of its speakers, the dominance of the Indonesian language, and the impacts of globalization and migration (Budiarta, 2019). Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) reveals a concerning decline in regional language usage among youth, which has dropped to 68.04%, accompanied by a notable increase in the use of Indonesian at home (31.81%) (BPS, 2021). This trend signifies a waning interest in regional languages, as younger generations increasingly prefer Indonesian for socialization. Furthermore, studies indicate that regional languages receive inadequate attention in educational and community contexts (Andriyanti, 2019; Yoniantini, 2021; Riani et al., 2022), which has led to an educational landscape predominantly dominated by Indonesian. In response to these challenges, local authorities have designated KM as the second official language alongside Indonesian in IKN and have integrated it into local curricula for early childhood and secondary education to protect its linguistic heritage (Lilianto, 2022). Promoting the KM language is crucial for fostering a regional identity that reflects Indonesia's multicultural society, particularly in the context of IKN's significance. This research seeks to explore the representation of multilingualism within school linguistic landscape and examine how linguistic landscape can be utilized to teach the KM language while enhancing Global Citizenship Education (GCE) in junior high schools across Kutai Kartanegara regency, East Kalimantan, Indonesia.

The concept of linguistic landscape (LL) refers to the visibility of languages in public and commercial signage within a specific territory, reflecting the sociocultural dynamics among various language groups (Landry & Bourhis, 1997; Maraf & Osam, 2022). LL can be categorized into micro forms, which involve linguistic units such as words and sentences, and macro forms that encompass monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual expressions (Gorter, 2006).

Research on LL has gained traction in educational contexts, particularly concerning schoolscares, or the environment within schools that includes both written and oral communications, and how they shape the power dynamics among languages (Brown, 2012; Dressler, 2015). For instance, Brown highlighted how schoolscares represent the varying

authority of languages in educational settings. Szabó (2015) expanded on this idea by focusing on the visual and spatial organization of these environments, including signage and furniture arrangements. A variety of studies have explored LL in educational contexts, including bilingual programs and dedicated language initiatives (Gorter et al., 2021; Gorter, 2018). Shang and Xie (2019) emphasized the significant role of LL in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, noting that effective signage in schools can facilitate language acquisition. Similarly, Ying (2019) investigated how LL influences students' learning experiences, indicating that even inadequately executed English signage can enhance the environment for language learning. Moreover, Algryani and Syahrin (2021) demonstrated that incorporating LL enhances literacy and critical thinking skills within EFL instruction. In another study, Dumanig and David (2019) revealed how LL can improve students' vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. The integration of LL into educational settings, particularly in teaching EFL, has also been explored through project-based learning frameworks (Solmaz & Przymus, 2021).

The relevance of LL in Indonesia is supported by studies conducted by Andriyanti (2019), Sumarlam et al. (2019), Yoniartini (2021), and Riani et al. (2022). Andriyanti (2019) examined the use of language in outdoor media within schools in Yogyakarta, while Yoniarti (2021) studied similar themes in Mataram. Sumarlam et al. (2019) discussed diverse linguistic practices in Malang City, where languages serve both informative and symbolic purposes. Riani et al. (2020) focused on the Javanese language's presence in outdoor school media in Yogyakarta. These studies emphasize the importance of examining language use in educational contexts, particularly in multi-ethnic societies, as they reveal underlying social and ideological factors.

Beyond its pedagogical applications, LL also significantly influences students' identities (Pakarinen & Björklund, 2017). Incorporating local languages into linguistic landscape reinforces cultural identity and instills pride among speakers, especially those from marginalized groups (Dagenais et al., 2016). LL serves as a tool for constructing identity, validating cultural heritage in multilingual contexts, and fostering a sense of belonging (Landry & Bourhis, 1997). When educational institutions display languages representative of their student populations, they create inclusive environments that honor students' cultural backgrounds (García & Wei, 2014). By promoting linguistic diversity, educators can enhance students' awareness of their roles in a multilingual society, thereby enriching their identities in a globalized world (Piller, 2017).

Building on this understanding, the study examines the representation of Kutai Malay (KM) —a regional language in Indonesia—within the buffer area of the nation's new capital (IKN). Focusing on junior high schools in Tenggarong District, where local authorities are piloting KM instruction, the research investigates how the linguistic landscape can amplify KM's visibility while nurturing students' cultural pride and global citizenship values. This localized exploration responds to broader calls for integrating marginalized languages into educational spaces, ensuring their preservation and empowering communities amid rapid sociopolitical changes, such as Indonesia's ongoing capital relocation.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study examines linguistic landscape (LL) and the integration of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) values in teaching the Kutai Malay language within junior high schools in the Tenggarong, Loa Kulu, and Loa Janan Districts of Kutai Kertanegara Regency, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. Conducted from April to May 2024, the research began with an analysis of the LL of 11 public junior high schools. The main goals were to map the linguistic diversity present in these environments, assess the visibility of the Kutai Malay language, and evaluate how GCE values are woven into school settings.

Using observation and documentation methods, the study primarily focused on outdoor signage as a medium for linguistic analysis, aligned with Backhaus's (2006) definition of signs as texts in public spaces. The initial data collection yielded 1,255 entries, which were subsequently reduced to 1,183 due to duplicates and illegible signs. The data was categorized by language type: monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs, based on frameworks by Gorter (2006) and Backhaus (2006). Furthermore, the data was analyzed thematically according to various GCE themes such as Human Rights Education, Respect for Diversity, and Sustainability. This thematic analysis offered valuable insights that informed focus group discussions for the study.

In the second phase of the study, a focus group discussion (FGD) was organized with 16 Kutai Malay language teachers from selected junior high schools, scheduled for May 2024. The main objective of the FGD is to make lesson plans that integrate Global Citizenship Education (GCE) values into Kutai Malay teaching by utilizing the linguistic landscape as a pedagogical tool.

Before the FGD, questionnaires were distributed to assess teachers' understanding of GCE values and their current practices in incorporating these values into their Kutai Malay instruction. The responses mapped teachers' knowledge and informed the development of socialization materials for the FGD. During the session, participants discussed GCE principles and practical applications of the linguistic landscape in their teaching methods.

Team members facilitated the FGD, acting as resource personnel and moderators to guide discussions. They encouraged teachers to explore local wisdom in the KM language through cultural expressions, such as rhymes, slogans, proverbs, and poems that embodied GCE values. Teachers then collaborated in groups to design lesson plans integrating GCE principles using the linguistic landscape.

All FGD activities were documented through recordings and transcriptions for thorough analysis. The outcomes of the discussions, including crafted lesson plans, were captured on video and authenticated in teaching plan documents, supporting the development of a teaching supplement module that embedded GCE values within the Kutai Malay curriculum.

III. FINDINGS

A. Displayed Languages and GCE in the Schoolscape

An analysis of 1,165 outdoor school displays—including entrance gates, school nameplates, outdoor bulletin boards (both teacher and student-generated), and classroom doors or windows—highlights a rich tapestry of linguistic diversity. The findings convey the presence of monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs, as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1
TABLE CO-EXISTENCE OF DISPLAYED MULTILINGUAL

Language	Monolingual	Bilingual	Multilingual	Sum	Percentage
Indonesian	594	200	25	819	69.2%
English	78	122	20	220	18.6%
Bugis	6			6	0.5%
Kutai Malay	20	44	16	80	6.8%
Javanese	6	2		8	0.7%
Arab		20	7	45	3.8%
Sanskrit		3	2	5	0.4%
Total	704 (60%)	391 (34%)	70 (6%)	1183	100%

The study found that monolingual signs comprise 704 entries (60%), with Indonesian being the most prevalent at 594, followed by English 78 and Kutai Malay 20. Bilingual signs are 391 instances (34%), predominantly featuring Indonesian with English (200), followed by English with Kutai Malay (44). Multilingual signs are 70 (6%), with combinations of Indonesian, English, and Kutai Malay. Notably, Kutai Malay ranks third in linguistic prevalence, highlighting its significance in this multilingual context. Some signs display Kutai Malay first in combinations, like Kutai Malay-Indonesian-English.

The displays of language on monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs are as follows.



Figure 1. Monolingual



Figure 2. Bilingual



Figure 3. Multilingual

(a). Figure 1 (Monolingual)

This sign, designed by students, presents the Kutai Malay phrase *wadah mbasoh tangan* “the place to wash hands”. Crafted onto a wooden board shaped like a cutting board and affixed to a building pillar, it denotes a designated area for handwashing. Created during the COVID-19 pandemic, this sign serves as a vital reminder for students and teachers to practice proper hygiene before entering the school premises.

(b). Figure 2 (Bilingual)

Another student-generated sign displays a dual-language appeal featuring Kutai Malay and Indonesian. The top line states *Ayok Etam jaga kebersihan lingkungan Etam dari sampah biar mencegah banjir*, followed by its Indonesian translation, *Ayo kita jaga kebersihan lingkungan kita dari sampah biar mencegah banjir* (both mean “Let’s keep our environment clean from rubbish to prevent flooding”). Affixed to the outer wall of a classroom in the school garden, this sign implores the school community to preserve cleanliness, thereby preventing the exacerbation of flooding.

(c). Figure 3 (Multilingual)

This sign has been prepared by teachers and incorporates Indonesian, English, and Kutai Malay. The top line states *PINTU HARAP TUTUP KEMBALI* in Indonesian; this is followed by "PLEASE CLOSE THE DOOR" in English and *TUTUP PINTU LAWANG BALIK* in Kutai Malay. Displayed on the library door, this notice serves as a courteous reminder to maintain a tranquil environment, crucial for focused reading.

B. Global Citizenship Education (GCE) Values on Linguistic Landscape in Schoolscape

In total, 683 signs communicate Global Citizenship Education (GCE) values, categorized as follows: Human Rights Education (248 signs, 36%), Conflict and Peace (31 signs, 5%), Respect for Diversity (136 signs, 20%), Globalization and Social Justice (88 signs, 13%), and Sustainability (180 signs, 26%). These GCE messages strategically populate various locations within the school environment, including courtyards, gardens, stairwells, and exterior classroom walls.

However, despite this distribution, the representation of Kutai Malay (KM) in these signs remains limited. As noted earlier, KM accounts for only 6.8% of the linguistic landscape, and its integration into GCE messaging is particularly sparse. Few signs incorporate KM language to articulate GCE values rooted in local Kutai Malay wisdom, such as proverbs (*pantun*), traditional poetry (*syair*), or cultural narratives. This gap highlights a missed opportunity to align global citizenship principles with localized cultural knowledge, weakening the potential for students to connect GCE values to their linguistic and cultural heritage.

Some displays of GCE signs are as follows.



Figure 4. Human Rights Education

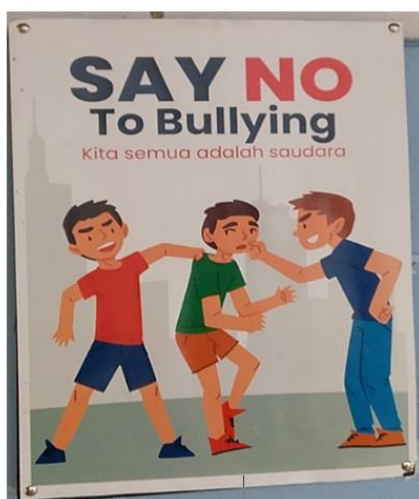


Figure 5. Conflict and Peacebuilding

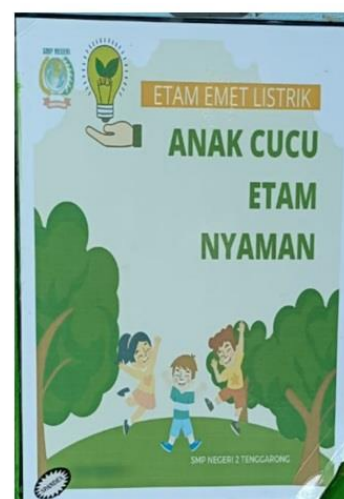


Figure 6. Sustainability

(a). Figure 4 Human Rights Education

This poster, made of paper, is displayed on the outer wall of the classroom. The Indonesian monolingual sign states *Kami Datang Untuk Belajar* “We Come to Learn” and *Kami Pulang Bawa Ilmu* “We Go Home Gaining Knowledge”, both embodying Global Citizenship Education (GCE). It highlights the right to education and encourages individuals to use their knowledge to improve their lives. In schools, this promotes awareness of global and local issues pertaining to justice, equality, and social responsibility, urging students to become active, responsible citizens who advocate for human rights. Though the sign's colors are fading, its motivational illustrations remain, encouraging students to engage in their studies and apply their knowledge.

(b). Figure 5 Conflict and Peacebuilding

This bilingual poster, displayed on an outer classroom wall, states in English, “Say no to bullying,” followed by the Indonesian *Kita semua adalah saudara*, or “We are all brothers” in English. It addresses the theme of Conflict and Peacebuilding, emphasizing that bullying is a destructive conflict with lasting negative effects. Rejecting bullying helps create a safe, inclusive environment and fosters empathy, solidarity, and communication skills among students—essential for overcoming differences and promoting peace. By raising awareness of bullying’s impacts, Global Citizenship Education (GCE) encourages constructive actions to respect everyone’s dignity, contributing to long-term peacebuilding. Illustrations on the sign depict children bullying another, reinforcing its anti-bullying message as a call to action.

(c). Figure 6 Sustainability

This Kutai Malay monolingual poster is affixed to the outer classroom wall and features two rows of text: *Etam emet Listrik* “We save electricity” and *Anak cucu etam nyaman* “Our children and grandchildren save”. The sign promotes sustainability within Global Citizenship Education (GCE), emphasizing the need to preserve the environment for future generations. By encouraging electricity conservation, it teaches students to contribute to environmental protection and

reduce impacts on climate change. The sign illustration of children playing in a green park symbolizes a safe, sustainable environment, reinforcing the message of global awareness and social responsibility.

The prominence of Indonesian in monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signs reflects its status as the national and official language, while English holds the position of an international language. Kutai Malay, as a local language, ranks third, comprising a concerning 6.8% of the signs. Based on the findings, Indonesian predominates in landscape linguistic signs within the school environment. This prevalence is rooted in the official status of Indonesian, as established by Law No. 24 of 2009, which mandates its use in educational settings (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2009). Nonetheless, the success of Indonesian in educational environments raises concerns regarding the increasing marginalization and potential endangerment of regional languages, exemplified by the case of the Javanese language (Harwati, 2020). In this context, the Kutai Malay language also appears to be facing marginalization, as evidenced by existing data indicating that it comprises only 6.8% of the linguistic landscape.

C. Focus Group Discussion on Linguistic Landscape

Before the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), questionnaires were distributed to assess 16 Kutai Malay teachers' understanding of the linguistic landscape approach and integration of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) values. Results indicated limited knowledge of GCE, with only 5% of the teachers being aware of it and 85% having no knowledge of GCE whatsoever. Nevertheless, around 80% recognized the language signs in their school environment but were generally unfamiliar with the concept of linguistic landscape and its application in their teaching. These findings set the stage for the subsequent discussions during the FGD, highlighting the need for increased awareness and training in these areas.

The FGD was structured into three distinct sessions. In the first session, a facilitator from the team introduced the concept of linguistic landscape. The facilitator explained that linguistic landscape refers to the use of signs displayed in public spaces, including writing, symbols, and icons that represent language usage in society. It is essential for teachers to understand this concept, as the elements of linguistic landscape can reflect the cultural identity and language of local communities. This foundational knowledge enables teachers to explore the potential of local languages and integrate them into their teaching practices. Furthermore, the facilitator discussed how linguistic landscape are vital for preserving regional languages and cultures, especially considering globalization and its impact on local identities.

To illustrate these concepts, the facilitator presented real-life examples of linguistic landscape within the school environment, showcasing local languages in use. These examples were crucial for helping teachers analyze how local languages function in their immediate surroundings. Additionally, the facilitator provided guidance on methods for collecting and analyzing linguistic landscape, such as taking photographs or conducting interviews with native speakers. This approach allows teachers to investigate the social and cultural contexts in which local languages are used. The session concluded with a discussion segment, allowing participants to engage with the material more deeply.

In the second session, the facilitator shifted focus to Global Citizenship Education (GCE). The facilitator defined GCE as an educational approach designed to equip students with an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as global citizens. Key values of GCE include Human Rights Education, Conflict and Peace, Respect for Diversity, Globalization, Social Justice, and Sustainability. Teachers were encouraged to incorporate the linguistic landscape approach into their local language instruction, highlighting how this integration can enhance students' understanding of the relationship between language, identity, and cultural diversity. The facilitator presented several examples of local language (Kutai Malay) signs that embodied GCE values, further illustrating this connection. This alignment with GCE's multidimensional framework is reinforced by its focus on integrating cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral learning outcomes. As outlined in UNESCO's publication "Topics and Learning Objectives" (UNESCO, 2015), GCE extends beyond cognitive learning to encompass non-cognitive aspects, such as fostering empathy, ethical reasoning, and active participation in addressing global challenges. The expected learning outcomes are outlined below:

(a). Cognitive Dimension

The aim of cognitive learning is for learners to acquire knowledge, understanding, and critical thinking skills concerning global, regional, national, and local issues, as well as the interconnections and interdependencies among nations and populations. The specific outcomes comprise:

1. Learners gain knowledge and understanding of local, national, and global issues, alongside the relationships and dependencies among different countries and populations.
2. Learners develop critical thinking and analytical skills.

(b). Socio-Emotional Dimension

The objective of socio-emotional learning is for learners to cultivate a sense of humanity towards others, share values and responsibilities, and develop empathy, solidarity, and respect for diversity and differences. The specific outcomes are:

1. Learners exhibit a sense of humanity towards others, sharing values and responsibilities based on human rights.
2. Learners develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity, and respect for diversity and differences.

(c). Behavioral Dimension

The aim of behavioral learning is for learners to act effectively and responsibly at the local, national, and global levels to contribute to a more peaceful and sustainable world. The specific outcomes are as follows:

1. Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national, and global levels to create a more peaceful and sustainable world.
2. Learners cultivate the motivation and willingness to take necessary actions to achieve a more peaceful and sustainable world.

By integrating cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral dimensions, GCE fosters individuals who understand global challenges, embody empathy and ethical values, and take actionable steps to address inequities—preparing them to contribute meaningfully to both local communities and the globalized world.

Teachers were provided with practical guidance on integrating linguistic landscape and Global Citizenship Education (GCE) values into their local language teaching. They learned to use project-based techniques, such as having students document signs reflecting GCE values in their environment. Students could conduct surveys in their communities and create presentations showcasing local languages alongside encountered GCE values (Ben-Rafael et al., 2006). To enhance this approach, teachers were organized into five groups, each tasked with designing teaching plans and materials for Kutai Malay that incorporated a specific GCE value through the linguistic landscape approach, with support from the facilitator. These collaborative efforts yielded five notable outcomes tied to GCE themes. Below are examples of lesson plans addressing Conflict and Peace and Sustainability themes.

D. The Lesson Plan of Conflict and Peace Theme

First, the teacher begins with a pre-activity phase to introduce the Conflict and Peace theme. The teacher initiates the session by greeting the students, checking their attendance, and leading a group prayer. Following this, students are presented with the relevant competencies and learning objectives, accompanied by prompting questions, such as, “How can we prevent conflict and foster peace?”

Next, students watch a video presentation about historical conflicts in Indonesia. Afterward, they are guided to take turns answering questions to reflect on the video’s content. Once the pre-activity discussion concludes, the teacher transitions to the core activities: 1) students are organized into groups of 4-5 members; 2) the teacher displays a KM-language slogan and poem related to the video’s themes, prompting students to analyse and discuss their meanings, cultural relevance, and connection to conflict resolution.

The popular slogan in KM is *Berkumpul Etam Bisa, Behambur Etam Binasa* and its translation in Indonesia *Bersatu Kita Teguh, Bercerai Kita Runtuh* “United We Stand, Divided We Fall”.

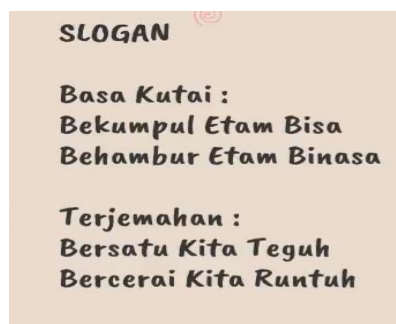


Figure 7. A Popular Slogan in Both Kutai Malay and Indonesian

The slogan emphasizes the need for unity as a strength in facing challenges together. Unity fosters collaboration and solidarity among individuals and communities, creating resilience against conflict. In contrast, division can weaken society and increase the potential for conflict and violence. This slogan also encourages dialogue and listening to differing opinions, which are crucial for fostering understanding and reducing tensions. By building a strong collective identity within diversity, this slogan underscores that togetherness is key to creating a peaceful and prosperous society.

Next, the teacher presents a poem as material for discussion with the students. The title of the poem is *Segenggam Jasa Pahlawan* “A Handful of Heroes’ Deeds”.



Figure 8.

The poem depicts the sacrifice and struggle of heroes in achieving independence, with strong imagery of sweat and blood flowing. In this poem, the author highlights unity in the fight against violence, as well as the impact of conflict that has turned this land into a monster. Despite the pain and suffering, there is also hope and a vow to continue fighting for the dignity and self-worth of the Indonesian nation. This poem reflects important values in peace education and global awareness, inviting readers to contemplate the meaning of sacrifice and the significance of unity in facing challenges.

Students and teachers discuss the content of the slogan and the poem. Following this, the students are assigned by the teacher to create slogans or a poem related to conflict and peace. The next step, the students take turns presenting their group's work, after which other groups provide feedback. The teacher assigned students a project to create posters featuring their original Malay Kutai slogans and poems, accompanied by Indonesian translations, which will be displayed in outdoor school display boards during the next class session. In the concluding segment of the lesson, the teacher guided students through a collaborative review of the key concepts covered, followed by a reflective discussion on the learning experience. This reflection emphasized the interplay between MK language use, cultural expression, and the integration of Global Citizenship Education (GCE) values, reinforcing the lesson's focus on linguistic diversity, peace, and conflict resolution.

E. The Lesson Plan of Sustainability

The learning scenario on the theme of sustainability begins with an introductory activity, followed by main activities and a concluding segment. The material taught consists of a *pantun* and a poem in the Kutai Malay language. *Pantun* is an old and extensive Malay poem known in many languages and ethnicities throughout Indonesia. The most general characteristic is that *pantun* consists of four lines (when written), also known as a stanza in the theory of literature, having each line/stanza pattern of a-b-a-b or a-a-a-a. *Pantun* for Malay people has been used in all aspects of life, including *pantun*-based traditional songs. The most frequently appearing Malay *pantun* couplets are the plant, fruit, region, river, animal, natural formation (mountain, hill, river, cliff), and daily activities (Andari & Suharto, 2020).

The teacher begins the lesson by showing a video about natural disaster floods. Next, the teacher engaged the students in a question-and-answer session regarding the content of the video. The teacher then provides examples of *pantuns* related to environmental conservation.

TABLE 2
 A KUTAI MALAY POEM AND ITS ENGLISH TRANSLATION

No	<i>Pantun</i>	Translation
1	Kadang sesuatu dari angan-angan Diwujudkan dengan mandiri Ayok etam jaga lingkungan Biar lingkungan etam berseri	From dreams we bring our visions true, With independence, we can break through. Let's protect our environment with care. So in beauty, our world may share.
2	Patong batu jangan di pahat Biar ndik cepat bekarat Jika lingkungan etam sehat Sumber penyakit alan tersikat	Don't carve the stone; let it stay whole. So, it won't rust; that's the goal. When our environment is clean and bright, We'll keep diseases far from sight.

The teacher then explains that the two *pantuns* align with the theme of sustainability as shown in Table 2. The first *pantun* highlights the importance of environmental stewardship and collective responsibility in protecting natural resources, promoting a vision for a sustainable future. The second *pantun* emphasizes preserving natural resources and the connection between a healthy environment and public health, advocating for proactive actions that contribute to

societal well-being. These *pantuns* encourage individuals to take responsibility for their environment and adopt sustainable practices, reflecting the values of Global Citizenship Education (GCE).

The teacher divides students into groups of five and guides them in composing two to three environmentally themed *pantuns* (traditional Malay poems). After drafting, students present their *pantuns* and respond to peer feedback, refining their work collaboratively. The teacher then assigns a project for students to design posters featuring their revised *pantuns*, which will be displayed on classroom and school bulletin boards during the next session. To conclude, the teacher facilitates a reflective discussion, inviting students to share insights on the lesson's themes—environmental sustainability, cultural expression, and the role of feedback in creative processes.

The two scenarios employ a linguistic landscape approach to teaching Kutai Malay (KM) while embedding Global Citizenship Education (GCE) values tied to conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and sustainability. However, these initiatives face challenges, including limited pedagogical strategies and scarce KM-specific materials, which constrain the curriculum's depth and cultural relevance. To address these gaps, educators should prioritize developing interdisciplinary resources that blend KM language instruction with community engagement, creating authentic cultural contexts for learning. Additionally, fostering student agency through hands-on projects (e.g., creating bilingual signs or digital stories), collaborative problem-solving, and peer presentations can deepen learners' connection to KM's cultural significance. Integrating technology—such as apps for documenting linguistic landscape or platforms for virtual exchanges—could further enhance engagement and critical understanding of KM's role in local and global contexts.

IV. DISCUSSION

This study underscores the critical need to integrate Kutai Malay (KM) linguistic identity into Global Citizenship Education (GCE) through the linguistic landscape of school environments. Despite KM's presence in monolingual, bilingual, and multilingual signage, its representation remains disproportionately low (6.8%), overshadowed by Indonesian (national) and English (international) languages. While GCE values are embedded in school signage across language types, KM's role in conveying these values is minimal. Notably, local wisdom forms—such as proverbs (*pantuns*), poetry, songs, slogans, and philosophies—are conspicuously absent. Some schools lack KM signage entirely, relying solely on Indonesian, despite evidence that KM's presence in educational spaces strengthens cultural identity and fosters student belonging (Pakarinen & Björklund, 2017; Gorter et al., 2021).

These findings align with Rusminto et al. (2021), who note Indonesian's success as a unifying national language as institutionalized by Law No. 24/2009. However, this dominance threatens regional languages like KM, as seen in schools where Indonesian dominates the linguistic landscape (Harwati, 2020; Andriyanti, 2019). To counter this, KM's integration into GCE frameworks is vital. It empowers students to embrace their heritage while engaging in global citizenship principles such as inclusivity, respect, and diversity (Banks, 2008). Exposure to KM in school environments cultivates a nuanced understanding of cultural roots and their interplay with global citizenship, enhancing students' language awareness and ownership of their linguistic heritage (Gorter et al., 2021). Moreover, centering KM in education addresses critiques of GCE's Western-centric bias, which risks alienating marginalized communities (Shultz, 2018). By valuing local languages and perspectives, educators create equitable frameworks that balance local identity and global engagement. This dual focus equips students to navigate cultural differences while recognizing global interconnectedness (Schattle, 2008).

The study further highlights how linguistic representation shapes identity. When KM is visibly embedded in schools, it reinforces pride and belonging among students—a crucial counterbalance to globalization's erosion of Southeast Asian cultural identities (Ullah & Ming Yit Ho, 2020). Schools thus become custodians of heritage, enabling students to reconcile local and global identities. Achieving this balance is essential for nurturing generations that respect diversity while contributing meaningfully to global discourse (Kay, 2018).

V. CONCLUSION

This study finds that the representation of Kutai Malay identity in the school's linguistic landscape is limited, accounting for just 6.8% of signage. While monolingual and multilingual forms of Kutai Malay are present, their integration with Global Citizenship Education (GCE) values remains underdeveloped. Teachers demonstrate enthusiasm for embedding Kutai Malay language instruction with GCE principles, yet the effectiveness of these efforts hinges on adequate resources and institutional support. The study underscores the urgency of incorporating Kutai Malay into the curriculum as a vital step in preserving cultural heritage and local identity.

The study highlights the transformative potential of linguistic landscape in teaching local languages like Kutai Malay (KM). To maximize this potential, schools must move beyond passive displays and integrate KM dynamically into curricula through interdisciplinary frameworks—for example, embedding KM signage and traditional poetry (*pantuns*) into subjects like social studies or sustainability education. Teacher training programs should prioritize equipping educators with strategies to use the linguistic landscape as a pedagogical tool, such as student-led projects to document and create KM signs. Partnerships with local communities and cultural practitioners can ensure authenticity, co-creating signage that reflects KM wisdom (e.g., ecological knowledge) and bridges classroom learning with lived experiences. Technology, such as QR codes linking to multimedia resources or augmented reality, can modernize engagement, while

policy mandates requiring KM representation in school signage (e.g., 30% allocation) could institutionalize its visibility. Finally, longitudinal research is needed to evaluate how sustained exposure to KM linguistic landscape impacts students' cultural pride, language proficiency, and global citizenship competencies, ensuring inclusive education that honors local identity within global contexts.

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Reading Comprehension Challenges in the EFL Classrooms

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Abstract—Several studies in the field of education have delved into the reading comprehension challenges encountered by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners and the perspectives of stakeholders within EFL classrooms on this issue. This paper specifically and extensively explores both linguistic and non-linguistic reading comprehension obstacles that are encountered by EFL learners. It also aims to explore the key factors that cause such difficulties. In addition, it attempts to identify how students handle reading comprehension texts and their accompanying activities. The study consisted of a group of undergraduate students in the English Department at Al-Qunfudhah University College, Saudi Arabia. A qualitative approach, including observation and semi-structured interviews, was conducted to collect data. The findings showed that most students encountered some difficulties related to linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of reading comprehension. Additionally, the results revealed certain key factors, such as a lack of awareness about the importance of reading, a lack of good reading habits, and teaching methods, that might lead to such difficulties. Finally, the classroom observations indicated that students had some misconceptions about the practice of reading while reading the given texts. A number of recommendations were included in this study to overcome such obstacles.

Index Terms—reading comprehension, reading challenges, strategies

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is considered one of the most important receptive skills. It is required for knowledge, pleasure, and the understanding of what is read. As Oakhill et al. (2015) state, “reading comprehension is important, not just for understanding text, but for broader learning, success in education, and employment” (p. 1). Readers read different kinds of texts, such as published articles, reports, short stories, reviews, and poems, for different purposes, and possessing good reading skills plays a vital role in understanding and learning. However, there are several other reasons behind why someone should read, such as improving vocabulary and grammar knowledge, acquiring a language, and developing reading comprehension (Harmer, 2007).

One of the goals of reading comprehension is identifying meaning from the text. Kırmızı (2011) notes that “comprehension involves constructing meaning that is reasonable and accurate by connecting what has been read to what the reader already knows and thinks about all of this information until it is understood” (p. 290). Therefore, reading comprehension enables readers to understand the gist of a text and its supporting details. Also, reading comprehension helps students become active readers. Qarqez and Ab Rashid (2017) point out that a reader needs to decode the words to make them comprehensible. Oakhill et al. (2015) further report that decoding words in the text is a crucial process central to comprehending the entirety of the text successfully.

Reading comprehension is becoming an increasingly key component among the various reading skills. First, it gives students the opportunity to understand the text effectively. Comprehension skills enable readers to use their background knowledge and context to understand what is read and link the main idea with other relevant information. Also, reading comprehension texts encourage readers to use different techniques - skimming, scanning, and predicting - to become better readers. Indeed, a wide range of skills is demanded here. However, in order to be effective readers, students need to identify different comprehension techniques, from simple to complex, to support themselves in dealing with different levels of text complexity.

A number of different activities can be applied to contribute to the enhancement of reading comprehension and to evaluating readers' comprehension skills. These include pre-reading activities, while-reading activities, and post-reading activities, which, accompanied by reading comprehension texts, are valuable exercises that students need to master (Güzel, 2022). However, several issues can lead to EFL students facing reading comprehension difficulties.

To meet the objectives of this study, the paper adopted a qualitative research framework comprising interviews and classroom observations to identify, describe and explain the main linguistic and non-linguistic challenges students encounter in their reading comprehension, as well as exploring a number of measures taken to overcome these challenges. The research offers some reflections on how EFL learners can better handle reading comprehension texts and activities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading comprehension challenges are not limited to low-level students; even higher-level learners may struggle to comprehend a text. Such challenges can arise for several reasons. Some of them are related to linguistic factors, while others are related to non-linguistic factors.

Comprehending reading texts goes beyond vocabulary knowledge, comprising as it does phonological, lexical, and syntactical knowledge. Qarqez and Ab Rashid (2017) reveal some examples of the difficulties readers encounter when comprehending such aspects, including ambiguous words and unfamiliar vocabulary. Similarly, Satriani (2018) reports that students encounter numerous linguistic obstacles in reading comprehension, naming complex grammar and sentence structure among them. Likewise, Al-Jarrah and Ismail (2018) identify some linguistic problems such as lack of linguistic knowledge, vocabulary and grammar, and the inability to recognize the type of text structure. Oakhill et al. (2015) contend that “if a reader cannot understand word meaning and has trouble understanding at the sentence level, then, obviously, comprehension of the text as a whole will be compromised” (p. 30). Similarly, Kasim and Raisha (2017) point out that readers that face some challenges related to meaning variations, such as distinguishing between homonyms or homophones, also exhibit a lack of knowledge when it comes to collocations and idioms. Raihan and Nezami (2012) found that the students in their study faced obstacles related to spelling and pronunciation. In other words, vocabulary knowledge is essential but is insufficient to comprehensively understand a text. Thus, readers need to go beyond text content and make an interpretation based on other clues.

Reading comprehension also entails acquiring non-linguistic abilities to go beyond the text. The capacity of reading a written text is important, but non-linguistic competence is essential to comprehend, analyze, and evaluate texts successfully. Several studies have identified non-linguistic reading comprehension challenges. Al-Jarrah and Ismail (2018), for example, mention a lack of attention as one of the problems that lead to failure when it comes to reading comprehension. Febriani et al. (2019) reported that the students in their study faced challenges with the reading process, motivation, background knowledge, strategies, and language knowledge. Furthermore, Khataee and Dowlatabadi (2023) state that background knowledge “can facilitate EFL learners’ reading comprehension” (p. 2). Likewise, Yousef et al. (2014) argue that there is a relationship between prior background knowledge and reading comprehension. Readers’ prior knowledge, in short, can help them comprehend a text. Similarly, Smith et al. (2021) mention that a lack of background knowledge results in an inability to comprehend a text and infer meaning successfully. Long and unfamiliar texts and a lack of motivation limit students’ reading comprehension (Satriani, 2018). Hence, successful reading comprehension demands acquiring different skills and strategies.

A number of approaches, for example, metacognitive strategies, can be applied to the comprehension of reading texts effectively, thereby reducing potential reading comprehension difficulties. Sheorey and Mokhtary (2001) define metacognitive strategies as “those intentional, carefully planned techniques by which learners monitor or manage their reading” (p. 436). Other studies have discovered the correlation between metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension performance. For example, Bouknify (2023) says that metacognitive strategies enable readers to comprehend what they read and reflect on their own understanding. Alqahtani (2019) argues for a strong link between metacognitive strategies and reading comprehension. Metacognitive strategies such as planning, monitoring, and evaluation contribute positively to reading comprehension and, in turn, academic success. These strategies support students to interact with the text, monitor their understanding, and control their comprehension processes (Samarajeewa, 2023). Therefore, it is advocated that such strategies should be incorporated in the EFL classrooms.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Statement of the Problem*

Despite teachers' ongoing efforts to improve students' reading comprehension, students still encounter challenges in reading comprehension texts and their activities. This critical problem could affect their language proficiency and academic performance. Consequently, this paper attempts to investigate the challenges and factors that cause such failures.

B. *Significance of the Study*

This study is crucial to enhancing stakeholders' understanding of the reading comprehension difficulties that EFL learners face. It also encourages both learners and teachers to identify the appropriate techniques for teaching and learning in class. Additionally, it provides stakeholders with important recommendations to reduce such obstacles. Moreover, this paper also hopes to encourage lecturers to take further steps in assessing their teaching approaches in the EFL classroom, as well as seeking to create a connection between reading comprehension difficulties among EFL learners and reading strategies and techniques.

C. *Aims and Research Questions*

This study aims to:

1. Identify the potential reading comprehension challenges encountered by EFL learners.
2. Explore the factors that lead to such challenges.
3. Explore how students deal with reading comprehension texts and their activities.

To achieve these aims, this paper will seek answers to the following key research questions:

1. What reading comprehension challenges are encountered by EFL learners?
2. What are the key factors that lead to such challenges?
3. How do students deal with reading comprehension texts and their activities?

D. Pilot Study

This study reports on a pilot study that was undertaken at Al-Qunfudhah University College in 2024 as a practical guide to meeting this paper's aims. The intended benefits identified in conducting such a pilot study include:

1. Raising students' awareness of using key reading comprehension strategies and skills.
2. Monitoring students' reactions to reading texts.
3. Exploring aspects of students' strengths and weaknesses in the classroom.
4. Exploring students' reading comprehension challenges and how they deal with reading texts.
5. Linking the key findings of another research method (interviews) with students' actions in the classroom.

A total of 48 undergraduate students participated in this study. None of the students reported physical or mental disabilities. They were taught strategies such as skimming, scanning, and predicting, as well as how to employ them before, during, and after reading. They were exposed to six reading texts with pre-reading activities, during-reading activities, and post-reading activities. Notes were made to track the students' progress and the way they dealt with comprehension texts. Besides notes, the students were asked to read the texts and answer a series of questions and then to write down their feedback after each comprehension text regarding the difficulties they encountered reading the texts.

E. Ethical Considerations

To protect the participants' rights and ensure there were no ethical issues that would have negative consequences for the participants during data collection in this study, ethical considerations were considered, namely:

1. The privacy of the participants and their information will remain anonymous and be respected and secured.
2. Politeness and patience are required.
3. Criticism of participants' thoughts and opinions will be avoided.
4. The participants were asked to sign a consent form.
5. The participants were provided with a copy of the information sheet.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings are based on qualitative data, including semi-structured interviews with lecturers, structured interviews with students, and classroom observations.

A. Findings of the Lecturer Interviews

Four lecturers were interviewed face to face. Two techniques were followed - using a recorder and taking notes on interview sheets. Each interview lasted between 30-35 minutes. The data were transcribed and printed to make brief notes. They were categorized into major and sub-themes based on the given answers to aid analysis of the data. Figure 1 displays the interview themes.

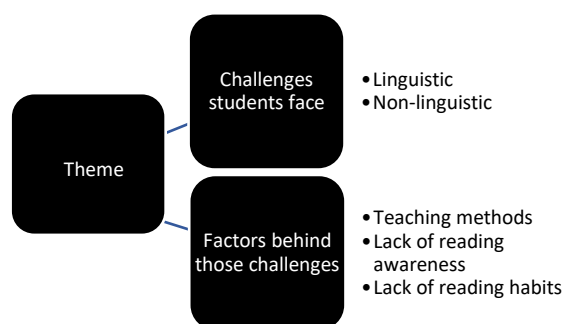


Figure 1. Interview Themes (Lecturers)

In response to the first theme - challenges that learners encounter in the EFL classrooms - the respondents expressed their concern about certain difficulties that hinder learners' reading comprehension. These difficulties include

insufficient vocabulary knowledge, lack of practice, lack of strategic reading, and the interference of their native language. Here are some different excerpts from the interviews:

Interviewee 1: The biggest challenge students face in reading comprehension is vocabulary knowledge. They do not have enough vocabulary to understand the content. A good vocabulary knowledge enables them to understand reading texts successfully.

Interviewee 1: Dictionaries are one of the most used tools in learning English. However, EFL learners use them as a sole source. They need to use some strategies to learn and read successfully.

Interviewee 2: In reading classes, I find my students rely heavily on their native language, Arabic. They use Google to translate words and sentences.

Interviewee 4: Most students are not familiar with reading strategies like skimming, scanning, and summarizing. So, they struggle with reading texts.

Regarding the key factors that may lead to reading comprehension difficulties, the lecturer respondents reflected on some factors behind such difficulties, such as teaching methods, a lack of awareness in society of the significance of reading, and a lack of reading habits. One major factor that leads to reading comprehension deficits is teaching approaches. There was a consensus among the lecturer respondents about the deficiency in strategy implementation in the classroom. Another factor mentioned was lack of reading awareness, mentioned by two interviewees. Additionally, a lack of good reading habits was also noted. Most notably, the interviewees acknowledged that students do not show much interest in reading books or other materials. Besides these factors, a lack of motivation and interest contributes to these difficulties.

Interviewee 1: Some English teachers still focus on the traditional approach; they ask students to read the given text silently and do its activities.

Interviewee 2: Unfortunately, our students read in the classroom only when they are obliged to.

Interviewee 3: Nowadays, the young generation spends too much time on social media and less time reading. They do not read as much as they should.

Interviewee 4: Students should navigate the barriers to reading and develop good reading habits.

Interviewee 3: Sometimes, some students do not like to read in the classroom because they do not have the motivation to read, and some topics do not attract their attention.

B. Findings of the Student Interviews

Seven undergraduate students were interviewed face-to-face in the college library of Al Qunfudhah University College. Two techniques were followed - using a recorder and taking notes on interview sheets. Each interview lasted 30-35 minutes. Next, the data were transcribed and printed out to make brief notes. They were then categorized into major and sub-themes based on the answers given for analysis of the data. Figure 2 displays the interview theme.

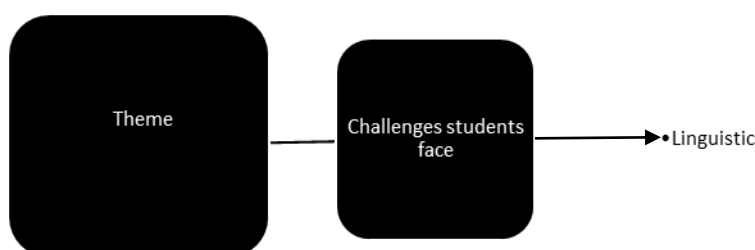


Figure 2. Interview Theme (Students)

The theme was challenges that students encounter in the EFL classroom. The participants acknowledged that one of the key challenges was vocabulary. Some of them said that they often use a dictionary to translate the given text word-by-word to understand the content. Another reason for reading comprehension deficits was grammar. Some students reported that existing pronouns in written texts limit their comprehension. Here are some different excerpts from the interviews:

Interviewee 1: I can read texts, but I cannot understand them. So, I face some problems in reading a text if I do not translate every single word using a dictionary.

Interviewee 2: I do not like reading comprehension texts because I spend much time translating the whole text word by word.

Interviewee 2: I do not know how to guess what the content of the text is about.

Interviewee 3: When I find pronouns in a text, I feel confused and cannot understand the written text.

Interviewee 5: It is too difficult when the text includes clauses, present perfect, and passive voice. So, I do not like such texts.

C. Findings From Classroom Observations

The process of observation went through three phases. The first phase was pre-observation, where key points such as the interviewees' backgrounds and experience of the given topic were discussed along with the skills and strategies that can be used to deal with the text. The second phase was observation, where the behaviors and reactions of the students towards reading comprehension texts were observed. Finally, the last phase was post-observation, where what was observed was discussed with the class.

Based on the classroom observations, it was noted the students who were observed had no physical or mental disabilities that might affect their reading comprehension. Nonetheless, two major points were identified: the first point was that the students encountered some difficulties related to reading comprehension texts and their activities. Indeed, both linguistic and non-linguistic reading challenges were observed. The second point was related to the attitudes and reactions of the students to reading comprehension. Based on both the feedback and their behavior exhibited before reading, while reading, and after reading, most of them could not initiate and connect their prior knowledge with the texts. Moreover, they could not correctly recognize the purpose and the main ideas from the supporting details when they read the given texts. Finally, they were unable to reflect upon their reading skills and abilities. Table 1 below sets out these issues.

TABLE 1
KEY FINDINGS BASED ON CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Linguistic challenges	Non-linguistic challenges
- Vocabulary: ambiguous words, phrases, and idioms - Grammar: connecting personal pronouns to their referents, word order, clauses, and passive voice	- Lack of background knowledge - Lack of concentration - Inability to differentiate main ideas from supporting details - Inability to implement reading skills and strategies

With regard to reading activities, the student participants did not respond positively to the communicative approach. Most of them tried to avoid open-ended questions that invited them to reflect on their background knowledge experiences. In fact, they preferred objective questions such as multiple choice, matching, and yes/no questions over subjective questions. Most of the students read the given activities before they read the texts, then they did the activities. Three remarkable points were noted in the classroom: the first one is that the students did not work collaboratively. Instead, they did the activities individually and avoided group discussions. The second point is related to their abilities to do the activities. There was a clear inability to deal with questions related to reading for gist, with such questions as, for example, "What is the writer's attitude towards...?" and "Read the text on page 91. Where might it come from?" Also, they struggled with post-reading activities such as "What is your opinion about...?" and "After reading the text, would you make any changes to your everyday life? Why? Why not?" Additionally, some students did not use their own words to answer the questions. They copied long sentences directly from the texts.

This study aimed at exploring reading comprehension difficulties encountered by students in EFL classrooms, and it attempted to identify the potential factors underlying such problems. Three research questions were addressed in relation to reading comprehension challenges: the reading comprehension challenges encountered by students, factors that may lead to such issues, and the attitudes and behavior of students toward reading comprehension.

1. What reading comprehension challenges are encountered by students in the EFL classroom?

This question aims at identifying reading comprehension deficits. Classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with lecturers, structured interviews with students, and students' feedback were used to collect the data. Based on the results, it can be said that reading comprehension can be challenging in EFL classrooms. Such challenges are related to linguistic and non-linguistic factors. Most students are confronted by obstacles and fail to comprehend texts successfully. The first obstacle is related to linguistic challenges, including lexical and grammatical ambiguity. Based on the classroom observations and students' feedback, the students showed a preference for using dictionaries to determine the meanings of words. Although they could understand the meaning of some single words, they exhibited an inability to understand the proper meanings of unknown words, idioms, and phrases. As a result, they could not comprehend the content and the main point behind the text. It seems that the students were unaccustomed to dealing with words out of context. To overcome this problem, learners must follow and use the context clues that a writer gives in a text and use the skills and strategies they have been taught, since there is a strong association between context clues and implementing reading comprehension skills and reading comprehension.

There were some signs indicating that the observed students struggled with grammar and vocabulary knowledge in context. First, during their reading classes, they expressed frustration with statements such as, "It is difficult to find out

the right meaning,” “I cannot find out the meaning of ...,” and “I am not good at that.” Another sign is that they read every single word and used their dictionaries as a sole source to find the meaning of unknown words individually. As a result, they failed to understand the content and the author's message well. Additionally, some students created their vocabulary list with their meanings in Arabic to help them memorize any new words. This concurs with Al-Jarrah's and Ismail's (2018) finding that EFL learners translate the meaning of words and/or sentences into their native language. Furthermore, other students divided the text into separate parts. They overlooked sentences that included unfamiliar words and phrases and did not try to guess the meaning based on context. It is thus not surprising that the students were unable to read effectively.

Another consequence of such a traditional approach is that the students lost their concentration and wasted time because they relied heavily on translating words in an isolated way. Similarly, Bouknify (2023) argues that “reading is not limited to reading and translating” (p. 42). Likewise, Oakhill et al. (2015) suggest that readers can guess the meaning of a word based on the context rather than looking up the meanings of all unknown words. For Gedik and Akyol (2022), students can use clues based on the context, such as synonyms and antonyms, to understand the written text.

One more reason why students encounter reading comprehension difficulties in the EFL classroom relates to grammatical knowledge, such as parts of speech, clauses, word order, and passive voice. Firman et al. (2021) conducted a study related to the abilities and difficulties of learners concerning reading comprehension. They found that one of the most common difficulties students face is low grammatical competence. In this regard, Hamidah (2016), Mahmood (2022), and Satriani (2018) all report that, to understand a text successfully, readers need to identify the grammatical rules and units to carry meanings. Similarly, Jeon and Yamashita (2014) state that “Grammar knowledge, if fully developed, enables readers to analyze and integrate syntactic information at the phrase, clause, and sentence levels, a crucial task for achieving comprehension” (p. 165). Likewise, Al-Jarrah and Ismail (2018) report that students with insufficient knowledge of grammatical rules tend to run into obstacles in reading comprehension. However, with the realization that linguistic structure is an essential competence but not a sufficient component of reading comprehension, learners need to go beyond the content.

Learners who struggle with reading comprehension because of linguistic structure need to start by improving their linguistic competence. Comprehending ambiguous lexical items that have different meanings and grammar uses requires understanding the relationship between linguistic knowledge and reading comprehension. Limits to linguistic knowledge hinder students' reading comprehension. Hence, teachers and students should keep in mind that students need a thorough knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical rules to understand sentence structures and enhance their comprehension. Several studies have reflected on the strong relationship between linguistic knowledge development and reading comprehension. For example, Gedik and Akyol (2022) and Masrai (2019) state that to be able to read successfully, readers need to have a good amount and great understanding of vocabulary. Likewise, Li and Kirby (2015), Oakhill et al. (2015), and Qian (2002) all note how vocabulary knowledge reinforces the reading process. Moreover, Hassan and Dweik (2021) and Oakhill et al. (2015) assert that reading comprehension requires incorporating words and sentences to carry meanings.

One non-linguistic difficulty that contributes to low reading comprehension is a lack of background knowledge. Most students focused on reading the given texts rather than on using their prior knowledge. They could not activate and connect their prior knowledge with the new information presented in the text. Different studies show that activating learners' background knowledge facilitates reading comprehension skills (Deshpande, 2016; Hassan & Dweik, 2021; Smith et al., 2021). Similarly, Hamidah (2016) claims that students need to be encouraged to use their background knowledge before reading texts for better understanding. Abdelaal and Sase (2014) likewise argue that there is a strong association between high prior knowledge and reading comprehension. Activating such knowledge about content enables students to reflect on what they know before they read and comprehend the content more adequately.

Based on the results, another reason for reading comprehension difficulties is a simple lack of concentration. It was observed that the students struggled to pay attention in class. In this regard, Al-Jarrah and Ismail (2018) concluded that one of the reading comprehension difficulties learners face is paying sufficient attention in the classroom. In the same vein, Soemer and Schiefele (2019) stated that readers need to pay close attention to reading comprehensively. Spears (2013) also mentions some factors that lead to poor concentration, such as personal issues, sleep deficiency, and financial difficulties. Similarly, Flemming (2011) points out that readers need to generate questions and answer them while they read to keep them focused. Also, learners need to be engaged with materials they are interested in to maintain their attention.

The inability to identify a text's main idea(s) and differentiate them from supporting details is a third challenge that the students encountered in the classroom. The notable point here is that they could not distinguish the main ideas from supporting details, while others encountered difficulties identifying the purpose of the texts. Some of them were unable to recall and say in their own words the essential information from the text. The reason behind that may be related to the influence of the traditional approach inside the classroom and the learners' native language. Recognizing the key ideas and supporting information is important for student comprehension. Being able to differentiate between main ideas and supporting information would enhance comprehensive understanding. This finding concurs with research conducted by

Madkour (2016) and Nur et al. (2022), who found that one of the difficulties students face in the classroom is determining the main idea and the relevant information in the text.

Another notable reason for a lack of understanding of a text is that many students do not read strategically. Reading comprehension strategies help students develop and strengthen their reading and show them how to tackle a text they are finding it difficult to understand. For example, using certain strategies would allow them to make predictions to describe what will happen next and infer the implicit meaning in a passage. Therefore, increased attention should be given to teaching a set of reading comprehension strategies and techniques such as skimming, scanning, summarizing, predicting, inferring, and generating questions, and how to implement them based on reading genres. Several studies have identified a correlation between reading comprehension and employing reading strategies and techniques (Banditvilai, 2020; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016; Park & Kim, 2017). Using reading strategies and techniques helps learners in multiple ways: it enables them to read purposefully, it influences the way they read the material, it monitors their comprehension of the text, and it helps organize text structure; as a result, reading comprehension is developed.

However, reading is more than comprehending sounds and decoding words; good readers need to go beyond linguistic structure to develop their ability to comprehend what they read and to infer the embedded information by collecting clues from the texts. In order to achieve this, they need to improve their capability to analyze and interpret the text effectively. Hence, employing a set of key comprehension skills and strategies in the EFL classroom is required. Such skills and strategies enable learners to link what they read to their background knowledge and previous experience to activate their competence. Firman et al. (2021) argue that linguistic competence is not enough; learners need to integrate reading strategies. A deeper dive into how to successfully teach and implement reading comprehension strategies should be taken into consideration. Numerous studies in the field have pointed to the importance of building reading comprehension strategies and skills and applying them in reading classes (Bouknify, 2023; Ismail & Tawalbeh, 2015; Nur et al., 2022; Palani, 2012; Samarajeeva, 2023; Talebi, 2015).

2. *What are the key factors that lead to such challenges?*

Identifying the main factors behind students' difficulties in reading comprehension is important for reducing such difficulties. Based on the findings from both classroom observations and semi-structured interviews with lecturers, it can be inferred that certain factors lead to poor reading comprehension. One of the critical factors is teaching and learning approaches. Bouknify (2023) states that students face challenges because teachers use traditional approaches to teaching reading skills. Similarly, Sofi (2015) found that the dominant teaching approach in the EFL classroom is the Grammar-Translation method. Teachers need to apply different useful approaches rather than focusing on such traditional approaches (Cao, 2023). Abdulkader (2016) concurs that EFL teachers have positive attitudes about using communicative approaches, but, nevertheless, they continue to focus on traditional approaches. Likewise, Al-Ahdal et al. (2014) also claim that English teachers should pay more attention to communicative approaches than traditional approaches. The focus on teacher-centered rather than student-centered methods may be attributed to such factors as a lack of emphasis on communicative approaches at the institutional level, a gap between teachers' beliefs and practices in the classroom, and a heavy reliance on students' native language. Thus, it is significant to shift from traditional methods to more effective methods related to communicative competence to improve learners' reading comprehension abilities and skills.

The second fundamental factor behind such obstacles is related to a lack of reading awareness that creates barriers to effective and purposeful reading. Although there are some important aspects, such as problem solving, critical thinking, and other skills related to social life influenced by reading, students tend to pay less attention to reading skills. Reading enhances learners' metacognitive and cognitive abilities, which develop their comprehension as a result. Additionally, it enriches learners' knowledge and encourages insights that enable them to navigate the difficulties they encounter in their life. Hence, student awareness of the significant role of reading should be raised to develop their reading comprehension skills.

The final key factor is related to students' reading habits. Despite the revolution of technology and the proliferation of easily available reading materials, there is a lack of good reading habits among the younger generations in some parts of the globe. Palani (2012) notes that "reading habits are an essential and important aspect for creating the literate society in this world" (p. 90). Similarly, Firman et al. (2021) show that learners encounter reading comprehension challenges because of their lack of good reading habits. Satriani (2018) states that learners suffer from a lack of motivation when it comes to reading, so they rarely read. One of the many issues confronting students nowadays is, perhaps, not their inability to read but their lack of interest. As a result, they have poor reading habits. Brassell and Rasinski (2008) mention that, "Students comprehend more when they are interested in the topic" (p. 29). Whatever the cause, the cumulative effect of poor reading habits is that learners often lose confidence in their capability to read texts.

3. *How do students deal with reading comprehension texts and their activities?*

The classroom observations and the interviews with lecturers and students revealed a number of misconceived practices that the student participants committed reading the given texts, namely: concentrating on linguistic competence (lexical and grammatical knowledge); reading and translating single words; reading the given text once; and answering the comprehension questions based on finding the common key words between questions and sentences in the text. Such misleading ideas are significant barriers to successful learning. Regarding the first misleading idea, focusing on linguistic structure, Talebi (2015) found that the students he observed in the classroom displayed good

linguistic competence, but they showed an inability to use reading comprehension strategies, resulting in reading comprehension problems. Likewise, Firman et al. (2021) and Hymes (1972) argue that linguistic knowledge is essential but is not enough to use the target language successfully. Similarly, Clifton and Duffy (2001) assert that “one must go beyond linguistic structure to understand fully how sentences and texts are understood” (p. 190).

The second misconception practice is reading and translating each single word using bilingual dictionaries, particularly electronic ones, because of their ease of use in the class. Such an approach could help students identify the meaning of some words and may enhance learners' vocabulary acquisition, but it should be used judiciously as just of the different tools to aid learning. Even then, translating words by dictionary does not enable the students to go beyond the text and recognize the author's main message, and it does not help them to learn to read successfully. As a result, students should be taught about using the context clues that are provided in a text and how to implement them to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words, alongside the use of bilingual dictionaries.

The third misconception is reading and understanding the text from the first reading. The students read the texts once, and they did not generate evaluative and inferential questions as they read. Such an approach does not promote deeper comprehension from the first reading. Langan (2013) points out that higher levels of reading comprehension increase gradually. For Mahmood (2022), applying a variety of reading strategies enables students to read efficiently. Likewise, Istiqomah et al. (2023) stress that the learners' capability to understand a text successfully depends on their ability to implement reading strategies to comprehend the author's message. In other words, using certain strategies to plan, monitor and evaluate reading comprehension helps students read purposefully and overcome potential difficulties as and when they arise.

The final misconception is students' practices and experiences when answering questions based on the text. Most of the observed students read the activities without really engaging with the content. They read the given activities before reading the text and then tried to find the common words linking the activities and the text. They divided the text into parts and read each one separately. As a result, they encountered difficulties. Firstly, they may give wrong and/or irrelevant answers. Secondly, they might fail to identify the main idea behind the text. Thirdly, they might not connect the sentences and the paragraphs together to get the author's key message. In this regard, Madkour (2016) mentions that applying reading strategies enables learners to make links between parts of a text. The last point is that the students may not use some strategies such as predicting, making inferences, and summarizing. Implementing questions in a classroom should go through three phases: pre-reading activities, while-reading activities, and post-reading activities. Such activities take learners to the highest level of comprehension since these activities require using strategies and skills to predict, infer, and analyze the content.

V. CONCLUSION

Generally, there is a limited understanding of the significance of employing reading skills and strategies in the classroom, leading to a failure to understand texts successfully and/or comprehensively. Also, there are some misconception practices among EFL learners in EFL reading classes. This paper aimed at exploring reading comprehension difficulties and illustrating the factors that cause such difficulties. Additionally, it attempted to understand misconception practices in EFL classrooms. The study revealed some fundamental reasons that affect reading comprehension, some of them related linguistic in nature, such as an inability to recognize grammatical and lexical items in a text. Others relate to non-linguistic factors such as lack of background knowledge, deficiency of attention, inability to identify main ideas and supporting details, and failure to apply reading comprehension strategies. The results demonstrate three key factors behind such difficulties: teaching approaches (the dominant approaches were traditional ones), lack of reading awareness, and lack of good reading habits. Additionally, the results showed that the observed students exhibited some misconceived practices when dealing with reading comprehension texts and activities.

Based on the results, a number of suggestions for improving learners' reading comprehension levels can be made. Teachers may create useful materials to engage students in different reading materials and increase their interest as well as use a variety of teaching approaches based on text genres to achieve better reading comprehension. In addition, teachers should increase students' awareness of the significance of reading comprehension strategies and skills.

The outcomes of this study serve to support Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Education in gaining a better understanding of such challenges and take them into consideration when designing textbooks. The results might also help lecturers create better strategies and materials to integrate into reading classes. In addition, the outcomes of this study might also encourage researchers to conduct more extensive studies in the field to cover different areas. Lastly, this study can enable universities and institutions in English-speaking countries to get a clearer picture of the reading comprehension challenges encountered by EFL students who desire to study abroad.

The current study has a number of limitations that future research might address. Firstly, the study was limited to the English Department at one institution of higher education, namely Al-Qunfudha University College. Also, the study was limited to male learners and did not include students with learning disabilities. Another limitation is that the study was limited to one semester.

Accordingly, further studies might focus on evaluating the current textbooks in use at Saudi universities to explore levels of comprehension questions. Also, further studies should be conducted to identify the other basic skills challenges

in the EFL classroom. Lastly, future research might be conducted to include female students and compare the results with male students.

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Reconstructing the Fictional Character of Fourteenth Daughter Xin (Xin Shisi Niang) in the English Translation of *Liaozhai Zhiyi*

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Abstract—*Fourteenth Daughter Xin (Xin Shisi Niang)* is one of the unusual tales in the anthology *Liaozhai Zhiyi* by Chinese novelist Pu Songling. The characterization of Fourteenth Daughter Xin, crafted to portray both the character development of the memorable female protagonist and the story's structure, contains numerous Chinese literary and cultural elements that present challenges in English translation. This study, based on a systematic examination of the original *Liaozhai Zhiyi* and its complete English version, aims to investigate how the translator reconstructs Fourteenth Daughter Xin's character image in English renderings. Through analysis of Fourteenth Daughter Xin's appellation, appearance, speech, and action, the findings reveal that the translator enhances emotional descriptions, emphasizes the elegance and beauty of Fourteenth Daughter Xin, and simplifies some action descriptions through omissions and adaptations. It can be observed that the translator tends to preserve cultural nuances closely while effectively conveying the overall characterization of Fourteenth Daughter Xin. This research aspires to serve as a reference for the English translation of literary fictional characters, facilitating the international dissemination of ancient Chinese literature.

Index Terms—fictional character, literary translation, Fourteenth Daughter Xin, Xin Shisi Niang, *Liaozhai Zhiyi*

I. INTRODUCTION

As one of the ancient Chinese classics, *Liaozhai Zhiyi* 聊斋志异, authored by Chinese novelist Pu Songling 蒲松龄 (1640-1715), is widely regarded as the preeminent example of *zhiguai* 志怪 [records of the strange] (Yuan, 2009, p. 120; Li & Jiang, 2017, p. 126). *Liaozhai Zhiyi* has garnered acclaim not only within China but also among international readers. Its translation into more than 20 languages has facilitated its broad dissemination and circulation to a global audience (Fan, 2020, p. 123).

Within the anthology of *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, which comprises nearly 500 unusual narratives, the tale of *Xin Shisi Niang* 辛十四娘, or *Fourteenth Daughter Xin*, stands out for its cultural significance and widespread appeal, primarily due to the portrayal of its female protagonist. The original text of *FOURTEENTH DAUGHTER XIN* encompasses approximately 3800 Chinese characters, considerably surpassing the length of most tales in *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. This extended length provides the foundational framework for a comprehensive demonstration of its narrative artistry in terms of textual capacity (Gu, 2020, p. 78).

Fourteenth Daughter Xin, a fox spirit who transforms into a beauty adorned in red, is depicted with a notable degree of affection and emotional depth. She is particularly distinguished by her striking beauty, intellect, compassion, frugality, determination, and autonomy. The narrative of Fourteenth Daughter Xin is intellectually stimulating, emphasizing her character development, experiences, and the emergence of female self-awareness. Fourteenth Daughter Xin's self-determination, quiet perseverance, and strategic planning are central elements throughout the tale, from its inception to the final revelation of the overarching scheme (Yin, 2023, p. 7). From her initial refusal of scholar Feng's proposal to her ultimate transcendent departure, Fourteenth Daughter Xin's autonomy is consistently underscored from various perspectives (Yin, 2023, p. 7). Zhao (2016, p. 925) commended Pu Songling's artistic prowess, evident in both

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character portrayal and plot construction in the tale of *Fourteenth Daughter Xin*. Influenced by the narrative, the characterization of Fourteenth Daughter Xin is depicted as “noble, virtuous, industrious, economical, perceptive, strategically adept, and committed to self-improvement” (Gu, 2020, p. 77).

The successful characterization in the tale has led to the recognition of Fourteenth Daughter Xin in *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. However, despite being one of the numerous fox spirits with distinct personalities in *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, Fourteenth Daughter Xin has received limited scholarly attention (Zhang, 2013, p. 48). There is a scarcity of translation studies focusing exclusively on the story of *Fourteenth Daughter Xin* and its fictional characters. Translators face two primary challenges. The first is comprehending the literary and philosophical portrayal of character images in *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. Character depiction in this work carries profound meanings, revealing the inequitable social reality of ancient times and human nature. The second challenge involves the intra-lingual translation within Chinese and the inter-lingual translation between Chinese and English. *Liaozhai Zhiyi* is composed in ancient classical Chinese, necessitating initial translation into modern vernacular Chinese before rendering it into a foreign language.

This study aims to investigate the reconstruction of the character image of Fourteenth Daughter Xin in English translations. The research posits that examining characterization through translation offers valuable insights into the translator’s detailed considerations. Furthermore, this study aspires to contribute to the Chinese-English translation of literary character images in fiction, potentially facilitating the international dissemination of classical Chinese literature.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Characterization in Literary Translation

Literary translation represents a unique and subjective endeavor situated at the core of a complex network of social and cultural practices (Bush, 2001, p. 127). It can also be conceptualized as a form of action within a real-world context or as a communication process (Jones, 2011, pp. 154-155). The field of literary translation studies primarily focuses on the relationships between source and target texts, with theoretical discussions centering on two closely interrelated issues: equivalence and communicative purpose (Jones, 2011, p. 153). In this context, literary translators can be viewed as cultural mediators, facilitating communication between different cultures (Jones, 2011, p. 156).

In literary studies and fictional narratives, a character denotes an individual in a literary work possessing a distinct identity constructed through appearance, dialogue, actions, name, and thoughts (Gill, 1995, p. 127). Characterization encompasses the methods by which a character is developed (Gill, 1995, p. 127; Li, 2019, p. 56). The depiction of characters’ traits is a crucial component of literary texts, and it is essential for literary translators to comprehend and interpret during the translation process (Darta et al., 2021). If a character in the translated text deviates from the portrayal in the original text, it can be argued that the characteristics and development of that character are altered, resulting in disparate and unequal dramatic effects between the original and translated versions (Darta et al., 2021). Through the faithful representation of character traits, the translated version must maintain the same objective as the original in conveying the author’s intent to readers (Darta et al., 2021).

Hu (1997) emphasized the significance of character names in characterization. He argued that researchers must recognize the cultural influences embedded in character names within classical Chinese fiction, acknowledge the distinctive role of naming techniques in character development, and appreciate the contribution of naming artistry to the aesthetic value of fiction (Hu, 1997, p. 74).

The physical appearance of a character is seldom described in isolation; rather, it serves to convey or illustrate the character’s inner personality to readers (Gill, 1995, p. 138). Culpeper (2001, p. 221) emphasized that elements of appearance, such as stature, attire, facial expressions, and posture, play a crucial role in characterization. Facial expressions are linked to specific facial features, including the eyes, nose, cheeks, mouth, and chin (Culpeper, 2001, p. 222). Stature may provide insights into a character’s physical height and social status (Culpeper, 2001, p. 224).

Clothing represents a significant aspect of appearance in literary characterization. Readers can form visual impressions of characters based on their attire and external features (Li, 2019, p. 73). Culpeper (2001, p. 225) noted that clothing, being changeable, is more dynamic than other appearance attributes. A character’s attire may vary according to factors such as social status, age, occupation, and income. Gill (1995, pp. 138-140) identified four functions of characters’ clothing in novels: (1) Clothes can serve as an extension or expression of personality. (2) Particularly in nineteenth-century novels, clothes often indicate social status. (3) Clothing can contribute to the novel’s atmosphere. (4) Attire can play a crucial role in plot development.

Action also plays a prominent role in portraying fictional characters. The actions are intricately linked to their motives, behaviors, and personalities (Culler, 2002, p. 167). Rimmon-Kenan (2002, p. 63) distinguished between a character’s one-time actions and habitual actions, noting that habitual actions often reveal the character’s static aspects, potentially creating a comic or ironic effect. Conversely, one-time actions may reflect specific characteristics and evoke the dynamic aspect of the character, frequently playing a more pivotal role in narrative turning points than habitual actions.

Speech serves as a prevalent method of characterization in literature (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 66). It can indicate a character’s age, gender, upbringing, education, profession, and emotional state (Shcherbak, 2015, p. 25; Rodionova, 2018, p. 823). Furthermore, speech can reveal a literary personage’s personality, inner world, and psychology, as well

as distinguish characters from one another (Shcherbak, 2015, p. 25; Rodionova, 2018, p. 823). Consequently, meticulous reproduction is essential in translation (Shcherbak, 2015, p. 25). Translators should strive to convey the features of a character's speech as accurately as possible to ensure that the rendered speech characterization closely matches the original (Shcherbak, 2015, p. 25; Rodionova, 2018, p. 828). Rodionova (2018, pp. 823-824) identified four key functions of speech characterization: (1) The characterizing function, which individualizes characters and manifests their unique traits; (2) The distinctive function, which differentiates characters from one another and highlights contrasts between them; (3) The comparative function, which compares the reactions and behavior of different characters in the same scene; and (4) The psychological function, which reflects a character's mental state and cognitive processes.

B. *Fourteenth Daughter Xin (Xin Shisi Niang)*

The narrative of *Fourteenth Daughter Xin* depicts the journey of the beautiful Fourteenth Daughter Xin, a transformed female fox spirit, who is compelled to experience mortal life before ultimately achieving immortality through diligence and cultivation. While the majority of research on *Fourteenth Daughter Xin* has been conducted from the perspective of Chinese literature, there is a notable scarcity of translation studies focusing exclusively on the story and characters of *Fourteenth Daughter Xin*. Within the Chinese academic sphere, a limited number of scholars have examined the representation of Fourteenth Daughter Xin. These studies indicate that the portrayal of Fourteenth Daughter Xin encompasses a diverse array of elements.

Xing (2006) and Xu (2014) examined the cultural significance of the “扑满 pū mǎn [ceramic coin bank]” in the characterization of Fourteenth Daughter Xin. Zhang (2013) analyzed Xin's portrayal through the lens of traditional cultural values, particularly Confucianism and Taoism. Wang (2022) investigated the representation of female consciousness in Xin's character development. Yin (2023) explored the relationship between Xin's characterization and contemporary social issues during Pu Songling's era. Yin (2023) further suggested that Xin's unwavering resolve, the complex trials she endured, and her intense, silent struggle reflect Pu Songling's empathy and lament for women in feudal society who lacked control over their destinies.

Several studies have focused on the narrative art in the tale of Fourteenth Daughter Xin. Gu (2020) examined the influence of plot structure on character development. He emphasized the interplay between overt and covert plots, as well as the combination of third-person omniscient and limited perspectives in the narrative structure of Fourteenth Daughter Xin's tale (Gu, 2020, p. 77). The overt plots delineate scholar Feng's fate, from his encounter with Fourteenth Daughter Xin to their forced marriage, his framing by acquaintances, and ultimately his rescue by Fourteenth Daughter Xin and her maidservant (Gu, 2020, p. 77). Concurrently, the covert plots trace Fourteenth Daughter Xin's journey, encompassing her unintended marriage, her rescue of scholar Feng from imprisonment, and her eventual transformation into an immortal being (Gu, 2020, p. 77).

III. METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes Zhu Qikai's 朱其铠 annotated version of Pu Songling's *Liaozhai Zhiyi* as its source text. The edition, titled *Quanben xinzhu Liaozhai Zhiyi [New annotated complete edition of Liaozhai Zhiyi]*, was published by People's Literature Publishing House in 1989 and reprinted in 1995. The target text for this study is the complete English translation of *Liaozhai Zhiyi*, entitled *Strange Tales from Liaozhai*, a six-volume work in progress by Sondergard from 2008 to 2014. The selection of Zhu Qikai's 1995 edition of *Liaozhai Zhiyi* as the source text is justified by Sondergard's reference to this edition in his translation (Sondergard, 2008, vol. I, p. ix). Furthermore, this study incorporates annotations and comments from scholars and experts on *Liaozhai Zhiyi*.

This study examines the characterization of Fourteenth Daughter Xin (Xin Shisi Niang) through Chinese-to-English translation, employing qualitative thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a flexible, foundational method for qualitative analysis that identifies, analyzes, and reports patterns and themes while minimally organizing and describing data in rich detail (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). The study's data consist of words, phrases, and clauses used to portray the character of Fourteenth Daughter Xin, both directly and indirectly. The characterization data are categorized into four themes: (1) appellation, (2) appearance, (3) speech, and (4) action. These data are extracted and analyzed to determine the preservation of the source text's original features.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Translating Appellation*

Xin Shisi Niang 辛十四娘 is a benevolent fox spirit residing in an abandoned Buddhist temple with her fox father and eighteen fox sisters. “辛 xīn” represents the family name, while “十四 shí sì” translates to “fourteen”, indicating her position as the fourteenth sister in the Xin Family (Wan, 2010, p. 24). “娘 niáng” is a versatile term for women, encompassing meanings such as “mother” and “young woman” or “girl”, depending on the context (Zhang & Yin, 2014, p. 1045; Wang et al., 2016, p. 292). Throughout the tale, the female protagonist is primarily referred to as “辛十四娘 xīn shí sì niáng” or simply “十四娘 shí sì niáng”. Sondergard translates these appellations as “Fourteenth Daughter Xin”

and “Fourteenth Daughter”, respectively, preserving the literal meaning. Notably, “辛 xīn” is homonymous with “心 xīn [heart]”, “十 shí” with “识 shí [know]”, and “四 sì” with “士 shì [intelligentsia]”. Zhang (1992, pp. 62-63) observed that Fourteenth Daughter Xin demonstrates a keen ability to understand individuals such as scholar Feng and gentleman Chu. Pu Songling bestows upon Fourteenth Daughter Xin a name that is both homophonic and cryptic: “辛 xīn (心 xīn [heart]) 十 shí (识 shí [know]) 四 sì (士 shì [intelligentsia]) 娘 niáng [lady]” (Zhang, 1992, pp. 62-63). The use of Fourteenth Daughter Xin’s name as the article’s title serves to allude to her character traits and encapsulate the narrative’s central theme (Zhang, 1992, pp. 62-63).

TABLE 1
FOURTEENTH DAUGHTER XIN’S APPELLATION

Source Text	Target Text
阴念：丽者何得在禅院中？(Pu, p. 542)	Feng wondered to himself: What’s a <u>beauty</u> like that doing in this rundown temple? (Sondergard, p. 731)
阴念：若得丽人，狐亦自佳。(Pu, p. 544)	He thought to himself: As long as I can marry <u>that beauty</u> , I’ll be happy, even if she’s a fox. (Sondergard, p. 738)
生喜得佳丽偶，并不疑其异类。(Pu, p. 544)	Feng joyfully received <u>the beauty</u> and actually didn’t think it anything strange. (Sondergard, p. 738)

Furthermore, the appellation of Fourteenth Daughter Xin is associated with the Chinese character “丽 lì” (beautiful), as evidenced by phrases such as “丽者 lì zhě”, “丽人 lì rén” and “丽偶 lì ǒu”. These examples illustrate scholar Feng’s intuitive evaluation of Fourteenth Daughter Xin, which is intrinsically linked to the concept of beauty. A character’s physical surroundings, including their room, house, street, town, and human environment (family, social class), often serve as trait-connoting metonymies (Rimmon-Kenan, 2002, p. 68). The presence of a beauty like Fourteenth Daughter Xin in a desolate temple is unusual, imparting a sense of peculiarity. Nevertheless, scholar Feng concentrates on Fourteenth Daughter Xin’s beauty, disregarding her unconventional setting. Both “者 zhě” and “人 rén” encompass the meaning of “person” (Zhang & Yin, 2014, p. 1906; Wang et al., 2016, p. 524). Sondergard translates “丽者 lì zhě” and “丽人 lì rén” as “beauty”, maintaining the original meaning of the source text. However, “偶 ǒu”, which denotes mate or spouse, differs from “者 zhě” and “人 rén” (Zhang & Yin, 2014, p. 1062; Wang et al., 2016, p. 298). “丽偶 lì ǒu” can be literally translated as a beautiful mate or spouse. Sondergard’s translation of “丽偶 lì ǒu” as “beauty” omits the connotation of “mate”, resulting in a semantic shift between the source and target texts.

B. Translating Appearance

Pu Songling portrays the striking beauty of Fourteenth Daughter Xin in a fragmented manner (Xing, 2006, p. 23). Throughout the narrative, her appearance, physique, attire, footwear, earrings, and golden floral adornments are interspersed, serving as subtle plot devices to illustrate Xin’s character (Xing, 2006, p. 23). Unlike typical alluring fox spirits from remote mountainous regions, Fourteenth Daughter Xin embodies the pure qualities of a fairy (Gu, 2020, p. 76; Wang, 2022, p. 79).

TABLE 2
FOURTEENTH DAUGHTER XIN’S APPEARANCE

Source Text	Target Text
味爽偶行，遇一少女，着红帔，容色娟好。(Pu, p. 542)	One dawn, he went out for a walk and met a young woman, <u>dressed in a short red cape, her happy, serene face quite lovely.</u> (Sondergard, p. 731)
果有红衣人，振袖倾鬟，亭亭拈带。(Pu, p. 542)	[...] <u>the young woman in red shook out her sleeves, bowed her head, and stood gracefully erect as she gently touched her robe’s belt.</u> (Sondergard, p. 734)
姬笑曰：“是非刻莲瓣为高履，实以香屑，蒙纱而步者乎？”(Pu, p. 543)	The old lady laughed and said, “Isn’t she the one <u>with the engravings of lotus petals on the bottom of her shoes</u> , who covered her face with gauze while walking?” (Sondergard, p. 736)
女子起，娉娉而立，红袖低垂。(Pu, p. 543)	The young woman got up, <u>revealing her slim beauty as she stood, her red sleeves hanging at her sides.</u> (Sondergard, pp. 736-737)
乃拔女头上金花一朵，付生收之。(Pu, p. 544)	Then she took a <u>garland of golden flowers from the girl’s head</u> and handed it to Feng, who accepted it. (Sondergard, p. 737)

Through scholar Feng’s perspective, the clothing, hairstyle, figure, and posture of Fourteenth Daughter Xin are portrayed. Xin’s attire is associated with “红 hóng [red]”. Her garments serve as an extension of her personality and an expression of her beauty. Upon scholar Feng’s initial encounter with Xin, her red clothing and countenance were particularly striking. The phrases “红帔 hóng pèi” and “容色娟好 róng sè juān hǎo” emphasize Xin’s exceptional appearance. “帔 pèi” refers to a short embroidered cape worn over a woman’s shoulders in ancient China (Yu & Sun, 2015, p. 1064; Zhao, 2016, p. 913). Sondergard translates “红帔 hóng pèi” as “a short red cape”, preserving the original meaning. In the source text, “娟好 juān hǎo” is akin to “娟秀 juān xiù”, denoting beauty, grace, and elegance (Yu & Sun, 2015, p. 1064; Zhang & Yin, 2014, p. 788; Wang et al., 2016, p. 213). In the target text, Sondergard renders “容色娟好 róng sè juān hǎo” with the addition of “happy, serene face quite lovely”, characterizing Xin’s face with a series of

favorable descriptors. It is evident that while the source text emphasizes Xin's beautiful and elegant facial features, Sondergard's translation highlights her facial expressions.

When scholar Feng encountered Fourteenth Daughter Xin at her residence, she remained attired in red. The phrase “振袖倾鬟 zhèn xiù qīng huán” describes Fourteenth Daughter Xin adjusting and shaking her sleeves, with her circular hair bun leaning forward and her head bowed (Yu & Sun, 2015, p. 1066; Zhao, 2016, p. 915). In the target text, Sondergard renders “振袖倾鬟 zhèn xiù qīng huán” as “shook out her sleeves, bowed her head”, preserving the original meaning. The phrase “亭亭拈带 tíng tíng niān dài” depicts the elegant and graceful standing posture of Fourteenth Daughter Xin as she touches her belt with her fingers (Yu & Sun, 2015, p. 1066). Sondergard's characterization portrays Fourteenth Daughter Xin as she “stood gracefully erect as she gently touched her robe's belt”. The addition of “gently” in the target text emphasizes Fourteenth Daughter Xin's elegance. In an effort to create a more compelling characterization, Sondergard accentuates Fourteenth Daughter Xin's grace and leaves evidence of the translator's reconstruction of the character image.

According to the old lady ghost's narration, the accessories of Fourteenth Daughter Xin are described. The phrases “刻莲瓣为高履 kè lián bàn wéi gāo lǚ, 实以香屑 shí yǐ xiāng xiè” refer to a specific type of high-soled embroidered shoes in ancient China (Zhao, 2016, p. 917). These shoes feature a hollow sole engraved with lotus flowers and filled with fragrant powder. As the wearer walks, lotus petal-shaped fragrant powder is left on the ground, creating the effect known as “步步生香 bù bù shēng xiāng [step by step fragrant]” (Zhao, 2016, p. 917). Lotus petals symbolize emerging from mud unstained, representing the beauty, purity, and resilience of Fourteenth Daughter Xin (Wang, 2022, p. 79). In the target text, Sondergard preserves the original meaning of “刻莲瓣为高履 kè lián bàn wéi gāo lǚ” by translating it as “with the engravings of lotus petals on the bottom of her shoes”. However, “实以香屑 shí yǐ xiāng xiè”, which denotes the fragrant powder filling, is omitted in Sondergard's translation. This omission may diminish the distinctive features of Fourteenth Daughter Xin's shoes, potentially affecting the characterization.

Upon encountering Fourteenth Daughter Xin in the residence of the elderly ghostly woman, scholar Feng observed that Xin remained attired in red. The phrase “娉娉而立 pīng pīng ér lì” denotes a “slim and graceful figure and standing posture” (Yu & Sun, 2015, p. 1071; Zhao, 2016, p. 917). In the target text, Sondergard translates this as “revealing her slim beauty as she stood”, effectively preserving the original connotation. The phrase “红袖低垂 hóng xiù dī chuí”, which initially describes the low-hanging red sleeves of Fourteenth Daughter Xin, is rendered in the target text as “her red sleeves hanging at her sides”. The addition of “at her sides” as a modifier to the verb “hanging” provides a more precise description of Xin's attire, thereby accentuating her elegance.

Furthermore, Fourteenth Daughter Xin adorns her head with a golden flower. The classifier “朵 duǒ” is employed for flowers or flower-shaped objects (Zhang & Yin, 2014, p. 316). The phrase “金花一朵 jīn huā yī duǒ” signifies a single golden flower (Yu & Sun, 2015, p. 1072). In the target text, this is translated as “a garland of golden flowers”, denoting a circular arrangement of blossoms, which illustrates the translator's reinterpretation of the character image. Consequently, the portrayal of Fourteenth Daughter Xin's headwear in the source text and Sondergard's translation offers readers distinct aesthetic experiences.

C. Translating Speech

Another indicator of the translator's reconstruction of the character image is Fourteenth Daughter Xin's speech. In the target text, Sondergard's characterization skills are evident in his renderings of the Chinese character “曰 yuē [say]”, which relates to the female protagonist Fourteenth Daughter Xin. The English equivalent of the Chinese character “曰 yuē [say]” has multiple alternatives that convey the meaning. Sondergard employs additions or alterations to Fourteenth Daughter Xin's speech. “曰 yuē” is accompanied by a diverse range of expressions, collocating with various modifiers or utilizing other alternatives to the verb “曰 yuē”. Through these varied expressions of “曰 yuē”, Sondergard effectively portrays Fourteenth Daughter Xin's speech and enhances the appeal of her intrinsic personality and emotions.

TABLE 3
FOURTEENTH DAUGHTER XIN'S SPEECH

Source Text	Target Text
女 <u>颀然</u> 曰：“还以告之父母。” (Pu, p. 544)	The young woman <u>blushed, and said</u> , “I have to go back and report this to my parents.” (Sondergard, p. 737)
女曰：“郡君之命，父母当不敢违。然如此草草，婢子即死，不敢奉命！” (Pu, p. 544)	“My parents wouldn't dare to disobey your ladyship,” <u>replied</u> the girl, “but I won't accept such a hasty marriage, even if it means sacrificing my life!” (Sondergard, p. 737)
女 <u>惨然</u> 曰：“公子豺狼，不可狎也！子不听吾言，将及于难！” (Pu, p. 544)	His worried wife <u>declared</u> , “Chu is such a wicked, cruel man—how could you have been friendly with him! If you don't listen to what I'm telling you, you'll suffer for it later!” (Sondergard, p. 739)
隔日，十四娘始知， <u>潸然</u> 曰：“早知今日矣！” (Pu, p. 545)	The following day, fourteenth daughter recognized what had happened, and <u>tearfully cried</u> , “Early on, I knew a day like this would come!” (Sondergard, p. 742)
居无几何，女忽谓生曰：“妾不为情缘，何处得烦恼？君被逮时，妾奔走戚眷间，并无一人代一谋者。[...]” (Pu, p. 546)	Feng hadn't been home for long when fourteenth daughter <u>suddenly told him</u> , “I haven't been terribly fortunate in my relationship with you, have I? When you were arrested, I devoted myself to planning how to save you, without anyone else stepping in to help out. [...]” (Sondergard, p. 745)

Fourteenth Daughter Xin declined scholar Feng's marriage proposals on two occasions. Initially, when scholar Feng presented himself to her father as a potential son-in-law, Fourteenth Daughter Xin resolutely refused (Yin, 2023, p. 7). Subsequently, when the old lady ghost attempted to arrange a marriage forcibly, Fourteenth Daughter Xin conveyed her wishes through her parents' directives (Yin, 2023, p. 7). In the source text, “颀然 tiǎn rán”, which encompasses feelings of shyness, shame, and embarrassment (Zhang & Yin, 2014, p. 788), modifies the verb “曰 yuē”. Notably, the original meaning of “颀然 tiǎn rán” does not emphasize facial coloration. In the target text, Sondergard translates “颀然 tiǎn rán” as “blushed”, highlighting a rosy facial hue associated with shyness, embarrassment, and shame. The phrase “颀然曰 tiǎn rán yuē” is rendered as “blushed and said”, demonstrating the translator's reconstruction of the character image. This translation may lead target readers to envision Fourteenth Daughter Xin as blushing while gently expressing her refusal.

Furthermore, when the elderly female spirit intensified her demands for marriage, Fourteenth Daughter Xin responded with a more resolute refusal, stating that she “would not accept such a precipitous union, even at the cost of her life”. In the target text, the verb “曰 yuē” is rendered as “reply”, which underscores Xin's response to the elderly female spirit. Sondergard endeavors to transform the abstract and implicit verb “曰 yuē [say]” into the more specific and explicit verb “reply”, thereby establishing Xin's character as one who firmly rejects the proposed marriage. It is worth noting that the verb “reply” more explicitly conveys the content of the speech compared to “say”.

Despite initially postponing the wedding, Fourteenth Daughter Xin ultimately succumbed to the old lady ghost's influence and married scholar Feng. Following their union, she diligently tended to his family's needs. Fourteenth Daughter Xin repeatedly cautioned scholar Feng against associating with unscrupulous individuals. In the source text, “惨然 cǎn rán”, denoting sorrowful and tragic (Zhang & Yin, 2014, p. 111), modifies the verb “曰 yuē”. The target text renders “惨然曰 cǎn rán yuē” as “declared”, emphasizing Fourteenth Daughter Xin's clear and emphatic speech. Sondergard opts for a more specific verb to convey both the modifier's and verb's meanings. The content of the utterance, pertaining to Fourteenth Daughter Xin's advice to scholar Feng, may have prompted Sondergard's alterations. These variations reveal the translator's reconstruction of the character image.

Nevertheless, circumstances proved unpredictable and beyond control. Ultimately, scholar Feng was falsely accused and imprisoned by his acquaintance Chu, causing Fourteenth Daughter Xin to fall into despair. In the source text, “潸然 shān rán”, which denotes shedding tears (Yu & Sun, 2015, p. 1080), functions as a modifier of the verb “曰 yuē”. In Sondergard's translation, “潸然曰 shān rán yuē” is rendered as “tearfully cried”, effectively preserving the original meaning of the source text. Sondergard endeavors to emphasize the sorrowful emotion of Fourteenth Daughter Xin, successfully maintaining fidelity to the original characterization.

Despite her inability to escape marriage, Fourteenth Daughter Xin remained unyielding and continued to resist in her own manner. Through rescuing her husband, she experienced the full spectrum of mortal emotions. The trials and tribulations in Xin's life reinforced her resolve to cultivate herself into an immortal (Yin, 2023, p. 8). Following her husband's rescue, she decided to disclose her experiences to him. In the target text, “忽谓生曰 hū wèi shēng yuē” is rendered as “suddenly told him”, preserving the original meaning of the source text. Sondergard opts for the alternative verb “tell” instead of “say”. “Tell” more accurately conveys Xin's intention to reveal her arduous mortal life compared to “say”. Furthermore, the content of the utterance may necessitate the translator to alter the verb, leaving traces of the translator's reconstruction of the character image. In comparison to the source text, Sondergard ensures that Xin's speech is not confined to a single verb but rather exhibits a range of variations that engage target readers.

D. Translating Action

The portrayal of internal and external action can unveil the concealed inner world of characters (Uspensky, 1973, p. 81). In this context, changes in characters' psychological states may be discerned through the interpretation of their action.

TABLE 4
FOURTEENTH DAUGHTER XIN'S ACTIONS

Source Text	Target Text
忽见生来，即转身入。(Pu, p. 542)	When she noticed him suddenly approaching, she <u>turned around and went back inside</u> . (Sondergard, p. 731)
十四娘为人勤俭洒脱，日以织织为事。[...] 日有赢余，辄投扑满。(Pu, p. 545)	Fourteenth daughter Xin was a <u>hardworking and thrifty</u> person, who spent her days spinning and weaving. [...] Each day's profits were tossed into the ceramic coin bank. (Sondergard, p. 741)
归家咨惋，遽遣婢子去。(Pu, p. 545)	She returned home, and following <u>consultation and sighs</u> , she hastily dispatched a maidservant on business. (Sondergard, p. 743)
每于寂所，於邑悲哀，至损眠食。(Pu, p. 546)	Each lonely day, she was so <u>sorrowful</u> that she couldn't sleep and eat. (Sondergard, p. 743)
后苍头至太华，遇十四娘，乘青骡，婢子跨蹇以从[...] (Pu, p. 547)	Later on, when some of their servants were near the western summit of Mt. Hua, they ran across fourteenth daughter, <u>riding on a dark mule</u> , with the maidservant straddling the mule behind her [...] (Sondergard, p. 746)

Fourteenth Daughter Xin exhibited a strong aversion to marriage from the outset. Upon seeing scholar Feng from afar, she promptly turned away. Her swift actions demonstrated her resolute determination to eschew mortal life (Yin, 2023, p. 7). In the source text, “即 jí” denotes “immediately” (Yu & Sun, 2015, p. 1080). In Sondergard's translation, “即转身入 jí zhuǎn shēn rù” is rendered as “turned around and went back inside” without emphasizing the immediacy, somewhat diminishing Xin's rejection stance and revealing traces of the translator's reconstruction of the character image.

Despite being unable to avoid marriage, Fourteenth Daughter Xin maintained her resolve and continued to resist in her own manner. She generated wealth through her own efforts, without depending on her fox family or resorting to magical means for personal gain (Yin, 2023, p. 7). The phrase “勤俭 qín jiǎn” is accurately translated as “hardworking and thrifty”, preserving its original meaning. In the source text, the term “洒脱 sǎ tuō”, which denotes “handling affairs efficiently and neatly” (Yu & Sun, 2015, p. 1078; Zhao, 2016, p. 921), is omitted in the target text. Sondergard's exclusion of Fourteenth Daughter Xin's actions somewhat diminishes the unique charm and inclination she exhibited.

Upon learning of scholar Feng's imprisonment, Fourteenth Daughter Xin promptly devised a meticulous rescue plan and dispatched her trusted fox maidservant to execute it. In the source text, “咨惋 zī wǎn” denotes “sigh with regret” (Yu & Sun, 2015, p. 1081; Zhao, 2016, p. 922). In the target text, Sondergard renders this as “consultation and sighs”, which includes some additions. As the concept of “consultation” is absent from the source text, Sondergard's translation suggests elements of character image reconstruction.

Fourteenth Daughter Xin endured numerous hardships during scholar Feng's imprisonment. While outwardly maintaining composure and managing various affairs, she harbored profound sadness and anxiety. The phrase “於邑 wū yì” signifies “making mournful sounds such as sob or whimper” (Zhao, 2016, p. 922). In the target text, “於邑悲哀 wū yì bēi āi” is rendered as “sorrowful”, which conveys the essence of “悲哀 bēi āi” but omits the specific connotation of “於邑 wū yì”. These translational variations reveal the translator's reconstruction of character portrayal, offering target readers a distinct aesthetic experience.

Despite her inability to escape marriage, Fourteenth Daughter Xin maintained her aspiration to transcend mortal life and her resolve to cultivate herself into an immortal (Yin, 2023, p. 8). When scholar Feng was imprisoned, only the fox maidservant, who loyally followed Fourteenth Daughter Xin, offered assistance. After rescuing scholar Feng and finding him a new companion, the maidservant accompanied Fourteenth Daughter Xin in departing the mortal realm. The phrase “乘青骡 chéng qīng luó” is rendered as “riding on a dark mule”, preserving the original meaning of the source text. “骡 luó” denotes a mule, while “蹇 jiǎn” signifies a donkey (Zhao, 2016, p. 924). The phrase “跨蹇以从 kuà jiǎn yǐ cóng” is translated as “straddling the mule behind her”, where the distinction between mule and donkey evokes different visual imagery for readers.

V. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the reconstruction of Fourteenth Daughter Xin (Xin Shisi Niang) in Sondergard's English translation of Pu Songling's collection of strange tales, *Liaozhai Zhiyi*. Through an analysis of her appellation, appearance, speech, and action, the character image of Fourteenth Daughter Xin, as reshaped in Sondergard's rendition, can be characterized by three distinct portrayal features.

The target text incorporates more nuanced and detailed emotional descriptions. Notable examples are found in the speech descriptions of Fourteenth Daughter Xin. In Sondergard's translation, the term “曰 yuē [say]” is accompanied by a variety of modifiers or alternatives such as “cry”, “reply”, “declare”, and “tell”. This approach enhances the portrayal of Xin's intrinsic personality and emotional depth.

Secondly, the target text emphasizes the elegance and beauty of Fourteenth Daughter Xin more prominently. The most notable examples are found in the descriptions of Xin's appearance. For instance, the phrase “拈带 niān dài” is translated as “gently touched her robe's belt”. The inclusion of “gently” accentuates Xin's refined demeanor. Consequently, Sondergard's additions enhance the target readers' aesthetic experience of the text.

Thirdly, several omissions and adaptations in the target text intentionally simplify aspects of Fourteenth Daughter Xin's personality traits, particularly in action descriptions. For example, Sondergard omits the phrase “洒脱 sǎ tuō [handling affairs efficiently and neatly]”, which to some degree diminishes the unique charm and characteristic tendencies that Fourteenth Daughter Xin exhibited.

In conclusion, Sondergard emphasizes faithfulness and detailed description in his translation and characterization of Fourteenth Daughter Xin. In most instances, Sondergard successfully retains and conveys the essence of the original characterization during the translation process. He makes a limited number of omissions and adaptations in characterization, which slightly alters the features of Fourteenth Daughter Xin. These subtle differences in his reconstruction approaches and choices reflect his understanding of cultural nuances and character personalities. The findings indicate that Sondergard's translation tends to preserve cultural nuances closely and effectively conveys the overall characterization of Fourteenth Daughter Xin. Sondergard's emphasis on faithfulness facilitates an exotic aesthetic experience for the target readers. Furthermore, this study's significance is twofold. Firstly, it delineates Sondergard's approaches to reproducing Fourteenth Daughter Xin's character image. Secondly, it examines the translation of *Liaozhai Zhiyi* from the perspective of characterization, thereby enriching the current research field of *Liaozhai Zhiyi*.

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The Future of Human Translators in the Era of Artificial Intelligence Translation Technologies

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Abstract—This study explored the future of human translators in the era of Artificial Intelligence (AI) translation technologies. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, enabling an in-depth examination of translators' insights regarding their evolving roles and the challenges they face in adapting their skills to remain competitive with AI. The results showed that 93% of participants envisioned their future flourishing through collaboration with AI. However, the themes emerging from the data analysis revealed that 97% of participants expressed fears of losing autonomy, job security, professional identity, and creative control unless human translators develop their skills. Additionally, 93% were concerned about diminishing human skills and values, while 90% expressed concerns about translation quality assurance. The findings revealed that 87% of participants faced challenges related to technical complexity and usability, while 83% reported difficulties in accessing technology training resources. To overcome these challenges, the study recommends developing proficiency in AI-powered translation applications and enhancing collaboration with AI. The study contributes to translation studies and technology by emphasizing the importance of adopting collaborative approaches to translation teaching and practice to remain competitive with AI. The study concludes that human translators are indispensable, particularly for enhancing cultural relevance and maintaining ethical standards when using AI translation tools.

Index Terms—artificial intelligence, human translators, machine translation, translation studies, translation technologies

I. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) in the field of translation has initiated extensive debates in academia about the future of human translators. AI translation models have revolutionized translation practices, and cross-border communication (Algouzi & Alzubi, 2023). By combining linguistic and computational theories, automated translation systems are trained to replicate several human cognitive processes, including attention, memory, and perception, which are crucial for producing accurate translations (Cordingley, 2024). Previous studies (Hancock et al., 2020; Kenechi, 2024; Yousif & Khalaf, 2024) indicated that machine translation (MT) enhances global interactions by dismantling language barriers, facilitating smooth communication with international partners. MT assists in translating documents, contracts, marketing materials, and product descriptions effectively. As AI translation platforms continue to evolve, improvements in translation quality, speed, and accuracy are expected to occur regularly (Yang, 2022). Additionally, Kenechi (2024) found that innovations such as multimodal translation and personalized services are reshaping the field, offering users real-time translations that are contextually accurate. However, the rise of AI-driven translation systems presents new challenges for human translators, emphasizing the importance of continuous professional development and adaptation within the profession (Lin, 2023). As AI continues to advance, concerns have emerged about whether human translators will be replaced or if their expertise will remain crucial for maintaining translation accuracy and cultural relevance in this context, previous studies (Kenechi, 2024; Kirov & Malamin, 2022; Mohammed et al., 2024; Wang, 2023) explored the relationship between human expertise and AI technology in the translation industry, aiming to address benefits and barriers, particularly in translation quality assurance. In this respect, critics argue that a significant performance gap still exists between AI translations and human translations (Awadh, 2024; Bo, 2023; Guerberofo-Arenas & Toral, 2022; Ibrahim & Alkhawaja, 2023). These studies reveal that while AI tools have become increasingly efficient at handling large volumes of text with speed and accuracy, they often fall short in capturing cultural complexities, creative aspects, emotional depth, and contextual meaning, i.e., areas where human translators excel. Therefore, the present study aimed to explore the benefits and challenges of AI translation tools, the difficulties human translators face, and the strategies they can apply to adapt their skills to remain competitive in an era dominated by AI technologies. To achieve this purpose, the study investigated how human translators envision their future as AI technologies continue to advance. The study addresses a gap in literature, marked by scarce research on the evolving roles of human translators in the age of AI and how technology influences the dynamic collaboration between machine and human translation. Thus, the study contributes to both translation studies and translation technology by providing new insights into the shifting roles of human translators amid AI advancements.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Machine Translation Theories and Practices

Machine translation is an automated system that utilizes computational linguistic analysis to process source documents and generate target texts without human intervention (Hutchins & Somers, 1992). Machine translation (MT) systems do not rely on a single theory but instead combine various approaches and models. In this respect, Hutchins and Somers (1992) examined two main perspectives in MT: linguistic and computational theories. Early MT systems incorporated several linguistic theories, such as Chomsky's (1965) transformational and generative grammar, Catford's (1965) contrastive analysis, Halliday's (1985) functional grammar, Nida and Taber's (1974) theory of dichotomy of oppositions, Newmark's (1981) semantic-communicative translation theory, and Jakobson's (2000) functions of language. Additionally, theories like Reiss and Vermeer's (1984) Skopos theory influenced MT development. Previous research (Koponen et al., 2019; Ranathunga et al., 2023; Zhang & Zong, 2020) found that computational concepts contributed to the development of several systems, such as rule-based machine translation (RBMT), statistical machine translation (SMT), example-based machine translation (EBMT), and hybrid systems. Rule-based machine translation (RBMT) relies on predefined linguistic rules and dictionaries to govern grammar and syntax, but it faces challenges with idiomatic expressions and language variation. Statistical machine translation (SMT) uses statistical models trained on large parallel corpora to identify patterns between source and target languages, but it requires substantial resources. Neural machine translation (NMT) uses artificial neural networks to model translations, producing fluent output without the need for explicit rules or statistical alignments. Furthermore, MT systems often rely on memory systems, which store multilingual archives containing segmented, aligned, parsed, and classified texts. Another theory used in MT is Cognitive Translation Theory (CTT), which is derived from cognitive linguistics. Additionally, previous studies examined other MT systems, such as hybridization, which combines two or more MT systems to enhance the translation process. For example, Huang et al. (2020) found that a hybrid system could integrate corpus-based rules or combine different corpus-based approaches. The study found that computational linguistics and natural language processing are combined to create a hybrid field that bridges traditional linguistics and artificial intelligence. Thus, hybrid MT systems are used in applications such as speech translation, cross-lingual information retrieval, and computer-aided translation.

Applying theories in practice, research (Hassan et al., 2018; Kamaluddin et al., 2024; Naveen & Trojovsky, 2024) found that several AI translation platforms incorporate CTT in their systems. For instance, Google Translate uses a Neural Machine Translation (NMT) model that encodes entire sentences to improve accuracy, while DeepL employs neural networks based on cognitive models to replicate human translation processes. Microsoft Translator and Facebook use transformer models to provide high-quality translations, with Facebook translating directly between languages without relying on English. Additionally, platforms like TransPerfect, and Lingo utilize Example-based Machine Translation (EBMT), while Smartling and Language Services Associates (LSA) employ hybrid and post-editing models. Furthermore, Trzaskawka (2020) and Wang et al. (2019) found that different translation models impact the features of each platform. For example, Google Translate supports text, website, document, and real-time speech translation across many languages. Microsoft Translator offers similar services with integration options for Microsoft Office and apps. DeepL provides document translation and API integration for various language pairs. Yandex Translate includes text, document, and website translation along with dictionary look-up and pronunciation features. Furthermore, Previous research (Läubli & Orrego-Carmona, 2020; Moneus & Sahari, 2024; Wang, 2023; Yang, 2022) found that automated translation tools have led to the rise of AI translation applications that aim to compete with human translators. These applications include ChatGPT, Bing Chat, Perplexity AI, Chat Sonic, Gemini, and Sider AI. For example, ChatGPT is a multimodal model capable of processing both images and text, demonstrating human-level competence on academic and professional benchmarks. Bing Chat offers personalized recommendations and insights, while Sider AI provides a comprehensive platform for chatting, writing, reading, and translation.

B. Impacts and Barriers of AI-Powered Translation

Machine translation is essential for enhancing communication across different languages and cultures. Previous studies (Algouzi & Alzubi, 2023; Hancock et al., 2020; Trzaskawka, 2020; Yousif & Khalaf, 2024) found that MT facilitates global interactions by overcoming language barriers, enabling effective communication with international partners, and promoting cross-cultural understanding. However, previous studies highlight several challenges that AI-powered translation platforms need to address. For example, Naveen and Trojovsky (2024) found that AI tools struggle with ambiguous words, polysemous terms, idiomatic expressions, cultural references, figurative language, and language variations such as humor, metaphor, homonyms, and symbolism. In this regard, findings from a cross-sectional study by Sahari et al. (2023) indicated that although ChatGPT is effective for translating straightforward content, it often falls short when faced with intricate nuances that necessitate human intervention. In a different study, Nimbalkar (2021) found that disambiguation is a common challenge in translation, as languages often contain words or phrases with multiple meanings depending on the context. Ambiguity can arise from homonyms, polysemous words, and cultural references. The study suggested that resolving these ambiguities could be achieved through collaboration between machines and human translators. Naveen and Trojovsky (2024) found that stylistic variations in language, such as genre, formality, and target culture, create challenges for machine translation systems in maintaining these distinctions. Overcoming these challenges requires advancements in natural language processing, machine learning, and access to diverse training data. MT systems may struggle with cultural references unless they have appropriate cultural and contextual knowledge. Cultural references,

such as names, proverbs, slang, and culture-specific concepts, often pose translation challenges due to the lack of direct counterparts in other languages. Accurate translation of these references requires localization, which adjusts the translation to fit the target culture. In other words, language is closely tied to culture and sociolinguistic norms, making cultural contextual appropriateness essential in translations. Therefore, AI systems must consider factors like regional dialects, and cultural subtleties to produce translations that align with the target language's cultural standards. Wang (2023) suggested that collaboration between humans and AI could enhance translation quality. Similarly, Moneus and Sahari (2024) explored the differences between human and AI translations within the legal sector, indicating that there would be no significant disparity between translations done by humans and those done by AI due to post-editing processes. The study concluded that while AI translation tools improve efficiency, human translators are essential for handling complex language, terminology, and context accurately.

C. Human Translators' Roles and Challenges in the Era of AI Technologies

Previous studies found that machine translation has reshaped the roles of human translators, requiring skills in post-editing, machine learning, and familiarity with AI tools. New roles for translators such as localization specialists, cultural mediators, and data curators, have emerged. Läubli and Carmona (2020) found that despite AI's accuracy, it demands for human post-editing. In the experimental study by ÖnerBulut and Alimen (2023), student translators involved in post-editing, pre-editing, and error annotation tasks began to see themselves as future experts in machine translation-related role. Similarly, findings from Zayed and Nuirat's (2024) study indicated that human translators use strategies like expansion, omission, and word choice to improve ChatGPT's translations. In this regard, Wang (2023) concluded that high-quality translations in the AI era rely on effective human-AI collaboration, with human translators focusing on specialized tasks and refining machine translations for accuracy and cultural relevance. Sheng and Kong (2023) found that human translators manage political, ideological, and subjective factors more effectively than AI, which struggles with tasks like annotating. The need for human judgment and flexibility in AI translation technologies remains crucial. Another important role for human translators is serving as cultural mediators. In this respect, Carvalho et al. (2023) highlighted that idiomatic expressions often carry cultural significance that machine translation tools struggle to capture. The authors argued that idiomatic expressions frequently hold cultural significance and meanings that may not translate directly into other languages. In this light, Naveen and Trojovsky (2024), and Zhang and Zong (2020) found that AI translation tools cannot grasp the emotional connotation or cultural context of words, as AI lacks the ability to understand subjective human experiences. Machine translation cannot fully understand emotional implications, a complex cognitive response that human translators can better handle (Khare et al., 2024). In this respect, previous studies (Guerberof-Arenas & Toral, 2022; Ibrahim & Alkhawaja, 2023; Pastor & Noriega-Santibáñez, 2024) revealed that human translators are valued for their creativity, as they effectively capture language nuances, tone, and cultural context of the original text. This is especially important in literary translation, where they convey not only meaning but also emotional and stylistic elements. Unlike machines, human translators use personal experience and cultural awareness to adapt idiomatic expressions, humor, and cultural references for the target audience. Therefore, previous studies emphasize the role and identity of the translator in transferring culture. Vermeer (1996) characterizes the translator as bi-cultural, highlighting the importance of understanding both the source and target cultures. Similarly, Snell-Hornby (1992) refers to the translator as a cross-cultural specialist, emphasizing the translator's role in bridging cultural gaps between languages. Hewson and Martin (1991) describe the translator as a cultural operator, underlining the translator's responsibility to navigate cultural differences effectively.

However, previous studies (Cordingley, 2024; Mohammed et al., 2024; Soysal, 2023; Yousif & Khalaf, 2024) revealed that human translators face various challenges, including technological literacy, loss of autonomy, job security, and adaptation to technological change. In this regard, Kirov and Malamin (2022) concluded that AI is likely to lead to job losses, with many translators viewing AI as a threat that will take over routine tasks, leaving them with roles focused on editing machine-translated texts and training AI. Bowker (2020) revealed that human translators face difficulties in mastering translation software and understanding machine translation systems to ensure accuracy. Another challenge for human translators is competition from AI, which offers faster and cheaper translations. In this respect, Cadwell and O'Brien (2022) argued that to remain competitive, translators must emphasize their unique skills, such as cultural competence, and the ability to interpret literary texts, areas where AI often struggles with. Furthermore, findings from Moorkens (2022) highlighted that human translators encounter notable challenges related to confidentiality and professionalism. Similarly, O'Hagan (2020) argued that the increasing use of AI in translation poses a threat to job security and professional identity, compelling translators to distinguish themselves through specialized expertise and ethical practices. Additionally, Cadwell et al. (2022) argued that overcoming these challenges needs sharing and collaboration within networks of professional translators. In this regard, Cordingley (2024) found that despite the advancements in machine translation, human translation is still essential for complex content that requires human input to ensure accurate communication.

D. The Future of Human Translators in the Era of AI Technologies

The review revealed differing opinions on how translation technology will affect the demand for human translators, emphasizing the complexity of this relationship. Previous studies (Bo, 2023; Moorkens, 2022; Reijers & Dupont, 2023) highlighted ethical concerns in AI translation, such as the impact on translators' professional identity, copyright, and

privacy. Findings from these studies pointed to certain concerns, including job displacement and the diminishing value of human expertise in cultural contexts. In this regard, ÖnerBulut and Alimen (2023) found that educators stressed the need for collaborative translation classrooms, where students can integrate human value into machine translation workflows. Liu (2024) indicated that achieving more accurate translations will advance through a partnership between AI and human translators. In a different study, Tuma and Hamood (2023) showed that human translators can improve productivity by refining machine-generated translations to meet clients' needs. It highlighted that integrating machine translation can help translators work more efficiently. Similarly, Yu (2024) revealed that translators skilled in machine tools and translation strategies will thrive in the future. Similar findings by Soysal (2023) emphasized that Translation Studies (TS) can improve AI translation systems by providing insights into context, and ethical considerations. Leveraging TS expertise can help AI developers enhance translation quality. In this regard, Lin (2023) concluded that the future will involve a collaboration between human translators and AI, combining their strengths for best results. Furthermore, Madkour and Al-Askr (2024) found that adapting teaching strategies in translation classroom is essential to meet industry demands and ensure future translators have the necessary skills for success. Regarding the translator's role in observing ethical standards, previous research placed significant responsibility on human translators. In this regard, Reijers and Dupont (2023) stated, "[...] we consider translation as an inherently ethical activity" (p. 13). Kenechi (2024) found that while machine translation is changing the translation industry by increasing productivity and diminishing human translators' roles, human expertise and creativity remain vital, particularly for tasks involving language, culture, and ethics. Thus, the future of translation is anticipated to emphasize increased collaboration between humans and machines, with each contributing their strengths to achieve the best outcomes.

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a qualitative research method to examine the future of human translators in the context of artificial intelligence translation technologies. The study also investigated their pedagogical beliefs, ethical concerns, and expectations regarding the use of artificial intelligence in translation. The sample consisted of non-randomly selected female translators who taught translation during the third term of the academic year 2024.

A. Research Questions

1. What are the main challenges human translators face when adapting to AI-powered translation tools, and how can they overcome them?
2. How can human translators adapt their skills to remain competitive in an industry increasingly dominated by AI translation technologies?
3. How do human translators envision their professional future in the era of AI translation technologies?

B. Participants

The current study adopted a qualitative research approach, focusing on a focused group of female translators who also teach translation. The study aimed to explore their perceptions and concerns about the future of human translators considering advancements in AI technologies. Using purposive sampling, the study included thirty female translators affiliated with public universities in Saudi Arabia.

C. Instruments

The researcher used semi-structured interviews, validated through a pilot study, to gather data with NVivo software for analysis. The interview had two sections: the first collected demographic information through closed-ended questions, and the second explored participants' views on the future of human translators, the impact of advancements of AI on their skills, and concerns surrounding AI use in translation.

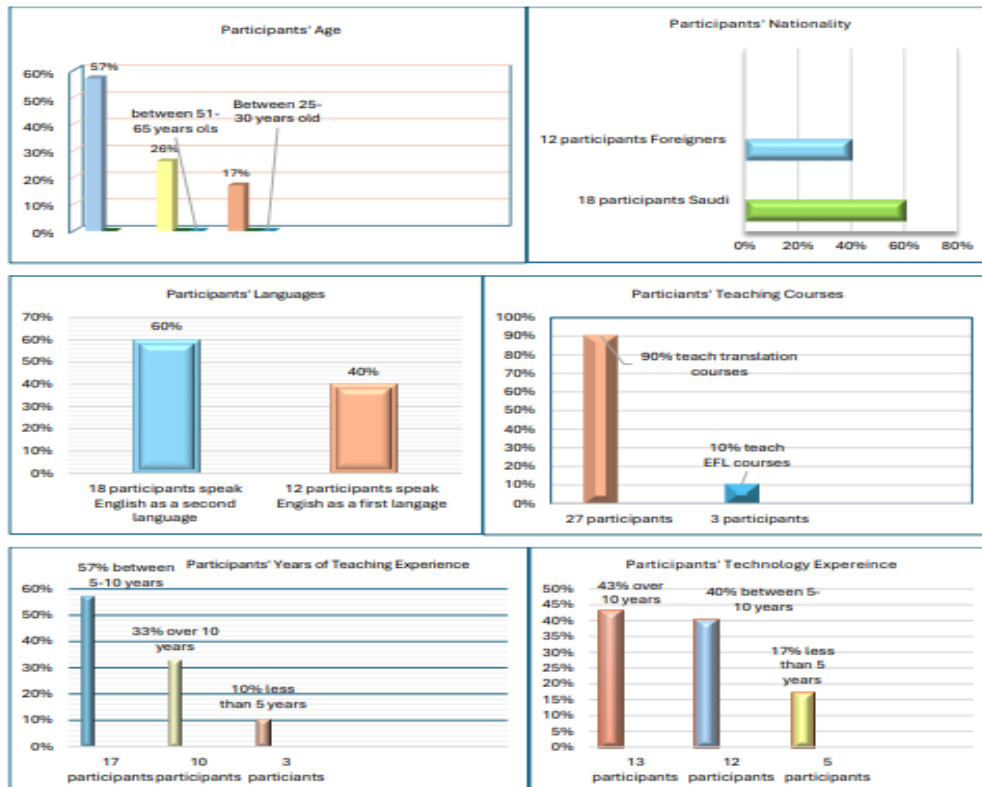
D. Data Collection Procedures

NVivo (version 15) software was used for data analysis, enabling comprehensive text analysis and theme identification within the collected data. Initial data codes were created to capture participants' experiences with AI-mediated translation, which were then organized into potential themes, highlighting significant patterns regarding the impact of AI technologies on human translators.

IV. RESULTS

A. Demographic Results

Demographic data revealed that 60% of participants were Saudis, while 40% were foreigners. In terms of age, 57% were between 31-50 years old, 26% were between 51-65 years old, and 17% were between 25-30 years old. Regarding language, 60% spoke Arabic as their native language, and 40% spoke English as their first language. In terms of teaching experience, 57% had 5-10 years of experience, 33% had over 10 years, and 10% had less than 5 years. Regarding technology proficiency, 43% had over 10 years of experience, 40% had 5-10 years, and 17% had less than 5 years. All participants (100%) reported integrating technology into their teaching, and 90% taught translation courses, while 10% taught EFL courses. Figures 1-6 display the results.



Figures 1-6. Participants' Demographic Results

B. Interviews Emerging Themes

The analysis of the interview, conducted using NVivo, identified six emerging themes: (a) AI translation will continue to prevail in the future, (b) new AI translation applications will be developed, (c) human translators will face more challenges for maintaining their roles, (d) enhancement of collaboration between AI and human translators, (e) ethical concerns about using AI will increase, (f) enhancing human roles for developing standards for quality translation. Table 1 illustrates these themes.

TABLE 1
EMERGING THEMES FROM PARTICIPANTS' INTERVIEWS

Interview Emerging Themes	n (=30)	Percent
AI translation will continue to prevail in the future	29	97%
New AI translation applications will be developed	29	97%
Human translators will face more challenges in maintaining their roles	28	93%
Enhancement of collaboration between AI and human translators	28	93%
Ethical concerns about using AI will increase	25	83%
Enhancing human roles for developing standards for quality translations	24	80%

As displayed in Table 1, 97% of participants believed that AI machine translation will continue to prevail in the future, and that new AI translation applications will be developed. Additionally, 93% of participants perceived that human translators would face more challenges in maintaining their roles, and that collaboration between AI translation and human translators will enhance. 83% observed that human translators have ethical concerns about using AI, while 80% felt that the enhanced human translators' roles will help them remain vital for high-quality translations. Many participants expressed concerns about the future of human translators as AI translation technologies continue to advance. One participant noted, "I perceive the role of human translators as becoming more consultative and advisory," suggesting that translators will need to select effective AI systems and ensure output aligns with the intended message, tone, and cultural contexts. Another participant noted that "[...] the role of human translators may evolve into that of specialized experts in post-editing," emphasizing the need for human intervention in refining machine-generated translations, particularly for accuracy, idiomatic expressions, and implicit meanings. However, a third participant stated, "AI and machine translation

technologies will augment, rather than replace human translators.” Another participant added, “These advancements will enhance repetitive tasks, but human translators will still be essential in providing the deep understanding of language and the context that machines currently struggle with.” Additionally, participants emphasized the importance of collaboration between AI and human translators. One participant stated, “Human translators will collaborate with AI, ensuring the highest standards of quality and cultural relevance.” However, some participants expressed concerns about staying competitive with AI. One participant stated, “The rapid pace of technological advancement can be overwhelming for human translators.” Some noted that the fear of job displacement could be addressed by emphasizing AI’s complementary role, with training and continuous professional development helping translators adapt to evolving tools. Another participant stated, “Human translators will focus on tasks that demand creativity, and cultural adaptation.” Other participants shared their use of AI tools like Trados Studio and Linguee, stating, “These tools are helpful, but they require human translators to develop training for achieving efficiency.” The results also showed that human translators are expected to focus on value-added roles requiring cultural expertise.

C. Answering the Research Questions

Q1. What are the main challenges human translators face when adapting to AI-powered translation tools, and how can they overcome them?

The results revealed six invariant constituents in the context of the challenges human translators face. These constituents are: (a) loss of autonomy and creative control, reported by 93%; (b) concerns about job security and professional identity, perceived by 93%; (c) diminishing human roles and values, represented by (90%); (d) difficulties in maintaining translation accuracy and quality, reported by 90%; (e) difficulties in handling technical complexity, perceived by 87%; and (f) lack of accessible and comprehensive AI training resources, reported by 80%. Table 2 displays these results.

TABLE 2
INVARIANT CONSTITUENTS OF HUMAN TRANSLATORS’ CHALLENGES

Invariant Constituents of Human Translators’ Challenge in AI Era	n(=30)	Percent
Loss of autonomy and creative control	28	93%
Concerns about job security and professional identity	28	93%
Diminishing human roles and values	27	90%
Difficulties in maintaining translation accuracy and quality	27	90%
Difficulties in handling technical complexity	26	87%
Lack of accessible and comprehensive AI training resources	24	80%

As displayed in Table 2, the invariant constituent of loss of autonomy and creative control emerged as the highest-ranked among the invariant constituents of the theme of human translators’ challenges in the era of AI. In this context, one participant reported, “Translators may feel a loss of creative control and autonomy when relying on AI tools that generate translations based on translation datasets.” Reporting their concerns about job security and professional identity, one participant stated, “A main challenge is overcoming the fear of job displacement due to the increasing reliance on AI in the translation industry, and this fear increases by emphasizing the dominance of AI.” Another participant added, “The rise of AI translation may lead to concerns about job security and the erosion of professional identity among human translators, particularly, in terms of the speed that machine translation is performed.” Additionally, another participant commented “Human translators fear the potential loss of traditional skills, particularly in tasks that rely on deep cultural and linguistic understanding.” Concerning the challenge of maintaining translation quality and accuracy, one participant stated, “AI translations may not always meet the quality and accuracy standards required, especially for complex texts or those with cultural references.” Another participant noted, “Quality assurance becomes crucial, as AI-generated translations need careful review to ensure accuracy and cultural appropriateness.” Furthermore, the participants reported other challenges, including technical complexity and usability, providing accessible and comprehensive training resources. In this regard, one participant stated, “Providing accessible training resources is challenging particularly, when financial aid is constrained.” Another participant noted, “The real challenge we face is adapting to the fast pace of technological change.” In this context, another participant added, “Change is disturbing, and it is accompanied by resistance, which hinders adaptation.” Thus, the participants agreed that human translators encounter challenges such as adapting to the rapid pace of AI technological advancements. However, the participants believed that human translators could overcome such challenges, suggesting some solutions that emerged in data analysis. Table 3 displays these solutions.

TABLE 3
ADDRESSING HUMAN TRANSLATORS' CHALLENGES

Invariant Constituents of Solutions To Human Translators' Challenges	n(=30)	Percent
Enhance creativity and cultural understanding	29	97%
Encourage a collaborative approach between human translators and AI	28	93%
Provide continuous technology training	28	93%
Develop specialized skills in areas that demand human expertise	27	90%
Implement a rigorous quality assurance process	27	90%
Apply strict data privacy and security standards	26	87%

As illustrated in Table 3, the participants made some suggestions to help human translators overcome the challenges they face in the era of AI. These solutions include: (a) enhance creativity and cultural understanding, reported by 97%; (b) encourage a collaborative approach between human translators and AI, represented by 93%; (c) provide continuous technology training, reported by 93%; (d) develop specialized skills in areas that demand human expertise, perceived by 90%; (e) implement a rigorous quality assurance process, reported by 90%; and (f) apply strict data privacy and security standards, represented by 87%. In this context, one participant noted,

"Translators should focus on highlighting their unique contributions, such as creativity, cultural understanding, and the ability to manage complex translations." Another participant reported, "By positioning themselves as indispensable partners in the translation process, human translators can ensure their continued relevance and success alongside AI technologies." Additionally, one participant stated, "Translators should be encouraged to stay informed about new developments in AI translation technologies through continuous education, attending conferences, and participating in professional networks." Another participant stated, "Professional development programs that provide opportunities for human translators to deepen their culture knowledge and technical expertise can help bridge the gap between human translators and AI." Another participant commented, "I believe there are two crucial solutions that human translators can use, namely, apply strict data privacy and security standards, and implement a rigorous quality assurance process, which can enhance their critical roles as quality assurance controllers." Furthermore, the participants agreed that using advanced AI technologies such as MateCat, DeepL, iTranslate, Reverso, Lingee, TripLingo, and neural machine translation models like OpenAI's GPT-4, helps in producing efficient translations. The participants believe that AI will play a significant role in the future of translation by enhancing the capabilities of human translators rather than replacing them.

Q2. How can human translators adapt their skills to remain relevant and competitive in an industry increasingly dominated by AI translation technologies?

The results revealed six invariant constituents of the theme of the skills that human translators need to remain competitive in the era of AI. These constituents are: (a) terminology database management skills, reported by 97%; (b) mastery of advanced linguistic competence, represented by 97%; (c) comprehensive cross-cultural competence, reported by 93%; (d) strong interpersonal skills for effective collaboration with clients, reported by 90%; (e) critical evaluation skills for assessing translation accuracy, quality, and strategies, perceived by 87%; and (f) effective workflow organization skills for enhancing translation project management and organization performance, reported by 83%. Table 4 illustrates these results.

TABLE 4
INVARIANT CONSTITUENTS OF HUMAN TRANSLATORS' SKILLS IN AI ERA

Invariant Constituents of Human Translators' Skills In AI Era	n(=30)	Percent
Terminology database management skills	29	97%
Mastery of advanced linguistic competence	29	97%
Comprehensive cross-cultural competence	28	93%
Strong interpersonal skills for effective collaboration with clients	27	90%
Critical evaluation skills for assessing translation accuracy, quality, and strategies	26	87%
Effective workflow organization skills for enhancing translation project management and organization performance	25	83%

As displayed in Table 4, terminology database management skills emerged as the highest-ranked among the invariant constituents, represented by 97%. In this context, one participant stated, “Human translators will need to develop proficiency in terminology database management, to effectively collaborate with these technologies to enhance their work and understand how AI systems operate.” Another participant added, “Developing terminology database management skills is crucial for human translators because it ensures consistency, accuracy, and efficiency for using specific terms across multiple projects.” Regarding the invariant constituents of linguistic competence, one participant noted, “Human translators need linguistic competence to ensure accuracy, variations, and cultural appropriateness of translations that AI systems often struggle to achieve.” Another participant commented, “While AI can manage straightforward translations, it frequently misses idiomatic expressions, tone, and context-specific meanings, and therefore, human translators with strong linguistic skills can identify and correct these shortcomings.” Additionally, the participants shared their comments on collaboration and interpersonal skills that human translators need to adapt. One participant stated, “Human translators need strong collaboration and interpersonal skills to collaborate effectively with diverse teams, including AI developers, project managers, and clients, for ensuring that the translation process aligns with client expectations and project goals.” Another participant added, “[...] strong interpersonal skills enable translators to manage expectations, and build trust.” A third participant commented,

“Interpersonal skills are vital for managing relationships with clients, ensuring that their needs and preferences are met.” Furthermore, commenting on translators’ critical evaluation skills, one participant stated, “Human translators need critical evaluation skills to assess the accuracy and quality of machine-generated translations, as AI systems can often produce errors or miss important contextual references.” Another participant noted, “Critical evaluation allows translators to identify when AI output falls short and make necessary corrections to ensure that the final translation is both accurate and culturally appropriate.” Additionally, the participants agreed that cultural competence, and workflow organization skills are crucial for human translators to adapt in the era of AI technologies. In this respect, one participant stated, “Cultural competence ensures that translators can provide contextually accurate translations that resonate with the target audience.” Another participant added, “Cultural competence is especially important as global communication becomes increasingly diverse and localized content is in high demand.” A third participant noted, “Workflow organization skills allow translators to efficiently manage and integrate AI tools into their translation processes, balancing human input with machine-generated output.” Thus, the participants believed that cultural competence and workflows organization skills help translators to improve projects, enhance productivity, and maintain high-quality translations, ensuring that both linguistic accuracy and cultural relevance are preserved.

Q3. How do human translators envision their professional future in the era of AI translation technologies?

The results revealed seven invariant constituents. These constituents include: (a) fears of losing their jobs, reported by 97%; (b) developing proficiency in AI-powered translation models, represented by 97%, (c) observing ethical implications of machine translation, reported by 93%; (d) enhancing collaboration with AI, perceived by 93%; (e) developing post-editing and quality assurance, reported by 90%; (f) enhancing cultural adaptation and localization, perceived by 87%; and (g) developing translation-research-based practices, reported 83%. Table 5 displays these results.

TABLE 5
INVARIANT CONSTITUENTS OF ENVISIONING THE FUTURE OF HUMAN TRANSLATORS

Invariant Constituents of Human Translators’ Envision of Their Future in AI Era	n(=30)	Percent
Fears of losing their jobs	29	97%
Developing proficiency in AI-powered translation models	29	97%
Observing ethical implications of machine translation	28	93%
Enhancing collaboration with AI	28	93%
Developing post-editing and quality assurance	27	90%
Enhancing cultural adaptation and localization	26	87%
Developing translation-research based practices	25	83%

As shown in Table 5, fears of losing their jobs, emerge as the highest-ranked invariant constituent in the context of how human translators envision their future. In this respect, one participant stated, “My fears stem from the speed of AI-powered systems, and their ability to process large volumes of text quickly and cost-effectively.” Another participant added, “AI-powered translation could replace human translators, particularly for straightforward tasks such as technical manuals or basic content localization.” A third participant reported, “The fear stems not only from automation but also from the growing misconception that AI can fully replicate the expertise of skilled linguists.” Another participant noted, “Despite these fears, it is crucial to emphasize the complementary role of AI as a tool to assist rather than replace human translators, ensuring quality and accuracy.” Furthermore, the participants asserted that human translators need to develop

their proficiency in AI tools, through enhancing collaborative tasks. In this regard, one participant stated, “I see human translators increasingly collaborating with AI tools, using them as assistants rather than substitutes.” Another participant commented, “[...] developing technology proficiency will ensure successful future for human translators as they will be able to continuously improve translation accuracy.” In this respect, the participants also shared their comments on the issues of developing quality assurance, and enhancing contextual knowledge, and creativity. One participant reported, “Human translators will act in the future as editors and quality controllers, ensuring that AI-generated translations are accurate, conveying the content of the source language texts in a way that satisfy the target language readership.” Another participant added, “Human translators will increasingly assume roles that require sophisticated cultural insight and specialized knowledge, and that human translators will complement AI, adding their human unique abilities to create translations that resonate cultural contexts on a deeper level.” Furthermore, most of the participants (93%) agreed that the main role for human translators in the era of AI is to observe ethical implications of using machine translation. In this respect, one participant stated, “Human translators can observe the ethical implications of translations, ensuring that automated systems are not biased, or misleading.” Another participant added, “I see the role of human translators as ethical guides who prevent the dissemination of harmful content that an AI system might not identify.” In other words, human translators can bridge the gap between technological capabilities and human values, providing oversight and expertise that enhance the overall quality and integrity of translations. Additionally, the participants reported that human translators need to develop translation-research based practices to maintain their roles in the era of AI. In this regard, one participant noted, “Research-driven practice helps translators stay informed about evolving linguistic trends, audience expectations, and ethical considerations, ensuring their work remains both accurate and culturally appropriate.” Another participant reported, “Emphasizing research-based approaches not only strengthens translation accuracy but also reinforces the human translator's role as a skilled professional capable of handling complex, culturally based content that machine translation tools often struggle to process effectively.” Thus, the participants believed that human translators would remain indispensable in the creation of universally accepted guidelines that enhance the reliability and accuracy of translations.

V. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The findings revealed that AI-powered translation will continue to dominate the future, and that new AI applications will be developed, as perceived by 97% of participants (Table 1). These results are in harmony with previous findings. For example, previous studies (Kamaluddin et al., 2024; Läubli & Orrego-Carmona, 2020; Moneus & Sahari, 2024; Trzaskawka, 2020; Wang et al., 2019) indicated that the emergence of automated translation tools has given rise to AI translation applications that claim to rival human translators. These applications include ChatGPT, Bing Chat, Perplexity AI, Chat Sonic, Gemini, and Sider AI. Other findings from the present study revealed that human translators will face challenges in terms of loss of autonomy and creative control, job security and professional identity, as perceived by 93%. Challenges also include diminishing their roles and values, maintaining translation accuracy and quality, managing technical complexity, and lacking accessible and comprehensive AI training resources, as perceived by 87% and 83% respectively (Table 2). These results are in alignment with previous findings. For example, O'Hagan (2020) found that the increasing use of AI in translation poses a threat to job security and professional identity, compelling translators to distinguish themselves through specialized expertise and ethical practices. Kirov and Malamin (2022) found that AI is likely to lead to job losses, with many translators, focusing on roles that target editing machine-translated texts. ÖnerBulut and Alimen (2023) found that translators will become experts in post-editing, pre-editing, and error annotation tasks. Bowker (2020) found that human translators face difficulties in mastering translation software and understanding machine translation systems. Cadwell and O'Brien (2021) found that translators must emphasize their unique linguistic and cultural skills to remain competitive in the era of AI. Additionally, Moorkens (2022) found that human translators must maintain the privacy of sensitive information while delivering high-quality work. Furthermore, findings from the present study showed that translators can address these challenges through enhancing creativity and cultural understanding, and developing collaboration with AI, as perceived by 97% and 93%, respectively (Table 3). These findings align with previous research findings. Cadwell et al. (2022) showed that overcoming challenges needs collaboration within networks of professional translators. Yu (2024) revealed that translators skilled in machine tools and translation techniques will excel in the future. Soysal (2023) emphasized that Translation Studies (TS) can improve AI translation systems by providing knowledge into context, and ethical considerations. Furthermore, the present study findings showed that human translators need to adapt their skills to remain competitive in the era of AI, including terminology database management skills, linguistic and culture competences, as reported by 97%, and developing collaboration and interpersonal skills, as perceived by 93%, and improving workflow organization skills, as reported by 83% (Table 4). These results are in harmony with findings from previous studies. For example, Zayed and Nuirat (2024) found that human translators use strategies that AI cannot apply such as expansion, omission, and transposition. Sheng and Kong (2023) found that human translators manage political, ideological, and subjective factors more effectively than AI. Other findings from the present study indicated that although human translators envision threats to professional future, however, they believe that they are indispensable, observing ethical implications of utilizing machine translation, as perceived by 93%, and enhancing creativity, cultural adaptation, and localization, as reported by 87% (Table 5). These findings are in alignment with that of previous studies. For instance, Bo (2023), Moorkens (2022), and Reijers and Dupont (2023) showed that ethical

concerns in AI translation such as copyright, and privacy impact translators' roles. Kenechi (2024) revealed that while AI-powered translation is changing the translation industry by diminishing translators' roles, human expertise and creativity are still vital, particularly for tasks involving language, culture, and ethics. Lin (2023) found that the future of translation will involve a collaboration between human translators and AI, combining their strengths for highest efficiency.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The current study has several implications. First, it emphasizes the significant influence of AI translation tools on the future of human translators, revealing the challenges they encounter in the age of AI. Secondly, the study reveals the strengths and limitations of AI tools in comparison to human translations, emphasizing the value of technological advancements while advocating collaboration between humans and AI to improve translation quality and efficiency. AI-powered tools facilitate language accessibility, foster multicultural understanding, and promote global cooperation. However, they often struggle with ambiguous language, polysemous terms, idiomatic expressions, cultural references, and figurative language. Addressing these limitations could be achieved through collaboration, where human translators can help clarify and refine ambiguous outputs, ensuring better accuracy. Thirdly, the study uncovers the emergence of new professional roles for human translators, including cultural mediators, localization experts, and data curators, as AI tools lack the capacity to grasp subjective human experiences. These evolving roles require translators to engage more deeply with creativity and cultural contexts, producing translations that resonate with target audiences while maintaining linguistic competences. Consequently, human translators remain essential for creativity and effective cross-cultural communication, particularly in sectors where cultural awareness and narrative coherence are crucial, such as literature and art. Another implication points to the need for human translators to adopt research-driven practices to sustain their relevance in the AI era. Human translators need to remain competitive and informed about linguistic development, audience preferences, and ethical considerations through continuous research that ensures that translations maintain accuracy and cultural appropriateness. This proactive approach not only enhances individual skills but also contributes to the broader field of translation studies, promoting best practices and ethical standards across the industry.

Based on the research findings, the study recommends cultivating expertise in AI-driven translation tools while promoting a more integrated partnership with AI. The study also recommends stressing the necessity of collaborative methods in translation education and practice to stay competitive alongside AI developments. The study finds that human translators remain essential, especially when it comes to preserving cultural nuance and upholding ethical standards in the use of AI translation systems.

However, the study is limited to a small sample size of thirty female participants who teach and practice written translation. This allowed for in-depth qualitative analysis of their perceptions regarding the impact of AI on their professional future. However, male participants were not included due to social constraints. Therefore, future studies should involve a larger, more diverse group of participants, including both female and male translators and teachers from various universities worldwide.

To wrap up, this study explored how human translators perceive their future in connection with advancing AI technologies, aiming to fill a gap in the literature where research on human translators' evolving roles in the AI era remains limited. The study investigated the benefits and barriers of AI-powered translation, the challenges that human translators face, and the strategies they employ to adapt their skills and remain competitive in a rapidly evolving industry. Thus, by exploring the dynamic relationship between human expertise and machine capabilities, this research contributes to both translation studies and translation technology, providing insights into how emerging technologies are transforming translation practices. The findings underscore the importance of human expertise in maintaining linguistic diversity, cultural appropriateness, and creative expression in the era of AI-driven translation.

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Sentence Classification Using Machine Learning and Word Embedding: An Innovation in Indonesian Language Learning

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Abstract—In applied linguistics, writing assessment examines language learning. There are various genres in writing, but the evaluation always includes a syntactic component or sentence structure. This research focuses on classifying sentence structure in the Indonesian language using the Random Forest Classifier algorithm on five different experiment models, which are trained using different vectorization techniques, including bag of word (BoW), hashing, Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency (TF-IDF), CBoW, and skipgram vectorizers. The results showed that the accuracy of the models varied significantly, with the highest accuracy of 76% achieved by the model trained using the CBoW vectorizer. The model trained using the BoW vectorizer and skipgram vectorizer had the lowest accuracies of 65%. These results suggest that different vectorization techniques significantly impact the accuracy of the model and the CBoW vectorization technique is the most

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effective. While the skipgram was trained using the dataset itself before being used to vectorize the dataset, but it did not show a significant improvement in accuracy. Classifying sentence structures with various models is important and may continue to support the syntactic assessment of computer-based Indonesian language writing skills.

***Index Terms*—Bag of Word, Continuous Bag of Word, sentence structure, syntactic assessment, Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency, vectorization techniques**

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is used as a means of communication only by humans. This is due to the human ability to create a symbol or name something. This is an ability that is not possessed by animals or plants. It also functions as a system of language symbols in the culture of a nation (Rabiah, 2018; Tektigul et al., 2023; Zalmansyah, 2017). Language may contribute to science, socio-culture, and society (Hariyanto et al., 2023; Nardiati et al., 2023; Nursugiharti et al., 2024; Zalmansyah et al., 2023). In this modern era, language cannot be separated from science and technology, so it involves the use of technology as part of language development.

Technological developments and advances touch various aspects of life, including in the field of language (Alimyar & Lakshmi G, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic, which broke out some time ago, has created the need for an online learning system. After the pandemic is relatively over, the “positive” side is that online learning has become an alternative to the reality of education. In the online learning process, the assessment aspect is one of the parts.

This research examines the detection of Indonesian sentence structures using machine learning and word embeddings. The importance of creating a model or an Artificial Intelligence that can detect a sentence structure is to assist in the automatic assessment of the result of writing texts. Writing texts are produced by students in the language learning process at school. In Indonesia, writing is trained and tested in the form of text production. In the 2013 Curriculum (revised) text-based learning has been applied to Indonesian Language subject. Writing skills as one of the four language skills (listening-reading-writing-speaking) have especially begun to be taught at the elementary school level in text form with various types of text genres (De Smedt et al., 2016; Fatonah & Wiradharma, 2018; Hoyos Pipicano, 2024; Jagaiah et al., 2020; Jiang et al., 2022; Khair & Misnawati, 2022; Kim & Zagata, 2024; Nordin et al., 2022; Philippakos et al., 2023; Renza et al., 2022; Rodríguez-Gonzalo & Abad-Beltrán, 2023; Setiawan et al., 2019; Sinaga et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2022; Zalmansyah, 2017; Zalmansyah, 2018).

In all text genres, there must be elements of words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and paragraphs. If the assessment is carried out on text, one of the elements of text scoring is syntax scoring which if conducted automatically, requires a model or script that can detect every sentence structure in a text. However, this research is limited only to the detection system at the sentence level and does not extend to paragraphs or scoring systems in the form of scores.

The components of the Indonesian writing assessment generally consist of content, organization, syntax, vocabulary, and mechanics (Abeywickrama & Brown, 2010). The detection of mechanical components and vocabulary in written Indonesian texts has been carried out in an Indonesian spelling editing application, called SIPEBI, developed by Mayani (Ramliyana et al., 2022; Utami, 2022; Winahyu, 2024). This application is connected to the Indonesian language dictionary, called KBBI (Moeljadi et al., 2016) for matching with the correct vocabulary elements. Meanwhile, Ratna also developed a web-based automatic essay scoring system, SIMPLE-O. This system works using latent semantics analysis (LSA) which compares the text with the words chosen as references (Ahmad & Laroche, 2023; Kim et al., 2020; Ratna et al., 2015; Valdez et al., 2018; Venugopal et al., 2023).

The syntactic component in this case is related to the use of sentences with the proper sentence structure or function syntax. Therefore, in this study, the data used is in the form of sentences with a standard structure. So, if there is a sentence that uses a non-standard structure, the machine will not read it, so the sentence is categorized as a wrong sentence.

With the advent of Machine Learning and Big Data, machine learning is constantly applied to solve various problems. The idea behind big data and the implementation of machine learning is to gather large enough data, and let a machine learning algorithm analyze those data, then form a model from patterns that are found in those analyzed data. Those patterns that are found by the algorithms are normally invisible to the naked human eye. This is the main reason why we implemented machine learning to create a model that could detect sentence structure in the Indonesian language. Since in the Indonesian language, a particular word could act as more than one entity depending on the position in a sentence, thus we could not implement Named Entity Recognition and POS tagging.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Algorithms based on transformational grammar have been used for a long time in detecting sentences, especially English sentences (Arooj et al., 2024; Campbell et al., 2012; Friedman, 1969, 1971; Leacock et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2014; Wortmann & Stouffs, 2018). In addition, in the English language, efforts to detect sentences as support for automatic writing assessments have indeed been started since the 1960s, although they then vacated and reappeared in 1970, initiated by Ellis Page and a team at the University of Connecticut who developed an automated essay scoring engine (Shermis et al., 2010).

Research on the detection of Indonesian sentence structure with machine learning is still rare. Some of them are research conducted by Gunawan, Mudafiq, and Sulastra. Identify and analyze sentence structure in the Indonesian language, even though not using a machine learning algorithm *per se*. They used LALR (Look Ahead Left Right) parser and POS (Part of Speech) Tag to identify Bahasa Indonesia sentence structure (Gunawan et al., 2019). The research focused on *kalimat tunggal* or otherwise known as a single sentence. First sentences are gathered, then preprocessing, and later processing, then finally post-processing. Preprocessing includes a set of processes that cleans the sentences from punctuation and tokenization, which outputs a tokenized sentence with the label of each token. Meanwhile, the processing stage took those labeled tokens to the LALR parser. There are no training processes in LALR parser, unlike machine learning. LALR parser works by following a set of rules created by humans after analyzing patterns on those tagged-tokenized sentences. Finally, in the post-processing stage, those sets of rules or models are assessed, by comparing the model prediction with expert judgment. The resulting evaluation saw the algorithm could parse 86.7% of the evaluation sentences correctly and couldn't parse 10% of the sentences.

Similar to previous research, Mudafiq et al. (Pratama et al., 2017) also use LALR parser to identify sentence structure, the difference is POS tagging was replaced with CFG (Context Grammar). Other than replacing the POS tag with CFG the computing process is largely the same, the algorithm rules are still defined by humans. This research also includes compound sentences in addition to single sentences. The final evaluation shows that LALR parser could successfully parse 70% of the sentence, with the algorithm performing significantly better in a single sentence.

Moving on from LALR, Sulastra et al. used Constraint-Based Formalism to analyze sentence structure in the Indonesian language (Sulastra, 2014). Still the same as the previous two research, in this research algorithm rules are defined by humans. The algorithm successfully parses 61% of the single sentences, and 38% of compound sentences during the evaluation.

Meanwhile, more specifically on the syntactic structure of Indonesian sentences, Wardana uses the Left-Corner algorithm and Nazief and Adriani's stemming process with CSharp programming to categorize sentence functions. Sentences that have been sorted out can be categorized into sentence functions, namely subject (S), predicate (P), object (O), and adverb (K) (Wardana et al., 2019).

Shifting from the Indonesian language, multiple research projects have been conducted to identify sentence structure or grammatical rules in various languages. Such as Arabic (Elarnaoty et al., 2012) and Bangla (Rahman et al., 2020). Nevertheless, research implementing machine learning is almost non-existent, especially in Bahasa Indonesia. Based on this premise, in this research, we created a classification model that is expected to be able to detect the structure of an input sentence.

III. METHODS

This research adheres to the SEMMA process, to be more organized and provides a more comprehensive paper. SEMMA process consists of five stages which are sample, explore, modify, model, and assess (Alimyar & Lakshmi G, 2021; Harno et al., 2024; Lima et al., 2024; Novillo Rangone et al., 2021; Quintero et al., 2024; Sundararajan et al., 2020; Tariq et al., 2019; Truong, 2024). The sample stage consisted of gathering the sample, in the explore stage the samples are explored using various data visualization methods, and in the modified stage the sample was manipulated based on the findings in the explore stage, and the model stage saw the sample is fed to the machine learning algorithm, and finally on the assess stage, the machine learning model created on the previous stage was assessed. This flow of process can be repeated if necessary.

A. Sample

One thousand two hundred and fourteen sentences in Bahasa Indonesia had been collected from various resources, both the mass media and intuitive sources based on the reasoning of researchers. Furthermore, the words or phrases in it are labeled according to their position in the sentence structure. The selection of sentence is based on the form of the syntactic structure of Indonesia language sentences, namely subject-predicate (SP); subject-predicate-object (SPO); subject-predicate-object-adverb (SPOK), and subject-predicate-adverb (SPK) (Moeliono et al., 2017). The sentence structure has also been ascertained to be a single sentence in the formal Indonesian language.

B. Explore

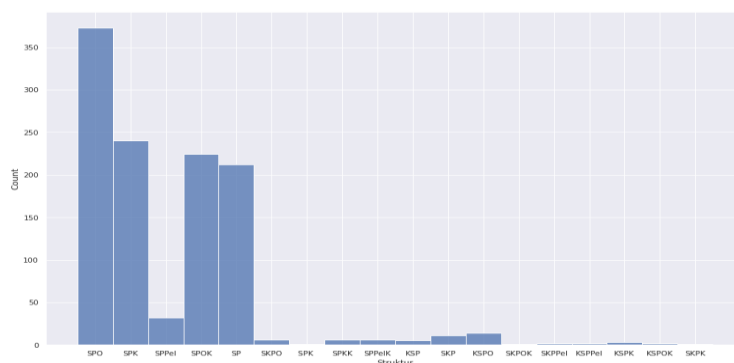


Figure 1. Number of Sentences per Class

Entering the exploration stage, the number of sentences per class is first visualized. Judging from Figure 1, the dataset is imbalanced, thus it is concluded that oversampling is necessary for the next stage. Furthermore, as previously explained, this research only analyzes the structure of SP, SPO, SPOK, and SPK, even though the data contains other sentence structures because the number of other classes is too small.

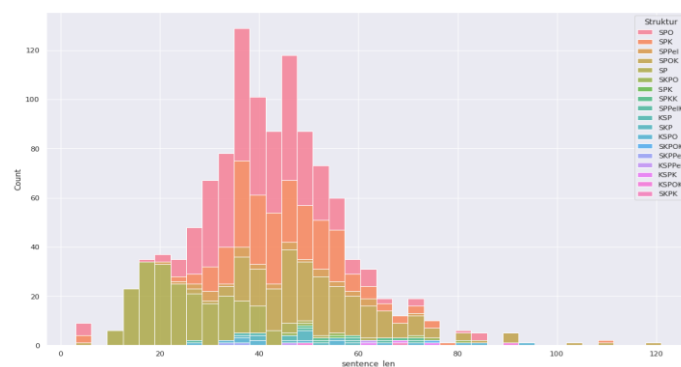


Figure 2. Distribution of Sentence Length

In addition to visualizing the number of each class in the sample, some other visualizations are also conducted. Figure 2 shows the distribution of sentence length which is measured by many characters. From figure 2 it can be concluded that the samples are not evenly distributed, and we can see many sentences consisting of a very small number of characters, in addition to some outliers on the longer sentences. Considering the structure, only SPO and SPK structures are evenly distributed, while SP and SPOK have skewed distribution.

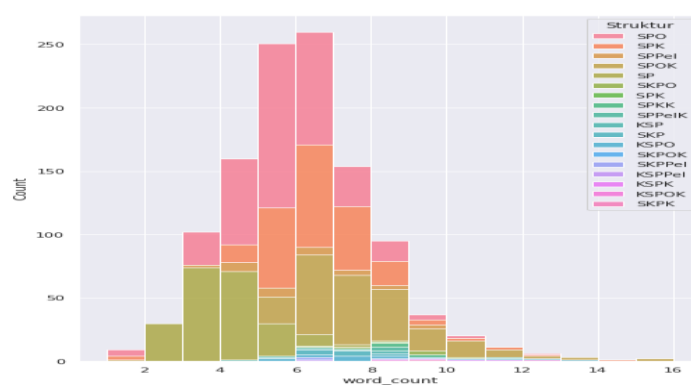


Figure 3. Distribution of Sentence Length

Figure 3 shows the distribution of word counts of the samples. Again, the samples are not evenly distributed, but contrary to Figure 2, only the outliers on the longer sentences caused the skewness. Structure-wise, the SP and SPOK still have a noticeable difference in distribution. This is because SP sentences are mostly very short.

C. Modify

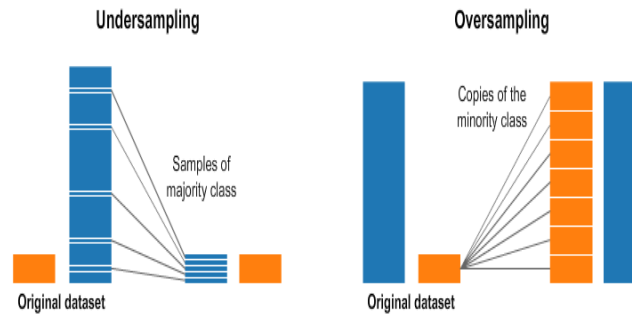


Figure 4. Comparison of Undersampling and Oversampling

In the previous stage, we found that the sample was imbalanced. An imbalanced sample could impact the accuracy of the model negatively. There are two resampling methods to handle an imbalanced sample, under-sampling and oversampling, which Figure 4 shows the comparison. Under-sampling took the majority class, which in this research are SPO, SPK, and SPOK, and then randomly removed sentences on those structures until the number of sentences was equal to the number of sentences on SP. Oversampling took the minority class, which is SPK, SPOK, and SP, and then multiplied some sentences until the number of sentences was equal to the number of sentences on SPO (Table 1).

TABLE 1
NUMBER OF SENTENCES PER STRUCTURE

Structure	Number of Sentences		
	Sample	Undersampled	Oversampled
SPO	373	212	373
SPK	240	212	373
SPOK	224	212	373
SP	212	212	373

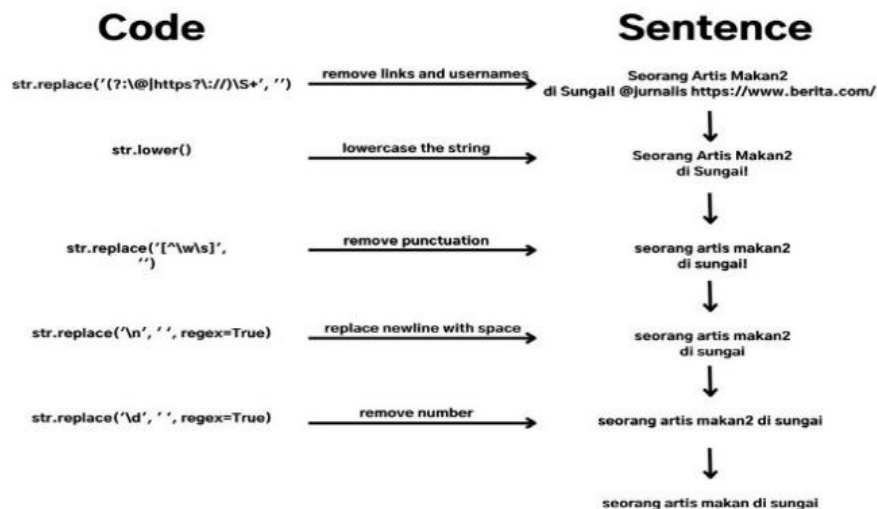


Figure 5. Data Cleaning Process of This Research

It is important to note that the samples are collected from various sources, which might contain unwanted characters. Thus, the sentences on the sample undergo a series of data-cleaning syntaxes. Figure 5 shows the syntaxes used and the effects of each syntax.

Contrary to popular belief, computers cannot directly understand human language. Human language must undergo a series of processes to be understood by computers; there are a myriad of processes but all of them come down to turning the text into numbers. This process is known as vectorization. The experimentation in this research will focus on implementing 4 different vectorization methods and compare the accuracy of the resulting model in predicting the sentence structure.

Sample

Sentence	Structure
Saya minum	SP
Saya makan nasi	SPK
Saya makan nasi di Jonggol	SPOK

Computer would process as

ayam	di	jonggol	makan	minum	nasi	saya	Class
0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2

Figure 6. Bag of Words Vectorization

One of the used vectorization methods is Bag of Words, the simplest of all. Bag of Words or BoW essentially turns every word that exists on the sample into a feature. Figure 6 illustrates the results of BoW. However, there is one crucial weakness which is the fact that BoW doesn't consider the position of a word in a sentence or the context of the word.

Bag-of-Words (BoW) is a simple yet powerful technique for representing text data in the form of numerical feature vectors. The basic idea behind BoW is to treat a document as a collection of its words, disregarding grammar and word order, and represent it as a fixed-length vector where each dimension corresponds to a specific word and the value in that dimension represents the number of times that word appears in the document. BoW is commonly used in natural language processing tasks such as text classification, sentiment analysis, and topic modeling.

One famous research that used the BoW approach is "A Study on Text Classification Using SVM and Naive Bayes" by Joachims, T. (Joachims, 1999), where the authors applied SVM and Naive Bayes classification algorithms to the text classification problem using the BoW representation. Another research is "A Comparative Study on Feature Selection in Text Categorization" by Yang, Y. (Yang et al., 2012) where the authors used BoW representation as a feature for text categorization and compared it with other feature selection methods. BoW is still widely used as feature representation in many text mining tasks, and it is effective in many real-world applications.

Another common method of vectorization is Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency, otherwise known as TF-IDF. This method partially counters BoW weakness by replacing the numbers, instead of just 0 and 1, TF-IDF adheres to the following formulas.

$$idf_i = \log\left(\frac{n}{df_i}\right) \quad (1)$$

$$w_{i,j} = tf_{i,j} \times idf_i \quad (2)$$

To put this formula in layman's terms. TF-IDF is almost like BoW with the exception that $w_{i,j}$ would replace the cells that have the value one, $tf_{i,j}$ is the same as BoW. Hence TF-IDF is multiplying idf_i value of each word with a BoW (Salton & Buckley, 1988), as shown in Figure 7 by using a sample previously used in Figure 6.

Implement formula (1) for every word on sample

Word	Idf _i
ayam	$\text{Log}(1/3) = 0.477$
di	$\text{Log}(1/3) = 0.477$
jonggol	$\text{Log}(1/3) = 0.477$
makan	$\text{Log}(2/3) = -0.17$
minum	$\text{Log}(1/3) = 0.477$
nasi	$\text{Log}(1/3) = 0.477$
saya	$\text{Log}(3/3) = 0$

tf_{i,j} (Similar to BoW)

ayam	di	jonggol	makan	minum	nasi	saya	Class
0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
1	1	1	1	0	0	1	2

Implement formula (2), computer would process as:

ayam	di	jonggol	makan	minum	nasi	saya	Class
0	0	0	0	0.477	0	0	0
0	0	0	-0.17	0	0.477	0	1
0.477	0.477	0.477	-0.17	0	0	0	2

Figure 7. TF-IDF Vectorization

There are some issues with the BoW and TF-IDF approach. Firstly, the measure of vectors depends on the estimate of our lexicon, which can be colossal. Usually, this is a squander of space and increments algorithms complexity exponentially which would result in *The Curse of Dimensionality*.

Furthermore, these embeddings will be closely coupled to their applications, making transfer-learning to a model employing a diverse lexicon of the same estimate, including, or expelling words from vocabulary would be nearly outlandish because it would require to re-train the complete model once more.

Finally, the complete reason for embedding is to capture the relevant meaning of the words, which this representation comes up short to do. There's no correlation between words that have comparable meaning or utilization. To tackle the problems, we mentioned CBoW and Skip-Gram were implemented.

The first Skip-gram model is defined as a set of assembled word prediction assignments. Each assignment comprises of prediction of a word v given a word w utilizing correspondingly their yield and input representations.

$$p(v | w, \theta) = \frac{\exp(in_w^T out_v)}{\sum_{v'=1}^V \exp(in_w^T out_{v'})}, \quad (3)$$

where global parameter $\theta = \{in_v, out_v\}_{v=1}^V$ stands for both input and output representations for all words of the dictionary indexed with $1, \dots, V$. Both input and output representations are real vectors of the dimensionality D . These individual predictions are grouped in a way to simultaneously predict context words y of some input word x .

$$p(y | x, \theta) = \prod_j p(y_j | x, \theta). \quad (4)$$

Input text $\mathbf{o}$ consisting of N words $o_1, o_2, \dots, o_N$ is then interpreted as a sequence of input words $X = \{x_i\}_{i=1}^N$ and their contexts $Y = \{y_i\}_{i=1}^N$. Here i -the training object (x_i, y_i) consists of the word $x_i = o_i$ and its context $y_i = \{o_t\}_{t \in c(i)}$ where $c(i)$ is a set of indices such that $|t - i| \leq C/2$ and $t \neq i$ for all $t \in c(i)$.

Finally, the Skip-gram objective function is the likelihood of contexts given the corresponding input words:

$$p(Y | X, \theta) = \prod_{i=1}^N p(y_i | x_i, \theta) = \prod_{i=1}^N \prod_{j=1}^C p(y_{ij} | x_i, \theta) \quad (5)$$

(Mikolov et al., 2013)

A continuous bag of words model (CBOW) is an exceedingly effective shallow neural network algorithm. It is created to produce vector representations of a language lexicon so that the information of the words is encoded within the vector space structure. The continuous bag of words model is comparable to the feedforward neural network language model (FFNNLM). FFNNLM was first proposed by Bengio et al., which applies the feedforward neural arrange (FFNN) into the language model and learns a dispersed representation for words to unravel the issue of high dimensionality. Be that as it may, the non-linear hidden layer of the model is erased, and the projection layer of the model is applied to all words. That's to say, the continuous-bag-of-words model may be a basic neural network with three layers: input, projection, and output (Mikolov et al., 2013).

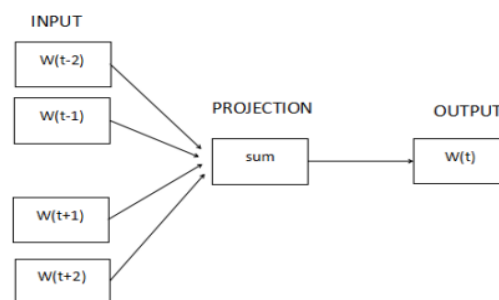


Figure 8. Continuous Bag of Words

D. Model

After undergoing vectorization, the dataset would move on to the next phase, which is the modeling phase. In this phase, the vectorized dataset will be modeled with the Random Forest algorithm. The random forest classifier comprises a combination of tree classifiers where each classifier is created employing a random vector tested freely from the input vector and each tree casts a unit vote for the foremost well-known class to classify an input vector. Random forests classifier is one of the foremost fruitful ensemble learning procedures that have been demonstrated to be exceptionally prevalent and effective in pattern recognition and machine learning for high-dimensional classification and skewed problems. A disadvantage related to tree classifiers is their high variance. In practice, it isn't exceptional for a little alteration within the training data set to result in an exceptionally diverse tree (Breiman, 2001).

E. Assess

Models created during the previous stage are then assessed in this stage. The assessment uses a standard practice for assessing classification models which include the use of Confusion Matrix. A confusion matrix is a table that is used to

define the performance of a classification algorithm. It is a summary of the predictions made by a classifier in comparison to the true values. Confusion matrix is a powerful tool for measuring the quality of classification models.

The basic mathematical formula for a confusion matrix is a table with rows representing the true values and columns representing the predicted values. For example, in a binary classification problem, the matrix will have two rows and two columns. The cells in the matrix represent the number of observations that have been predicted to belong to a certain class while they belong to another class. The diagonal elements represent the number of observations that have been correctly classified, while the off-diagonal elements represent the number of observations that have been misclassified.

Mosteller and Wallace first introduced the confusion matrix in a 1964 paper "Inference in an Authorship Problem" (Mosteller & Wallace, 1963). Confusion matrix is widely used in many machine learning tasks for evaluating the performance of a classification model, it is also used to evaluate the performance of other models that make categorical predictions, such as decision trees, neural networks, and support vector machines.

		Predicted Value			
		SP	SPO	SPK	SPOK
Real Value	SP	P-SP-SP	P-SPO-SP	P-SPK-SP	P-SPOK-SP
	SPO	P-SP-SPO	P-SPO-SPO	P-SPK-SPO	P-SPOK-SPO
	SPK	P-SP-SPK	P-SPO-SPK	P-SPK-SPK	P-SPOK-SPK
	SPOK	P-SP-SPOK	P-SPO-SPOK	P-SPK-SPOK	P-SPOK-SPOK

Figure 9. The Confusional Matrix of This Research

IV. FINDINGS

In this study, eight different experiments have been conducted to explore the effects of different vectorization techniques and sampling methods for classifying Indonesian sentences based on their structure, focusing on four basic sentence types: SP, SPO, SPK, and SPOK. The dataset used for these experiments was approximately 1214 labeled sentences, the entire experiment used the Random Forest algorithm as the classifier. There are four vectorization methods tested which include Bag of Words (BoW), Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency (TF-IDF), Continuous Bag of Words (CBoW), and Skip-gram, in addition to oversampling and under-sampling is also used to address class imbalance. Figure 10 below displays the summary of the experiment results.

Experiment Number	Sampling	Vectorization	Accuracy
1	Oversampled	BoW	69%
2	Undersampled	BoW	65%
3	Oversampled	TF-IDF	70%
4	Undersampled	TF-IDF	73%
5	Oversampled	CBoW	76%
6	Undersampled	CBoW	68%
7	Oversampled	Skipgram	68%
8	Undersampled	Skipgram	65%

Figure 10. Experiment Results

The CBoW model combined oversampling achieved the highest accuracy (76%), indicating it has the best capability in classifying sentence structures. This finding is likely due to how CBoW works itself, in which the model predicts a target word based on its surrounding context that contributes to creating a representation of sentence structures. The efficiency of CBoW in encoding sentence context likely contributed to its better performance in distinguishing between the complex sentence structures represented in the dataset, as we can see from its confusion matrix shown in Figure 11.

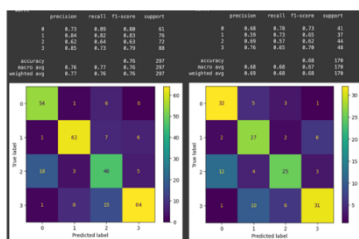


Fig. 11. Classification Report and Confusion Matrix of CBoW-Oversampled (left) and CBoW-Undersampled (Right)

In contrast, the Skip-gram model, despite functioning by creating a detailed word relationship mapping, showed lower accuracies, which are 68% with oversampling and 65% with under-sampling. This can be attributed to Skip-gram's focus on predicting surrounding words for a given target word, which, while useful for capturing word meanings, may not be as effective for the task of sentence structure classification. As we can see from its confusional matrix in Figure 12, Skip-gram fails in distinguishing between SPK and SPOK, this is likely due to its detail-oriented structures. This is better at capturing relationships involving rare words or phrases, but this detail-oriented approach might not be as necessary for understanding general sentence structures, especially when the focus is on common syntactic patterns.

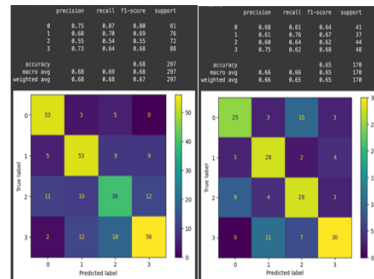


Fig. 12. Classification Report and Confusion Matrix of Skipgram-Oversampled (left) and Skipgram-Undersampled (Right)

On the other hand, BoW and TF-IDF might be too simple for this task. In the case of BoW, the oversampling method might have helped to balance the classes, leading to better model performance compared to under-sampling. However, BoW does not consider the order of words or context, which might limit its effectiveness in capturing sentence structures. Compared to oversampling, the decrease in accuracy in BoW_under-sampling could be due to the loss of information caused by under-sampling itself. This method might have removed valuable examples, leading to a less effective training process for the model.

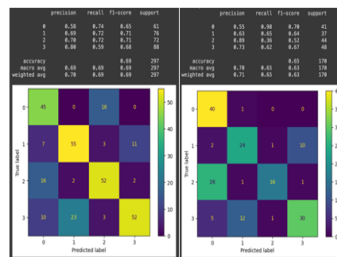


Fig. 13. Classification Report and Confusion Matrix of BoW-Oversampled (left) and BoW-Undersampled (Right)

However, in the case of TF-IDF, things are reversed. This method weighs the words based on their frequency across the datasets, which can provide better insights into each word concerning sentence structures. The impact of sampling methods on model performance was also notable. TF-IDF with under-sampling achieved higher accuracy (73%) than with oversampling (70%), suggesting that the model could generalize better with a more balanced, albeit smaller, dataset. This result underscores the potential trade-off between dataset size and balance in machine learning, where reducing the number of samples to achieve class balance can sometimes lead to more robust models.

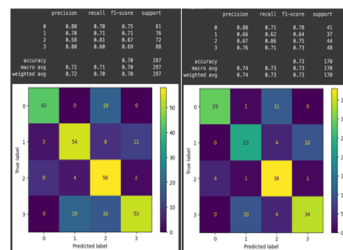


Fig. 14. Classification Report and Confusion Matrix of TFIDF-Oversampled (left) and TFIDF-Undersampled (Right)

V. DISCUSSION

This study explored the impact of various vectorization techniques and sampling methods on classifying Indonesian sentences based on their structure using the Random Forest algorithm. Four basic sentence types were classified: Subject-Predicate (SP), Subject-Predicate-Object (SPO), Subject-Predicate-Complement (SPK), and Subject-Predicate-Object-Complement (SPOK). Through eight different experiments, we aimed to determine the most effective vectorization and sampling combinations for achieving high classification accuracy.

A. Vectorization Techniques

The experiments tested four vectorization methods: Bag of Words (BoW), Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency (TF-IDF), Continuous Bag of Words (CBoW), and Skip-gram. Each method offers a unique approach to representing text data, impacting how well sentence structures can be distinguished by the classifier.

The results show that *CBoW combined with oversampling achieved the highest accuracy (76%)*, making it the most effective method in this study. CBoW works by predicting a target word based on its surrounding context, enabling it to capture sentence structure better than other methods. This efficiency in encoding the contextual relationship between words allows CBoW to more accurately differentiate between the four sentence types. The confusion matrix in Figure 11 supports this, as CBoW-oversampling shows fewer misclassifications, especially between closely related sentence structures such as SPO and SPOK.

In contrast, the *Skip-gram model yielded lower accuracy (68% with oversampling and 65% with undersampling)*, which can be explained by its mechanism of predicting surrounding words from a given target word. Although Skip-gram excels in capturing detailed word relationships, it may not be as effective in sentence structure classification, where understanding the general syntactic patterns is more important than detailed word-level relations. As indicated in the confusion matrix (Figure 12), Skip-gram particularly struggled to distinguish between SPK and SPOK, likely because its focus on rare word relationships does not contribute much to identifying common sentence structures.

The *BoW and TF-IDF models* both performed reasonably well but with notable differences in their performance. BoW with oversampling achieved 69% accuracy, slightly higher than undersampling (65%). This is likely because oversampling helped balance the classes, allowing the model to train on a more evenly distributed dataset. However, BoW's limitation lies in its inability to capture the word order or context, which is essential for understanding sentence structure. The underperformance with undersampling can be attributed to the loss of critical information, as valuable training examples may have been removed, reducing the model's effectiveness.

In the case of *TF-IDF*, under-sampling produced a better result (73% accuracy) than oversampling (70%). This suggests that under-sampling helped the model generalize better, even with a smaller dataset. TF-IDF considers word frequency across the dataset, which allows it to weigh words in a way that better reflects sentence structure. This finding highlights the importance of balancing dataset size and quality in machine learning models, where fewer but more balanced samples can sometimes lead to more robust performance, as evidenced by the confusion matrix in Figure 14.

B. Impact of Sampling Methods

Sampling methods, particularly oversampling and undersampling, were employed to address the class imbalance in the dataset. The impact of these methods was evident across all experiments. Generally, oversampling improved the model performance for vectorization methods like CBoW and BoW, as it mitigated the issue of underrepresented classes. However, oversampling also risked introducing noise by duplicating samples, which may explain why TF-IDF performed better with under-sampling.

Undersampling, on the other hand, produced mixed results. For TF-IDF, it resulted in better model accuracy, likely because it removed noisy or redundant data, allowing the classifier to focus on more representative examples of each sentence type. However, for methods like BoW and Skip-gram, undersampling led to a decrease in accuracy, suggesting that these methods require a larger dataset to capture enough information about sentence structures.

C. Implications for Indonesian Sentence Classification

The findings of this study have significant implications for classifying Indonesian sentence structures. First, the superiority of CBoW in combination with oversampling demonstrates that capturing the contextual relationships between words is critical for understanding sentence structures. This suggests that future studies should explore further enhancements to context-based models, such as more sophisticated embeddings or deep learning techniques like BERT, which could potentially improve classification accuracy.

Moreover, the trade-offs between oversampling and undersampling highlight the importance of dataset balance in machine learning. While oversampling can help address class imbalances, it may not always lead to improved performance, particularly for vectorization methods like TF-IDF, which benefit from undersampling. This finding suggests that achieving optimal performance may require fine-tuning the balance between dataset size and quality, depending on the specific vectorization method employed.

Finally, the lower performance of BoW and Skip-gram indicates that these methods may not be well-suited for sentence structure classification tasks that require an understanding of the syntactic arrangement of words. Future research should consider exploring more advanced models that can capture word order and context more effectively, such as recurrent neural networks (RNNs) or transformers.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study's results highlight the importance of choosing appropriate vectorization and sampling techniques for specific linguistic tasks. CBoW's context-capturing efficiency, especially when combined with oversampling, proved to be most effective for classifying Indonesian sentence structures, offering a promising direction for further research in computational linguistics and natural language processing. The linguistic characteristics of the Indonesian language, with

its structured sentence construction (SP, SPO, SPK, SPOK), played a significant role in the experiment outcomes. The ability of CBoW to capture sentence-wide context likely provided it with an advantage in identifying the underlying structure of sentences, which is less pronounced in models like Skip-gram that emphasize word-to-word relationships.

While the findings offer valuable insights into the suitability of different vectorization and sampling methods for sentence structure classification in Indonesian, the study has limitations, including the relatively small size of the dataset. Future research could explore larger datasets, different machine learning algorithms, and deep learning approaches to further understand the dynamics of sentence structure classification in Indonesian and other languages with similar syntactic features.

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The Impact of AI-Powered Instructional Activities on Enhancing EFL Majors' Oracy Skills

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Abstract—This research investigated the impact of AI-powered instructional activities on enhancing EFL majors' oracy skills. An experimental method (pre/post-test non-equivalent group design) was employed to accomplish the purpose of the research. The research participants, totalling 65 sophomore EFL majors, College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia, were divided into a control group and an experimental one. A standardised listening test was adopted, a speaking test was developed, and a scoring rubric was created; both tests were administered to the participants before and after treatment. The experimental group received the AI-powered instructional activities, while the control group studied the conventional materials using conventional teaching methods. The results revealed that the experimental group students showed significant improvement in their listening and speaking skills compared to their counterparts in the control group. The research recommended incorporating AI-powered instructional activities to develop the EFL majors' oracy skills.

Index Terms—AI, instructional activities, oracy skills, listening, speaking

I. INTRODUCTION

Oracy skills are considered by some as merely talking or simply listening and speaking; however, they form the foundation for the other language skills (Ikwen, 2015). Oracy skills form the basis of other types of learning as they enable learners to link what they have learned to what they are about to learn (Nicholson, 1998). Through oracy skills - namely listening and speaking- language users can transfer their knowledge and ideas to others and develop new understanding (Lifford et al., 2000). Furthermore, oracy skills have been found to support academic achievement and provide access to effective engagement in the professional context (Gaunt & Stott, 2018; Hill, 2021). "L2 oracy is essential for academic learning, creative and critical thinking, collaboration and innovation in our globalised world of the twenty-first century" (Goh, 2014, p. 1).

When contemplating daily life activities and the total time of communication, Rivers (2018) estimated that: listening occupies 40-50% of the total time; speaking occupies 25-30%; reading occupies 11-16%; and writing occupies 9%. Such statistical analysis highlights the significance of listening and speaking skills, which are essential not only in daily life interaction but also in the classroom. Integrating the main oral skills forms the essence of communicative competence which includes knowledge of phonology, grammar, pragmatics and sociolinguistics. More critically, practicing language in the learning environment necessitates listening and speaking which are the primary channels for learning (Lynch & Mendelsohn, 2013).

EFL oracy comprises listening and speaking, and they cannot be taught separately as they represent the two main pillars of communication (Mah, 2016). The term oracy was originally coined by Wilkinson (1965) to refer to oral language skills, mainly listening and speaking, unlike literacy skills: reading and writing. Cambridge Papers for ELT define oracy skills as using listening and speaking skills to communicate effectively through talks in various social contexts (Cambridge Papers in ELT, 2021). On the other hand, speaking is also considered a critical skill as the individuals' language skills are assessed based on their speaking abilities, which creates the first impression (Lord, 2014). Listening is a multifaceted active process encompassing several factors to be integrated, such as vocabulary understanding, sentence structuring, stress and intonation recognition, and sociocultural context grasping (Musa & Abdel-Aliem, 2019; Vandergrift, 1999).

Celce-Murcia (2001, p. 103) highlighted, "For most people, the ability to speak a language is synonymous with knowing that language since speech is the most basic means of human communication". Being a productive and demanding skill, speaking is the most effective means for conveying ideas, thoughts and emotions; moreover, language learners need to achieve a satisfactory level of speaking skills. Furthermore, for the oral message to be developed accurately for the target audience, ample requirements ought to be met to deliver the intended meaning, such as fluency, accuracy, intonation, etc. (Ari, 2018).

Brown (2006) demonstrated that mastering oracy skills necessitates hard work over a long time as it is not an easy process, yet it is not stress-free even for professionals. EFL oracy occurs in four elements, namely social and emotional, linguistic, cognitive and physical. The social and emotional element incorporates interaction. In the communication process, the linguistic element encompasses vocabulary and the grammar rules in the language used; the cognitive element comprises the ability to organise events and prioritise the content elements; the physical element covers the physical strands and the pronunciation capabilities (Mercer et al., 2019).

Mastering oracy skills is part and parcel of every successful language learning endeavour, necessitating adopting new teaching approaches to attain potential outcomes (Richards, 2006). As such, a plethora of research has asserted that language can be acquired through a communicative process as language is mainly and primarily communication. Richards (2006) elaborated on the development witnessed in the field of language learning starting from achieving grammatical competence, followed by the employing of the grammar-translation method, the audio-lingual method, and the direct method. Finally, the communicative language teaching approach was adopted by language educationalists where grammar was not the focal point of language learning. Consequently, attaining proficiency in language learning necessitates practice. Bearing this in mind, Celce-Murcia (2001) highlighted various ways to improve language and communicative skills among learners. Learners can practice discussions, speeches, role plays, and other numerous activities.

Technology has been causing a drastic change in the education landscape and restructuring the educational paradigm with numerous innovative tools (Wark, 2018). Artificial intelligence has impacted pedagogical practices, specifically in the language learning field, to be a focal point for language researchers worldwide to ensure its implications in different fields. AI tools have the potential to provide flexible and adaptable learning experiences. Turing (1950) claimed that machines could perform several functions automatically without human interference. The following trend of research sought to explore the possibility of the tools to do some jobs automatically. In the past, artificial intelligence was depicted by Rifkin (1995) as the mechanism of developing machines which can execute tasks that need human intelligence. On the other hand, Jia (2009) explained the meaning of AI in simple terms as an intelligent machine which can complete a discussion with humans. Testa (2021, p. 18) defined artificial intelligence as “a computational machine, capable of processing data, modifying it based on logically formulated instructions”.

Suryana et al. (2020) signified that AI tools are employed to reduce human effort in different life tasks considering the speed and quality such as Google, Tesla and Apple. Chiefly, the proliferation of AI tools came with the appearance of ChatGPT by OpenAI (Rodrigues et al., 2023).

Abundant applications and software have appeared to enhance foreign language learning; such tools are not seeking to replace the teachers, yet they provide innovative, adaptable assistance for accomplishing the teacher's work. Providing relevant information and supporting independent learning, AI tools help students improve their overall language learning (Sumakul et al., 2022). Interaction allows foreign language learners to negotiate input and produce output with the guidance of a teacher (Loewen & Sato, 2018). The extraordinary abilities of the AI tools to process large amounts of data, understand different contexts, submit personalised and fine-tuned feedback, and offer new insights and suggestions have made such tools viable options for fostering the educational practices and enhance the intended learning outcomes (Roll & Wylie, 2016; Ouyang & Jiao, 2021).

Chatbots as simple forms and newly developed tools powered by AI were recently used to enhance the skills of language learners considering several aspects such as timely interaction and dialogic feedback (Huang et al., 2022; Radziwill & Benton, 2017), authentic learning contexts (Junaidi, 2020), and personal support (Smutny & Schreiberova, 2020). Chatbot is “an AI-assisted dialogue software program that can interact with users and process their inputs using natural language” (Huang et al., 2022, p. 237). Significantly, AI chatbots have appeared to execute abundant tasks in several domains, such as Apple's Siri, Amazon's Alexa, Google's Personal Assistant and Replika (Smutny & Schreiberova, 2020). Chatbots were proven to be effective means because they enable access to learning resources, meet the learners' needs, and decrease language anxiety (Çakmak, 2022; El Shazly, 202; Hadi & Junor, 2022; Fidan & Gencel, 2022; Tai & Chen, 2022). The users can use their mobile phones, tablets, iPads, and computers to connect with chatbots. The AI tools enable learners to interact via voice-based, text-based, and voice-text (Wollny et al., 2021).

The integration of AI tools in the teaching-learning process signifies a form of collaborative learning. When learners interact with AI-assisted language learning tools, they do their best to advance their levels to reach their ZPD. Such interactions are aligned with the principles of the social constructive learning theory of Vygotsky where technology as a collaborative partner is best utilized for achieving the intended learning objectives (Weng & Chiu, 2023; Zheng et al., 2021). The learner's engagement with AI tools plays a pivotal role in shaping the mechanisms of AI-assisted language learning as the learners construct knowledge meaningfully (Fitria, 2023).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous studies were conducted addressing AI in the language teaching-learning context. For instance, Hsu et al. (2023) conducted a study investigating the impact of AI tools for image recognition on EFL vocabulary acquisition, self-regulated learning and anxiety. The study adopted the experimental method; the experimental group received AI-assisted image recognition technologies treatment while the control group received the traditional content via the conventional method. The results of the study revealed that the study participants' vocabulary knowledge in the experimental group outperformed their counterparts in the control group. Although the experimental group outperformed the control one in

self-regulation and language anxiety, no statistically significant differences were found between the mean scores of the experimental group and the control one.

Rad et al. (2023) conducted a study to investigate the effectiveness of AI tools in developing writing feedback literacy, engaging and improving overall writing outcomes. The study adopted the experimental method, and 46 EFL learners participated in the study. The Wordtune app was adopted as a treatment material; a writing test and an engagement scale were used for collecting data. The results revealed that AI-based treatment enhanced EFL learners' writing outcomes and engagement.

Çakmak (2022) conducted a study to assess the impact of AI chatbot (Replika) on developing EFL majors' speaking performance. The study adopted the experimental method; the participants were 90 EFL majors who were divided into a control group and an experimental one. The results of the study revealed that the AI chatbot had a positive impact on developing their speaking performance. However, the students' anxiety increased; they also formed negative perceptions towards chatbots.

Lee et al. (2023) investigated the effectiveness of AI-assisted language learning on developing reading enjoyment. The study adopted the experimental method: the experimental group received the treatment via AI tools which generated the reading topic for learners based on their interests, and the control group received the conventional reading and activities. The results confirmed that AI-powered language learning tools enhanced the learners' reading enjoyment significantly.

Xio and Park (2021) investigated the effectiveness of automatic speech recognition (ASR) in identifying English pronunciation errors and the students' attitudes concerning using ASR. The study participants were five EFL learners. The attained results revealed that the errors of pronunciation detected by ASR overlapped with those detected by human raters. Furthermore, ASR assisted the participants with their pronunciation problems.

Junaidi (2020) explored the effectiveness of AI-assisted language learning tools on the study participants' speaking skills. The study adopted the experimental design: the experimental group studied via AI-assisted tools, and the control group studied the usual content via the conventional teaching method. The participants' speaking skills were assessed considering fluency, grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation. The results revealed that the experimental group students outperformed their control group counterparts.

Kim (2019) investigated the effectiveness of AI chatbots in developing English grammar. The participants were 70 undergraduate Korean students. The study adopted the experimental method: the experimental group studied via the Replika app, while the control group studied the usual content via the conventional teaching method. A grammar test was used as a pre-post-test to explore the participants' level and development in grammar skills. The results revealed the effectiveness of chatbots in developing the EFL majors' English grammar skills.

Qinghua and Satar (2020) conducted a study investigating the effects of chatbot use in developing the participants' conversation skills (negotiation for meaning). The participants of the study were eight undergraduate and postgraduate EFL Chinese students. The results demonstrated the effectiveness of chatbots in conversational skills development (negotiation for meaning); the less proficient students gained much from interacting with the chatbots. Learners with higher language proficiency expressed dissatisfaction with the chatbots; limited engagement was observed while interacting with the chatbots.

Putri and Islamiati (2018) investigated the impact of the Duolingo app on EFL majors' listening abilities. The study adopted the experimental method, and 39 EFL majors participated. The results revealed that the Duolingo app has contributed to developing EFL majors' listening skills, and the students expressed positive attitudes towards using such tools.

The displayed literature review underscores the multifaceted significant impact of AI tools in developing various language skills and aspects. For example, AI-assisted language learning promotes language learners' vocabulary knowledge, writing, speaking, listening, grammar proficiency, language enjoyment, and motivation. It was found that AI tools develop literacy skills, motivation and engagement. Although a wealth of literature indicates the effectiveness of AI tools in language learning, a gap exists regarding their influence on oracy skills. The studies reviewed employed a range of experimental designs such as case studies, experimental studies, and instruments due to the variations of the treatments. Some studies included a limited number of participants which means a lack of generalizability and reliability of the findings. Although most studies showed positive outcomes due to the use of AI tools, some studies, such as Hsu et al. (2023) showed a negative impact of AI tools. Çakmak (2022) showed an increase in the level of speaking performance yet showed an increase in the level of anxiety and negative perception about AI tools. Such inconsistency of the yielded results necessitates further investigations to verify the effectiveness of such tools in the development of EFL majors' language skills.

III. METHOD OF THE RESEARCH

A. Research Questions

Research on the impact of AI tools on oracy skills is still scant. Furthermore, no consensus concerning the effectiveness of such tools exists in the literature (Ji et al., 2023). Moreover, most EFL learners suffer from severe weakness in their oracy skills (Amer, 2019; Musa, 2023; Saleh et al., 2023; Tahriri et al., 2015). The present research sought to assess the extent to which AI-powered instructional activities are effective in developing EFL majors' oracy skills by providing a precise insight into the reasonable integration of AI tools in the teaching-learning process to help students, curriculum

developers, and policymakers make the right decision. The research findings might have far-reaching implications worldwide focusing on EFL programs thoroughly and providing custom-tailored effective learning experiences. Moreover, they provide empirical evidence judging the extent to which AI tools can be integrated as efficient tools in the teaching-learning process. The results might have reliable implications concerning developing autonomy and independence due to the employment of AI-powered instructional activities. The current research sought to uncover the promises linked to integrating AI technology into education and the aspiration of developing EFL majors' language skills. Furthermore, all the learning institutions endeavour to enhance the quality of the educational experiences and prepare the graduates for the globalised job market. Integrating AI-powered activities enables bridging the gap between the theoretical teaching of these subjects and the practical use of the language in semi-authentic situations. Subsequently, the following research sought to address the following questions:

- To what extent do AI-powered instructional activities impact EFL majors' listening skills?
- To what extent do AI-powered instructional activities impact EFL majors' speaking skills?

B. Design of the Research

Grounded on the positivist paradigm, it is postulated that reality is objective and can be measured through empirical investigation. In other words, the development of oracy skills can be seen as a measurable outcome which can be assessed through systematic data collection and statistical analysis. The empiricism of the present research is based on quantitative data collection through the administration of valid and reliable instruments before and after the treatment, followed by a rigorous systematic analysis to finally assess the extent to which the oracy skills were developed among the EFL majors (Cohen et al., 2018).

Consequently, the present research adopted the experimental method, aligned with the positivist paradigm, as the most suitable method. Meticulously, it tested the cause-and-effect relationship between two main variables by answering the research questions. A pre/post-test non-equivalent group design was employed in the research to ensure the rigorousness of the administration and outcomes.

C. Participants of the Research

The research participants included 64 sophomore EFL majors, College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. The research participants were randomly selected and assigned into two groups: an experimental group and a control one, using the SPSS software. The initial comparability between the research groups was ensured as the students belonged to similar social classes, and the participants' demographic data, such as age, gender and academic background were alike to some extent. More critically, ethical considerations were considered as the participants were given an overview of the research, considering the purpose, the procedures, and the potential risks and benefits. Furthermore, before participation, the participants' consent was obtained before the treatment, and they were informed that their scores would not be used except for research purposes and would not affect their future grades.

D. Instruments of the Research

Two instruments were developed: a speaking test and a listening comprehension test to accomplish the research purpose. First, the speaking test was developed to assess the participants' oral proficiency. The test consisted of three main sections: 1) a photo card part where each examinee was given a card containing a photo to answer what she could see in the photo in two minutes followed by several questions generated and posed by the examiner about the main aspects of the photo. 2) The second part was the long talk or the cue card, where each examinee was given a card containing one main question followed by three prompts, and the examinee was given one minute to prepare her ideas and two minutes to talk about the topic given followed by several questions related to the cue card. 3) The third part was the discussion, where each examinee was asked several questions about three topics. The test was prepared in six versions to ensure confidentiality; a scoring rubric, consisting of five descriptors, was developed by the researchers to ensure a reliable assessment of the speaking skills. Meticulously, the candidates were assessed in terms of their task fulfilment, fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. Each descriptor was in five levels starting from five to one, and the test total score was 25 marks.

Second: Regarding the listening test, a standardised listening test was borrowed from "First Certificate in English," comprising various contexts such as dialogues, announcements, and lectures followed by comprehension questions to assess the candidates' listening skills. The questions varied to include multiple-choice, fill-in-the-gaps, and multiple-matching questions. The test mark scheme was used to score the test and assess the participants' performance.

A pilot test was initially employed to calculate the psychometric properties of the tests; 17 EFL majors who took part in the pilot testing of the listening and speaking skills were excluded from the final experimentation. The Results of the pilot testing included estimating the timing of the test, refining the scoring rubric, and monitoring the technical issues concerning the speakers in the listening test and the recorder in the speaking test.

The face validity of the speaking and listening tests was assured by submitting the tests to seven experts: three ESL experts, two curriculum and instruction experts, and two evaluation and assessment experts. The suggested modifications were accomplished to formulate the test in its final form. Regarding the speaking test, the inter-rater reliability was used, as both researchers corrected the output of the pilot speaking test followed by subjecting the output of the correction process to Cronbach's alpha where the results showed higher levels of reliability ($\alpha = 0.89$) indicating that the test is reliable and ready to be administered. The listening test reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha results,

indicating that the test has a high reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.81$); consequently, both tests were reliable and ready to be administered to the research participants.

E. Procedures of the Research

Procedurally, the speaking and the listening tests were validated and administered to the research participants before the treatment, namely the AI-powered activities to the experimental group and the conventional content and method to the control group. To ensure the homogeneity of the research participants, the pre-test results of both groups in both tests were statistically analysed to verify the extent to which the participants were homogeneous; thus, the pre-test was used as a base for assessing the participants' mean differences in the post-treatment. The results of the homogeneity tests conducted by the research demonstrated that the value of t -test scores of the experimental group and the control one in both the listening and speaking tests were 0.73 and 0.39, respectively. The p values in both tests were 0.47 and 0.69, which are greater than 0.05, indicating that both groups were homogeneous and that the mean score differences are the result of the treatment adopted. After accomplishing the intervention, the listening and speaking tests were administered, followed by data analysis.

F. The Treatment Materials

The AI-powered instructional activities were utilized as instructional materials in the curriculum prescribed to the EFL to enhance their oracy skills. The activities used were varied to include: 1) natural language processing tools (NLP): the AI tools use the NLP to provide instant feedback and assessment for the student's spoken languages such as ChatGPT. 2) Automated speech assessment: AI tools are used to assess the learners' spoken language regarding intonations, pronunciation, clarity, and many other aspects such as ELSA speak. 3) Interactive Chatbots: AI tools that can initiate semi-authentic conversations to practice speaking such as Duolingo. The current research, based on reviewing the available literature, pilot testing and expert consultation, used three AI tools: ChatGPT, ELSA speak, and Duolingo. The treatment was passed through controlled practice, guided practice, and then free practice; the instructor's roles were mainly supervising the interaction in the class, ensuring maximum engagement in the teaching-learning process, providing feedback and delivering technical support for addressing any difficulty encountered.

The choice of AI-powered instructional activities is theoretically founded upon the constructivism learning theory, where the learner is an active participant inside the classroom, constructing knowledge through interaction and feedback (Von Glasersfeld, 2013). The zone of proximal development by Vygotsky is another theoretical underpinning for AI-powered activities where the AI tools offer personalised scaffolding and support for learners (Vygotsky et al., 1984). The AI-powered instructional activities were implemented in the listening and speaking activities: pronunciation practice, conversation simulation, listening comprehension, and speech assessment.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Addressing the first research question necessitates the employment of an independent sample t -test due to the nature of the question, after assuring the test assumptions. The statistical analysis was employed by comparing the pre-test with the post-test mean scores to show the differences in the participants' listening skills as indicated in Table 1.

TABLE 1
COMPARISON OF LISTENING SKILLS MEAN SCORES BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND THE CONTROL ONE (N= 64)

Group	No.	M	SD	T-Value	Sig. (2tailed)	d
Con	33	19.67	4.13	4.95	0.00	1.25
Exp	31	23.68	1.88			

The results highlighted that the t -test value is (4.95), which is significant (sig. = 0.00 2tailed = $P < 0.05$). More importantly, the effect size using Cohen's d was employed to identify the magnitude of the treatment (1.25), indicating substantial development due to employing AI-powered instructional activities. Thus, the effectiveness of AI-powered instructional activities in developing the EFL majors' listening skills was confirmed.

Addressing the second research question necessitates adopting the independent sample t -test due to the nature of the question and the statistical data required after assuring the test assumptions. Statistical analysis was employed by comparing the pre-test with the post-test mean scores to depict the participants' speaking skills as indicated in Table 2.

TABLE 2
COMPARISON OF SPEAKING SKILLS MEAN SCORES BETWEEN THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND THE CONTROL ONE (N= 64)

Group	No.	M	SD	T-Value	Sig. (2tailed)	d
Con	33	13.70	1.33	5.15	0.00	1.28
Exp	31	16.13	2.33			

The results underscored that the t -test value is (5.15), which is significant (sig. = 0.00 2tailed = $P < 0.05$). Authenticating the results necessitates calculating the effect size using Cohen's d , which yielded (1.28) which is a large effect size. Thus, the results underscored that AI-powered instructional activities have developed the EFL majors' oracy skills (listening and speaking). Therefore, AI-powered activities can be used in the teaching-learning process to enhance the EFL major's oracy skills compared to the conventional activities used in the classroom.

The research results highlight the effectiveness of AI-powered instructional activities in developing EFL majors' oracy skills. The results can be attributed to increasing engagement levels among the research participants; they spent most of their time inside the classroom practising listening and speaking activities. Another plausible interpretation of the attained results is the personalised learning provided by the AI-powered instructional activities. The activities are fine-tuned and tailored to best fit the users of the AI tools. Customising the activities might meet the needs and preferences of the EFL majors, which might have a considerable effect on the outcomes. More importantly, the AI-powered activities allow self-paced learning, which fosters the learners' independence and autonomy as well as self-controlling the learning process, which might result in observed improvements in the oracy skills. The accessibility of the tools anytime and anywhere might have impacted the learners' self-directed learning (Betaubun et al., 2023; Faresta, 2024; Yang & Weng, 2023).

The authentic situations and language created by the AI tools and the greater exposure might enable the EFL majors to enjoy the authenticity of language. Exposure to linguistic patterns and speech expressions might lead to better language in listening and speaking. Furthermore, more realistic practices might contribute to better performance in listening and speaking (Jahrani & Listia, 2023; Yin, 2015). Another reasonable interpretation of the attained results is that the immediate feedback provided by the AI tools might considerably affect the learners' production. The best use of feedback must help in individualising the teaching-learning process, which has a positive consequence on the teaching-learning process (Al-Fogara & Al-Sagrat, 2021; Sallang & Ling, 2019).

Grounded on the principles of cognitive load theory, AI-powered activities break down long activities into chunks and small components. This approach enables learners to concentrate on specific aspects of language, similar to the scaffolding method used by some teachers (Mohammed & Abd Elrahman, 2024). Another plausible interpretation of the attained results might be the student's motivation and confidence. Employing technology in the teaching-learning process is an enjoyable experience favoured by most students. When the students participate meaningfully in the teaching-learning process, they develop their knowledge and understanding; thus, their confidence increases. Such findings are in line with those of Dreimane (2019) and Ginzburg and Barak (2023). Another interpretation of the attained results might be the decrease in the level of apprehension and stress during practising the language. Practising listening and speaking in the traditional classroom might be stressful for some students when they practise with their teacher or their partners; however, practising with the AI tools might provide a sense of security and privacy for learners, and they will not be afraid to make mistakes (Chen, 2024; Dryden et al., 2021; Musa, 2019).

Another significant point is that integrating cutting-edge technology in the traditional classroom might positively enhance the EFL majors' participation and interaction. Feeling excited to use such innovative tools productively, or what is known as the "novelty effect" in developing their linguistic skills, might influence their learning outcomes positively. Added to that, most AI tools incorporate the elements of gamification to make the learning process more enjoyable and to increase the student's enthusiasm, such as points, grades, levels, words of praise, etc. Such innovative tools might help provide an effective environment which increases Self-Compassion and is free from boredom, enabling peer and group interaction. Such interpretation is in line with (Abdellatif, 2022; Nasr, 2024; Santosa et al., 2022).

Another plausible interpretation of the attained results is the efficient role which the instructor plays in the teaching-learning process. Changing the role of the instructor from the knowledge bank, who dispenses the language information to the students, to the facilitator and supervisor of the classroom interaction might give the students more time to practice the language and interact with the language in authentic contexts. The availability of the supporting environment might enhance the EFL majors' oracy skills. Furthermore, the availability of the practice outside the classroom means that students could engage in listening and speaking exercises and increase exposure to the target language (Chiu et al., 2021; Pokrivcakova, 2019).

Finally, a logical, reasonable explanation of the results attained is the learning strategies developed by the EFL majors due to the level of practice performed. Students might learn to focus on keywords, predict content and disregard inessential information. The variation of the strategies, whether they are learning or teaching strategies, might help EFL majors. In other words, AI-powered tools provide various forms of practice, such as visual, auditory and interactive elements. Making use of various modes might result in significant development in the EFL majors' oracy skills (Buşu, 2024; Rizvi, 2023).

V. CONCLUSION

The research highlighted that AI-powered activities were effective in developing the EFL majors in both listening and speaking skills. Several key points might be considered, such as the employment of AI-powered activities to provide an engaging environment and personalised learning tailored to meet the individual needs and preferences to improve their oracy skills. Another significant point is that the immediate feedback provided by the AI tools has developed the participants' oracy skills. Furthermore, anxiety reduction is a fundamental factor that contributes to increasing the willingness to practice, resulting in the development of oracy skills.

AI-powered activities provided authentic language situations for practising language to link classroom practice to the real-world use of language. Another important item is the adoption of new technologies with all the available services, such as gamification and feedback, and the custom-tailored content might impact the outcomes of EFL majors. The AI-powered activities have enabled the instructor and the learner to use various strategies and techniques and transformed the role of the instructor to be the supervisor and facilitator of the teaching-learning process.

Based on the results, the present research recommended that AI-powered activities ought to be incorporated into the EFL curricula via curriculum designers and developers to develop oracy skills. EFL teachers should be empowered with the necessary skills via direct training and workshops to best integrate AI-powered activities for developing language skills. Furthermore, EFL policymakers should promote autonomy among EFL learners considering employing AI tools independently to develop their language skills. Technology-powered educational environments should be supported by providing access to reliable internet sources and software to present efficient learning and teaching practices. The current research suggested investigating the effectiveness of AI-powered activities in developing other language skills; exploring the EFL majors' engagement and motivation while using the AI tools; researching the impact of AI-powered activities in developing the language competence of learners with special needs; and finally probing the effectiveness of AI tools in fostering collaborative activities and social learning among EFL majors.

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The Practice of Teaching to the Test in General English Classes: A Case Study of a University in Vietnam

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Abstract—The assessment of both students and teachers depends too much on grades, causing most teachers to choose the “teaching to the test” method. This choice is due to the pressure of assessment and also the wishes of most students. This study examines how teachers have implemented “teaching to the test” in their General English (GE) classes, and what their views are on this method. To answer the above questions, a research method including both qualitative and quantitative methods was conducted with teachers at a university in Vietnam. Two data collection tools were a questionnaire and an interview. The results from the questionnaire show that teachers emphasize on test-wiseness training, curriculum narrowing, and motivational activities to maximize students’ final exam performance. However, teaching test content and format, although moderately employed, often overshadows efforts to develop students’ broader communicative and practical language skills. When interviewed about teachers’ views on this approach, they expressed concerns about long-term negative impacts such as limiting the development of comprehensive language skills and reducing students’ career opportunities. Although this approach helps students improve their short-term performance, its negative effects make it necessary for teachers and administrators to reconsider how they assess teachers’ and students’ abilities and rebalance their teaching programs accordingly.

Index Terms—teaching to the test, general English, case study

I. INTRODUCTION

The growing importance of English in Vietnam reflects its global significance as a tool for communication and career advancement. At universities, lecturers play a critical role in equipping students with the necessary English skills to meet graduation requirements and succeed in the workplace. Achieving specific language proficiency scores is often a mandatory benchmark for academic success. Consequently, many English courses are designed with goal-oriented frameworks tailored to students' needs. Teaching to the test has become a popular approach for students aiming for high scores, as they integrate language acquisition with targeted test-taking strategies (Hu & Trenkic, 2021; Koo, 2020). These courses help familiarize students with test content and format, reduce anxiety during exams, and enhance performance by emphasizing strategic question answering and time management. Consistent practice in these areas reinforces the adage that “practice makes perfect” (Mahmood et al., 2022).

However, the prevalence of exam-driven education systems has reshaped the landscape of English teaching and learning. In many cases, classroom time is disproportionately allocated to activities aligned with exam formats rather than fostering communicative competence (Gao, 2012; Ming & Jaya, 2011; Pan & Block, 2011). This phenomenon has led to “test score pollution”, where students become adept at test-taking without genuinely mastering the language (Ntumi et al., 2022).

Despite widespread criticism of “teaching to the test” in various countries, this approach remains prevalent in Vietnam. Instructional practices often depend on individual teacher beliefs (Gebriel & Eid, 2017), with some prioritizing test item practice and others focusing on broader academic skill development (Rathert & Cabaroglu, 2022). This study investigates the implementation of “teaching to the test” in GE classes at a university in Vietnam. It examines whether teachers overly prioritize preparing students for final tests (FT) rather than cultivating essential language competencies. In addition, the

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research explores teachers' perspectives on "teaching to the test," including their thoughts and attitudes toward this teaching approach. The findings aim to help teachers critically evaluate whether their methods support meaningful language development or merely cater to assessment demands. Additionally, the study provides insights for administrators to formulate policies that balance exam preparation with broader educational goals. By laying a foundation for further research, this study seeks to contribute to a more holistic understanding of teaching practices across a broader range of educational institutions.

To achieve these, the study addresses the following research questions:

- (1) *To what extent do teachers implement the practice of "teaching to the test" in their General English classes?*
- (2) *What are teachers' perceptions of the practice of teaching to the test?*

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Teaching to the Test

The concept of teaching to the test typically emerges in high-stakes environments where test scores carry significant weight and influence outcomes for participants (Menken, 2006; Popham, 2001). This instructional approach focuses on teaching specific content that is subsequently assessed at the end of a unit. However, such assessments often aim to verify whether students have memorized a set of procedures rather than fostering a deeper understanding of the material. As a result, this method primarily measures rote memorization rather than critical thinking and analytical skills.

Teaching to the test is particularly prevalent in skill-based learning contexts (Kohn, 2000). One significant limitation of this approach is its potential to misrepresent students' genuine understanding. Moreover, this method frequently emphasizes tasks that mimic test items but may diverge considerably from those encountered in real-world academic or professional settings. Consequently, non-native English-speaking students often achieve the required test scores but continue to struggle with practical English communication in academic or workplace environments (Berman & Cheng, 2001).

B. Essential Components of Teaching to the Test

In this study, test content and format, test-wiseness training, curriculum narrowing and motivational activities are discussed as the main components of 'Teaching to the test' (Miyasaka, 2000).

Teaching test content and format predominantly focuses on educating students about the material being assessed and familiarizing them with the structure of the test (Jackson & McGlinn, 2014). This instructional practice encompasses various activities, which can be categorized into four main groups (Moore, 1994; Popham, 1991): (1) preparation based on previous test formats, (2) preparation for the current test format, (3) practicing with the same format as the test, and (4) practicing with different formats from those of the test. In previous-format preparation, students engage in activities derived from previously administered test papers. These activities include practicing with questions from past tests, teaching strategies for approaching similar questions, and familiarizing students with earlier versions of the test to set expectations (Burns et al., 2008). Current-format preparation involves providing students with materials related to the test papers that will be used or may potentially be used in the upcoming test. Similarly, same-format preparation includes offering students a comparable or simulated test format through commercially developed preparation packages, providing practice questions in the same format, and incorporating similarly formatted test items into teacher-created classroom assessments.

Test-wiseness training has been defined in various ways. One of the earliest and most frequently cited definitions is by Millman et al. (1965), who describe test-wiseness as a test-taker's ability to leverage the characteristics and setup of the test or testing environment to achieve a high score. Similarly, Oakland (1972) defines test-wiseness as the skill to demonstrate proficiency in test-taking by utilizing the features and structure of a test and its environment to attain a score that accurately reflects one's abilities. Williams and Dolly (1993) further elaborated on this concept, noting that test-wiseness is the ability of a test-taker to perform better than random chance on a multiple-choice test, regardless of the content being assessed. In other words, test-wiseness strategies can help reduce the level of anxiety (Mo'en et al., 2022) and get high scores (Alnasraween et al., 2020).

Curriculum narrowing, driven by the emphasis on preparing students for standardized tests, often leads teachers to prioritize content that is directly relevant to these assessments. This practice, as highlighted by Hong and Youngs (2008), results in a curriculum heavily influenced by test requirements, shaping both the content teachers cover and the areas on which students focus their studies. Similarly, Brown (2005) observes that teaching to the test often closely mirrors the tests themselves, exacerbating the narrowing of the curriculum. Phelps (2011) further elaborates on this issue, noting that extensive activities in teaching to the test compel teachers to concentrate on strategies that enhance students' test performance rather than fostering a deep understanding of the subject matter. Such activities may include formulating objectives based on previous test items, excluding content that has already been assessed, focusing on test-related vocabulary, and emphasizing materials perceived as critical for test success. This approach also limits interactive classroom activities, such as discussions, pair work, and group work, and shifts classroom time away from subjects not included in the tests (Shepard & Dougherty, 1991). While seemingly a prevalent and unintentional practice, curriculum narrowing has been identified as one of the least effective strategies for enhancing test scores (Baker et al., 2010).

Motivational activities, as described by Moore (1994), are exercises designed to focus classroom attention on the upcoming examination and mentally prepare students for it. Smith (1991) similarly categorizes these activities under the concepts of exhortation and stress inoculation. Such practices may include rewarding students for achieving high scores on in-class or practice tests, offering incentives such as score bonuses to encourage attendance during test weeks, and discussing the long-term benefits of high-test scores for students' future opportunities. Additionally, these activities aim to boost students' confidence by highlighting their potential to perform well on the test and using test reports to identify and address individual strengths and weaknesses. According to Burgess and Head (2005), English instructors often find teaching exam-focused classes particularly rewarding for several reasons. Firstly, students tend to be more motivated due to their shared goal of excelling in their studies. Furthermore, the syllabus is clearly defined and supported by a wealth of published materials, which facilitates structured teaching. Lastly, teachers derive a sense of accomplishment from their role in helping students succeed, especially when favorable exam results reflect their efforts.

C. Washback Effect

When examining the practice of teaching to the test, it is crucial to consider the concept of "washback," which is generally understood as the influence of testing on teaching and learning (Hu & Trenkic, 2021; Rathert & Cabaroglu, 2022). Bailey (1996), after an extensive review of the concept, proposes a basic model that clarifies the mechanics of washback. This model categorizes the effects of test-derived information on test-takers as washback to the learners, while also considering the impact on teachers, administrators, curriculum developers, and counselors. Most existing washback studies are primarily qualitative and exploratory in nature. These studies have identified washback as a highly complex phenomenon, shaped by both contextual and personal factors (Alderson & Wall, 1993). In classroom settings, teacher-related factors are particularly pivotal (Qi, 2005). The interaction between contextual and individual factors in any educational setting determines the nature and extent of washback (Gebriel & Eid, 2017). This article examines the impact of FT scores on teachers' pedagogical approaches and classroom practices.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was used to comprehensively investigate "teaching to the test" in GE classes. The study integrated quantitative and qualitative methods with different levels of priority. Quantitative data, collected through a structured questionnaire with ten teachers, had a higher priority and provided statistical insights into the prevalence of specific teaching practices. Qualitative data, collected through semi-structured interviews with four teachers, provide nuanced insights into the perceptions, challenges, and long-term impacts of teaching to the test. Integrating these methods ensures triangulation, with quantitative findings informing qualitative inquiry, thus providing both breadth and depth to the analysis.

B. Participants

To assess the extent to which teaching to the test was implemented at a private higher education institution in Vietnam, ten GE teachers were invited to participate in the study. All participants provided informed consent for their responses to be included in the report and published in a scientific journal. The results from the demographic questions revealed key characteristics of the teacher respondents. Two of the teachers in this study are male, while eight are female. The majority of the participants are relatively young, with 80% being under 40 years old. Notably, six of the ten participants have over ten years of teaching experience, while the remaining four have been teaching English for five to ten years. Additionally, six teachers reported feeling pressured when assisting students in preparing for their final tests. Overall, these teachers can be characterized as predominantly young, relatively experienced, and somewhat influenced by the pressures associated with preparing students for exams. Several factors contributed to the limited number of participants in this study. The survey was conducted during the summer semester, a period characterized by fewer classes and a limited number of lecturers teaching basic English courses. Specifically, the faculty comprised 13 full-time teachers and 4 visiting teachers. Despite this, only 11 teachers responded after being invited to participate via the survey link. Unfortunately, the data from one respondent were deemed unusable due to incomplete survey responses, resulting in its exclusion. Some teachers who did not participate cited time constraints and busy schedules as reasons for their non-involvement.

C. Instruments

A questionnaire employed as a research instrument and distributed to the teachers consists of two main sections: Demographics and Classroom Activities. Part I aims to gather information regarding the participants' age, gender, teaching experience, and susceptibility to test-related pressure. Part II includes 34 close-ended questions that assess various indicators of the practice of teaching to the test. Based on the operational framework, these questions are organized into four key components: Teaching Test Content and Format, Test-Wisness Training, Curriculum Narrowing, and Motivational Activities. All questions are formatted using a 5-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to evaluate different aspects of their teaching practices. Additionally, semi-structured interviews comprising four questions were designed to explore teachers' views on the practice of "teaching to the test," its impact on curriculum design and

implementation, and its associated washback effects. These interviews were conducted with four teachers to obtain valuable and specific insights addressing the second research question.

D. Data Collection and Analysis

Initially, the questionnaire and interview questions were administered to four GE teachers as part of a pilot study. The purpose of this pilot study was to assess the instruments' clarity, relevance, and effectiveness in eliciting the required information. Based on the feedback and observations gathered during the pilot study, revisions were made to improve the clarity and relevance of the statements, ensuring better alignment with the research objectives. Following these revisions, the finalized questionnaire and interview were distributed to the participating teachers via Google Forms to collect the necessary data for the study. The data collected from the questionnaire were analyzed quantitatively, whereas the data from the interviews were analyzed qualitatively.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

• Results from the questionnaire

Teaching test content and format: The results from the preliminary analysis of teaching 'test content and format' are presented in Table 1. This component includes 10 items categorized into four groups: (1) same-format preparation, (2) previous-form preparation, (3) current-form preparation, and (4) varied-format preparation. Overall, the teachers have engaged in teaching test content and format with a moderate frequency ($M = 3.31$).

TABLE 1
FREQUENCY OF TEACHING TEST CONTENT AND FORMAT

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Test content and format	10	2.90	3.80	3.3100	.32813

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Provide class with practice questions in the same format as final tests.	10	3.50	1.080
2. Use a commercially developed test preparation package with parallel form to the final test.	10	3.10	.994
3. Use test items with similar format for teacher-made classroom tests.	10	3.70	.823
4. Use prior-year test questions as practice for the current -year test.	10	3.80	.632
5. Teach students how to approach a question seen on past tests.	10	3.40	.699
6. Show students past versions of the test so that they would know what to expect.	10	2.60	.966
7. Teach vocabulary words that are on the current test.	10	3.30	.949
8. Give students practice exercises with questions of the current test, with a change in the stem or distracters.	10	3.50	.707
9. Give students practice exercises with questions of the current test.	10	2.90	1.197
10. Provide class with practice questions in different formats (open-ended/ filling/ essay/ puzzle).	10	2.30	.949

The records indicate that the highest frequency of the practice of teaching to the test involved same-format preparation ($M = 3.43$). Specifically, teacher-created classroom tests with similar formats were used more frequently than other methods, with a mean of 3.70. The mean for using "questions in the same format as the final test" was slightly lower, at 3.50. In contrast, the use of commercially developed test preparation packages with formats parallel to the FT was significantly lower, with a mean of 3.10. This suggests that teachers prefer to use their own classroom tests and practice questions that mirror the FTs, familiarizing their students with this type of assessment.

As indicated in the table above, previous-form preparation ranks as the second most frequently used method, with a mean of 3.27. Prior-year test questions, which simulate the FTs, are most frequently employed as samples ($M = 3.80$), alongside using past tests to teach students how to handle test items ($M = 3.40$). This approach helps students understand how to approach similar questions. The last item has a relatively low mean ($M = 2.60$). This could be because not all teachers are responsible for the content of the FTs and may not have access to past tests, resulting in fewer students being introduced to these tests. These findings suggest that previous-form preparation is considered a practical and convenient method to help students prepare for upcoming tests. Clearly, the primary aim of using previous-form preparation is to familiarize students with the test format rather than the content. In comparison, the frequency of current-form preparation is slightly lower, with an average mean of 3.23 across three items, ranging from 2.90 to 3.50. Since current-form preparation involves activities closely aligned with the test, few teachers admit frequently giving students practice questions from the current test. As mentioned earlier, some teachers are required to prepare the FTs by the end of the course, which may result in their partial or full disclosure of the test content to students. Varied-format preparation exhibits the lowest frequency, with a mean score of 3.30, likely due to its perceived lower practicality and convenience compared to other methods. This indicates that teachers do not invest much time in preparing practice questions in varied formats. However, incorporating test content into various formats can yield more accurate assessments and better help students develop cognitive skills.

In summary, the most notable result from the data is that same-format and previous-format preparation activities are the most frequently used, primarily aiming to accustom students to the test format rather than the test content. Consequently, varied-format preparation receives the least attention.

+ *Test-wiseness training*: Table 2 below illustrates the frequency with which test-wiseness training is employed in GE classes. Overall, the data indicate that teachers have frequently engaged in test-wiseness training to prepare their students for the FTs, with a high average frequency ($M = 4.08$).

TABLE 2
FREQUENCY OF TEACHING TEST-WISENESS TRAINING

	n	minimum	maximum	mean	std. deviation
Test- wiseness training	10	2.63	4.75	4.0750	.62138

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
11. Teach students how to follow test directions.	10	4.50	.527
12. Discuss with students how to mark the answer sheet.	10	3.10	1.370
13. Show students how to use time efficiently to complete the test.	10	3.50	1.354
14. Teach students how to use deductive reasoning skills to eliminate distracters.	10	4.50	.707
15. Teach students some guessing strategies.	10	4.50	.707
16. Teach students how to avoid errors.	10	4.00	1.054
17. Talk to students about the purpose of the test (intent consideration).	10	4.00	.943
18. Teach students how to use clues to determine the answers.	10	4.50	.527

The data reveal that all teachers reported teaching students how to follow test directions and use clues to determine answers with very high frequency ($M = 4.50$). Notably, the standard deviation for these two items is significantly less than 1 on the 5-point Likert scale used in the questionnaire, indicating remarkable homogeneity within the population on these practices. A similar trend is observed for items 14 and 15, which involve teaching students how to use deductive reasoning to eliminate distractors and how to apply guessing strategies, both with a mean of 4.50 and a standard deviation of 0.707. Regarding error avoidance (16), seven out of ten teachers frequently incorporate this strategy into their test preparation, resulting in a mean of 4.00. Error avoidance involves careful test-taking practices and reviewing responses. Test-wiseness related to intent consideration (17), which involves understanding the test's purpose to better anticipate what to expect, received similar attention, also with a mean of 4.00. Remarkably, advice on time management receives less attention than other items, with a mean of 3.50, despite being a crucial element of test-taking. In practice, the time limit places significant pressure on test-takers, making tips on efficient time use essential in GE classes. Item 12, which involves demonstrating how to mark the answer sheet, shows significantly less frequency, with a mean of only 3.10. This is likely because, while useful, marking the answer sheet does not require much time or effort, and students accustomed to multiple-choice tests typically manage this task without difficulty. The data also indicate that 4 out of 10 respondents rarely or never address this issue with their students.

Overall, the results suggest that test-taking skills highlighted in the teaching material, which can compensate for students' lack of competence, are taught more frequently than those based on teachers' own experiences and practical teaching.

+ *Curriculum narrowing*: Table 3. below provides the results obtained from the preliminary analysis of curriculum narrowing. Generally speaking, the average mean value for this practice is 3.99, indicating a relative frequency.

TABLE 3
FREQUENCY OF TEACHING CURRICULUM NARROWING

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Curriculum narrowing	10	3.40	4.40	3.9900	.31073

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
19. Prepare objectives based on past items and teach accordingly.	10	3.90	.994
20. Use past tests to eliminate the already-tested content.	10	4.20	.789
21. Teach commonly-tested vocabulary (with meaning to answer MCQs, without focus on use or pronunciation).	10	3.50	1.080
22. Emphasize which materials are important for tests.	10	4.40	.699
23. Give instruction in mother tongue (ignore use of target language).	10	3.70	1.418
24. Focus on R+L (tested domain) and give little attention to communicate skills (S+W).	10	3.90	.994
25. Limit interactive activities (discussion, pair work, group work).	10	4.00	.943
26. Extensively review/ drill domain tested.	10	4.30	.675
27. Assign test-related homework/ extra materials to help prepare for the upcoming tests.	10	4.30	.675
28. Limit communicative game activities.	10	3.70	.949

Interestingly, the frequency of classroom activities related to curriculum narrowing exhibits two main trends: very high frequency ($M = 4.30$ – 4.40) and high frequency ($M = 3.50$ – 4.20). Although the primary goal of GE is to enhance students' language skills, particularly communication skills, classroom activities tend to focus predominantly on materials deemed important for the FT, extensive review sessions, drilling within the tested domain, and assigning test-related homework. These activities represent the highest frequency within the "curriculum narrowing" component. For item 22, the majority of respondents reported frequently emphasizing which materials are important for the test, resulting in the highest frequency ($M = 4.40$). This practice significantly narrows the curriculum but is perceived as practical and convenient for

teachers responsible for courses. Additionally, teachers tend to review or drill students extensively in the tested domain, also at a very high frequency ($M = 4.30$). This trend is further reflected in item 27, where incorporating test materials into homework or assignments reaches a mean of 4.30. This practice deliberately focuses students' time and effort on the tested content rather than fostering a broader set of communicative competencies. The remaining items fall into the high-frequency category, with means ranging from 3.50 to 4.20. As mentioned earlier, many teachers experience pressure related to their students' FT scores, leading most to use past test papers to narrow down the tested content ($M = 4.20$), prepare objectives based on previous test items ($M = 3.90$), and teach vocabulary commonly found on tests ($M = 3.50$). This indicates that teachers prioritize content likely to appear on the test. However, this result somewhat contradicts their response to item A6, "show students' past versions of the test so that they would know what to expect," which has a lower mean of 2.60. Regarding classroom activities, 9 out of 10 respondents admitted to limiting their students' engagement in interactive and communicative game activities, with means of 4.00 and 3.70, respectively. In terms of language skills, receptive skills are taught more frequently than productive skills, with a high mean of 3.90. To ensure students clearly understand instructions and explanations, teachers often use the students' mother tongue rather than the target language, with a mean value of 3.70. This practice is typically employed when explaining difficult vocabulary or problematic grammatical points to Vietnamese learners for testing purposes. In general, the results suggest a lack of consensus among various activities related to curriculum narrowing and test content and format. Notably, practices that encourage students to focus on the test receive more emphasis than communicative and interactive activities.

+ *Motivational activities*: Table 4. below illustrates how frequently teachers motivate their students to serve the purpose of testing. The results on the whole show a fairly high frequency for motivational activities ($M=3.52$).

TABLE 4
FREQUENCY OF TEACHING MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITIES

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Motivational Activities	10	2.33	4.83	3.5167	.84419

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
29. Give students rewards for completing in- class/ sample tests with high scores.	10	2.90	1.524
30. Encourage attendance in the test week and provide rewards for high attendance (e.g. score bonus).	10	4.20	.789
31. Talk to students about the advantage of high-stake test scores for their future.	10	3.90	.994
32. Boost students' confidence for test (stress inoculation).	10	3.90	.994
33. Encourage students to eat good breakfast, get enough sleep, and be rested for the days of testing.	10	3.40	1.350
34. Use sample test report to identify students' strengths and weaknesses.	10	2.80	1.619

The results indicate significant variation in the frequency of classroom activities related to motivational strategies, which can be grouped into three main categories: fairly high frequency ($M = 4.20$), high frequency ($M = 3.90$), and medium frequency ($M = 2.80-3.40$). The item with the highest frequency is 30, with a mean value of 4.20, suggesting that the majority of teachers frequently encourage attendance during test week and offer rewards for high attendance, aiming to motivate students to attend class and prepare for the test. Items 31 and 32 exhibit the second-highest frequency, each reaching a mean of 3.90. Notably, these two items also share the same standard deviation (0.994), indicating a consensus among teachers on the importance of incentivizing class attendance through rewards, such as score bonuses, and helping students recognize the long-term benefits of doing well on tests. The final category, with medium frequency, includes items 29, 33, and 34, with means of 2.90, 3.40, and 2.80, respectively. It is noteworthy that the practice of exhortation, which includes advising students on healthy eating and resting before tests, receives relatively more attention, with a mean of 3.40. In tertiary education, it is generally assumed that university students are already aware of how to care for themselves and prepare physically for tests. In contrast, the other two items (29 and 34) show lower frequencies, with means of 2.90 and 2.80, respectively. The data suggest that extrinsic encouragement, such as rewarding high scores on midterm tests and using test reports to help students identify strengths and weaknesses, is not frequently applied.

Overall, the results show a higher frequency for activities designed to boost students' confidence and encourage attendance compared to those related to advice on health care and physical preparation. The following section provides a brief overview of how frequently the practices of 'teaching to the test' are utilized by the teacher respondents.

TABLE 5
SUMMARY OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH 'TEACHING TO THE TEST' IS EMPLOYED

Test-preparation teaching practices	Mean
1. Teaching content and format	3.31
2. Test-wiseness training	4.08
3. Curriculum narrowing	3.99
4. Motivational activities	3.52
M = 3.73	

In conclusion, the teachers have been extensively involved in various practices of teaching to the test, with a fairly high average frequency ($M = 3.73$). Notably, test-wiseness training is the most frequently employed practice, while teaching

content and format is utilized the least often. The following section provides a brief overview of how frequently these practices are utilized by the teacher respondents.

- *Findings from the interview*

To obtain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of teachers' perspectives on "teaching to the test", interviews were conducted with four participants: three aged 25–40 and one aged 45. To ensure anonymity, the participants were assigned codes: T1, T2, T3, and T4. The interview included four questions aimed at exploring their views on the practice of "teaching to the test," its impact on curriculum design and implementation, and the resulting washback effects.

+ *Teachers' perceptions of teaching to the test:* For all four teachers, the question, "*In what ways do you balance the focus on test preparation with the development of students' broader language skills?*" proved challenging to answer. This difficulty arises from the limited time available for the course—only 45 periods—which makes it challenging for teachers to simultaneously help students enhance their language proficiency and prepare effectively for the FTs. Despite the emphasis on high exam scores as the primary goal for most students, the teachers agreed that fostering both knowledge acquisition and practical skills is indispensable. They suggested that, given sufficient time, it would be possible to integrate test preparation with practical language applications by designing activities that align with the test format while also promoting real-world language use. For instance, T1 proposed incorporating test-based reading comprehension tasks with texts that reflect real-life contexts, such as articles or professional documents. T1 further emphasized the importance of "*lecturers encouraging communication practices.*" This could involve embedding tasks like role plays, group discussions, or debates into exam preparation sessions, which not only enhance listening and speaking skills but also indirectly support test readiness. Similarly, T2 advocated for a balanced approach, stating that "*teachers should combine test-focused training with comprehensive assessments.*" This might include supplementing test-related exercises with projects, presentations, or journal writing to evaluate students' broader linguistic competence, thereby encouraging authentic language use beyond the confines of test requirements. T3 expressed concern about the allocation of time for activities unrelated to test preparation. She suggested that teachers dedicate a portion of class time to exam-focused tasks while reserving the remainder for activities that develop broader skills, such as creative writing, storytelling, or listening to podcasts, which can enrich students' overall language acquisition. Unlike the aforementioned teachers, T4 focused on the integration of authentic materials. He highlighted that "*incorporating real-world resources, such as articles, interviews, or podcasts, alongside test preparation materials, can expose students to diverse contexts and help them practice language more effectively.*" Notably, all four teachers stressed the importance of fostering autonomous learning. They recommended guiding students to utilize independent language learning tools, such as online platforms, mobile applications, or language exchange programs, to supplement test preparation and enhance overall proficiency. This approach, they suggested, could help both teachers and students achieve a balance between preparing for exams and improving practical language abilities.

Regarding the question about curriculum design—"How does 'teaching to the test' influence curriculum design and lesson planning in General English classes?"—all teachers acknowledged that this practice significantly shapes both curriculum development and lesson planning. T1 highlighted the prioritization of test-specific content, including the narrowing of the curriculum and its alignment with the test format. Specifically, teachers tend to focus on material directly relevant to the exam, often excluding broader topics or skills that are not assessed. Lesson plans are typically structured around the test format, emphasizing the types of questions and tasks students are likely to encounter. T2 observed that "teaching to the test" dedicates a substantial portion of class time to practicing test-like exercises. For example, communicative tasks such as discussions, debates, or collaborative projects are often minimized in favor of preparing for FTs. From the perspective of teaching methods, T3 and T4 noted a tendency for instructors to prioritize test-taking strategies over communicative approaches. T3 also raised concerns about evaluation methods, stating that assessment often relies heavily on FT results, with limited emphasis on comprehensive or formative evaluation practices. T4 expressed concerns about the constraints on teacher autonomy. He argued that teachers are frequently compelled to design curricula within a test-focused framework, which restricts their ability to incorporate innovative or student-centered approaches. Additionally, there is considerable pressure on educators to meet performance metrics, which often forces them to closely align lesson plans with test preparation objectives. This, in turn, may stifle creativity and flexibility in teaching.

+ *Washback effects:* When discussing the potential long-term washback of the question, "*What are the potential long-term washback of a 'teaching to the test' approach for students' English proficiency and employability?*" all four teachers agreed that, while this approach may effectively improve short-term test scores, it can have significant long-term consequences on students' language proficiency and career prospects. T1 noted that "teaching to the test" restricts the development of students' language skills. Specifically, it may lead to proficiency in test-focused areas such as grammar, reading comprehension, and vocabulary while leaving students inadequately prepared in unassessed skills like speaking, listening, or creative writing. This emphasis on test-specific abilities often neglects the practical application of language, resulting in students who perform well in exams but struggle to communicate effectively in professional or social settings. T3 emphasized that when teaching and learning revolve around test scores, students' skills may not align with the demands of diverse work environments. Employers frequently prioritize communicative and practical language abilities, which are not sufficiently cultivated through test-focused instruction. This misalignment can hinder job performance and limit career advancement. In today's globalized job market, candidates with well-rounded language proficiency and cross-cultural

communication skills are often preferred, leaving students trained under test-centered approaches at a disadvantage. T2 and T4 highlighted an additional concern: students who associate English learning solely with exam preparation may develop a negative perception of language acquisition, reducing their motivation to continue learning once the test is over. This rigid focus on test-specific content may also inhibit the development of autonomous learning strategies necessary for adapting to evolving professional demands. T2 further observed that a test-focused environment can increase stress and diminish students' interest in the language, negatively impacting their long-term engagement with English. T4 added that "teaching to the test" undermines broader educational goals. Institutions that prioritize test performance may unintentionally devalue comprehensive language education, limiting their ability to produce well-rounded graduates. Consequently, students who graduate with inadequate practical skills may reflect poorly on their institution's educational quality, potentially affecting their reputation and employability.

With the question "*How might a shift away from test-focused instruction affect teaching practices and student outcomes in General English programs?*", the teachers noted that moving away from test-oriented teaching could lead to significant transformations in instructional methods and student outcomes, fostering a more comprehensive and meaningful language learning experience. T1 and T3 emphasized the potential adoption of communicative language teaching methods, which prioritize a learner-centered approach. According to T1, teachers could focus more on students' interests, needs, and goals, designing lessons that encourage active participation and personalized learning. She also highlighted the importance of integrating broader skill development, suggesting that teaching practices could expand to include creative writing, critical thinking, cross-cultural communication, and problem-solving tasks, thereby going beyond the narrow confines of test preparation. T3 addressed the potential for greater flexibility in curriculum design, noting that the absence of test-based constraints would allow educators to innovate, tailor content to students' proficiency levels, and explore diverse teaching strategies. T2 and T4 discussed the potential impact on student learning outcomes. They argued that a broader curriculum would enable students to develop balanced skills, equipping them to use English effectively across various contexts. Additionally, students could gain greater confidence and fluency in real-world communication, preparing them for professional, academic, and social interactions. T2 noted that moving away from repetitive test preparation could make learning English more engaging and relevant, fostering intrinsic motivation to improve. T4 further asserted that emphasizing meaningful language use rather than rote memorization could promote deeper learning and long-term proficiency. Despite the potential advantages, all four teachers expressed concerns about the challenges and risks of eliminating "teaching to the test". First, both faculty and students accustomed to test-oriented instruction may resist changes, given uncertainties about how to measure success without standardized test results. Second, transitioning away from test-focused methods would require alternative assessment tools, such as portfolios, project-based evaluations, or presentations, which may be more complex to design and implement. Third, the absence of structured test preparation could hinder some students' ability to achieve high scores on standardized exams, which are often critical for graduation or employment opportunities. Finally, a less structured, non-test-focused approach might benefit students unevenly, as those with varying levels of self-discipline or motivation may struggle to adapt.

In summary, while the teachers acknowledged the benefits of moving away from "teaching to the test," they also recognized the associated challenges, particularly under the constraints of limited time and the pressure to achieve high scores. As a result, most teachers continue to prioritize exam preparation, aligning with the expectations and goals of the majority of students.

B. Discussion

+ *Extent of teaching to the test*: Quantitative data indicate that "teaching to the test" is widely implemented across various components, including test content and format, test-wiseness training, curriculum narrowing, and motivational activities. Teachers frequently employed test-wiseness strategies ($M = 4.08$), such as teaching guessing and error-avoidance techniques, aligning with findings from Mahmood et al. (2022) on the emphasis on specific testing skills. These skills and strategies do not replace thorough test preparation; however, having them can assist students in achieving a high score (Barnes & Fives, 2020; McConlogue, 2020). Narrowing the curriculum ($M = 3.99$) is another prominent trend, as teachers prioritize materials critical for final exams while reducing activities that foster communication and interaction skills. This trend echoes the perspectives of Koo (2020), who argues that such practices often overlook broader language development. Conversely, less emphasis was placed on motivational strategies and varied-format preparation, suggesting a predominant focus on practices directly linked to achieving high test scores. This observation aligns with Phelps (2011), who stressed that narrowing instructional content to meet test requirements undermines comprehensive language learning.

+ *Teachers' perceptions of teaching to the test*: Responses from the interview questions offered valuable insights into teachers' perspectives. While teachers acknowledged the practicality of adapting lessons to test formats, they also expressed concerns about its impact on students' broader cognitive and linguistic development. For instance, T1 and T4 highlighted the limitations of curriculum narrowing, reflecting Brown's (2005) concern regarding the exclusion of essential language competencies. Teachers noted that while test-focused teaching aids students in mastering test-specific skills, it often fails to develop practical language and communication abilities (Berman & Cheng, 2001). Moreover, the relatively low emphasis on motivational and diverse preparation strategies underscores a dominant focus on practices that prioritize immediate test performance over long-term skill acquisition. This observation, again, aligns with Phelps (2011), who cautioned that such instructional narrowing undermines comprehensive language learning.

+ *Washback effects*: Teacher interview responses also highlighted concerns about the negative effects of test-oriented teaching, such as its potential to demotivate students and narrow their perception of English learning. As Alderson and Wall (1993) emphasized, the interaction between contextual and individual factors plays a pivotal role in shaping resistance, which can either facilitate or hinder meaningful language acquisition. Indeed, while the "teaching to the test" approach may enhance short-term test performance, it often adversely affects students' long-term English proficiency and employability. Such findings underscore the need for a balanced instructional approach that integrates test preparation with broader language skill development.

V. CONCLUSION

Findings:

Results from the survey and interview responses indicate that while the "teaching to the test" approach can temporarily help students achieve higher scores, it often hinders the development of comprehensive and proactive language skills. Specifically, teachers tend to focus heavily on test-taking strategies, prioritizing exam-specific content over interactive and communicative activities. Many teachers also expressed concerns regarding the long-term consequences of this approach, particularly its adverse effects on students' future employability and real-world language competencies.

Despite recognizing these challenges, educators acknowledge the pressures imposed by high-stakes testing and the limited time available for broader skill development. To address these issues, it is essential to adopt a balanced teaching approach that integrates test preparation with activities designed to foster holistic language acquisition. Achieving this balance requires collaboration between educational administrators and teachers to adjust curricula, explore alternative assessment methods, and implement innovative, student-centered instructional strategies.

Furthermore, administrators must avoid placing excessive emphasis on teacher evaluations based solely on student test scores. Over-reliance on this metric risk creating an environment where teachers feel compelled to prioritize exam performance at the expense of fostering well-rounded, meaningful language skills. Instead, a more comprehensive evaluation framework should be adopted - one that encourages practices aimed at preparing students not only for exams but also for long-term academic, professional, and personal success.

Implications:

The findings of this study highlight both the challenges and opportunities associated with "teaching to the test" in English language teaching. Educational managers and higher education institutions can utilize these insights to develop strategies that enable teachers to achieve a balance between exam preparation and comprehensive language skills training. Furthermore, educational institutions in Vietnam and beyond can adopt globally relevant approaches to integrating test-specific knowledge with communicative competencies. The study also underscores the importance of mitigating the negative impacts of test-oriented teaching, which remains a significant concern for education systems worldwide.

Limitations & Recommendations for future research:

Encountering some limitations of this study is unavoidable. The study is limited by its small sample size and its focus on a single university in Vietnam, which constrains the generalizability of its findings. To address these limitations, future research could expand the scope by including a larger and more diverse sample across multiple educational institutions or regions. Such comparative studies would enable researchers to identify differences and similarities in English teaching practices. Additionally, future research could investigate the long-term impacts of "teaching to the test" on students' language proficiency and career opportunities. Broadening the scale and scope of research would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of this instructional approach and its implications for education systems globally.

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Framing the Bisht: A Multimodal Analysis of Arab and Non-Arab Online Media Coverage in the 2022 World Cup Final

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Abstract—This study investigates how Arab and non-Arab online news sources covered the bisht moment during the 2022 FIFA World Cup final. The study's corpus consists of 10 English-language online news reports, evenly split: 5 from Arab and 5 from non-Arab sources, collected from their official websites, to ensure diverse cultural representation and prevent bias. Using Machin and Mayr's (2012) Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA) framework and Van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square model, the study analyzes the corpus to explore how text and visuals were used to shape the story. The findings revealed that Arab media focused on the bisht as a symbol of pride and tradition, using positive language and images to show it as a gesture of respect and cultural importance. On the other hand, non-Arab media often described the bisht as awkward or unnecessary, highlighting controversy and ignoring much of its cultural meaning. The findings also showed that both sides framed the event differently based on their cultural perspectives. Arab media celebrated the moment, avoiding any criticism and focusing on the bisht's rich heritage. Non-Arab media, however, highlighted its clash with Messi's jersey, seeing it as a distraction from his amazing win. The visuals also reflected these narratives, with Arab media blending tradition and celebration, while non-Arab media leaning toward creating tension. Finally, the study highlighted how media shapes public views of cultural moments and the need for fair and balanced reporting in global events.

Index Terms—Arab and non-Arab online news sources, bisht, multimodal critical discourse analysis, Qatar World Cup 2022

I. INTRODUCTION

This study investigates how Arab and non-Arab online news sources covered the bisht moment during the 2022 FIFA World Cup final. The tournament's hosting has always generated worldwide controversies over many issues, including bidding, politics, and ethics. Qatar's selection in 2010 to host the 2022 World Cup was not an exception to the rule. The decision faced criticism over issues, such as infrastructure, extreme heat, social policies, and migrant worker rights. Despite these challenges, Qatar hosted the first World Cup in the Arab world, blending cultural significance with athletic excellence.

A. Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA)

Multimodality in media discourse integrates multiple modes of communication beyond written or spoken language. Kress (2010) defines it as “an approach that looks at multiple modes of communication such as text, color, and images” (p. 1), emphasizing how these elements interact to create meaning. Writing conveys abstract ideas, images communicate quickly, and color highlights key points. This is especially relevant in online media, where multiple modes enhance understanding. Lyons (2016) highlights that modes are culturally and socially shaped resources for meaning making, requiring shared recognition within communities. She identifies semiotic resources, like facial expressions or technology, as crucial in multimodal frameworks. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) extend multimodality through three assumptions: communication involves interrelated modes, meaning depends on their selection and arrangement, and these resources develop socially over time. Multimodal analysis applies to diverse media, from print (Baldry & Thibault, 2006) to film (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996) and face-to-face interactions (Norris, 2004). This understanding led to MCDA, which examines semiotic resources, such as words, visuals, sounds, and gestures. Machin and Mayr (2012) stress that “while linguistic analysis provides insights, visual and non-verbal modes play an essential role in constructing meaning”, revealing implicit messages in media.

B. Bisht's Cultural Status in the Arab Culture

The moment Messi received the World Cup trophy draped in a bisht sparked international debate on sport, culture, and identity. Just before he lifted the trophy, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani placed the traditional black cloak, symbolizing honor, authority, and celebration in Gulf culture, over Messi's shoulders. Worn by tribal chiefs, kings, and

imams, the bisht carries deep cultural meaning. While some saw it as a gesture of respect, others, like New York Times journalist Panja (2022), argued Qatar sought to share the spotlight. Critics felt it overshadowed Argentina's celebration, while supporters saw it as a symbol of cultural appreciation.

C. Aims and Questions of the Study

This study analyzed how Arab and non-Arab online news sources framed the bisht event during the Qatar World Cup 2022 final celebration. It examined whether these portrayals were positive or negative, influenced by the outlet's cultural or political orientation. The study explored the use of text, images, and symbols in shaping representations, focusing on the interplay between linguistic and visual semiotics. In addition, it investigated the ideological implications of these portrayals, assessing how media narratives reflected or challenged dominant cultural, social, and political perspectives. By comparing representations across contexts, the study offered insights into how media content reinforces or disrupts ideologies related to identity, power, and cultural values in high-profile sporting events. To achieve these objectives, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. To what extent did Arab and non-Arab online news sources in English portray the bisht scene positively or negatively during the final celebration of the Qatar World Cup 2022?
2. What modes and devices did these online news sources utilize to communicate their intended meanings about the bisht scene?
3. To what extent were these portrayals ideologically shaped, and did they involve manipulation strategies?

D. Significance of the Study

This study is significant for its focus on a culturally symbolic moment in a major global sporting event, the bisht scene at the Qatar World Cup 2022. It examines how Arab and non-Arab online news sources represented this moment, highlighting the role of language and visuals in conveying cultural and political ideologies. The study contributes to MCDA by investigating how different modes of communication, including text, imagery, and symbols, combine to create meaning. Unlike previous research on sports media coverage, it explores how these elements shape media narratives. It also sheds light on how media discourse influences cultural and political identities, revealing ideological perspectives in representation. By analyzing this event, the study deepens our understanding of the intersection between sport, culture, politics, and media in a globalized world.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section aims at placing available research in the context of existing knowledge concerning MCDA with ideological perspectives. Ideology is regarded as one of the fundamental and most studied topics in critical discourse analysis. Van Dijk (1998) defines ideology as the "socially shared, general beliefs" (p. 32). Ideology in discourse mostly appears when there are different groups having opposing points of view. Texts are described as multimodal when they incorporate various modes of communication beyond just written or spoken language.

Mostafa (2018) examined the portrayal of Arab female athletes during the Rio 2016 Olympics, focusing on their increased participation in traditionally male-dominated sports and its challenge to gender stereotypes. Using the MCDA framework by Machin and Mayr (2012), which integrates social semiotics to analyze language and imagery in reinforcing ideologies, the study analyzed two articles on Egyptian weightlifter Sara Ahmed's bronze medal win. The Olympic Games Organization's article provided a neutral, Western perspective, while Ahram Online contextualized the achievement nationally. The findings revealed that both articles' lexical and visual elements conveyed implicit and explicit values about Arab female athletes, framing them as equals on the global stage.

Assaiqeli (2021) examined the role of visual representations in shaping and preserving national themes related to the Nakba, a key event in Palestinian history characterized by mass displacement and dispossession. The study revealed that iconic images, such as keys, tents, and olive trees, function as powerful symbols that memorialize the Nakba while signifying resilience, the Right of Return, and enduring connections to the homeland. The study also found that these visuals serve as resistance tools, opposing attempts to erase Palestinian identity and historical memory. The findings highlight that visual representations transcend linguistic barriers, making them accessible and evocative tools for resistance and advocacy. The study highlighted the critical socio-political role of visual discourse. Finally, the study findings enrich the understanding of visual semiotics, showing how imagery continues to be instrumental in memorializing history, mobilizing communities, and sustaining the Palestinian struggle for justice and self-determination.

Abdelghany et al. (2023) examined how memes about COVID-19 reflect cultural and political attitudes in Egypt and the United States. Using 80 memes taken from Facebook, the researchers analyzed how text and images combine to create metaphors, revealing hidden meanings and social critiques. The study identified five main metaphors which show how different cultures responded to the pandemic. Egyptian memes often highlight emotional appeals, religious practices, or dismissive attitudes toward the virus. In contrast, American memes focus on issues like generational pessimism or reliance on unproven remedies. These themes, social insensitivity, media trends, pessimism, and government incompetence, reveal both shared and culture-specific responses to the crisis. The findings revealed that memes do more than just make people laugh; they also express opinions about social and political issues.

Atma (2023) investigated gender stereotypes in Algerian TV advertisements using multimodal analysis to explore consumers' perceptions of these portrayals. The findings revealed that TV commercials heavily rely on gendered stereotypes. These stereotypes are visually reflected through strategies like modality, transactional processes, and offer gaze, and linguistically through declarative statements, active voice, and repeated lexical choices. These portrayals align with traditional societal roles, depicting women as housewives striving to please their families and portraying them as weak and calm, while men are shown as emotionless and authoritative. The study concluded that these advertisements perpetuate outdated gender roles, despite societal shifts in gender dynamics, as acknowledged by respondents.

Amer (2024) conducted a multimodal critical discourse analysis of the Palestinian movement, Hamas, examining digital discourses on X (formerly Twitter) using critical discourse techniques and a social semiotic framework by Kress and Van Leeuwen (1996, 2006). The findings revealed that tweets with Hamas were often linked to terms, such as terrorism, portraying Hamas negatively and legitimizing actions against it, while Hamas' tweets emphasized "occupation" and related terms like "Jerusalem" and "Hamas." The study highlighted the potential for Palestinians to use social media strategically to share their narrative and suggested expanding future research to include more platforms and multimodal sources, preserving the historical record of the Palestinian struggle amid efforts to remove such content.

Al-Taleb and Hamdan (2024) conducted a multimodal critical discourse analysis of nine Disney animated films released over three decades (1990-2019). The study focused on the visual and linguistic portrayal of male characters, utilizing Aley and Hahn's (2020) framework of men's visual portrayal, developed from Goffman (1976) and Coates' (2016) framework on men's language. The findings revealed significant shifts in the representation of masculinity over time. Visually, male characters transitioned from exaggeratedly large sizes with big muscles to more realistic body types with logical proportions. Early portrayals emphasized physical strength, but later decades presented heroes as powerful gentlemen, valuing qualities beyond brute force. By the 2010s, male characters no longer relied on attire to signify their status, reflecting broader sociocultural changes in ideals of heroism. The depiction of masculine touch also evolved: in the 1990s, interactions often conveyed control, while in subsequent decades, they shifted to convey protection and care. Eye withdrawal, however, remained consistent, symbolizing introspection and emotional depth. Linguistically, "asking questions" and "giving orders" were dominant features of male characters' speech across the three decades, while swearing and interruptions were less common. These changes in visual and linguistic representation illustrate how Disney's portrayal of masculinity has adapted to reflect evolving sociocultural values and expectations.

Alexandrovna and Andreevna (2025) apply Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine how language constructs legitimacy, power, and ideological control. While the bisht study investigates media narratives surrounding a cultural event, this study explores how presidential rhetoric frames war as a morally justified act. Both analyses highlight the role of discourse in shaping public perception, whether in sports media or political decision-making. Moreover, they underscore the function of language as a tool for reinforcing dominance and justifying actions, much like how non-Arab media framed the bisht moment in alignment with their cultural perspectives.

Finally, as far as the researchers can ascertain, the portrayal of the bisht in media and its multimodal representation has not been extensively studied or remains significantly under-investigated, leaving a clear gap in the literature. This dearth of research has served as the primary motivation for the current study, which aims to address this gap by exploring the bisht's symbolic and cultural significance through a multimodal lens.

III. METHODOLOGY

This section explains corpus and data collection, the framework of the study, and the analysis method.

A. Corpus and Data Collection

The corpus includes 10 English-language online news sources, evenly divided: 5 derived from Arab sources (Ahrām Online, Al Jazeera, Arab News, Khaleej Times, and Middle East Eye) and 5 from non-Arab sources (BBC Sport, Daily Mail, CNN Sport, NDTV Sports, and All-Football). This balanced selection ensures a comprehensive view of how the bisht was portrayed, combining perspectives from the Arab world with those from Europe, North America, and Asia. The Arab sources represent diverse regional viewpoints, while the non-Arab sources provide an international lens. By including both widely popular platforms with global reach and smaller regional outlets, the corpus captures a rich mix of global and local perspectives, offering a comprehensive understanding of how the bisht was presented during a major international event. This approach, however, ensures a diverse cultural representation and avoids bias from any single perspective. The researchers gathered the data from the official websites of these news sources. The selection criteria required that the reports were published within 15 days of the 2022 World Cup final (19 December 2022 – 02 January 2023), focused on Messi's coronation and the bisht presentation, and included multimodal elements, combining text and visuals. All reports were in English to enable a consistent analysis.

B. Framework of the Study

The study conducted a qualitative analysis of semiotic features, both linguistic and non-linguistic, as well as ideological framing, using two distinct frameworks. Machin and Mayr's (2012) MCDA framework was first applied to analyze how Arab and non-Arab online news sources in English portrayed the bisht scene during the Qatar World Cup

2022 final. The analysis focused on both linguistic elements in the report texts and visual semiotics in the accompanying images, such as Messi's stance and the placement of the bisht. This approach highlighted framing strategies and revealed narratives about cultural identity, authority, and tradition. Van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square model was then employed to analyze ideological framing within the discourse. This framework revealed manipulation strategies in media portrayals of the bisht event, such as emphasizing positive traits of the ingroup while stressing negative characteristics of the outgroup. It further illustrated the power dynamics shaping media narratives of the event.

C. Analysis Method

The analysis was conducted at two levels to explore semiotic features and ideological framing in the data. The first level of analysis examined linguistic elements, such as lexical connotations, overlexicalization, lexical absence, quoting patterns, functionalization versus nomination, and specification versus generalization, as well as non-linguistic elements, including visual semiotic choices, multimodality, iconography, and framing and positioning. Their definitions are drawn from Machin and Mayer (2012). Lexical connotations reflect ideological stances through word choice, such as describing someone as a "revolutionary" versus a "rebel," which suggests positive or negative views (p. 38). Overlexicalization emphasizes negativity through repeated terms like "regime," "dictatorship," and "authoritarian government" (p. 37). Lexical absence involves omitting key details, such as protesters' demands, to downplay their perspective. Quoting patterns, such as prioritizing statements from officials over ordinary citizens, reinforce specific viewpoints. Functionalization versus nomination highlights how referring to people by roles (e.g., "the worker") depersonalizes them, while using names (e.g., "John Smith") humanizes them (p. 79). Specification versus generalization examines the use of generalized terms like "migrants," which can imply collective behavior, compared to specific terms that focus on individuals (p. 80). According to Machin and Mayer (2012), these strategies reveal implicit ideological positions and are central to critical discourse analysis.

Machin and Mayr (2012) emphasize that non-linguistic elements play a crucial role in understanding meaning making in discourse. Visual semiotic choices involve the selection and arrangement of visual elements to convey specific meanings and ideologies as "visual semiotic resources can be used to connote discourses and ideas" (p. 70). Multimodality refers to the interaction of various semiotic modes, such as language, images, and layout, to create meaning, emphasizing that "meanings are communicated through a complex interplay of different semiotic resources" (p. 1). Iconography addresses the use of culturally or ideologically significant images and symbols, where "certain kinds of people, places and things have become established as familiar and instantly recognizable" (p. 50). Framing and positioning influence interpretation by determining "what is included and excluded, and how elements are arranged," along with "the angle or point of view adopted" (p. 72). All in all, these elements reveal deeper ideological framing and semiotic strategies embedded in multimodal texts.

The second level analyzed ideological dimensions in the data considering Van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square model, which outlines four key strategies for constructing ingroups and outgroups through discourse. The first is emphasizing positive ingroup characteristics, highlighting their favorable traits to create a positive self-image. The second is emphasizing negative outgroup characteristics, where their unfavorable traits or actions are heightened to portray them negatively, reflecting that "their bad actions and properties are emphasized, while their good ones are ignored or mitigated" (p. 267). The third strategy, mitigating positive outgroup characteristics, involves downplaying or ignoring favorable aspects of the outgroup, ensuring their contributions remain invisible or unacknowledged. Finally, mitigating negative ingroup characteristics minimizes or rationalizes unfavorable actions of the ingroup, presenting them as exceptions or less significant. These strategies reflect deliberate inclusion or exclusion in discourse to shape ideologies, maintain power dynamics, and reinforce group identities.

IV. RESULTS

This section presents the results of analysis by addressing the three research questions: "To what extent did Arab and non-Arab online news sources in English portray the bisht scene positively or negatively?", "What modes and devices did these sources use to communicate their intended meanings?", and "To what extent were these portrayals ideologically shaped and involved manipulation strategies?". The first two questions were examined using Machin and Mayr's (2012) MCDA framework, analyzing text and images. The third was addressed through Van Dijk's (1998) Ideological Square model. The analysis focused on six randomly selected reports, three from each source type to balance depth and representation. Random selection ensured objectivity, while limiting the sample to six allowed for a more focused exploration of key trends. Non-Arab reports were analyzed first to capture a global perspective on the bisht scene, reflecting broader cultural and ideological biases. These sources, with wider reach, employed distinct framing strategies, often contrasted by Arab sources responding to their claims.

A. Non-Arab Online News Reports

Report Example 1: The All-Football report titled "Bizarre moment Messi is dressed in traditional Arabic robe ahead of trophy lift" <https://m.allfootballapp.com/news/Headline/Bizarre-moment-Messi-is-dressed-in-traditional-Arabic-robe-ahead-of-trophy-lift/2986143>

The linguistic analysis revealed key framing strategies shaping the bisht moment. Lexical choices such as “bizarre,” “awkward,” and “odd” framed the bisht negatively, suggesting discomfort and unfamiliarity. The report stated that Messi “endured an awkward moment” and later “cut an odd figure” lifting the trophy in the bisht. This contrasted with descriptions of the bisht as a garment “traditionally worn for special or ceremonial occasions” and carrying “connotations of power” due to its association with royalty and clergy. Overlexicalization emphasized its ceremonial weight, contrasting it with Messi’s Argentina jersey, which was “partially obscured by a long black robe.” This focus suggested cultural intrusion at a moment many viewed as Argentina’s. Selective quoting reinforced a critical framing, prioritizing negative reactions, such as one calling the bisht a “PR tool for the Qatari regime.” While some supportive views, such as a fan calling the robe “a fitting way of acknowledging Messi as the king of football,” were mentioned, they received less emphasis. The report included dismissive remarks, such as the bisht being “grossly indulgent” and that “it should be a moment for the players, not the host.” Though a counterview like “live your life and stop whining” was noted, it was downplayed, further skewing the narrative. Functionalization and nomination also shaped the framing. The Emir was referred to by title, emphasizing his authority, while Messi was named throughout, reinforcing his global identity. Specific criticisms like “Messi finally wins the World Cup and is made to put on a robe. You just don’t do that” highlighted objections, whereas generalized positive acknowledgments, such as comparisons to black-tie attire, were underplayed. These strategies collectively framed the bisht as a cultural imposition, overshadowing its intended symbolism of honor and respect. The images added depth through non-linguistic features. Semiotic choices, such as the contrast between the bisht’s black and gold design and Messi’s jersey, symbolized the blending of traditions. Multimodality combined visuals and situational elements, positioning Messi as the focal point. Iconography reinforced cultural pride, linking Messi’s victory to local traditions. The bisht’s connotations of power were echoed visually, aligning with its description as “worn by royalty, officials, and clergy.” Framing techniques placed Messi at the center, with the Emir and FIFA president’s presence adding formality. These visual elements highlighted the interplay between cultural pride and global recognition, suggesting an appreciation of tradition.

Ideologically speaking, the analysis revealed deeper narratives in how Western norms were positioned as the standard, while the bisht was framed as exotic and intrusive. Messi was said to have endured “an awkward moment”, reinforcing negative outgroup traits by portraying the gesture as unwelcome. The claim that Messi “cut an odd figure” with his jersey “partially obscured” further suggested the bisht clashed with Western expectations for the trophy presentation. Negative outgroup characteristics were also emphasized by framing the bisht as political. A cited tweet called the gesture “symbolic. A way to stamp culture on what will be one of the most iconic images ever,” suggesting an imposition rather than respect. Critiques like “you just don’t do that” and claims that the bisht detracted from Argentina’s celebrations reinforced this cultural dominance narrative. At the same time, positive outgroup traits were mitigated. While the bisht was compared to Western black-tie attire, its associations with power were quickly overshadowed by criticisms. Tweets labeling it “grossly indulgent” dominated, reflecting a selective focus on controversy. The report also downplayed negative ingroup traits, avoiding any critique of dismissive Western attitudes. For instance, it did not challenge the claim that the bisht was a “PR tool for the Qatari regime.” Messi’s acceptance and the gesture’s respectful intent were minimized. While the report acknowledged that the bisht is “traditionally worn for special or ceremonial occasions” and was presented by the Emir with FIFA President Gianni Infantino applauding, this was undermined by its portrayal as a display of power. Positive ingroup characteristics were reinforced by framing the bisht as overshadowing the celebration, aligning with Western perspectives on trophy presentation propriety. This framing strategy reflects power dynamics, portraying the bisht as cultural dominance rather than an honorable tribute.

In conclusion, the All-Football report presents a mixed view. Linguistically, it leans toward criticism, using words like “bizarre” and “awkward” to highlight controversy. Visually, it suggests cultural respect and unity, with Messi appearing as a bridge between global and regional traditions. This contrast reflects ideological divisions: the text skews toward controversy, while the images suggest mutual appreciation.

Report Example 2: The BBC Sport report titled “World Cup final: Lionel Messi lifts trophy in bisht - traditional Arab robe” <https://bbc.atualizarondonia.com/sport/football/64018448>

The linguistic analysis of the BBC Sport report revealed a more neutral and celebratory framing of the bisht moment compared to the All-Football report. Lexical choices such as “iconic moment” and “the great Lionel Messi” emphasize the significance of Messi’s achievement. The bisht is described in culturally respectful terms as a “traditional men’s cloak popular in the Arab world,” avoiding pejorative connotations like “bizarre” or “awkward” found in the All-Football report. This difference in lexical framing positions the bisht moment as a natural part of a culturally rich event rather than an imposition. Overlexicalization is used to highlight Messi’s triumph, with phrases like “glittering and unparalleled career” and references to “the greatest finals ever witnessed.” In contrast, the cultural significance of the bisht receives limited emphasis, with its ceremonial importance noted briefly as “a dress for an official occasion and worn for celebrations.” This lexical imbalance highlights Messi’s role over the cultural symbolism of the bisht, aligning with a Western-centric narrative. The report integrates quotes to provide multiple perspectives. Hassan Al Thawadi, the secretary general of Qatar’s tournament organizing committee, describes the bisht as “a celebration of Messi,” framing it as an act of respect, while Sheikh Tamim states that the World Cup was an opportunity to “learn about the richness of our culture and the originality of our values.” These quotes contextualize the bisht as a gesture of cultural pride. However, the report also acknowledges criticisms, stating, “others have seen it as disrespectful and overshadowing the

day he had been waiting for.” The analysis of the accompanying image revealed non-linguistic features that contributed to the framing. Semiotic choices, such as the contrast between the bisht’s black color and Argentina’s jersey, symbolized cultural pride as well as global sportsmanship. Multimodality added further depth, with body language, facial expressions, and clothing visually linking Messi’s victory to Arab culture, while his teammates’ celebratory presence reinforced the moment’s significance. Iconography also played a key role, as the bisht added cultural depth to Messi’s image, blending his personal triumph with a gesture of cultural exchange. The report describes how the moment coincided with Qatar’s National Day and marked the conclusion of the first World Cup held in a Muslim country. This framing situates the bisht as more than a personal gesture to Messi, emphasizing its regional and cultural significance.

The ideological framing analysis revealed comprehensive strategies in the report, aligning with Van Dijk’s (1998) Ideological Square model. In this regard, the report emphasizes positive ingroup characteristics by celebrating Western values such as merit and teamwork. It highlights Lionel Messi’s achievements and Argentina’s collective success with phrases like “The great Lionel Messi was called up on stage to lift the trophy he had craved for so much of his glittering and unparalleled career,” and “overcame France on penalties in one of the greatest finals ever witnessed,” underscoring resilience and unity. The report emphasizes negative outgroup characteristics by framing the bisht moment as an intrusion. Statements like “It may have been a big honour for Messi to be dressed in the Arab attire, but others have seen it as disrespectful and overshadowing the day he had been waiting for,” suggest a lack of cultural appreciation and reinforce negative perceptions of Arab traditions. Furthermore, the report mitigates positive outgroup characteristics by downplaying the cultural significance of the bisht, despite quotes from Hassan Al Thawadi and Sheikh Tamim highlighting its intent as “a celebration of Messi” and an opportunity to “learn about the richness of our culture.” The absence of Western voices endorsing the gesture limits its prominence and diminishes its value. Finally, the report mitigates negative ingroup characteristics by avoiding a critical examination of Western biases. While it mentions views that the bisht was “disrespectful and overshadowing,” it does not question whether these reactions stem from cultural misunderstandings, presenting them neutrally instead. This framing keeps the focus on Messi’s career and Argentina’s victory, presenting the bisht as secondary and aligning with a predominantly Western perspective.

In conclusion, the BBC Sport report celebrates Messi’s win while diminishing the bisht’s significance, focusing on Western values and presenting Arab traditions as secondary. The narrative highlights Messi’s achievement, with the bisht serving as a minor gesture of cultural exchange. This analysis reveals both respect and bias, underscoring the challenges of representing diverse perspectives in global sports media.

Report Example 3: The Daily Mail report titled “Selfish moment Qatar World Cup hosts force Lionel Messi to cover up his iconic No.10 shirt with an Arabic robe for trophy presentation” <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-11551783/Bizarre-moment-Lionel-Messi-dressed-traditional-Arabic-robe-ahead-World-Cup-trophy-lift.html>

The Daily Mail report used linguistic features to shape its portrayal of the bisht moment. Lexical choices like “selfish,” “force,” and “awkward moment” depict the gesture as intrusive. For instance, the report states, “Lionel Messi endured an awkward moment after Argentina’s World Cup win on Sunday as he was draped in a robe ahead of the trophy lift,” implying that the bisht overshadowed Messi’s identity and Argentina’s victory. Overlexicalization amplifies criticism with repeated phrases like “it should be a moment for the players” and “grossly indulgent,” while lexical absence limits discussions of the bisht’s cultural significance, briefly mentioning it as worn for “special or ceremonial occasions.” Messi’s voice is missing, leaving the narrative unbalanced. Selective quoting further reinforces bias, giving prominence to criticisms like “You just don’t do that” over supportive remarks such as “live your life and stop whining.” Functionalization and nomination frame interpretations: Messi is described as “Argentina’s captain” and “king of football,” reinforcing his global status, while the Emir of Qatar is referred to only by title, implying political motives. Visual elements add depth to this framing. Semiotic choices highlight the bisht’s contrast with Messi’s Argentina jersey, symbolizing a mix of cultural and global identities. Messi’s calm expression suggests possible discomfort, complicating the celebration. Multimodality emphasizes Messi as the focal point, with fireworks in the background adding grandeur but isolating the bisht as a distinctly Arab symbol. Iconography positions the bisht as a cultural artifact, while the World Cup trophy remains the ultimate symbol of victory. Framing and positioning place Messi at the center, but in some shots, the bisht’s prominence suggests cultural imposition, potentially overshadowing his national identity.

The report employed distinct framing techniques to shape perceptions. Positive ingroup characteristics highlight Argentina’s victory and Messi’s status as a global icon. The report states that Messi’s triumph “has put an end to the debate over who the greatest footballer of all time is,” reinforcing his greatness. Argentina’s journey is depicted as historic, emphasizing Messi’s role in securing victory and ensuring the ingroup’s excellence. Conversely, negative outgroup characteristics emerge in criticisms of Qatar’s role. The bisht is labeled a “selfish” act and “PR tool” to impose cultural identity. One tweet states, “It’s a moment for the players, not the host,” while another calls Qatar’s actions “grossly indulgent.” The framing suggests that Qatar’s gesture detracted from the authenticity of the celebration, casting it as cultural overreach. While positive aspects of the outgroup are briefly acknowledged, skepticism dominates. The bisht’s ceremonial role is compared to Western black-tie attire, yet this recognition is undermined by dismissive remarks like, “Messi finally wins the World Cup and is made to put on a robe to lift the trophy. You just don’t do that.” Even when described as a “king of football” gesture, the bisht remains framed as an imposition rather than an honor.

Negative aspects of the ingroup are softened by portraying Messi's reaction as calm and compliant. The report ensures that Messi's dignity remains intact, avoiding any suggestion of discomfort. It redirects focus to Argentina's "thrilling final" and Messi's crucial role, reinforcing the purity of Argentina's triumph rather than Qatar's cultural intervention.

In conclusion, the Daily Mail frames the bisht moment as an intrusion, contrasting with Argentina's celebrated victory. Linguistically, it emphasizes criticism using words like "selfish" and "awkward moment." Visually, however, it portrays cultural respect and unity, with Messi as a bridge between global and regional traditions. This contrast reflects ideological divisions, with the text leaning toward controversy while the visuals suggest mutual appreciation.

B. Arab Online News Reports

Report Example 4: The Ahram Online report titled "From 10 to 150 a day: Boom for 'Bisht' maker after Messi's World Cup" <https://english.ahram.org.eg/News/482964.aspx>

The analysis of the report highlighted several linguistic features that framed the bisht and its presentation positively. Lexical choices and word connotations used terms like "traditional gown" to describe the bisht, linking it to significant events, such as "weddings, graduations, and official events." Words like "delicate," "handmade," and "family company" emphasized tradition, craftsmanship, and cultural pride. The gesture of dressing Messi in the bisht was framed as an "honour", reflecting Arab values. Overlexicalization added to this positive portrayal, with detailed descriptions of the bisht's materials and its increased sales overshadowing any criticism, emphasizing its cultural and economic importance. On the other hand, lexical absence was evident, as negative or critical terms were avoided to ensure a positive and respectful depiction of Arab traditions. Quotes further reinforced this narrative, such as the statement of Ahmad Al-Salem, whose family company made the bisht, "It was a gift from one king to another king," which highlighted admiration and family pride. Functionalization versus nomination also shaped the narrative: Messi was referred to by name and title, emphasizing his individuality and achievement, while the Emir was functionally described as a "sheikh" or "emir," emphasizing ceremonial authority. Generalized terms like "Arab commentators" created a sense of cultural unity, portraying widespread approval of the bisht gesture. However, the analysis of the accompanying image provided insights into the non-linguistic elements that complemented the textual narrative. Semiotic choices, such as draping Messi in the bisht, symbolized the blending of global sports and Arab tradition, turning the garment into a representation of inclusivity and cultural pride. The multimodality of the image, combined with captions and commentary, framed the gesture as one of mutual respect between Qatar and the global community. Iconography further amplified the bisht's cultural significance, with its regal black and gold colors and intricate craftsmanship transforming the trophy presentation into a celebration of Arab heritage. In addition, framing and positioning emphasized Messi's central role in the image, draped in the bisht and surrounded by cheering spectators, creating a unifying and celebratory tone that focused on cultural appreciation.

The ideological framing analysis reinforced positive Arab identity using Van Dijk's Ideological Square model to shape ingroup and outgroup dynamics. The bisht was framed as a "traditional gown" worn at "weddings, graduations, and official events," emphasizing its cultural significance. The report highlighted that Messi's bisht was crafted by Salem's family company, a "longstanding bisht supplier to Qatari royalty", reinforcing tradition and quality. Criticism from the outgroup was mitigated by attributing it to misunderstandings. Salem explained that dressing Messi in the bisht was meant to "honour" him, suggesting negative reactions stemmed from cultural differences, not the gesture itself. The report also downplayed positive outgroup perspectives, mentioning Western criticism but omitting appreciation. Internal dissent within the Arab community was also absent, presenting a unified ingroup image. By focusing on tradition, honor, and cultural misunderstanding, the report aligned with Van Dijk's strategy of emphasizing positive ingroup traits while minimizing criticism.

In conclusion, the Ahram Online report utilizes Van Dijk's Ideological Square model by emphasizing the positive aspects of the Arab identity and the bisht, attributing criticisms to misunderstandings, and maintaining a focus on the ingroup's perspective, thereby reinforcing a positive self-image.

Report Example 5: The Aljazeera News report titled "What is a bisht and why was Messi wearing it at the World Cup?" <https://aje.io/71z8yh>

The analysis revealed linguistic and visual strategies that frame the bisht moment positively. Lexical choices, such as describing it as a "mark of honour" and "an embrace by Messi of the local culture," emphasize its respect and significance. The bisht is portrayed as a "formal robe worn by royalty, dignitaries, grooms, and graduates," reinforcing its prestige. Overlexicalization highlights its ceremonial importance, countering potential Western misunderstandings, while lexical absence omits criticisms. Expert quotes, such as Mustafa Baig's statement that the gesture was "a mark of honour" and "a cultural acceptance," further validate this framing. Functionalization presents the Emir of Qatar as a symbol of Arab hospitality and Messi as a cultural ambassador, promoting global harmony. Visual analysis supports this framing through semiotic choices, such as draping the bisht over Messi's jersey, symbolizing a fusion of tradition and sportsmanship. The black and gold design enhances its ceremonial value, while iconography elevates Messi's status, reinforcing cultural authenticity. The image's composition visually connects the bisht to Messi's jersey, crafting a narrative of unity and respect.

The ideological framing analysis emphasized positive ingroup traits, calling the bisht a "mark of honour" and "cultural acceptance", reinforcing Arab pride by linking it to royalty and status. In contrast, Arab media counters negative outgroup traits, portraying Western critiques as culturally uninformed. Mustafa Baig argues that Messi's act

was “an embrace of local culture”, challenging dismissive narratives. Western perspectives acknowledging Messi’s gesture as “smart thinking” are framed as superficial, failing to grasp its deeper cultural meaning. Instead of engaging with Western critiques, Arab media focuses on cultural education. Hassan al-Thawadi, Qatar’s tournament secretary general, describes the gesture as “a regional celebration”, subtly reframing the narrative. To mitigate negative ingroup traits, Arab media downplays criticisms of the gesture as performative, portraying the Emir’s action as diplomatic and celebratory. Controversial interpretations are omitted, ensuring a unified, dignified representation of Arab traditions.

In conclusion, the Al Jazeera News report frames the bisht as a symbol of respect and pride, using positive language, expert perspectives, and visual elements to reinforce its cultural significance. Ideologically, it emphasizes Arab hospitality and honor, presenting the bisht moment as a celebration of cultural exchange and inclusivity while subtly responding to external criticisms.

Report Example 6: The Arab News report titled “Western media mocks Messi for wearing honorary Bisht, downplays Martinez’s obscene Golden Glove gesture” <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2218771/media>

The Arab News report employed specific linguistic features to frame the bisht moment as both respectful and significant, while simultaneously criticizing Western media’s reactions. Lexical choices such as “gesture of high respect” and “highest honor” emphasize the cultural value of the bisht, portraying it as a meaningful symbol of Gulf tradition. In contrast, terms like “mock,” “downplay,” and “ignorant” are used to criticize Western media for their dismissive attitudes, highlighting double standards. For instance, the report notes that “several Western media outlets have condemned Qatar for ‘ruining’ the World Cup final on Sunday by honoring Argentina’s Lionel Messi with a bisht, a gesture of high respect, while merely describing goalkeeper Emi Martinez as ‘lewd’ for holding the Golden Glove trophy against his crotch.” Overlexicalization is evident in the repeated use of words like “racist” and “ignorance,” which strengthens the defensive tone and draws attention to cultural insensitivity. Lexical absence further shapes the narrative by omitting neutral or conciliatory Western responses, maintaining a polarized perspective. Selective quoting, such as references to a “flimsy black robe” contrasted with social media praise, highlights the tension between cultural misunderstanding and appreciation. Functionalization and nomination personalize the criticism by naming Western figures like Gary Lineker, while generalizations about Western media reinforce the overarching narrative of cultural disparity. The analysis of the accompanying images highlighted non-linguistic elements that supported the report’s framing of the bisht moment. Semiotic choices, such as Messi standing with the Emir and FIFA President while wearing the bisht, emphasized a connection between global sports and Gulf traditions. The luxurious black and gold bisht draped over Messi’s jersey symbolized cultural pride, blending tradition with modernity. Multimodality further enriched the narrative, using Messi’s expression and the formal setting to communicate themes of respect and unity. Iconography played a central role, with the bisht symbolizing prestige and tradition, while the secondary image of Martinez’s obscene gesture with the Golden Glove disrupted the ceremonial tone. This stark contrast between the primary and secondary images highlighted the disparity between respectful traditions and irreverent behavior. The framing and positioning of the images emphasized these differences, with Messi’s central and balanced composition celebrating cultural pride, while Martínez’s isolated and inappropriate gesture disrupted the event’s dignity.

Ideologically, the report positioned Arab culture positively while critiquing Western media’s reactions. Positive ingroup characteristics are emphasized through the bisht’s portrayal as a symbol of pride and hospitality, reflecting Gulf traditions and values. Negative outgroup characteristics are highlighted by focusing on Western media’s alleged ignorance and cultural insensitivity, particularly in their dismissal of the bisht’s significance. While positive Western reactions are briefly acknowledged, they are framed as exceptions, reinforcing the critique of broader Western attitudes. The report avoids addressing potential negative aspects of the bisht gesture, such as accusations of politicization, ensuring a cohesive and favorable narrative about Arab traditions. Power dynamics are portrayed through the bisht moment, with the gesture framed as an assertion of cultural pride on the global stage, countering narratives of Western dominance.

In conclusion, the Arab News report frames the bisht as a symbol of cultural respect and pride, using linguistic and visual elements to criticize Western media’s reactions while celebrating Gulf traditions. Through positive language, selective imagery, and ideological framing, the report positions the bisht moment as a powerful statement of Arab identity and cultural diplomacy. The inclusion of Martínez’s obscene gesture in the secondary image further reinforces the narrative by contrasting respectful tradition with inappropriate behavior, emphasizing the contrast between cultural pride and irreverence. This framing underlines themes of inclusivity and mutual respect, presenting the bisht as a bridge between tradition and global sportsmanship.

V. DISCUSSION

The analysis of Arab and non-Arab media coverage of Messi wearing the bisht highlights notable differences and some shared elements in framing the event. The subsections below provide a detailed discussion and comparison.

A. Semiotic Features

Arab media frame the bisht as a symbol of “honor,” “pride,” and “tradition,” while non-Arab reports use terms like “awkward,” “bizarre,” and “controversial,” portraying it as intrusive. Some non-Arab sources attempt neutrality, calling it a “traditional Arab robe.” Both sides show overlexicalization: Arab media emphasize “handmade” and “gold-

threaded,” while non-Arab reports repeat “unnecessary” and “overshadowing.” Selective omission also shapes narratives, Arab media avoid Western critiques, while non-Arab outlets downplay the bisht’s cultural significance. Quoting patterns differ: Arab reports highlight cultural experts, while non-Arab media amplify skepticism, citing Gary Lineker’s “a shame” remark. Functionalization and nomination reinforce framing. Arab media call Messi “the victorious captain” and the Emir “custodian of Arab traditions,” while non-Arab sources label the Emir simply “the host.” Arab reports celebrate the bisht’s craftsmanship; non-Arab media generalize its role but critique its impact on Messi’s jersey. Multimodal strategies vary, Arab media pair images of Messi in the bisht with celebratory captions, while non-Arab reports use similar visuals but frame the bisht as contentious. Both highlight its iconographic significance, but Arab media see it as cultural unity, while non-Arab media depict it as disruptive.

B. Ideological Framing

Arab reports emphasize Arab culture as generous, respectful, and rooted in tradition, presenting the bisht as a symbol of honor. In contrast, non-Arab reports focus on Western values of sporting tradition and individuality, framing Messi’s jersey as sacred. Both narratives agree on Messi’s global significance but diverge on cultural interpretation. Negative outgroup framing deepens this divide. Arab reports label Western reactions as “orientalist” and dismissive, while non-Arab reports call the bisht “awkward” and “unnecessary”, portraying it as cultural imposition. Both sides selectively acknowledge outgroup support but avoid self-criticism, Arab reports omit the bisht’s exclusivity, while non-Arab reports ignore Western cultural insensitivity. Power dynamics are also framed differently. Arab reports present the bisht as cultural diplomacy, portraying Messi’s act as voluntary. Non-Arab reports interpret it as Qatari assertion, overshadowing Messi’s triumph. Despite contrasts, both narratives highlight the bisht and Messi as symbols of broader cultural discourse.

C. Comparisons With Previous Studies

The study’s findings highlight both similarities and contrasts with prior research on multimodality and ideological framing. It confirms that the media shapes public perceptions of cultural events through text and visuals. Like Mostafa (2018) on Arab female athletes, this study found that media blends local and global narratives. However, unlike Mostafa’s “harmonious identity fusion,” non-Arab media framed the bisht as clashing with Messi’s jersey, emphasizing cultural conflict. Similar to Atma (2023), Arab media paired celebratory bisht images with positive captions, while non-Arab sources focused on controversy, reinforcing opposing narratives. The study also aligns with Assaiqeli (2021), showing how visual symbols preserve cultural identity. Just as Nakba images (olive trees, keys) evoke resilience, Arab media framed the bisht as a tradition of pride, resisting Western critiques. A contrast arises with Abdelghany et al. (2023), who analyzed humor in cultural critique. While this study examined serious ideological framing, Abdelghany et al. showed how memes used satire to critique society. Similarly, Amer (2024) and Al-Taleb and Hamdan (2024) found that media integrates text and visuals to highlight heritage. Regarding ideology, Arab media framed the bisht as Gulf pride, while non-Arab media framed it as awkward or intrusive, reinforcing selective narratives (Assaiqeli, 2021; Abdelghany et al., 2023).

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main aim of the present study was to examine how Arab and non-Arab online news sources framed the bisht moment during the 2022 FIFA World Cup differently, influenced by cultural and ideological perspectives. Arab media celebrated the bisht as a symbol of pride and tradition, using positive language, historical context, and visuals to emphasize its significance. In contrast, non-Arab media often portrayed the bisht as intrusive or unnecessary, relying on critical language and visuals to suggest that it detracted from Messi’s achievement. Both sides employed selective framing, reflecting broader cultural and ideological biases. This demonstrates how linguistic and multimodal strategies shape public understanding of culturally significant events. To address these findings, future linguistic and multimodal research should focus on how media constructs and communicates cultural narratives. Future research should compare how different cultures frame traditions in global events, analyzing word choices, metaphors, and rhetorical devices to reveal patterns of bias. Researchers should also examine how visuals, captions, and text interact to create or reinforce cultural meanings, using multimodal discourse analysis to explore the relationship between language and imagery. Finally, researchers should investigate how providing historical and cultural context in media narratives influences audience understanding and appreciation of cultural gestures. This will help reveal how media represents or misrepresents cultural practices, contributing to more inclusive and accurate communication in global contexts.

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Integrating Soft Skills Into Task-Based Language Learning in Higher Education

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Abstract—Although research on soft skills in higher education has been widely conducted, research on assignments to promote soft skills remains limited. The aims are to investigate the forms of assignments made by lecturers to train students with soft skills in Task-Based Language Learning, to analyze the percentage growth in categories of soft skills, and to describe the most important soft skills from the perspective of a language educator. This study employs a quantitative and qualitative survey design. The quantitative survey questionnaire was created and delivered to 102 language teachers online; 84 were from Indonesian universities, while 16 were from Malaysian universities. Eight faculty members were interviewed in Focus Group Discussions to validate quantitative research findings and to determine the most required soft skills. The study found that while teachers have a relatively solid comprehension of each component of soft skills, the types of assignments issued to students vary. Educators believe that communication skills, teamwork, and computer literacy are the most important soft skills for graduates today. It is projected that the findings of this study will motivate lecturers to include varied activities in assignments to help students enhance their soft skills.

Index Terms—soft skills, assignment, task-based learning, higher education

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, education has progressed in information technology use and Internet communication, which has provided greater access for educators and students to upgrade their teaching and learning approaches, which may require some application of skills (Alyoussef, 2023). In the opinion of teachers (Lepeley et al., 2021), information technology can help university students become more prepared in any academic field. Meanwhile, some education experts emphasize the importance of using skills such as teamwork, communication, and lifelong learning to adapt to the contemporary needs of education (Tan et al., 2020; Emanuel et al., 2021), and they also encourage educators to help students develop soft skills. Soft skills refer to personal attributes and abilities that people may have natively, and they are often associated with a person's personality and character. These skills can help people interact successfully, display professionalism, and create relationships (Cuic Tankovic et al., 2023).

Most scholars have different opinions about the soft-skills categories. For example, some scholars (Heckman & Kautz, 2012; Hendarman & Tjakraatmadja, 2012; Marin-Zapata et al., 2022) divide soft skills into ten categories: qualities or values, predispositions or attitudes, methodological skills, leadership or management abilities, interpersonal skills, communication skills, articulation work, emotional labor, and 'lookism', which relates to professional appearance. Moreover, soft skills are viewed as characteristics or attributes of one's personality which include time management,

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stress management, effective communication, creativity, and leading teams required at the university level (Gibb, 2014). Despite having different views of what soft skills are, these skills are then believed to stand as comprehensive and sufficient enough to be acquired by students in higher education levels (Gan, 2012). Thus, transformative learning in developing skills and competencies is vital to equipping students to be able “to solve environmentally important problems and lead an environmentally aware way of life” (Mulnix, 2012; Hassan et al., 2013; Kechagias, 2011).

Task-based language learning (TBLL) is one of the common platforms used by students and educators in classrooms. (Lorente et al., 2024; Oo et al., 2024; Rehan et al., 2024). Among its benefits are that it emphasizes more on a student-centered approach than a teacher-centered approach, uses language as a learning tool, facilitates the language skills application in a real-world context, conforms to students’ intermediate level, and enables classroom engagement while catering to students’ needs (Chu et al., 2024; Oo et al., 2024; Xue, 2022). TBLL is seen as an ideal language learning platform for students because it integrates the application of soft skills required by students. It deals mostly with active classroom activities (Ahmadian, 2016; Xue, 2022; Gurzynski & Baralt, 2014). For instance, role-playing can be a suitable classroom activity as it enhances students’ creativity in the language learning experience by encouraging them to respond to a real-life situation while improving their self-confidence. This greatly aligns with the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) which can be engaged in classroom activities as part of TBLL activities for students.

CLT improves students’ second language competence (Philp & Duchesne, 2016). Common tasks like presenting from a group work discussion have developed students’ confidence and encouragement to participate and speak more often with their teammates (Abrami et al., 2015). This consequently improves their speaking skills. Through this activity, it is believed that students can pitch their creativity to making decisions. Therefore, implementing TBLL in the classroom significantly facilitates students better at harnessing their language learning (Alyoussef, 2023; Philp & Duchesne, 2016; Van der Zwaard & Bannink, 2019).

Recently, TBLL has given greater attention to the adaptation of cognitive skills focusing on memorizing, synthesizing, and analyzing especially towards developing decision-making skills about power and supremacy in administration areas (Finn et al., 2014; Taatgen, 2013). Besides looking at their ability to make decisions, soft skills like creativity are also crucial in problem-solving so that students can solve any job’s related issues rather than only using them in the classroom. Besides, meaningful learning experience contributes to an in-depth comprehension of language knowledge which is accomplished through the engagement of problem-solving skills (Kessler & Hubbard, 2017; Tadjer et al., 2020). These soft skills then undeniably need to be taught and harnessed by the teachers for classroom activities. (Hariti et al., 2020).

In Asian nations such as Indonesia and Malaysia, the curriculum that directly addresses the development of soft skills has not been fully defined (Jaedun et al., 2024; Tamsah et al., 2023). University curricula always emphasize the quality of mastery of hard or technical abilities. Indeed, several lecturers in universities in Indonesia and Malaysia have used the soft-skills development method (Ormond & Sulianti, 2017; Shakir, 2009; Tan et al., 2020). This can directly stimulate the development of their soft skills, which has received little attention from universities and lecturers.

Previous research has explored how college students apply soft skills to support their academic activities (Hora et al., 2018; Musa et al., 2012; Tadjer et al., 2020, 2022; Yousef et al., 2020). Several research looked at soft skill education, soft skill mastery by lecturers and students, soft skill development using media, the relationship between soft skills and digital literacy, and soft skill empowerment to push students to learn (Scott & Willison, 2021). However, lecturers’ perspectives on soft skill development, types of assignments to students, and the research of soft skills most needed by the labor market have never been discussed previously.

Based on the discussion made on the roles of soft skills in higher education, this paper intends to answer the following research questions;

1. What are the lecturers’ perceptions of integrating soft skills in learning activities?
2. How do educators assign students to improve their soft skills in task-based language learning?
3. Which soft skills are urgently needed for students’ future work?

II. METHOD

This study employed a survey research design that collected both qualitative and quantitative data to explore the practices of tertiary language educators in developing their students’ soft skills through assignment-based learning activities.

A survey was developed and distributed through an online platform to a total of 102 language lecturers, with 18 participants from Malaysia and 84 from Indonesia. The participants consisted of 44 male and 58 female lecturers and were recruited through professional associations and social media groups for educators in both countries. These participants were recruited from a total of 35 institutions in Indonesia and another 6 institutions in Malaysia. Furthermore, the participants consisted of educators with various teaching experiences in diverse subject areas such as English proficiency skills, linguistics, education, literature, language assessment, and teaching of third languages such as Arabic, Indonesian, Japanese, and French. By having a mix of participants from different backgrounds, a wider range of ideas is explored compared to having a lack of diversity that stifles the generation of new ideas.

A semi-structured online survey was developed as the primary instrument to address the research questions and objectives. Semi-structured questions have an advantage where they offer the participants flexibility in giving out

responses. The survey comprises 19 questions in total with a combination of 10 open-ended and 9 closed-ended questions. A section containing six demographic questions on the participants' teaching background is also included as demographic data enables participants' diversity in the study to be recognized. The open-ended questions focused on lecturers' experiences in developing students' soft skills development and their specific assignment methods in doing so. A total of 9 soft skills themes are inquired including communication skills, critical thinking, ethics in speaking, self-confidence, cooperation and teamwork, emotional intelligence, networking skills, adaptation skills, and students' creativity skills. Meanwhile, the closed-ended questions gathered information on the frequency of the assignment tasks applied by the educators to enhance the inquired soft skills. For this type of item, a frequency scale is used to identify how often the participants perform the tasks. As the data were collected through a mix of close-ended and open-ended questions, thematic analysis was utilized as a method to analyze the qualitative data obtained from the open-ended questions. According to Kiger and Varpio (2020), this method involves sifting through a set of data to find repeated themes and in the process of doing so, researchers also interpret the data at the same time.

The study followed some steps to ensure validity and credibility. Firstly, the research team obtained approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the Universiti Teknologi MARA before distributing the instruments. UiTM's REC ensures that the study conforms to the standard guidelines of research laws and regulations (Research Ethics Committee, 2018).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Results

(a). Lecturers' Perception of Soft Skills

When language teachers were asked about their comprehension, the description of their answers is displayed in Figure 1 below.

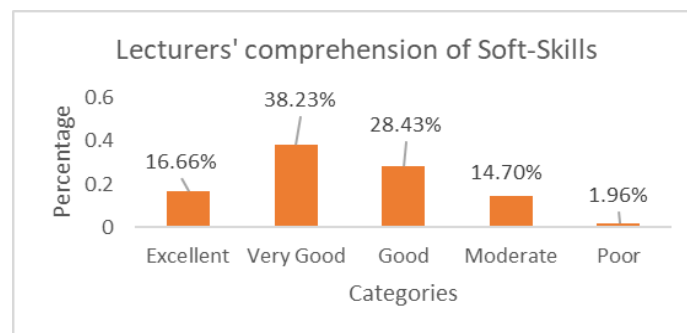


Figure 1. Lecturers' Comprehension of Soft Skills (n=102)

When language teachers were asked about their frequency in preparing students' soft skills development at the beginning of the teaching and learning process, their responses were as shown in Figure 2 below.

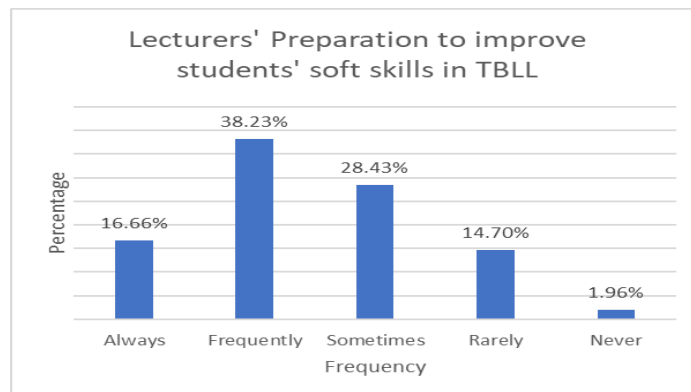


Figure 2. Teachers' Planning of Soft Skills in TBLL

When language teachers were asked about the frequency of assessing students' soft skills during the learning process, their responses are depicted in Figure 3 below.

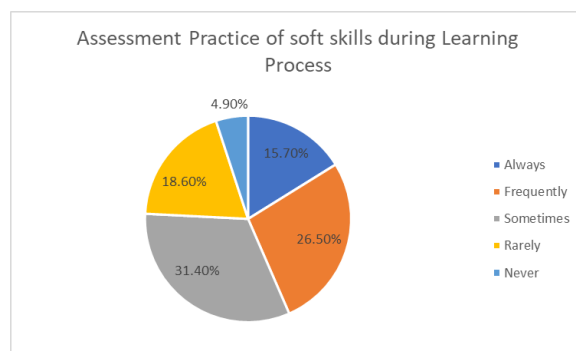


Figure 3. Assessment Practice of Soft Skills During Learning Process

(b). *The Form of Assignments to Improve Soft Skills in TBLL*

When language teachers were asked about the types of activities they assigned to students to improve their communication skills, the description of their assigned activities is described in the table below:

TABLE 1
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN COMMUNICATION SKILLS/N=102

No	Assignment	Frequency	Percentage
1	Individual/group presentation	32	31.37%
2	Debates	26	25.49%
3	Role-playing	20	19.60%-
4	Storytelling/Narration	10	9.80%
5	Writing peer review	5	4.90%
6	Panel discussion	4	3.92%
7	Podcast/video creation	3	2.94%
8	Classroom forum/blogs	2	1.96%

Assignments that are dynamic and captivating might help students develop their communication abilities. Students can work together or independently to prepare and make a presentation on a specified topic, improving their verbal communication and teamwork skills. In debating activities, to promote critical thinking and effective speaking, students are given topics to investigate and make justifications for or against. Students are given roles (such as interviewee/interviewer or customer/service provider) in role-playing exercises to mimic authentic communication situations. In storytelling or narration activities, to enhance their descriptive and expressive abilities, students are encouraged to recount a tale or an experience. In Writing and Peer Review activities, Essays, blogs, or reflective journals are given to students, and peer review sessions are incorporated to give them practice giving constructive criticism. In panel discussion exercises, students imitate professional communication situations by taking part in or moderating discussions on certain subjects. In Podcast or Video Creation activities, Students improve their verbal and digital communication skills by recording conversations, lessons, or original content. Students combine textual and digital communication abilities by creating an online platform in Classroom Forums or Blogs where they can publish ideas or reply to suggestions.

Critical thinking skills

When language teachers were asked about the types of activities they assigned to students to improve their critical-thinking skills, the description of their assigned activities is described in the table below.

TABLE 2
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Case studies/problem-solving	34	33.33%
2	Debates	25	24.50%
3	Socratic seminar	14	13.72%
4	Research projects	9	8.82%
5	"What if" scenarios	7	6.86%
6	Concept mapping	6	5.88%
7	Compare and contrast assignment.	5	4.90%
8	Media or literature analysis	5	4.90%
9	Reflection Assignment	2	1.96%

Teachers provide their students with interesting assignments to help them develop their critical thinking abilities. In Case Studies and Problem-Solving assignments, Teachers provide students with hypothetical or real-world situations to analyze and suggest solutions for. In debate activities, teachers give students a contentious issue to investigate and make an argument for or against. Students' logical thinking, arguments supported by evidence, and viewpoint evaluation are all demonstrated in these exercises. In Socratic seminars, Teachers assign readings and lead conversations in which

students pose and respond to challenging issues. Investigating deeper meanings and challenging presumptions are the main goals of this exercise. In research project activity, students are given open-ended research topics by their lecturers, and they must collect, assess, and synthesize data to conclude. In the “What if” scenario, to promote logical and creative thinking, teachers provide their students with hypothetical situations to think about. In concept mapping assignments, to demonstrate the links and interactions between concepts, teachers ask students to make a visual map of the notion. The activity improves the participants' ability to arrange and synthesize information. In the “compare and contrast” assignment, teachers Give pupils two concepts, theories, or viewpoints so they can compare and contrast them. In Analysis of Media or Literature, students are given assignments by teachers to critically assess literary works, news pieces, or ads. Teachers offer reflective essays or journals for students to assess their own decision-making and mental processes as part of the Reflection assignment.

Speaking Ethics

When language teachers were asked about the types of activities they assigned to students to improve their ethics in speaking, the description of their assigned activities is described in the following table.

TABLE 3
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN ETHICS IN SPEAKING

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Debate with ethical guideline	28	27.45%
2	Role-playing scenario	25	24.50%
3	Famous speech analysis	21	20.58%
4	Peer feedback exercises	10	9.80%
5	Code of Ethics creation	6	5.88%
6	Persuasive speaking	4	3.92%
7	Ethical storytelling	3	2.94%
8	Reflection of ethical communication	3	2.94%
9	Ethic assignment	2	1.96%

In this skill, assignments should emphasize respect, honesty, empathy, and accountability in communicating to assist students in developing their speaking ethics. In the Debate with Ethical Guidelines activity, students discuss a sensitive topic (e.g., privacy vs. security). They maintain a respectful discourse while avoiding insults and incorrect information. The project intends to teach students how to argue sensitive topics in an ethical and useful manner. In role-playing scenarios, teachers present students with circumstances in which they must resolve moral quandaries in communication, such as giving bad news to a coworker or clarifying a misunderstanding. In the famous speech analysis, students evaluate speeches by well-known individuals, highlighting moral attributes such as honesty, tolerance for opposing viewpoints, and avoidance of deceptive language. The activity's goal is to understand how ethics supports good communication.

Through the Peer Feedback Exercise, Students give a brief speech or presentation, followed by a structured peer evaluation on ethical issues (e.g., fairness and respect for other viewpoints). The goal is to reinforce the value of constructive criticism and courteous discourse. In the code of creation activity, Teachers provide students with the duty of developing a "speaking code of ethics" for themselves or their groups, which encompasses ideals like integrity, openness, and decency. The goal is to encourage contemplation about their roles as moral communicators. Through the persuasive speaking activity, students prepare a persuasive speech on any topic they choose, ensuring that their ideas are supported by facts and free of rhetoric or deception. The goal is to emphasize the necessity of ethical persuasion and authenticity. In the ethical storytelling activity, Students emphasize honesty, and respect for people or cultures and refrain from using unpleasant words. Teachers urge students to share a personal or cultural story. The purpose is to engage in culturally sensitive and ethical storytelling. In the Reflection of Ethical Communication activity, teachers provide students with a reflective essay or diary entry to write about an instance in which they witnessed or participated in unethical speech. The goal is to promote self-awareness and adherence to moral behavior. In addition, in an ethical project, professors ask students to assess a media star or public speaker's ethical behavior during interviews or speeches.

Self-Confidence

The table below describes the types of activities that language teachers allocate to students to increase their self-confidence skills.

TABLE 4
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN SELF-CONFIDENCE

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Individual presentation	30	29.41%
2	Personal achievement journal	18	17.64%
3	Role-playing exercise	13	12.74%
4	Peer-teaching assignment	11	10.78%
5	Gradual exposure challenge	12	11.76%
6	Talent shows or showcase	7	6.86%
7	Positive affirmation activities	6	5.88%
8	Collaborative projects	3	2.94%
9	Storytelling experience	2	1.96%

Improving student self-confidence involves assignments encouraging self-expression, resilience, and gradual exposure to new challenges. In individual presentation assignments, students prepare and give a presentation on a chosen topic. It begins with informal settings before transitioning to official ones. The goal is to gain confidence in public speaking and communicating ideas. Students keep a notebook in the personal achievement journal assignment to record their accomplishments, obstacles conquered, and good feedback received. The purpose is to encourage self-reflection and recognize personal improvement. In the Role-playing exercise, Students are given real-life events (e.g., job interviews, conflict resolution) to act out in a safe and supportive setting. The goal is to gain confidence in handling a variety of scenarios. In the Peer-Teaching assignment, students plan a short lesson to teach their peers a subject in which they excel or enjoy. The goal is to let students take ownership of their knowledge and skills. Students are assigned more difficult assignments in the Gradual Exposure challenge activity, such as beginning with group presentations and progressing to individual presentations. The idea is to help them acquire confidence gradually. In talent shows or showcase activities, Students demonstrate or present a skill, ability, or project they are proud of in front of their classmates. The idea is to inspire pupils to embrace and demonstrate their unique strengths. Teachers assign students to write letters to themselves through positive affirmation activities, stressing their virtues and successes. Its purpose is to boost self-esteem and improve self-perception. In Collaborative project activities, Teachers create group activities in which students contribute unique responsibilities, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to shine. The goal is to increase confidence via teamwork and shared achievement. In the Storytelling experience, Teachers ask students to share a personal experience or reflect on how they overcame a hurdle. The idea is to normalize vulnerability and increase resilience.

Cooperation and Teamwork

When asked what activities they assigned to students to increase their collaboration and teamwork abilities, language teachers provided their responses as stated in the table below.

TABLE 5
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN COOPERATION AND TEAMWORK

<i>No</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1	Group project	34	33.33%
2	Role-based task assignment	22	21.56%
3	Collaborative Problem Solving	15	14.70%
4	Peer Teaching Assignment	11	10.78%
5	Creative Work Project	8	7.84%
6	Team-based competition	6	5.88%
7	Simulation or role-playing	3	2.94%
8	Peer Review Workshop	3	2.94%

Improving student teamwork involves assignments promoting collaboration, communication, and mutual accountability. In group projects, Teachers propose a project that requires students to collaborate, split tasks, and create a finished output (such as a presentation, report, or creative piece). The purpose is to instill shared responsibility, coordination, and compromise. In the Role-based task assignment, within group work, students are allocated certain roles (for example, leader, researcher, or presenter). Rotate roles for future assignments. The goal is to help children understand and value the various contributions to a team. In the Collaborative Problem-Solving activity, Teachers give a hard challenge that must be solved with the participation of all team members. The purpose is to promote creativity, critical thinking, and collaboration towards a common solution. In the Peer Teaching Assignment, Teachers assign groups of students to teach their classmates a topic or concept. Every member should participate in the planning and delivery. The purpose is to promote collaboration, responsibility, and knowledge sharing. In the Creative Work Project assignment, teachers assign teams to create something together (e.g., a video, artwork, or skit) that demands collaboration and the integration of varied ideas. The purpose is to foster companionship and creativity through collaborative efforts. In the Team-based Competition, teachers create a pleasant competition in which groups compete to solve puzzles, accomplish tasks, or propose ideas. The goal is to create teamwork under pressure and improve strategic thinking. In the Simulation or role-playing activities, Teachers assign a simulation in which students take on responsibilities within a team to address a problem (for example, running a business or managing a crisis). The goal is to improve cooperative, communicative, and decision-making abilities. In the Peer-Review Workshop activity, Groups of students review and provide comments on each other's work, emphasizing constructive criticism and collaborative progress. The purpose is to foster respect for peers' viewpoints and teamwork when improving ideas.

Emotional Intelligence

The table below describes the types of tasks that language teachers allocate to students to increase their Emotional Intelligence skills.

TABLE 6
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN COOPERATION AND TEAMWORK

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Reflective journals	28	27.45%
2	Empathy exercises	21	20.58%
3	Role-playing Scenarios	16	15.68%
4	Group Discussion with an emotional focus	10	9.80%
5	Mindful Assignment	9	8.82%
6	Emotional Intelligence Case Studies	7	6.86%
7	Gratitude Letter Writing	5	4.90%
8	Emotional Vocabulary Expansion	4	3.92%
9	Peer feedback on emotional skills	2	1.96%

Improving students' emotional intelligence (EI) involves fostering self-awareness, empathy, self-regulation, social skills, and motivation. In the Reflective journal activity, teachers guide students to keep a notebook in which they can reflect on their emotions, reactions, and how they handled various events. The goal is to increase self-awareness and emotional regulation. In the Empathy Exercises, Teachers provide projects that require students to write or role-play as someone else. The goal is to create empathy and comprehension of how others feel. In the Role-playing scenarios, Teachers provide scenarios in which students must handle disagreements or emotionally intense interactions. The goal is to improve self-regulation, active listening skills, and empathy. In Group Discussions with an emotional focus, teachers offer talks on themes such as stress management, relationship development, and dealing with disappointments. The goal is to improve social skills and encourage sharing emotions in a safe environment. In the Mindfulness Assignments, Teachers guide students through mindfulness techniques (such as deep breathing and meditation) and ask them to evaluate how they affect their emotions. In the Emotional Intelligence Case Studies, teachers offer case studies in which students analyze the emotional dynamics of a scenario and provide acceptable solutions. In Gratitude Letter Writing, Teachers assign students to write letters of gratitude to those who have had a good impact on their lives. The purpose is to promote happy feelings and develop connections. In the Emotional Vocabulary Expansion, Teachers provide activities in which students explore and express complicated emotions, allowing them to articulate sentiments more precisely.

Networks

An assignment to improve students' networking skills can be designed to encourage interaction, collaboration, and practical use of networking concepts. The table below highlights the many types of assignments that language professors assign to pupils to help them improve their network skills.

TABLE 7
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN NETWORKS

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	Networking Event Simulation	35	34.31%
2	Informational Interviews	26	25.49%
3	Collaborative Group Projects	18	17.64%
4	Networking Challenges	14	13.72%
5	Case Studies on Networking	9	8.82%

In networking Event Simulation, students organize a simulated networking event, such as a career fair or a professional meet and greet. This project trains students in event management, public speaking, and interactions with peers and professionals. Finally, they create reports that outline the event planning process and reflect on the networking interactions. In Informational Interviews, each student seeks out and contacts a professional in their field of interest for a quick interview. This exercise helps people increase their ability to make relationships, initiate professional conversations, and gain industry insights. In Collaborative Group Projects, Students work together in groups to complete a project that needs them to network with other stakeholders, such as guest lecturers or industry partners. Throughout the project, children can practice teamwork, external communication, and connection-building. Finally, students will be able to report on the completed project and share their thoughts on the networking experience. In Networking Challenges, Students are given weekly challenges such as attending a professional webinar, engaging in an online conversation, or introducing themselves to someone new. They will demonstrate spontaneous networking, adaptability, and confidence. In Case Studies on Networking, students look at case studies of successful professionals and how networking helped them flourish. The skills developed include analytical thinking and an understanding of networking strategies.

Adaptation

The assignments are intended to increase students' adaption skills, with a focus on helping them become more flexible, resilient, and resourceful in various situations. The table below describes the types of tasks that language teachers offer to students to develop their adaptability skills.

TABLE 8
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO ADAPTATION

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	<i>Role-Reversal Exercise</i>	35	34.31%
2	<i>Case Study Analysis</i>	26	25.49%
3	<i>Cross-Cultural Simulation</i>	20	19.60%
4	<i>Dynamic Team Challenge</i>	12	11.76%
5	<i>Scenario-Based Problem-Solving</i>	9	8.82%

In the reversal exercise, students take on a role or responsibility that is outside of their comfort zone, such as serving as a team leader, completing a task for a different department, or presenting an opposing viewpoint in a debate. Flexibility, perspective-taking, and problem-solving abilities have all been enhanced. The delivery can be a report or video diary detailing their struggles and adaptations. In Case Study Analysis, Students are given to analyze real-life or hypothetical events demanding quick adaptation (for example, a firm pivoting during a crisis or an athlete adjusting to an unexpected obstacle). The project helps to develop analytical thinking, strategic planning, and decision-making skills. The report is a written study that includes advice on how to adapt effectively. In Cross-Cultural Simulation, students simulate navigating a diverse cultural setting (for example, a business discussion or a group project with international participation). In the Dynamic Team Challenge, Students work in rotating teams on a project with changing requirements or restrictions (such as unexpected changes in resources, timeframes, or objectives). Teamwork, flexibility to change, and resilience under duress are all cultivated talents. The report could be a finished project or a group reflection on their adaptation strategies. In Scenario-Based Problem-Solving, students are provided with scenarios in which they must alter their plans in response to unforeseen events (for example, a natural disaster, technical failure, or policy change).

Leadership

The table below describes the types of exercises that language teachers allocate to students to strengthen their leadership skills.

TABLE 9
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN LEADERSHIP

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	<i>Group projects</i>	39	38.23%
2	<i>Event Planning and Execution</i>	28	27.45%
3	<i>Case Study on Leadership Styles</i>	21	20.58%
4	<i>Leadership Role-Playing</i>	12	9.80%

In Group projects, teachers assign students to lead group projects. They are in charge of creating goals, distributing work, and guaranteeing project completion. Skills learned include team management, communication, decision-making, and problem-solving. The finished project, a leadership reflection notebook, and peer assessments. In Event Planning and Execution, Students plan and lead a small event (such as a seminar, fundraiser, or community outreach activity). Planning, delegating, dispute resolution, and resource management are all abilities that have been acquired. The event outcomes include a summary report and a reflection on leadership challenges and accomplishments. In Case Study on Leadership Styles, Students examine several leadership styles using case studies of renowned leaders or organizations to discover their strengths, flaws, and situational applications. Analytical thinking, comprehension of various leadership techniques, and adaptability are among the improved skills. The report consists of a written analysis and a presentation that proposes how to apply the lessons learned. In Leadership Role-Playing, students practice leadership scenarios (e.g., dispute resolution, crisis management, or team inspiration) in which they take on leadership responsibilities. Public speaking, problem-solving, and making decisions under duress are among the talents that have been developed.

Digital Literacy

Improving students' digital literacy entails teaching them how to utilize digital tools efficiently and responsibly, evaluate online material, and navigate the digital world. The table below describes the types of tasks that language teachers allocate to students to develop their digital literacy skills.

TABLE 10
FORMS OF ASSIGNMENT TO TRAIN DIGITAL LITERACY

No	Activities	Frequency	Percentage
1	<i>Digital Research Project</i>	42	41.17%
2	<i>Online Collaboration Exercise</i>	20	19.60%
3	<i>Digital Presentation Assignment</i>	18	17.64%
4	<i>Data Analysis and Visualization</i>	17	9.80%
5	<i>Data Analysis and Visualization</i>	5	4.90%

In a Digital research project, Students are instructed to research a topic using online resources, ensuring that their sources are credible and relevant. This activity promotes information literacy, critical thinking, and citation abilities. The report takes the shape of a research paper or a presentation, with a bibliography of reliable sources and an explanation of why each source was selected. In Online Collaboration Exercises, Students use collaboration

applications (such as Google Docs, Trello, and Slack) to work on a group project. Collaborative abilities, knowledge of digital technologies, and communication skills have all been developed. The report takes the form of a finished project, including a summary of tools utilized and reflections on their effectiveness. With Digital Presentation Assignments, students use multimedia presentation tools such as PowerPoint, Canva, or Prezi to incorporate text, pictures, and videos (Durak, 2019). Content development, visual design, and expertise with digital tools are among the talents developed. The activity report contains a polished presentation and a perspective on the creative process. Students can collect and visualize publicly available data using technologies such as Excel or Google Sheets. The developed skills include data literacy, analytical thinking, and digital tool use.

C. Soft Skills Are Urgently Required for Work

Based on the result of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD), there are three soft skills most needed by students that directly support them in their future jobs, the teachers responded with their answers as displayed in the following table.

TABLE 11
THE NEEDED SOFT SKILLS IN WORK

Soft skills	Frequency	Percentage
Communication	92	90.19%
Digital literacy	87	85.29%
Teamwork	76	74.50%
Critical thinking	42	41.17%
Creativity	40	39.21%
Adaptation	34	33.33%
Problem-solving	31	30.39%
Leadership skills	28	27.45%
Collaborative	19	18.62%

According to the respondents, communication skills (90.19%) are the most important soft skills in the workplace, followed by computer literacy (85.29%) and collaborative abilities (74.5%). Graduates with strong communication skills are more likely to stand out and be promoted because they can express themselves convincingly in meetings, presentations, and reports. Furthermore, they can assist graduates in effectively communicating their thoughts and opinions in reports, presentations, and meetings, increasing their chances of recognition and development (Beaty & Silvia, 2012).

Digital literacy is essential for recent graduates since it equips them with the skills and information required to navigate and thrive in today's technologically advanced society (Geng et al., 2019; Koltay, 2011). The majority of jobs require proficiency in digital technologies such as Microsoft Office, Google Workspace, and industry-specific applications. Employers want graduates who can manage data, communicate online, and collaborate digitally. Technology is always growing, and digital literacy allows graduates to quickly adapt to new tools and platforms. This adaptability is essential for maintaining competitiveness in the job market. In essence, digital literacy is a fundamental skill that equips recent graduates to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and digital society (Rogan & Miguel, 2013; Devedzic et al., 2018).

Teamwork is an essential ability for recent graduates since it equips them to effectively interact and contribute in professional settings (Sancho-Thomas et al., 2009; Sridharan & Boud, 2019). Most industries rely on teams to achieve objectives, solve problems, and produce results. Teamwork allows people to learn from others with different backgrounds, ideas, and expertise. Working in a team encourages excellent communication, which includes active listening, feedback, and idea sharing (Rineks et al., 2021; Succi & Canovi, 2020). To summarize, cooperation is essential for new graduates since it fosters critical interpersonal, communication, and problem-solving skills, making them more effective and desirable in professional settings. In addition to the three soft skills above, respondents also chose other soft skills needed in work, although the percentage of their choices was lower, such as critical thinking, creativity, adaptation, problem-solving, leadership, and collaborative skills.

B. Discussion

Researching the implementation of soft skills in education is crucial because it helps educators, policymakers, and stakeholders develop effective strategies to equip students with the skills needed for personal and professional success (Fernandez & Liu, 2019; Hariti et al., 2020; Hora et al., 2018). The results of this study have revealed how educators perceive soft skills, the assignments they practice to improve each component of soft skills, and the types of soft skills that are most needed in the workplace.

Most instructors comprehend the applicability of soft skills. This finding is consistent with prior research (Hendarman & Cantner, 2018; Hendarman & Tjakraatmadja, 2012; Hurrell, 2016; Lyu & Liu, 2021). This found that if teachers understand soft skills effectively, they will endeavor to build their students' soft skills through a variety of activities during the learning process. Regarding the preparation for the implementation of soft-skills development in the learning process, there is still very little previous research that explores this topic. Most of them (Hurrell, 2016; Knox & Stone, 2019; Lyu & Liu, 2021) only emphasize the understanding and application of soft skills in teaching and learning activities in the classroom based on an analysis of student needs and the school environment.

This study is unique in that it examines how the forms of teacher assignments to students to develop their soft skills are supported by more extensive explanations of the forms of assignments and features that underpin the assignments that can directly improve students' soft skills (Ngang et al., 2015). Another distinguishing feature of the study's findings is the investigation of the types of soft skills that are most needed in the workplace, which employs university graduates. This information is undoubtedly critical for educators planning soft skills development in classroom learning activities.

The results of the study assist educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in developing successful strategies to provide students with the skills they require for personal and professional success (Fernandez & Liu, 2019; Hariti et al., 2020). In addition, it ensures that educational programs address these gaps and prepare students for the workforce. Understanding how to integrate soft skills into education helps align curricula with the needs of modern industries. It ensures that students develop competencies like problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaboration, which are essential for career readiness. Researching their implementation helps educators identify teaching methods that enhance engagement, motivation, and academic performance.

IV. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to investigate lecturers' perspectives on how to improve students' soft skills, the types of assignments they practice, and the soft skills elements that are most needed to prepare them for future work. The results indicate that most professors have distinct perspectives on soft skills in TBLL. This fact is supported by several tasks assigned by professors to strengthen one soft skill. Communication, computer literacy, and teamwork are the most important soft skills that students will need in their future careers. This research also exposes the varied assignments given by lecturers during the learning process based on the soft skills components required by students. Furthermore, this study explains the types of soft skills that new graduates need to prepare for their future jobs. These findings highlight the critical role of lecturers in improving students' soft skills through the types of tasks they provide to students during the learning process. Students are expected to be able to train and enhance their soft skills through these projects to assist their mastery of hard skills learned during their studies. The findings of this study undoubtedly contribute to increasing the quality of graduates from higher education and enriching the literature on soft skills development. Several limitations of this study, such as the number of respondents, the relationship between mastery of soft-skills components, and the triangulation of research techniques, can be addressed by future researchers to create a more thorough definition of soft-skills mastery.

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Marianne Dashwood: When Money Rejects Love in the Eighteenth Century

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Abstract—In the introduction to *Sense and Sensibility*, Anne Rowe states, “The novel’s heroine, Elinor Dashwood, displays the kind of good sense which is regularly attributed to ‘prudence’. She observes closely, cautiously weighing up situations, and ultimately follows the most politic course without compromising her principles or hurting others. In contrast, her sister, Marianne, behaves with ‘imprudence’. She reacts on instinct, defying the consequences, and, as a matter of principle, refuses to act on a rational basis while failing to see the contradiction” (Austen, 1992, p. v). Rowe’s comparison between the two young sisters is respectable; however, Marianne is more sensible than her sister, and her actions are justified. This paper focuses on Marianne’s character to explain why her sensibility is sensible rather than imprudent and to prove that Austen shows her readers how Victorian women’s feelings, emotions, and desire for love were controlled by money, social barriers, and the patriarchal system. Marianne is a unique woman in her society because she seems to break away from the traditional approach to marriage. It is important to understand Marianne’s character in this way because she represents not only herself but also other women of her time who married men they neither liked nor loved.

Index Terms—love, eighteenth-century women, marriage, sensibility, money

I. INTRODUCTION

Anne Rowe writes in the introduction to *Sense and Sensibility*, “The novel’s heroine, Elinor Dashwood, displays the kind of good sense that is frequently attributed to ‘prudence’” (Austen, 1992, p. v). That is, as a result of her careful observation and careful consideration of the circumstances, Elinor finally chooses the path that is the most politically sound, without surrendering her ideals or causing harm to other people. On the other hand, her sister Marianne exhibits so-called “imprudence” in her behavior: “She reacts on instinct, defying the consequences, and, as a matter of principle, refuses to act on a rational basis while failing to see the contradiction” (Austen, 1992, p. v). The comparison that Rowe makes between the two young sisters is admirable; however, Marianne is arguably more reasonable than her sister. This paper will demonstrate that her behaviors are, in fact, appropriate.

This paper will concentrate on Marianne’s character to argue that Austen demonstrates to her readers how Victorian women’s sentiments, emotions, and desire for love were constrained by money, social obstacles, and the patriarchal system. Marianne’s sensitivity will be shown to be rational rather than unwise. Because she seems to deviate from the conventional approach to marriage, Marianne stands out as a unique lady in her local community. When seen in this light, Marianne’s figure is significant because she represents not only herself but also other women of her day who married men whom they neither loved nor felt committed to.

II. TEXTUAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Quixotism, a notion taken from the main character in *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes, is a concept that had an impact on English writing throughout the eighteenth century. A quixotic hero or heroine is someone who is highly educated, has a passion for reading (particularly romance novels written by French authors), and is idealistic yet unrealistic (doing what others in his or her society are not accustomed to doing; (Ardila et al., 2017, p. 17). Austen was influenced by William Cowper, an English poet and hymnodist; Walter Scott, a Scottish historical novelist; and Alexander Pope, an eighteenth-century English poet known for his satirical verse (Austen, 1992, pp. 11, 31). By this standard, Marianne Dashwood can be considered a quixotic female character. She has a passion for reading and could have been influenced by any of these authors. It is widely acknowledged that these three individuals were among the most influential poets in the Age of Reason, which spanned the first half of the eighteenth century. Marianne took inspiration from them. As will be demonstrated, she is also thought to be quixotic because she proclaims her love for Willoughby and follows her feelings without giving any consideration to what other people may think of her. This is something that is not typical in the Victorian society in which she lives.

One feature of both the eighteenth century and quixotism is sentimentalism, which is the practice of sentimentality, the tendency to act and behave based on excessive feelings:

In principle, a sentimentalist account of moral concepts can even be combined with a robustly realist – that is, response-independent — explication of moral properties, regardless of whether such an account views moral properties as being reducible or irreducible to natural properties. For a robust realist our sentiments or

emotions would then play primarily an epistemic role for recognizing or affectively perceiving moral properties that are constituted independent of our sentiments. Sentimentalists would normally regard a non-reductive account of moral properties to be incompatible with the naturalist framework that they favor. (Debes & Stueber, 2017, p. 12)

Based on the information presented in this passage, being an emotional person indicates that a person is realistic, and their responses are seen as being more moral and authentic because they are pure. In addition, sentimentalism indicates that a person develops a greater sense of independence and that they are aware of their social position as a result of reflecting deeply on the situation. In this case, Marianne is covered. She is quite sensitive, and she does not distort her remarks to capture the attention of others. Her feelings are thus not anything that can be described as “reductive” and are not deemed proper within the traditions or norms of her community. This is not to say that Marianne is “imprudent”; rather, her sentimentality is the most significant indicator of her sensibility. It makes sense to act in accordance with one’s own convictions and disregard others’ opinions. Will other people in Marianne’s society experience life as she does? Is her society concerned about her feelings, whether she is happy or unhappy? Obviously, none of this is the case. Consequently, she is a reasonable person for putting her own emotions first.

Marianne is seventeen and the middle daughter of Mr. Henry Dashwood and his second wife. She has two sisters—Elinor, who is nineteen, and Margaret, who is twelve. After her father’s death, her stepbrother, John Dashwood, comes to Norland Park in Sussex to take his inheritance. His father recommends that he take care of his stepmother and sisters “to make them comfortable” (Austen, 1992, p. 2). “Comfortable” here does not necessarily mean physical comfort; rather, it is giving them more money to help them have a decent life, or at least a life that is similar to the one they led when their father was alive because Marianne’s “mother had nothing, and [her] father only seven thousand pounds in his own disposal; for the remaining moiety of [her father’s] first wife’s fortune was also secured to her child” (Austen, 1992, p. 1). The outcome of this is that her stepbrother, John Dashwood, does not fulfill his promise because his wife, Fanny, thinks only about her own son’s fortune and wishes to get rid of the Dashwoods’ shadow. Understanding these small details is important in comprehending the dynamic of Austen’s story, as they lead to the incomplete love between Willoughby and Marianne because of the social traditions of marriage in Victorian England.

Austen’s intended readers were girls fifteen to twenty years old at the end of the eighteenth century. This was the physical age for English girls to think about their future husbands (“Victorian Era-Victorian Wedding-THE ENGAGEMENT,” 2017). To marry during the Victorian era, a woman needed an estate that made handsome young men think about it and not about her nature or education or whether her moral constitution matched his or what distinguished her among women. This estate would become her husband’s property based on the laws of the eighteenth century. Thus, the mother of a man in the eighteenth century could gain access to the upper class by having her son marry a wealthy woman. As Gordon Edmund Mingay states in his book, *English landed society in the eighteenth century*:

It must be recognized that the barriers to social advancement were still formidable, and that indeed there were various factors tending to increase the difficulty of entering the aristocracy in the eighteenth century. It was true that the acquisition of an estate conferred social status, but such a statement is misleading if it implies that the gate to advancement was wide open. It was in fact a narrow gate, and difficult to pass, and only the most able, ambitious, and fortunate could progress very far beyond it up the social scale. (Mingay, 2013, p. 26)

Mingay argues that it was hard to increase one’s social status, and of course, it was hard for women of that time because if a woman inherited an “estate,” her husband or son would become the landlord of it. This was the law; this law existed to encourage the spread of patriarchal ideology throughout the social classes. Having an estate would give a man his place in the aristocracy. An estate was like a credit card that “open[ed]” the door to material success (Mingay, 2013, p. 26). The eighteenth century was a time when men were looking for ways to increase their fortunes. But what if a woman did not have this credit card? She might be like Marianne. Common law granted property to husbands, and women “lost all rights of possession on marriage” (Wynne, 2016, p. 15). Knowing this social history helps us to understand how Austen satirized the unfair system that encouraged men to covet women for their property rather than to love or care about them.

It is also important to recognize how Austen presents her readers with the first meeting between Marianne and Willoughby. She does this for two logical reasons: to show that love is a dream for her gender and to show how easy it is to fall in love with an irresponsible man. According to the narrator, Willoughby’s arrival mirrors a girl’s dream of a knight who takes her away with him on his white horse. When Marianne walks with Margaret, she takes a “false step [that] brought her suddenly to the ground,” and Willoughby “took her up in his arms without further delay, and carried her down the hill” (Austen, 1992, p. 27). Marianne could not do anything but think about him and look for his best points to even if they were William Cowper and Alexander Pope, instead of looking deeply into his nature and asking whether he were a responsible man. What a past he might hide! Moreover, although Marianne’s affection is honest, when the first test of this love comes, Willoughby leaves Barton Cottage in Devonshire, Marianne’s house after her father’s death because of the property-less position she has been put in by the law (her inheritance having gone to her brother, John Dashwood); in “the material world [of the eighteenth century], property is actually a relationship, a site of effect, sentiment, dreams and passions which focuses on objects” (Wynne, 2016, p. 16). Instead of discussing the

situation, he leaves without giving any explanation. He makes her suffer, and her honesty leads her to go to London to see him, but he lets her down there, too.

What matters here is that he leaves because he has impregnated a young woman named Eliza, whose father is unknown and whose mother, also named Eliza, was Colonel Brandon's first love. Willoughby's "old cousin, Mrs. Smith" (Austen, 1992, p. 214), had promised that he would inherit her estate, but when she learns about his sin, she immediately banishes him from her house. To overcome this financial hardship, he seeks to marry Miss Grey, who has "[f]ifty thousand pounds" that will help him pay off his debts. Moreover, Marianne states that "[her] feelings are not often shared, not often understood. But *sometimes* they are" (Austen, 1992, pp. 58-59). This signifies that her society does not care about the pleasure of affection, which she confirms when she tries to convince Elinor and justify why Willoughby turned his back on her. She explains that she has been exploited "[b]y all the world, rather than by [Willoughby's] own heart. [She] could rather believe every creature of [her] acquaintance leagued together to ruin [her] in his opinion, than believe his nature capable of such cruelty" (Austen, 1992, p. 125). "The world" is a reference to the eighteenth-century society that Wynne calls the "world of material" (Wynne, 1992, p. 15), and it is the main reason for her misery. She is pure in her level dealings with Willoughby, "as if the strictest legal covenant had bound [them] to each other" (Austen, 1992, p. 124). She does not think about money or material possessions; instead, she is looking for pure love. On the other hand, Willoughby later apologizes and admits his love and desire to propose to her the day he left, but he states that his apology is too late because he is married. He justifies his behavior to Marianne on what he calls "reasonable grounds" (Austen, 1992, p. 213)—his bankruptcy after Mrs. Smith banishes him and prevents him from inheriting. His irresponsibility guides him to refuse Mrs. Smith's offer for him to marry little Eliza instead of marrying Marianne. He chooses to marry Miss Grey due to her wealth, as Marianne's lack of money and the misguided beliefs about the need for riches, which he was predisposed to hold, were further amplified by an extravagant social environment (Austen, 1992, p. 216). Essentially, Austen aims to show that a woman's passion is sensible, but either men's avarice or the power of money leads them to reject this love.

When compared to Marianne, Elinor, her eldest sister, tends to give the impression that she is older than she really is. She is able to demonstrate how responsible she is, and this is laudable. It would seem that she is looking out for her personal interests even though she has a lot of passion for Marianne. Whenever Marianne tries to criticize Edward Ferrars' attention to her adoration, for example, she is pleased with her reaction. However, she does not accept Marianne's connection with Willoughby—or at the very least, she does not feel comfortable with it. She urges her mother to inquire of Marianne whether or not she is engaged to Willoughby (Austen, 1992, p. 56). In response to Lucy Steele's secret engagement to Edward, which began four years previously (Austen, 1992, pp. 86-87), she conceals her pain. However, later on, she is on the verge of ruining their engagement when Brandon asks Elinor to tell Edward that he is going to give Brandon the "little rectory [that is in] Delaford [and is] now just vacant" if Edward accepts (Austen, 1992, pp. 188-189). She is polite to Brandon, but in reality, she is trying to postpone sharing this excellent news with Edward because she loves Edward. She keeps Mrs. Jennings from informing him until she writes him a letter (Austen, 1992, pp. 189-190). She is nice to Brandon. On a deeper level, she cannot be considered receptive to being complimented by her mother, sisters, or friends. In the era in which the book was written, there was no need to be embarrassed about being in love. Although Lucy seems to taunt Elinor and appears to be attempting to dissuade her from liking Edward, Elinor needs to act in a manner that is consistent with what we as human beings perceive to be normal and tell her the truth rather than merely pretending that she is nice. At the conclusion of the book, she is looking for her own perks, which she was able to get by the time the story ends. She tied the knot with Mr. Edward Ferrars, who is affectionately referred to as "the letter F" by her neighbors (Austen, 1992, p. 83).

Readers can have access to the most valuable lessons that one can learn from Austen. Through one of the most eloquent lectures ever delivered by the intrepid Marianne, she feeds us with a feast of moral philosophy when she characterizes Elinor's actions in keeping Lucy's secret a secret: "If such is your way of thinking, ... if loss of what is most valued is so easily to be made up by something else, your resolution, your self-command, are perhaps a little less to be wondered at and a little less to be admired. They are brought more within my comprehension" (Austen, 1992, p. 174). When Marianne says that Elinor is "thinking" that if she loses something, she will find another thing that is "valued" and that life does not center on loving a man, she is implying that Elinor is thinking that there will be other recompense for her loss. Although she does not love Brandon, she will inherit his money. In point of fact, Elinor is not in a state of "self-command"; rather, she is skilled at esteeming others and demonstrating respect for them. That is, she is able to attract those who believe in social flattery and make them believe that she is intelligent through the use of social flattery. Congratulations to you, Elinor! By the time the book is over, you will have received the recompense you deserved for being in "self-command." You decide to wed the man you love, and you also manage to persuade your sister to wed Brandon, a man whom she sees as a financial guarantee. In general, Elinor is a loving and supportive sister to Marianne; nevertheless, when it comes to matters that pertain to her personal well-being, she will consider only herself. There is a secret lesson that Austen wants to convey to her female readers via Elinor's example: women should be more in "self-command" with any form of connection: they should avoid hurting other people but concentrate on their own advantages, especially when it comes to marriage.

In Marianne's story with Colonel Brandon, she first meets him at a party that Sir John Middleton holds at his house at Barton Park (Austen, 1992, p. 22). She is playing music sensitively, which leads Brandon to think about her in

comparison with his first love, Eliza. This relationship is sparked by Mrs. Jennings, a widow who has nothing to do after her two daughters marry except help other young people marry (Austen, 1992, p. 23). She teases both Marianne and Brandon that they love each other; however, Marianne does not like this joke for two significant reasons. She does not want to be a second love to anyone, and he is thirty-five while she is seventeen, which forms a gap (Austen, 1992, p. 25). As the narrator confirms this thought in the following:

A woman of seven-and-twenty [...] can never hope to feel or inspire affection again; and if her home be uncomfortable, or her fortune small, I can suppose that she might bring herself to submit to the offices of a nurse, for the sake of the provision and security of a wife. In his marrying such a woman, therefore, there would be nothing unsuitable. It would be a compact of convenience, and the world would be satisfied. In my eyes it would seem only a commercial exchange, in which each wished to be benefited at the expense of the other. (Austen, 1992, p. 25)

It is accurate and easy to comprehend Marianne's point of view. For a couple to understand each other, have the same interests, and eventually become close as a pair, it is vital for them to be the same age. A marriage like the one that Marianne portrays will not be anything more than what she refers to as a "commercial exchange." Nevertheless, Marianne is only nineteen years old when she ties the knot with Brandon, not twenty-seven! (Austen, 1992, p. 255) Due to the patriarchal nature of society, her morals, views, and ideals are unresolvable: she has to have an estate if Willoughby is to be greedy enough to seek her hand in marriage. However, she does not have an estate since the inheritance system gives her brother John the riches that her father had brought into the world. And thus, it comes to pass that she weds Brandon rather than Willoughby, the man she loves!

In order for the quixotic nature of Marianne's character to come to an end, she must either return to the order of the system or become more fully what was referred to in the eighteenth century as "the angel in the house" (*The Angel in the House*, 2024). In "The Angel in the House," a poem published in the 18th century, Coventry Patmore in his discussion of his wife Emily as a pleasant housewife who commits herself to the purpose of making her husband happy. In a similar vein, Marianne "found herself, at nineteen, submitting to new attachments, entering on new duties, placed in a new home, a wife, the mistress of a family, and the patroness of a village" (Austen, 1992, p. 255), or, to put it more succinctly, "the angel of house"—the archetypal woman of the eighteenth century. This is the way in which the term may be used to Marianne in an authentic manner. Through the character Marianne, Austen demonstrates to her audience that people of her gender were experiencing hardships in marriage and were not at all content with their destinies.

Austen's writing approach, which Holm calls "free indirect discourse" (2017), allows her to expose Marianne's point of view. It is a distinctive kind of third-person narrative that she employs to characterize the mental and emotional processes that take place inside a character. Austen is a caustic female novelist who is satirizing Marianne's sensibility and feelings, as well as those of young women like Marianne. She is doing this by comparing Maria to other young women. It is clear in the narrator's ways when the narrator tells us about Marianne's character:

[Marianne] was born to discover the falsehood of her own opinions, and to counteract, by her conduct, her most favorite maxims. She was born to overcome an affection formed so late in life as seventeen, and with no sentiment superior to strong esteem and lively friendship, voluntarily to give her hand to another!—and *that* other, a man who had suffered no less than herself under the event of a former attachment,—whom, two years before, she had considered too old to be married. (Austen, 1992, p. 255)

In a double satire, Austen ridicules her gender throughout the novel. She describes Marianne's emotions toward her husband as "friendly" instead of "lovely"! Also, she accuses her of forgetting her "affection," although Austen herself understands the environment that surrounded eighteenth-century wedding customs—that is, the economic system and how much a woman needed property to get a husband that she could love. In Marianne's case, her marriage is "considered a business deal" ("Victorian Era-Victorian Wedding-THE ENGAGEMENT," 2017) because if she does not accept it, she will spend her life "[forever] with her mother, and [find] her only pleasures in retirement and study" (Austen, 1992, p. 255). She has no choice but to accept Brandon's proposal under the pleasure of her mother and sister, who see him as a distinguished man who will be responsible for her, be able to provide her mother with a good life, and help Elinor and her husband Edward Ferrars have a good married life. Marianne's acceptance of Brandon's proposal is all about money, not love. Equally important to note is that Marianne's sense is the reason behind this choice. That is to say, Marianne is not selfish; she can stay home with her mother forever; however, her sense leads her to think not only about her happiness but also about her widowed mother and her younger sister Margaret, who is supposed to be fourteen when the novel ends. In three years, Margaret will search for her dream knight, and of course, she will need Brandon's wealth. Ultimately, Marianne's great affection for her family makes her follow their advice and marry Brandon to empower her two sisters and mother and grant them access to upper-class society and thus the ability to encounter patriarchal society.

III. CONCLUSION

Austen is able to effectively generate sensitive readers via Marianne's character. These readers are able to connect with Marianne's struggle with love and marriage and come up with their own responses to it. She hopes that by means of Marianne, she will be able to educate her gender on two very important aspects of their choice of love. Initially, there are men who are like Willoughby, the knight of their dreams. While it is perfectly acceptable for young ladies to love

these men, they should exercise caution since a man who has a flaw in his character does not deserve to be the source of a woman's grief. Second, if a young lady comes across a guy who is capable of doing things to fulfill her but is not someone she loves, she needs to be extra careful. This is because the man could harm her heart in order to gain her (i.e., her body) for his own property, much as Brandon did. Willoughby was unable to marry his sweetheart Marianne because of this, and consequently, Marianne's heart was broken. Willoughby advises Mrs. Smith to refrain from giving her estate to Willoughby. The lesson that Austen intends to impart to young ladies is that they should choose their love with discretion and attempt to keep their emotions in check. Although falling in love is something that cannot be foreseen and is beyond our ability to control, it is important for a woman to make sure that the guy she is falling in love with is someone who really merits her affection and heart. Therefore, readers who are sensitive should not criticize Marianne for liking Willoughby; rather, she deserves empathy, and this empathy is what ties readers to Marianne. Readers need to have a moral perspective regarding her affection. It is important to recognize and appreciate her love and passion for Willoughby even though he does not merit her feelings and commitment.

It is essential to be aware that Austen communicates her double satire by describing a tale contained inside the primary plot. The person who is responsible for Marianne's misery is Brandon, who is portrayed as honest and trustworthy. In a chat with Elinor, Brandon recounts the narrative of his love with Eliza, an orphan and affluent woman who marries his eldest brother due to her poverty and debts (Austen, 1992, p. 136). This is an ironic way of telling the event. The fact that Brandon's brother needs the money that would enable him to get married is more important to him than his affection for her—Eliza. Brandon does the same thing with Marianne: although he is aware of her feelings for Willoughby, he marries her even though she is financially deficient. In addition to this, he is the one who tells Mrs. Smith of Willoughby's improper relationship with Eliza's daughter, the younger Eliza. Because Brandon is aware of the privileges the culture allows his gender, he is dishonest. It is always estates that men seek, not the love of women. Therefore, in order to conceal his inability to marry the younger Eliza, he does all in his power to stop Willoughby from marrying Marianne. Because he is aware that Willoughby is waiting to inherit from Mrs. Smith so he can marry her, he obstructs Willoughby's path at the same time. Willoughby tells Elinor that Mrs. Smith had received some information, possibly from a distant relative, who had an interest in taking away her goodwill towards me (Austen, 1992, p. 215). That "distant relation" was Brandon, who intended to remove Willoughby from the path to marrying Marianne even though Brandon is aware that Marianne loves Willoughby, not him. As a result, Marianne is in the same situation as Eliza and a great number of other women living during the Victorian era. It is impossible for them to ever come into contact with the inheritance system or the conventional method of getting married. It was a vicious circle!

According to Annette Federico, in her article, "Familiar Marriage" & Victorian Fiction," "Social conditions during the reign of Victoria had changed enough so that neither the marriage of rational esteem nor the marriage of emotional passion offered completely satisfactory models for women who desired a wider scope for self-development and for participation in public affairs" (2017, pp. 394-395). It is evident that eighteenth-century women were suffering and trapped between the hammer of social roles that made them marry for "rational" reasons and the anvil of "emotional" marriage. If Marianne had married Willoughby, she would probably not have been happy with an "emotional" marriage because her mother (Mrs. Dashwood) and her older sister Elinor would not have accepted him the way they did Brandon. When Marianne marries Brandon, the man who is most desirable by her mother's and older sister's standards, they see this as a "rational" marriage. This is why Federico says that women were not "offered completely satisfactory models": they were caught between their families and their hearts. Ultimately, Austen seeks not to create a sense of comfort, but instead to inspire and direct actions that enhance responses to the challenges and possibilities presented by the idea (Kerr et al., 2016, p. 25). Federico means that Austen urges us as readers to think about the marriage system as problematic and the limitation that Victorian women were in when they desired to marry their lovers. Generally, Austen wanted her sensitive readers to pay attention to the serious problem that eighteenth-century women faced.

Marianne, in a nutshell, is not what Rowe claims; rather than having "imprudence," she exhibits a disposition that is very moral, yet whimsical. It is impossible for her to practice her morals in reality during her time because of the philosophy of her socioeconomic class, which encouraged men to seek financial gain rather than love—or, what is more significant, the essence, heart, and nature of a woman. In the end, Austen satirized marital customs and the inheritance system via the creation of Marianne, who "has not abandoned all rationality in her allegiance to feeling" (Waldon, 2001, p. 66). However, she feels that by flouting traditions that seem to her to have no purpose, she is instead fulfilling the genuine dictates of reason. She has a strong feeling of responsibility for her mother and two sisters, which is why she chooses to marry Brandon.

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Exploring Quranic Narrative Styles Using Interpersonal Mood Analysis Based on a Passage From Nuh Story

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Abstract—This study employs interpersonal mood analysis to investigate the narrative styles utilized in translating Nuh's brief stories in Surah Al-Araf (Chapter Seven). This study examines the complex narrative techniques utilized in the Quran, concentrating on a particular passage from the story of Noah (Nuh). This study seeks to cast light on the interpersonal mood, a fundamental component of linguistic analysis, within the narrative structure of the Quran. The use of SFL as a methodological and analytic framework explores how the Quran uses language to convey interpersonal meaning, specifically in the context of the story of Nuh. Translating literary works entails conveying the original narrative style in the target language while preserving its essence. The qualitative content analysis is conducted on a sample of the translated texts of Prophet Nuh's short story by Saheeh International, with a focus on mood selection and the functional value of the language employed in the translations, as well as how the selected moods contribute to the overall narrative style and interpretation of the text. This analysis assists in comprehending how narrative style expresses their attitudes, intentions, and emotions via language. The findings of this study contribute to a greater comprehension of the Quranic narrative style by emphasizing the significance of interpersonal mood analysis as a method for deciphering the nuances of its storytelling techniques. This research not only enriches the field of Quranic linguistics but also offers valuable insights into the broader study of narrative discourse, nurturing a greater appreciation for the literary and communicative dimensions of religious texts.

Index Terms—narrative styles, translations, Nuh short stories, interpersonal mood analysis

I. INTRODUCTION

The primary narrative types are extensively articulated throughout the Quran in various ways and were used to captivate the audience, assist memorization, and impart religious lessons (El-Wakeel, 2021). Authorial tone, direct utterances, dialogues, and scene descriptions are among the ways. Sumarsono (2018) claims that the Quran employs tales to give educational answers, explain religious teachings, and traverse moral lessons. The tales in the Quran are considered mysterious happenings, with only Allah knowing the chronological specifics (Shekarbigi & Noor, 2012). The Quran also contains narrative verses recounting tales about prophets and other individuals, occasionally interpreted using Israiliyyat stories (stories about Israel's sons) (Munirah, 2018). It also involves dialogue-based storytelling to include historical memories and lessons (Hawamdeh, 2019).

The narrative styles of the Quran differ from those of other works of the same era in that they concentrate on imparting religious and moral themes via storytelling and historical events (Hawamdeh, 2019). The investigation of Quranic narrative styles in terms of interpersonal mood analysis has been employed throughout studying the realization of mood, modality, and assessment systems in the discourse of Nuh short tales in the Quran as part of integrating cognitive sociolinguistics (Suhadi, 2015).

The account of Nuh (Nuh) and the flood is one of the most captivating in the Quran. This work has captivated the attention of experts and readers worldwide, prompting multiple translations to reach a wider audience. On the other hand, the proper portrayal of the narrative methods used in these translations remains a fascinating topic of study (Baker,

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2018). For various reasons, understanding the narrative processes utilized in Nuh's short story translations is important. To begin with, it gives a more in-depth grasp of the complications of translating religious works, which may need grammatical precision and the preservation of delicate narrative methods.

Systemic functional linguistics (SFL) is a functional linguistics approach that views language as a social semiotic system. To analyze interpersonal mood, SFL may be used to examine system-structure relationships and reasoning principles inside the framework. The mood system is investigated in terms of its contribution to dialogic negotiation and its paradigmatic context, which includes imperative, declarative, interrogative, and command phrases. Examining mood distinctions entails taking into account the realization of various mood types through verbal stems, co-occurrence with relevant particles, and the location of the Predicator inside a phrase (Hawamdeh, 2019).

Overall, SFL offers a thorough framework for investigating the interpersonal meaning given by mood choices in various circumstances. The purpose is to understand how interpersonal mood impacts translated stories, which allows researchers, translators, and readers to analyze the emotional depth of the narrative and its impact on the audience. The usefulness of various translation procedures in keeping the desired emotional and narrative impact was determined by evaluating interpersonal mood in translated versions of Nuh short tales. Narrative styles affect the reader's comprehension, engagement, and emotional connection to the topic (Toubia et al., 2021).

The Quran's unique storytelling tactics provide a rich and fascinating experience by portraying emotions, attitudes, and human relationships through different language resources. While numerous academics have researched many elements of Quranic translations, such as language correctness and religious interpretation adherence, more clarity is needed in researching narrative styles utilized, especially in Quranic short stories studies.

From the perspective of interpersonal mood analysis, this study investigates Quranic storytelling strategies in translations of Nuh short tales from Surah Al-Araf. Interpersonal mood refers to the grammar and word choices that convey the attitudes, moods, and interpersonal interactions of the narrative's characters. Nonetheless, they will give useful insights for translators, academics, and readers who want to understand more about Quranic storytelling approaches.

II. METHODOLOGY

The qualitative content analysis research approach was used to examine Quranic Narrative Styles in Nuh Short Story Translations. SFL is the researchers' theoretical framework, while interpersonal mood analysis is their primary data analysis approach. Examining the language choices that convey attitude, and interest in the story is part of the study. The study's results shed light on the narrative style used in Nuh short story translations, their influence on character relationships, emotional engagement, and the overall ambiance of the tale.

A. Data Collection

The research includes examining and comprehending Quranic passages, translations, and relevant contextual information. Purposive sampling was used to choose Quranic passages, namely Surahs Al-Araf (Chapter or Surah Seven), which include Prophet Nuh's short stories. Purposive sampling enables a more in-depth analysis and grasp of research issues (Ritchie et al., 2003; Dornyei, 2007). The Saheeh International translations were used as primary texts for study because of their extensive usage, simplicity, and accessibility.

B. Data Analysis

Language components indicative of distinct interpersonal moods (e.g., declarative, imperative, interrogative) were manually marked and categorized within the selected text excerpts. The Systemic Functional Linguistics interpersonal analysis framework (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) was utilized to examine the interpersonal mood characteristics of the translations. This study adds to a more profound knowledge of how translators communicate emotions and interpersonal relationships from the original text, as well as insights into the strategies used to convey the tale's tone and basic narrative structure.

III. RESULTS

A. The Passage Contents

Table 1 displays the Arabic and English translations of the seven Ayat from Al Araaf surah. The translation is drawn from the Sahih International translation of the Quran. The Ayat in the Quran (Surah 7; Ayat 59-64) was selected to study part of Nuh's story with his people.

TABLE 1
SIX VERSES FROM CHAPTER SEVEN (7) CONCERNING NUH'S STORY

Number	Translation	Original
1st verse / 1st clause	Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people	لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ
1st verse / 2nd clause	Then said: "O my people! Worship Allah!	فَقَالَ يَقُومُوا أَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ
1st verse / 3rd clause	You have no other Ilāh (God) but Him. (La ilaha illallah: none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh).	مَا لَكُمْ مِّنْ إِلَٰهٍ غَيْرُهُ
1st verse / 4th clause	Certainly, I fear for you the torment of a Great Day!"	إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ (7:59)
2nd verse / 5th clause	The leaders of his people said: "Verily, we see you in plain error."	قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرُوكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ (7:60)
3rd verse / 6th clause	[Nuh] said: "O my people! There is no error in me	قَالَ يَقُومُ لَيْسَ بِي ضَلَالَةٌ
3rd verse / 7th clause	but I am a Messenger from the Lord of the 'Alamin (mankind, jinn and all that exists)!	وَأَكْبَرُ رَسُولٌ مِّنْ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (7:61)
4th verse / 8th clause	I convey unto you the Messages of my Lord	أَتْلُوْكُمْ رُسُلًا مِّنِّي
4th verse / 9th clause	and give sincere advice to you.	وَأَنْصَحُ لَكُمْ
4th verse / 10th clause	And I know from Allah what you know not.	وَأَعْلَمُ مِنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ (7:62)
5th verse / 11st clause	Do you wonder?	أَوْ عَجِبْتُمْ
5th verse / 12nd clause	that there has come to you a Reminder from your Lord through a man from amongst you	أَن جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَىٰ رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ
5th verse / 13rd clause	that he may warn you	لِيُنذِرَكُمْ
5th verse / 14th clause	and that you may fear Allāh	وَلِتَتَّقُوا
5th verse / 15th clause	So, you might receive mercy	وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ (7:63)
6th verse / 16th clause	But they belied him	فَكَذَّبُوهُ
6th verse / 17th clause	So, we saved him and those along with him in the ship,	فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِّ
6th verse / 18th clause	and We drowned those who belied Our Ayat	وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
6th verse / 19th clause	They were indeed a blind people	إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا عَمِينَ (7:64)

B. Elements of Nuh Story

Table 2 describe five elements of Nuh's short story, the characters, setting, conflict, plot, and theme. The first element of the characters shows that Nuh is the primary character while his people are the sub-character. The primary character, Nuh, was mentioned either explicitly by name or implicitly by a pronoun that refers to him based on the Arabic characterization of the sentence. The setting, describes four matters: type, place, culture, and people. All the matters in the setting are deductive because the Quran never said anything about any of these matters. The third element is the conflict, which underlines religion, economy, society, and the environment. Except for religion, which is clearly identified in the passage, the other three matters were not specified. The plot is clearly described with five steps, starting with exposition, then rising action, heading toward climax and falling action. The last element is the theme, which describes the nature of the story.

TABLE 2
ELEMENTS OF THE STORY OF NUH

Element	Purpose
Characters	The narrator: The Almighty Main character: Nuh Sub-character: Nuh's people.
Setting	Time: Not specified Place: Not specified (Archeologists claim the location might be the South of Iraq) Type of people: Urban Culture: Middle East
Conflict	Religious: Conflict between mono and polytheism Economy and Social are Not known. Environmental: Not specified
Plot	1. Exposition: Introduction, background, character, and time. 2. Rising Action: Up-down dialogue accompanied by rejection/accepting which leads to the climax (the following stage) 3. The climax takes place upon turning incidents 4. Falling Action shows the immediate reaction to the climax. 5. Resolution shows the results or the consequences of any action
Theme	A calm persuasive dialogue characterizes the first stage of conveying the message.

C. Verses Description

The study of the opening sentence in the first verse reveals that the narrator (Almighty) utilized a declarative mood in the past simple (the finite) to initiate the narrative with two residues. The first serves as a conjunctive adjunct. The second comprises the prediction and the complement to demonstrate that the Almighty sent the prophet Nuh to his people, Table 3.

TABLE 3
1st CLAUSE 1st VERSES

1st verse /1st clause	Indeed, We sent Nuh to his people		لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا نُوحًا إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِ	
Narrate	(Subject) Almighty			
Indeed	We	sent	Nuh	to his people
Conjunctive Adjunct	Subject	Finite/Past Simple	predicator	Complement
RESIDUE	MOOD/Declarative		RESIDUE	

The second clause also contains two residues. First, *then said*: as a reverse adjunct and the Adjunct Vocative finite "O my people", which play the role of introducing and suspending. At the same time, the Predicator (*Allah*) forms the second residue, which plays the role of completing the information. The finite (*Worship*) is the imperative Mood (speech function) in the present simple tense to clarify the speech functions as a command as an ordinance, Table 4.

TABLE 4
2nd CLAUSE 1st VERSES

1st verse /2nd clause	Then said: "O my people! Worship Allah!"		فَقَالَ يٰقَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ	
A dialogue	Nuh			
Then Said [Nuh]	O my people	Worship	Allah	
conjunctive. adjunct	Adjunct Vocative finite	Finite/Present Simple	Predicator	
RESIDUE	MOOD/IMPERATIVE		RESIDUE	

The third clause Table 5 contains one residue (*no other Ilāh but Him*), completing the information. The finite (*have*) is the Declarative Mood (speech function) in present simple tense. Clarify fact (statement).

TABLE 5
3rd CLAUSE 1st VERSES

1st verse / 3rd clause	You have no other Ilāh (God) but Him. (La ilaha illallah: none has the right to be worshipped but Allāh)		مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ
Dialogue	Nuh		
You	have	no other Ilāh but Him	
Subject	Finite/Present Simple		Complement
	MOOD/Declarative		RESIDUE

In Table 6 The 4th clause contains two residues, 1st *Certainly*: a circumstance adjunct. 2nd and the Predicator (*you*). (*the torment of a Great Day*), completing the information. The finite (*fear*) is the Declarative Mood (speech function) present simple tense. Clarify a statement, that expression of prophet Nuh's attitude.

TABLE 6
4th CLAUSE 1st VERSES

1 st V. / 4 th cl.	Certainly, I fear for you the torment of a Great Day!"		إِنِّي أَخَافُ عَلَيْكُمْ عَذَابَ يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ	
Dialogue	Nuh			
Certainly	I	Fear	you	the torment of a Great Day
Conjunctive Adjunct	Subject	Finite/Present Simple	Predicator	Complement
RESIDUE	MOOD/Declarative		RESIDUE	

Hence, the first verse contains four clauses, which are introduced by a narrated sentence that introduces the whole story and the story's hero in a declarative Mood, followed by a prophet Nuh's speech, which starts with an Imperative Mood (order his people to worship Allah), followed by a declarative mood that explains the Prophet's feelings and attitude.

The second verse and the fifth clause below contain two residues, Table 7 (*the leaders of his people said*). As a conjunctive adjunct, to exchange the dialogue part. So, it is the answering of the unbelievers. While the Predicator (*you*) and (*in plain error*) form the second residue, completing the information. The finite (*see*) is the Declarative Mood (speech function), in the present simple tense. Where the unbelievers' statement expresses their attitude toward Nuh's speeches.

TABLE 7
5th CLAUSE 2nd VERSES

2 nd V. /5 th Cl.	The leaders of his people said: "Verily, we see you in plain error."		قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنَّا لَنَرَاكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ		
Dialogue / answer	Unbelieved People				
The leaders of his people said:	Verily	we	see	you	in plain error
conjunctive. adjunct	Circumstantial adjunct	Subject	Finite/Present Simple	predicator	Complement
RESIDUE	MOOD/Declarative		RESIDUE		

Table 8, Has two residues. *Said* as a conjunctive adjunct, continuing the dialogue part. In contrast, the second residue, (no error in me) describes the predicator attitude, completing and explaining the subject's attitude. The finite (is) the present simple tense, fused with the subject (there) is a declarative mood.

TABLE 8
6th CLAUSE 3rd VERSES

3rd verse / 6th clause	[Nuh] said: "O my people! There is no error in me			قَالَ يُقَوْمُ لَيْسَ بِي ضَلَالَةٌ
Dialogue/answer	Nuh			
said: O my people!	There	is	no error in me	
Vocative Adjunct	Subject	Finite/ Present Simple	predicator	
RESIDUE	MOOD/Declarative			RESIDUE

Table 9, continues Nuh's talk, containing two residues. First, "but" is a conjunctive adjunct. The clause (*from the Lord of the 'Alamîn*) the second residue the subject's attitude. The finite (*am*) in the present simple tense and the subject (I), clarified the declarative speech functions as an answering statement.

TABLE 9
7th CLAUSE 3rd VERSES

3rd verse / 7th clause	but I am a Messenger from the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn, and all that exists)!			وَلَكِنِّي رَسُولٌ مِّن رَّبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ
Dialogue/answer	Nuh			
but	I	am	a Messenger	from the Lord of the 'Alamîn
Conjunctive. Adjunct	Subject	Finite/Present Simple	Predicator	Complement
RESIDUE	MOOD/Declarative			RESIDUE

The fourth verse has 3 clauses continuing Nuh's talk. (Table 10) the eighth clause contains one residue (*the Messages of my Lord*), describes the predicator attitude (*you*), as complement information. The finite (*convey unto*) in the present simple tense, with the subject (I). Clarifying the Declarative speech functions.

TABLE 10
8th CLAUSE 4th VERSES

4th verse / 8th clause	I convey unto you the Messages of my Lord			أَتْلُوكُم مَّالِيَ رَبِّي
Dialogue	Nuh			
I	convey unto	you	the Messages of my Lord	
Subject	Finite/Present Simple	Predicator	Complement	
MOOD/Declarative			RESIDUE	

The second clause of the fourth verse (9th clause in the story) is a continuation of Nuh's talk that contains two residues, as explained in Table 11. The first residue is a conjunctive Adjunct (*And*). The second residue (*sincere advice*) describes the predicator attitude (*you*), which completes and explains the information. In comparison, the finite (*give*) comes in the present simple tense. Clarify the speech functions as a statement in a Declarative Mood function as a kind of expression of the speaker's (Nuh) attitude toward what his people said before.

TABLE 11
9th CLAUSE 4th VERSES

4th verse / 9th clause	and give sincere advice to you.			وَأَنْصَحْ لَكُمْ
Dialogue	Nuh			
And	give	sincere advice to you		
conjunctive Adjunct	Finite/Present Simple	Complement		
RESIDUE	MOOD/Declarative			RESIDUE

Table 12, Contains two residues, the conjunctive Adjunct (*and*) at the beginning and the complement (*from Allah what you know not*) that describes the Subject attitude (*I*). The finite (*know*) in the present simple tense. To clarify the Declarative Mood function as a kind of expression of the speaker's (Nuh) attitude.

TABLE 12
10th CLAUSE 4th VERSES

4th verse / 10th clause	And I know from Allah what you know not			وَأَعْلَمُ مِّنَ اللَّهِ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ
Dialogue	Nuh			
And	I	know	from Allah what you know not	
conjunctive. Adjunct	Subject	Finite/Present Simple	Complement	
RESIDUE	MOOD/Declarative			RESIDUE

The fifth verse contains five clauses (11,12,13,14,15). As seen below, the first clause (11th) continues Nuh's talk in an interrogative mood that expresses the change in the prophet's way of speaking. Table 13 reflects his anger and dissatisfaction with his people's reaction. The clause has one residue at the end: the predicator (*wonder*). The finite (*Do*) in the present simple tense with the subject (*you*) clarifies the speech functions in the form of an exclamation question

in an interrogative Mood function. This interrogative mood changes the narrative style of the story. The researcher regards it as a raising action in the plot of the story.

TABLE 13
11th CLAUSE 5th VERSES

5th verse / 11st clause	Do you wonder?	أَوَعَجِبْتُمْ
Narrate/ Summary	Almighty	
Do	you	wonder
finite/Present Simple	Subject	predicator
MOOD/INTERROGATIVE		RESIDUE

The second clause (the 12th) in this verse continues Nuh's reaction toward his people's beliefs, as shown in Table 14). The clause contains two residues, conjunctive adjunct (*that*) as an introduction to answering the exclamation part of the previous clause. Where the second residue is contained of the predicator (A reminder) and the complement (*from your Lord through a man from amongst you*). The finite (*has come to*) with the subject (*you*) presents the declarative mood in the present simple tense introducing the fact that Nuh is just a human being.

TABLE 14
12th CLAUSE 5th VERSES

5th verse / 12nd clause	that there has come to you a Reminder from your Lord through a man from amongst you			أَن جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِّن رَّبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِّنكُمْ
Narrate/ Summary	Almighty			
That	has come to	you	A reminder	from your Lord through a man from amongst you
conjunctive Adjunct	Finite/Present Perfect	Subject	Predicator	Complement
RESIDUE	MOOD/DECLARATIVE			RESIDUE

The third clause continues Nuh's reaction toward his people's nonbelief. Table 15 shows two residues, the conjunctive adjunct (*that*) to justify what the prophet mentioned in the previous clause. While the second is the predictor (*you*). However, the subject (*he*) is fused with finite (*warn*) to form the declarative mood speech function.

TABLE 15
13th CLAUSE 5th VERSES

5th verse / 13rd clause	that he may warn you			لِيُنذِرَكُمْ
Narrate/ Summary	Almighty			
That	he	warn	you	
conjunctive Adjunct	Subject	Finite/Present Simple	predicator	
RESIDUE	MOOD/DECLARATIVE			RESIDUE

This verse's fourth clause (the 14th) continues Nuh's reaction toward his people's non-beliefs, as depicted in Table 16. The clause starts with a residue, which is a conjunctive adjunct (*and that*) to justify what the prophet mentioned in the previous clause. However, the subject (*you*) is fused with finite (*fear*) to form the declarative mood speech function using the present simple tense.

TABLE 16
14th CLAUSE 5th VERSES

5th verse / 14th clause	and that you fear			وَلْتَقُوا
Narrate/ Summary	Almighty			
And that	you	fear		
Conjunctive + consequence Adjunct	Subject	Finite/present simple		
RESIDUE	MOOD/Declarative			

The last clause (the 15th) where the prophet concludes his talk (Table 17), starting with consequence adjunct (*so*) the 1st residue. However, the subject (*you*) is fused with finite (*might receive*) to form the declarative mood speech function using the present simple tense. He ends the verse with polite wishes that they might receive mercy from Allah.

TABLE 17
15th CLAUSE 5th VERSES

5th verse / 15th clause	So, you might receive mercy			وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَرْحَمُونَ
Narrate/ Summary	Almighty			
so	You	might receive	Mercy	
Consequence (conclusion) Adjunct	Subject	Finite/Past Simple	predicator	
RESIDUE	MOOD/DECLARATIVE			RESIDUE

The sixth and last verse contains four clauses (16,17,18,19), which are considered to be the story's conclusion, which ends the story with the result of ratification or denial of the messengers' message. As seen below clause (16th (Table 18), is a sequence action that shows the reaction of the nonbelievers starting with (*So*) the consequence adjunct, which gives

the last reaction of nonbelievers, while the second residue introduces the predicator (*him*). However, the finite (*belied*) comes in the past simple tense, which is fused with the subject (*they*) to clarify the speech functions in the form of statements in a Declarative Mood function.

TABLE 18
16th CLAUSE 6th VERSES

6th verse / 16th clause	So, they belied him			فَكَذَّبُوهُ
Narrate/ Summary	Almighty			
So	they	belied	him	
Consequence (result) Adjunct	Subject	Finite/Past Simple	Predicator	
RESIDUE	MOOD/Declarative			RESIDUE

Table 19, on the other hand, the second clause (17th) is a sequence of the reward of the faithful believers (*So, we saved him and those along with him in the ship*). The clause has two residues. The first residue is the Consequence Adjunct (*So*), which reflects the end of the story. In contrast, the second residue is formed by fusing the predicator (*him*) with the complement (*and those along with him in the ship*). However, the finite (*saved*) comes in the past simple tense, fused with the subject (*we*) to clarify the speech functions in the form of statements in a Declarative Mood function.

TABLE 19
17th CLAUSE 6th VERSES

6th verse / 17th clause	So, we saved him and those along with him on the ship			فَأَنجَيْنَاهُ وَالَّذِينَ مَعَهُ فِي الْفُلِّ
Narrate/Summary	Almighty			
so	We	saved	him	and those along with him in the ship
Consequence (result) Adjunct	Subject	Finite/Past Simple	predicator	Complement
RESIDUE	MOOD/Declarative			RESIDUE

Table 20, conversely the third clause (18th) is in comparison information regarding the punishment of the nonbelievers. Starting with (*and*) conjunctive Adjunct the 1st residue and ends with 2nd residue, which is formed by fusing the predicator (*those*) with the complement (*who belied Our Ayat*). However, the finite (*drowned*) in the past simple tense, fused with the subject (*we*) to clarify the speech functions in the form of the Declarative Mood function.

TABLE 20
18th CLAUSE 6th VERSES

6th verse / 18th clause	and We drowned those who belied Our Ayat			وَأَغْرَقْنَا الَّذِينَ كَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا
Narrate/ Summary	Almighty			
and	We	drowned	those	who belied Our Ayat
conjunctive Adjunct	Subject	Finite/Past Simple	predicator	Complement
RESIDUE	MOOD/Declarative			RESIDUE

Table 21, the last clause in the story of Nuh in the Surat Al-Araf, clause (the 19th), is continuous the reason behind the punishment of the nonbelievers. The clause has a residue, the Conjunctive Adjunct (*indeed*), which emphasizes the result or the reason behind the punishment of the nonbelievers. The finite (*were*) in the past simple tense, fused with the subject (*they*) clarifies the Declarative Mood function.

TABLE 21
19th CLAUSE 6th VERSES

6th verse / 19th clause	They were indeed blind people			إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَوْمًا عَمِينَ
Narrate/ Summary	Almighty			
They	were	indeed	a blind people.	
Subject	Finite/Past Simple	Conjunctive Adjunct	Complement	
MOOD/Declarative			RESIDUE	

D. Summary of the Results

The conversation and mood aspects (declarative, imperative, interrogative) linked to the role of finite tense and residue clauses in reflexing the characters' interpersonal metafunctions that are used to analyze these verses. Furthermore, the narrative aspects will serve as a motivation for the SFL analysis. The goal of dialogue writing is to convey tale's events. Dialogue viewpoints may be used in fairy tales, fiction, or factual works. The five components of tale elements are the storyline, introduction, character, setting, conflict, plot, and theme. These parts provide a systematic approach to relating information and making a compelling tale.

The bulk of story formats have a beginning, middle, and conclusion. An author or speaker may use various materials to construct a text in dialogue with the reader. These meanings are conveyed by personal pronouns, clausal mood, and formality level (Darong, 2021). As a result, mood choices show how the sentence is formed to actualize the interactional speech functions of offer, command, assertion, and query. Therefore, they are the fundamental system in the lexicogrammatical analysis of the phrase as an exchange.

In the following mood analysis, the total number of clauses in each mood type is provided, and the proportion of each mood type to the total number of clauses is indicated in frequency and percentage terms. For mood type, all clauses are assessed, not only embedded clauses. To acquire the proper topic and message, examine how the interpersonal metafunction helps comprehend the parts of the short tale, the main and sub-characters, via mood functions. The primary character in Surat Alaraf is Nuh, as shown (explicitly or indirectly) by the nature of the discourse, other characters, and narrators. Table 22 displays the results of assessing the short narrative in Surat Alaraf's varied moods.

A summary of the clausal analysis shown in Table 3 through Table 21 is statistically described in Table 22. There are 19 clauses in the selected six Ayat subjected to full meaning within the purpose of that Ayah (7:63):

"أَوْعِيبَتْكُمْ، أَنْ جَاءَكُمْ ذِكْرٌ مِنْ رَبِّكُمْ عَلَى رَجُلٍ مِنْكُمْ، لِيُنذِرَكُمْ، وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَرْحَمُونَ"

On the contrary, Ayah (7:60) comprises the least number of clauses: only one.

"قَالَ الْمَلَأُ مِنْ قَوْمِهِ إِنِّي لَأَنْذِرُكَ فِي ضَلَالٍ مُبِينٍ"

The total number of clauses is 19 with each analyzed under the following criteria: subject, finite present, finite past, present perfect, predictor and complement. It can be noted that there are some verses without one or even two of these criteria. The subject was repeated 5 times in 7:63. The distribution of the verbs (present, past, present perfect) was also estimated showing 12 finite present occasions compared to only one present perfect. The analysis shows that there are 15 predictor which represents the second highest after the subject (17 times) in the six chosen verses. The complements are repeated 11 times in the same verses.

TABLE 22
SUMMARY OF THE MOOD ANALYSIS

# (Verse)	Clauses	Subject	Finite Present	Finite Past	Present Perfect	Predictor	Compliment
1 (7:59)	4	3	3	1	0	4	2
2 (7:60)	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
3 (7:61)	2	2	2	0	0	2	1
4 (7:62)	3	2	3	0	0	2	3
5 (7:63)	5	5	3	1	1	5	1
6 (7:64)	4	4	0	4	0	1	3
Total	19	17	12	6	1	15	11

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Domination of Declarative Mood

In order to give a clear explanation of the dominator's mood, the relationship between the Character's talk (the mood about the finite tenses) and the story elements is clarified. The use of the (declarative) corresponds to an assertion in the sense that it can either be related to the foregrounding of the information expressed in a proposition, that is, with the intention of the speaker to inform the hearer of the propositional content, or with the truth of the proposition according to some individual. (Ahern & Leonetti, 2004). Table 23 shows the number of declarative moods, 17 clauses out of 19, where Nuh, the main character, gives 11 declarative talks.

The declarative mood structure plays a fundamental role in conveying the first part of a message. It is a linguistic practice that exists within a speech community and is specified by a declarative mood marker. This distinguishes assertion from other content-conveying linguistic acts such as presupposition and implicature (Jary, 2020). The declarative mood delivers a propositional representation that is likely to be employed as a premise in deriving contextual effects, contributing directly to the relevance of the utterance (Jary, 2020). The declarative is the only mood that can be used to explicitly assert the proposition expressed by an utterance (Moaddab & Hejrati, 2012). It also explains the relationship between assertion and main-point status without identifying the two. The declarative mood can be separated from its role as an indicator of illocutionary force and can exist in languages lacking the category of sentence (Meyer, 2005).

TABLE 23
MOOD ANALYSIS OF THE NUH STORY

Q.V	Verse	Claus	Character	Elements	Imperative	Declarative	Interrogative	Residue	# Clause
59	1	1st	Almighty	Introduction		√		2	4
		2nd	Nuh	Introduction	√			2	
		3rd	Nuh	Introduction		√		1	
		4th	Nuh	Introduction		√		2	
60	2	5th	Undelivered	Raising action		√		2	1
61	3	6th	Nuh	Raising action		√		2	2
		7th	Nuh	Raising action		√		2	
62	4	8th	Nuh	Raising action		√		1	3
		9th	Nuh	Raising action		√		2	
		10rd	Nuh	Raising action		√		2	
63	5	11st	Nuh	Climax			√	1	5
		12nd	Nuh	Climax		√		2	
		13rd	Nuh	Climax		√		2	
		14th	Nuh	Climax		√		2	
		15th	Nuh	Climax		√		2	
64	6	16th	Almighty	Falling action		√		2	4
		17th	Resolution			√		2	
		18th	Resolution			√		2	
		19th	Resolution			√		1	
Total					1	17	1	34	19

B. Finite Tense Analysis

Table 24 shows the relation between the finite tense and the characters, elements, mood, finite tenses, and subject clause to help researcher get results relating to the finite tens choices and how each character introduces himself in the subjective clause. Analyzing the percentage of mood types, elements, and finite tens reflects the interpersonal metafunction.

TABLE 24
FINITE TENSE IN ELEMENTS OF SHORT STORY

Q.V	Verse	Clause	Character	Elements	Mood	Finite tense	Subject clause
9	1	1st	Almighty	Introduction	Declarative	past simple	We
		2nd	Nuh	Introduction	Imperative	present simple	None
		3rd	Nuh	Introduction	Declarative	present simple	You
		4th	Nuh	Introduction	Declarative	present simple	I
60	2	5th	Undelivered	Raising action	Declarative	present simple	we
61	3	6th	Nuh	Raising action	Declarative	present simple	there
		7th	Nuh	Raising action	Declarative	present simple	I
62	4	8th	Nuh	Raising action	Declarative	present simple	You
		9th	Nuh	Raising action	Declarative	present simple	Non
		10rd	Nuh	Raising action	Declarative	present simple	I
63	5	11st	Nuh	Climax	Interrogative	present simple	You
		12nd	Nuh	Climax	Declarative	present perfect	You
		13rd	Nuh	Climax	Declarative	present simple	He
		14th	Nuh	Climax	Declarative	past simple	They
		15th	Nuh	Climax	Declarative	present simple	You
64	6	16th	Almighty	Falling action	Declarative	past simple	They
		17th	Resolution	Conclusion	Declarative	past simple	We
		18th	Resolution	Conclusion	Declarative	past simple	We
		19th	Resolution	Conclusion	Declarative	past simple	They

C. The Interpersonal Metafunction Mood of Language

The interpersonal metafunction clarifies the importance of highlighting the role of the grammatical choices relating to the elements of the story. However, interpersonal metafunction is about the social world, especially the relationship between speaker and hearer, and is concerned with clauses as exchanges depending on the character's talk. Indeed, the short story is a message to the hearer and the reader, so they must learn how to be a good believer. According to mood function, each character has its role in the short story setting.

The role of the narrative reflects the introduction, 1st verse / 1st clause (Indeed, We sent (Nuh) to his people), and the ending using past simple declarative mood. 6th verse / 16th to 19th clause (But they belied him /So, we saved him and those along with him in the ship, /and We drowned those who belied Our Ayat /They were indeed a blind people). The second role explains the characters' behaviors or the story's happiness or sadness. The narrator (Allah SW) explains why the message was rejected (that he may warn you so that you may fear Allah and that you may receive (His Mercy). At the end, as a summary and finishing to the story, the narrator (SW) addresses the mind and soul of the listener and the reader (We saved him and those along with him on the ship). Nevertheless, (We drowned those who belied Our Ayat). This sad ending for the belying because (They were indeed blind people). So, understanding interpersonal metafunction through mood analysis helps understand the central role of reading the Holy Quran, and encouraging readers to take the right approach and realize the truth is the goal of the Quranic short story. There is no doubt that all the dialogue and monologue in Quranic narrative style discourse serves a final purpose: the success of conveying the holy message. It is worth noting that the mood system plays a crucial role in achieving this purpose.

V. CONCLUSION

The research provides a linguistic examination of the Quranic narrative style in Nuh's story, the section disclosed in Chapter 7 (Al-Araaf Surah). Sahih International was chosen as the translation. There were 7 Ayat, which were separated into 19 clauses. The conclusion provides fresh perspectives on the material. The study indicates the use of SFL mood analyses in organizing both experience and interpersonal linguistic resources. Adding verbal inflection and pronominal markers broadens the theme's limit to match the Arabic clause structure. The Quranic narrative also includes examples of interpersonal metafunction, which may be examined utilizing the cognitive sociolinguistics dimension and translation quality evaluation technique. Thematic structural coherence is revealed in the coherence of Quranic passages at both the macro and micro levels. Genre and discourse rhetorical pattern analysis may identify genre-specific elements and discourse rhetorical patterns in the Qur'an's narrative parables (El-Daly, 2019; Arabzoozani & Pahlavannejad, 2019). Some inferences may be derived from this study based on the research findings and data analysis.

The research intended to demonstrate that, despite its religious basis (message), the Quran is, at heart, is a text with texture--a trait shared by all texts--resulting from various connections and linkages. Text internal forces (grammatical and lexical cohesive devices) keep text portions together, resulting in a unity or unified whole. These internal forces, or cohesive devices, contribute to the construction of text on the one hand and to its interpretation by the receiver/reader on the other. As a result, these coherent mechanisms diminish textual interpretative conjecture and minimize the involvement of the receiver/reader in changing the text. Based on this, our examination of the cohesive devices (in the Quran) indicated that the Quran as text utilizes these cohesive components to construct its texture (cohesion) by SFL viewpoints. As a linguistic theory, SFL offers new paths for better understanding and analyzing the textual relations (of the Quran). This description results in two outcomes. The first is that the research attempted to illustrate that an SFL-based interpretation of the Quran's coherent relations provides a fruitful approach to better comprehending this sacred literature's textuality. Second, this technique does not diminish the holiness of the text; rather, the ostensibly religious approach deprives the holy text of its inherent dynamics while exaggerating its non-linguistic features.

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Internet Memes and Gender: A Pragmatic Analysis of How Saudi Male and Female EFL Undergraduate Students Use Internet Memes

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Abstract—The study examined the differences between 150 male and female EFL undergraduate students in their use of internet memes. The way in which male and female participants used internet memes was investigated. Moreover, the differences between the two genders in the pragmatic functions of the memes and the most common function by each gender were investigated. The data for the current study were gathered using a questionnaire completed by 75 male students and 75 female students. The findings suggest that both male and female participants showed a high use of memes in their private conversations with their family and friends. It also showed high use of memes for joking or humour. Male participants showed a high use of memes for entertainment or satire, whereas female participants used them to express their emotions, which was a less frequent function among males. In terms of the most common emotions expressed by males and females, male participants used memes to express happiness and joy more frequently than females, whereas female participants were more likely than males to use internet memes to express sadness, anger, love and hate. Therefore, this shows differences between males and females in the pragmatic functions of using internet memes. The majority of the male and female participants felt comfortable using memes from different cultures, although a few preferred not to because they were afraid of being misunderstood. The paper concludes with a recommendation to conduct studies on the pragmatic functions of memes by different age groups.

Index Terms—females, gender, internet memes, males, pragmatic functions

I. INTRODUCTION

Social network users have developed their own communication systems in order to communicate their feelings, thoughts and emotions by using emoticons, GIFs and internet memes. Internet memes are widely used by people of different ages on social networks. They are considered a modern cultural phenomenon through which certain information is spread via internet communication (Ariyoga & Rahyono, 2020). Internet memes combine image and text and are often used for purposes such as comedy and satirical drawings (Ostanina-Olszewka & Majdzińska-Koczorowicz, 2019). Given their widespread use across many digital platforms, internet memes have received increasing scholarly attention (Vasquez & Aslan, 2021).

Undergraduate student internet users may prefer to use internet memes to express their emotions, feelings or thoughts instead of using written language. Undergraduate students may also create new internet memes. As Smith (2021) states, studying memes in a geographical and academic population, rather than solely in a digital one, enhances understanding of how internet memes are used in many different contexts, including non-digital and interpersonal communication.

This study focuses on the use of internet memes by male and female EFL undergraduate students. Gender was selected as a focus because the literature on gender and language (cf. Bassiouney, 2009; Labov, 1982; Trudgill, 1983) shows that men and women tend to use language in distinct ways. A linguistic stereotype holds that women are more careful in their phrasing and articulation of language than men in order to appear more feminine and well-mannered (Bensaber, 2020). For example, a study conducted by Newman et al. (2008) explored language differences between males and females. This was done by analysing the language in 14,000 text samples. The findings showed that in the 8,353 text files examined, women primarily used language for gossip, talking about other people and what they had done. They also expressed emotions such as doubts, as well as their preferences and dislikes. In contrast, men, in the 5,970 text files analysed, used language to label objects and processes, along with a lot of talk about jobs, sports, money, usage of numbers and, most importantly, swear words and profanity. Regarding the similarities, both genders used language to talk about time, anger and sexuality. The distinction in how males and females use language could also apply to their use of internet memes.

The aim of the current study is to identify the pragmatic functions of internet memes used by male and female students, as well as finding out whether there are gender differences in the students' pragmatic preferences and functions in their use of internet memes. This is of key importance as it will provide an understanding of how internet memes are used and whether there are any gender differences in the use of the two groups. Most previous studies have examined digital content instead of conducting interviews or questionnaires, exploring social functions within a digital community or broader meme processes (Davis et al., 2016; Gal et al., 2016; Marcus et al., 2017; Milner, 2016; Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2017;

Smith, 2021). Moreover, since the students in the current study are studying English as a foreign language, the research paper will investigate whether this enables them to use internet memes from English-speaking cultures in the Arabic-speaking culture.

The purpose of the study will be fulfilled by answering the following research questions:

- 1) How do Saudi undergraduate students use memes?
- 2) What is the most common pragmatic meaning of the internet memes used by male students?
- 3) What is the most common pragmatic meaning of the internet memes used by female students?
- 4) Is there a difference between male and female students in the pragmatic functions of their use of memes?

The findings of the current study will contribute to the literature on the pragmatic functions of internet memes, especially by focusing on Saudi undergraduate students, whose use of internet memes, to my knowledge, has not been addressed before.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Internet Memes

The term *meme* was popularized by the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins in his 1976 bestseller *The Selfish Gene* (Ariyoga & Rahyono, 2020). Dawkins coined the term to introduce his theory of mimetics to explain cultural (re)production, evolution and transmission, and “to argue that units of cultural transmission are analogous to the genes of biological evolution” (Xie, 2022, p. 7). According to Dawkins, a meme is “a unit of cultural transmission, or a unit of *imitation*” (Dawkins, 1976, p. 206, 2016, p. 249; italics in original). He suggests that “tunes, ideas, catchphrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or of building arches” (Dawkins, 1976, p. 206, 2016, p. 249) are examples of memes. Dawkins went on to refine his definition by stating that “[a] meme should be regarded as a unit of information residing in a brain” (Dawkins, 1982, p. 109, 1999, p. 165). For Dawkins (2006), a meme can be defined as an act of imitating ideas that spread from person to person; he also explains that the term meme has a Greek root (*mīmēma*), meaning something that can be imitated.

It is noteworthy that Shifman (2014) and Milner (2016) introduced a genre of memes called internet memes. Shifman (2014), in her book titled *Memes in Digital Culture*, defines internet memes as “(a) a group of digital items sharing the common characteristics of content, form and/or stance; (b) that were created with awareness of each other; (c) were circulated, imitated and / or transformed via the Internet by many users” (p. 41). To her, internet memes are a group of digital items that share common characteristics of form, content and attitudes, created intentionally in relation to one other. These memes are then circulated, imitated and even changed by many users over the internet. Shifman (2014) highlights that digitalization plays an important role in spreading culture, which supports Davison’s (2012) perspective that internet memes represent cultural artefacts that gain influence through online transmission. Nevertheless, memes are not necessarily jokes as they do not need to be funny or interesting (Markowski, 2022). They blend various modes, such as images, text and audio-visual material, in order to produce a shared cultural experience.

In his book *The World Made Meme*, Milner (2016) provides a definition of internet memes that is in agreement with Shifman (2014), but he expands the concept to include pictures, hashtags, puns, songs, YouTube videos, stock photos, catchphrases and even recordings of physical performances. According to Börzsei (2013), meme images can originate from sources such as films, video games, political imagery or photos of celebrities; they may appear as standalone image or be accompanied by text.

Xie (2022) illustrates that anything can become a meme as long as other people can imitate, copy and transmit it, noting that memes may be in different forms and genres, such as “text messages, slogans, speeches, lectures, instructions, advertising/advertisements, films, videos, pictograms, images, pictures, cartoons, comics, image macros, public texts (road/ traffic signs, brand logos, notices, etc.), music, songs, recipes, etc” (p. 9). Such items can be viewed as ‘meme outputs’.

A simple definition of internet memes is that they are created and transmitted online through social media and messaging applications (Xie, 2022). However, internet memes refer not only to those created online but also to those created offline and transmitted online.

The success of a meme depends on how often the meme is reproduced or imitated (Blackmore, 1999). Sometimes certain memes become popular because they are funny or associated with a certain incident like COVID-19. As Wiggins (2022, p. 10) notes: “the internet meme is a remixed, iterated message that is rapidly diffused by members of participatory digital culture for the purpose of satire, parody, critique, or other discursive activity”.

B. The Conceptual Blends of Memes

Fillmore (1976) introduced the term *frames* to describe how mental spaces are structured (Ostanina-Olszewska & Majdzińska-Koczorowicz, 2019). Frames are structured clusters of knowledge that can be metonymically activated by one of their components. Fillmore (1976) notes that “particular words or speech formulas, or particular grammatical choices, are associated in memory with particular frames, in such a way that exposure to the linguistic form in an appropriate context activates in the perceiver’s mind the particular frame” (p. 25). This leads to frame metonymy, where accessing any part or element of a frame can help to understand either the whole frame or part of it (Ostanina-Olszewska & Majdzińska-Koczorowicz, 2019).

Internet memes are an example of conceptual blends. This is because they act as creative artefacts by combining modalities and are often allusive and intertextual, spatial, complex and multilevel structures (Ostanina-Olszewska & Majdzińska-Koczorowicz, 2019). Creating new content becomes possible through conceptual blending or conceptual integration, which Fauconnier and Turner (2002) recognize as the basic instrument of human creativity. For this process to take place, at least two input spaces should be included, each containing elements from different scenarios. Several steps are involved in creating a conceptual blend. Abstract connections, or frames, are created through the selective mapping of corresponding elements from different scenarios. These frames are created within a blended space, resulting in new frames that differ from those in the original spaces, known as emergent structures (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002, p. 61). Conceptual understanding thus develops through dynamic interaction between mental spaces, resulting in a blend being produced that has an emergent, unique structure and logic.

Conceptual blending is a very rapid, dynamic, unconscious and routine process (Cichmińska, 2004), and it has been demonstrated to function similarly across the highest levels of scientific, artistic and literary thought (Fauconnier & Turner, 2002). It has crucial importance in language, science, art and religion, and other expressions of human creativity. Conceptual blending is fundamental to everyday reasoning, as well as in all artistic and scientific pursuits. Within a blend, the new structure, meaning and qualities can over time become part of a particular cultural context, evolving into established language structures that may later contribute to the creation of new meanings. Composition, completion and elaboration processes underpin the emergence of conceptual blending, and each of these elements enable new content (emergent structure) to emerge that is not accessible in the individual input spaces. Fauconnier (1997) describes these three processes as follows:

Completion: Knowledge of background frames, cognitive and cultural models, allows the composite structure projected into the blend from the inputs to be viewed as part of a larger self-contained structure in the blend. The pattern in the blend triggered by the inherited structures is ‘completed’ into the larger, emergent structure.

Elaboration: The structure in the blend can then be elaborated. This is called ‘running the blend.’ It consists of cognitive work performed within the blend, according to its own emergent logic. (pp. 150–151)

Conceptual integration is considered the basic mechanism of human creativity through which language users create a blend containing a new semantic quality. This blend can then have new frames, features and associations which could be the consequence of one’s culture, language or nationality (Ostanina-Olszewska & Majdzińska-Koczorowicz, 2019).

Internet memes are known for mixing different modalities such as text, pictures and/or audiovisual material in a creative way. They represent a text–picture interdependence based on specific rules that co-create discourse. In this sense, without the picture, the text would be incomplete and not understood, even though the textual part is presented in condensed form, often without adherence to grammatical rules. After being combined with an image, the text often acquires an entirely different meaning and may refer to a commonly known and popular semantic framework (Ostanina-Olszewska & Majdzińska-Koczorowicz, 2019), and semantic roles are often attributed to particular characters. Internet memes become multimodal through the interactions and interdependence between linguistic and visual forms (Dancygier & Vandelanotte, 2016).

Recipients of memes use frame metonymy, in which identifiable frame elements allow comprehension of the complete frame or the particular context. This approach also facilitates understanding the behaviour of the participants involved. Moreover, in analysing memes, they cannot be isolated from their cultural associations or connotations. An individual’s perspective is constantly affected by the information found in the memes, which usually has a satirical or ironic nature (Ostanina-Olszewska & Majdzińska-Koczorowicz, 2019). How an individual interprets a meme is shaped by the beliefs, opinions, stereotypes and clichés shared by a particular group of people, as an individual user of a network never constructs a meme on their own. Memes prompt recipients to alter the original meaning, resulting in them becoming co-authors of the meme. The content of each meme corresponds to different situations, reflecting the unique experiences of each person and the fact that humour is directly associated with creativity.

Ostanina-Olszewska and Majdzińska-Koczorowicz (2019) note that memes always carry some background meaning and should not be analysed as isolated artefacts. This means that memes do not only reference previous versions of a situation or meme and play a role in the creation of new memes but also create new concepts relevant to the contexts, situations and images to which they refer.

C. Pragmatics and Internet Memes

Pragmatics is the study of utterances and the intentional meaning of speech in a given time and place, including the implicit meaning behind language. Daily use of the internet has led to a widening of the scope of pragmatics to include internet pragmatics, which Xie (2022) considers to be a valuable area of enquiry. According to Xie (2022), internet pragmatics is an important branch of the pragmatics field that studies online language, encompassing social media and the online world. It is a very promising and diverse area of knowledge which is full of vitality, involving exploring various aspects of human cognition, interaction and social dynamics relating to the internet. Yus (2019) states that internet pragmatics provides a powerful explanatory tool which enables understanding of the many layers of intended meanings communicated through internet memes.

The popularity of internet memes results from the nature of their visual and textual content (Malik & Tehseen, 2022). Internet memes are used as figurative devices to say one thing with a different implied meaning. Moreover, Grundlingh (2018) argues that memes are considered as speech acts; therefore, they are easily communicated and comprehended.

Most of the time internet memes imply various meanings depending on the time and context in which they are used. Grice (1975) introduced the theory of implicature, which refers to the conclusions that the hearer draws from an utterance, even if it is not explicitly conveyed in the speaker's words.

According to Xie et al. (2021), internet pragmatics studies both what the internet is and how people use it. It recognizes the internet as an increasingly complex and diverse aspect of daily life. As a functional perspective, internet pragmatics seeks to explain how individuals use various linguistic and semiotic resources online to express themselves and understand others. Given that the human life-world is inherently diverse, encompassing individuals with linguistic, cultural, educational, religious, ethical and cognitive differences, members of a certain subculture may also exhibit heterogeneous characteristics.

D. Previous Studies

Given the widespread nature of internet memes, they have received a considerable amount of scholarly attention in their many digital forms (Vasquez & Aslan, 2021). Most studies have analysed digital items rather than using interviews or questionnaires to collect data from internet memes' users, focusing on the social functions of memes within the specific digital community studied or on larger meme processes (Davis et al., 2016; Gal, 2015; Marcus et al., 2017; Milner, 2016; Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2017).

In a study conducted on undergraduate university students, Smith (2021) examined the use of internet memes by college students at Central Washington University, as well as attempting to examine how memes were defined within this sample. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the data; 14 questionnaires were completed and returned, while 18 interviews were conducted with six participants. Analysis of the data showed that the college students considered memes to play a significant role in their conversations with family and friends, and they also used them to construct their public identities. However, the students did not engage in meme making to the same extent as other types of meme use, and when they did so it was often not recognized by them as meme making. Additionally, their definitions of memes were similar to those set out in the current literature. Smith (2021) found that the participants first started interacting with memes at the age of 11–14 years old.

Bensaber (2020) examined the differences between males and females in their understanding and appreciation of the humour found in memes and written jokes, aiming to investigate the hypothesis that males understand and appreciate humour in memes and jokes to a greater extent than females. For hypothesis testing, a questionnaire and a test were administered to a total of 58 participants in a cluster sample, consisting of 29 male participants and 29 female participants. The participants were in their third year studying English at Frères Mentouri Constantine University. In the questionnaire, the students provided information about their exposure to English media and their preferred social media platforms. The main research tool was a test, providing the participants with six memes and eight written jokes representing different types of humour. They were first expected to react to these items; following this, if they had understood the content, they had to provide an explanation of the humour and their reactions. The results revealed a gap in males' and females' understanding of humour in memes and written jokes. The males seemed to understand humour more than the females did, with a difference of over 10% between the two genders. However, regarding humour appreciation, males and females were almost equally appreciative of humour.

The current study aims to investigate the use of internet memes by Saudi male and female EFL undergraduate students and to find out the common pragmatic functions of internet memes for each gender group.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Participants

The data were collected from 150 participants, consisting of 75 female and 75 male Saudi EFL undergraduate students from the Department of English Language and Literature at the College of Languages and Humanities, Qassim University. The data were gathered randomly from students aged 18 years old and over. Undergraduate students were selected because internet memes are widely used by this age group and they can also participate in creating them.

B. Data Collection

A digital questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was designed based on Smith (2021), and more questions were added to encompass the research questions of the current study. The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions, focusing on the participants' behaviour in using internet memes and the pragmatic functions of the memes. Three specialists in the field judged the questionnaire. A pilot study was also conducted to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. This involved asking five undergraduate students from the Department of English Language and Literature at Qassim University to complete the questionnaire. Following this, the questionnaire was distributed to the main participants of the study.

A quantitative analysis was conducted using Excel to identify the similarities and differences between the two groups in their use of internet memes and the most common pragmatic functions used by each group.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, the findings from the questionnaire data will be discussed to answer the research questions.

The first question in the questionnaire asked about the frequency of using internet memes in any digital space. As can be seen in Figure 1, both male and female participants reported using internet memes, though with varying frequency. The purpose of this question was to find out how frequently the participants encountered memes in their lives and to ensure that they understood that internet memes can be used to convey their intended messages without using traditional text messages.

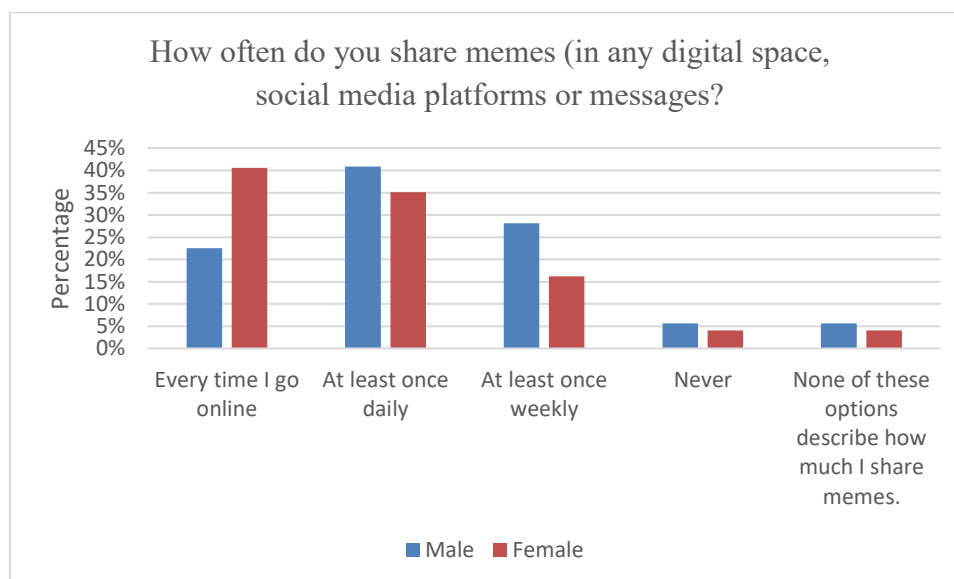


Figure 1. Male and Female Participants' Frequency of Sharing Memes (in Any Digital Space, Social Media Platforms or Messages)

The findings suggest that both males and females use internet memes in different digital spaces. 41% of the male participants reported using internet memes at least once daily, whereas 41% of the female participants reported that they use internet memes every time they go online. These findings suggest that the female participants have a stronger preference for using internet memes compared to the male participants. Only a few participants from both genders reported never using memes (4% of males and 3% of females).

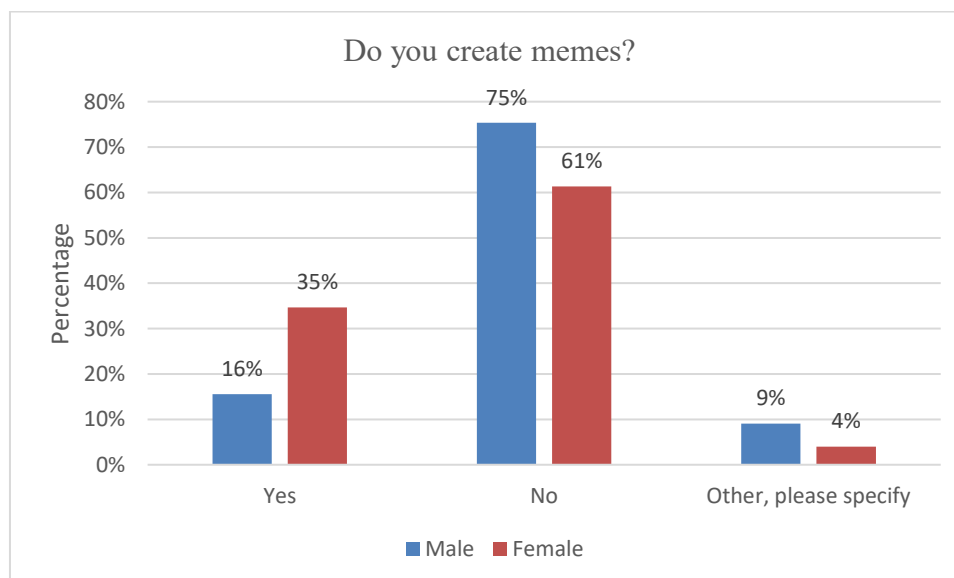


Figure 2. Creating Internet Memes

According to Boiko et al. (2024), internet users often participate in meme creation, with memes being easily changed by other internet users to convey their intended message. Thus, memes go through a process of transformation and lose their authorship. By examining the participants' attempts to create memes, Figure 2 shows that both genders rarely create memes. Nevertheless, the results show that the female participants tend to create memes more often than the male participants, with 35% of females doing so. This aligns with Smith's (2021) findings, as the participants in her study did not engage in creating memes to the same extent as they used them.

Since memes are mostly encountered on social media, Figure 3 illustrates the most common social platform in which the participants see internet memes. Both genders agreed that memes are more commonly found on TikTok. More male than female participants reported encountering internet memes on Instagram (24%), whereas more female than male participants reported that memes are more common on X (24%). This partially agrees with the findings of Smith (2021), whose participants also reported encountering internet memes on X and Instagram. The results disagree with Bensaber (2021), who found that memes were most commonly found on Facebook and Instagram.

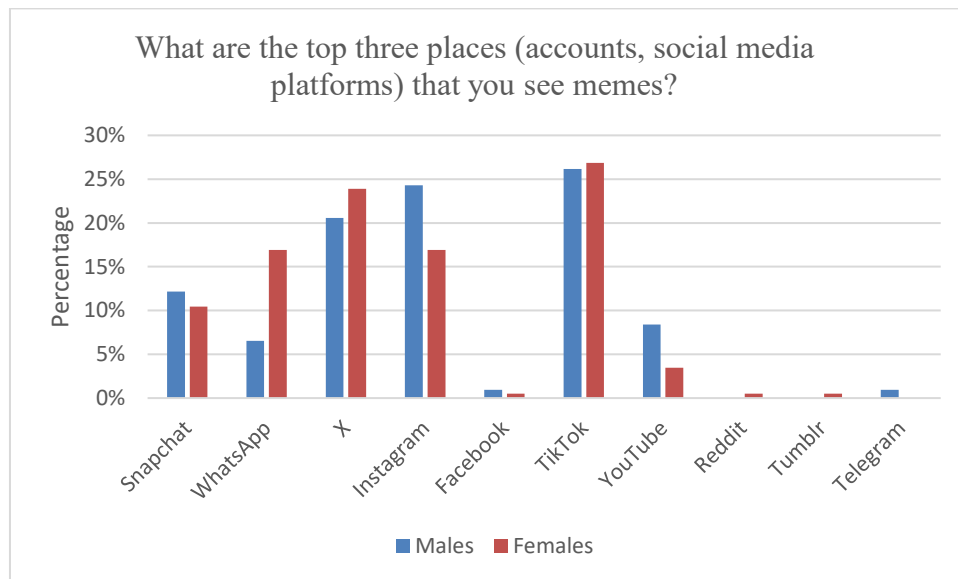


Figure 3. Where Study Participants Found Memes

The participants were also asked about with whom they prefer to use memes. The male participants reported that they prefer to use internet memes with their friends, with 96% selecting this option. Similarly, the female participants also showed a strong preference for using memes with friends, accounting for 76% of the total, and they also showed a preference for using them with their families, as can be seen in Table 1. The strong preference for using internet memes with their friends by both male and female participants could be due to being of the same age or generation, with shared life experiences and lifestyles. This contrasts with older people or people who they are not familiar with. Both genders showed a very low preference for using internet memes with their colleagues, when chatting with unknown people and in formal conversations. This could be because the students are aware of the formality of these contexts and fear being misunderstood by people they are not familiar with, such as in interactions with unknown people or colleagues.

TABLE 1
WITH WHOM DO YOU USE MEMES MORE WHEN CHATTING?

Gender	Family	Friends	Colleagues	Chatting with unknown people	In formal conversations
Male	3%	96%	1%	0%	0%
Female	20%	76%	1%	1%	1%

The participants showed an interest in looking for more information about the internet memes they encounter (61% of females and 53% of males), as shown in Figure 4. This agrees with the findings of Smith (2021), who found that most of her participants verified the information they found in memes: seven of the participants answered "Yes" to looking for more information about memes or verifying meme content and four answered "No". In the current study 47% of the male participants answered "No", compared to 39% of the female participants. This indicates that the male participants are less interested in looking for more information about memes or verifying information about them, while the female participants seemed to be more curious about memes.

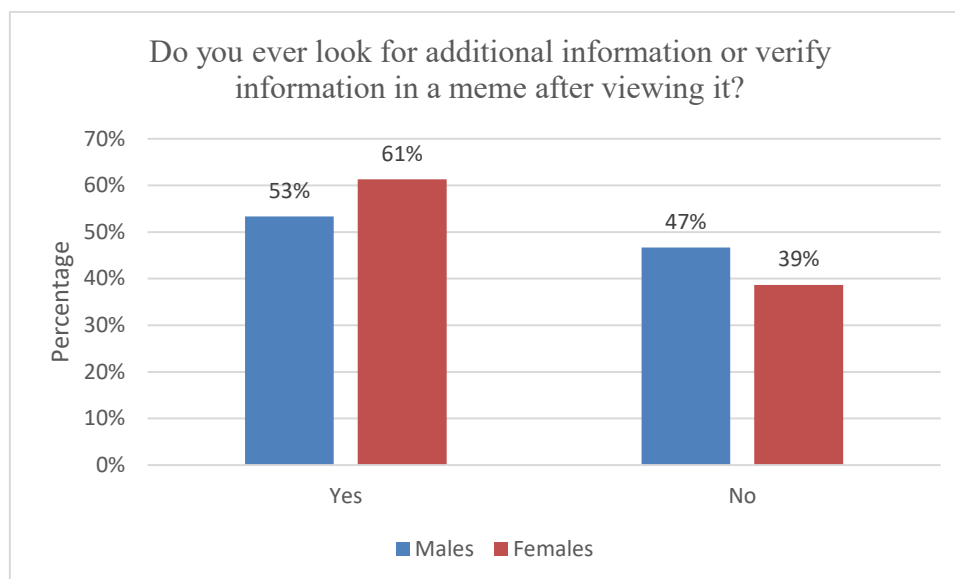


Figure 4. Male and Female Participants' Verification of Information in Memes

In terms of the purpose of using memes, both the male and female participants reported using internet memes for joking (25% of males and 23% of females). Expressing emotions was the second most frequent purpose for female participants (19%), while using memes for entertainment was the second most frequent purpose for males (16%). Using memes for entertainment was the third most frequent purpose for the females (13%). For the male participants, using memes to express satire was the third most frequent purpose (15%). The male participants showed more use of internet memes to talk about sports in comparison to the females, who were less interested in this purpose. Both genders showed less interest in using memes for talking about politics, national identity and culture, which could be due to the seriousness of such kinds of topic. Regarding the purposes of irony/metaphor, exclamation and exaggeration, although they showed a low percentage of use the female participants seemed to use them more frequently than the male participants. These findings are presented in Figure 5.

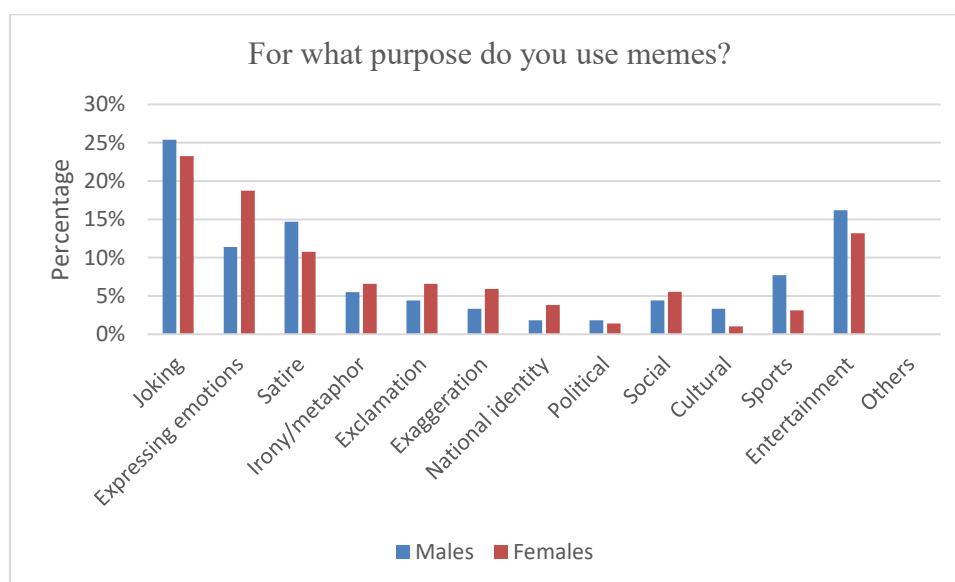


Figure 5. Pragmatic Functions of Using Internet Memes for Male and Female Participants

The results showed that the majority of the male and female participants reported first encountering memes at the age of 11–14 years old (65% of males and 61% of females, a negligible difference). This finding is consistent with the results of Smith (2021). The remainder of the participants (both male and female) reported encountering memes at the age of 14 to 18. A few participants reported another age range, such as between 18 and 20 years old, as reported by one of the males and one of the females. One of the females mentioned that she started encountering internet memes at the age of 5 to 6 years old. The findings are illustrated in Figure 6.

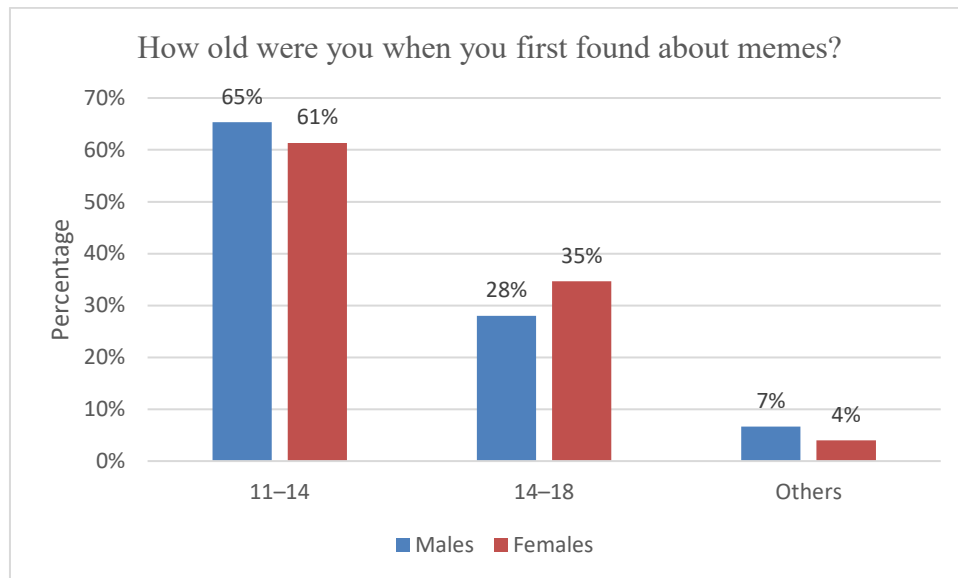


Figure 6. Age at Which Male and Female Participants First Encountered Internet Memes

Since it was expected that one of the main purposes of using memes would be to express and transmit emotions (cf. Boiko et al., 2024), it was interesting to examine the most widely expressed emotions and whether any gender differences could be seen. Figure 7 presents the findings. The most commonly expressed emotion through using memes was happiness, which was widely expressed by both genders (28% of males and 21% of females). In second place was joy, which was more widely expressed by male than female participants. On the other hand, female participants showed a higher use of memes expressing sadness than the males, at 14%, and it was their second most frequently expressed emotion. Male participants also showed higher use of memes expressing surprise and fear than the females. The female participants seemed to use more memes expressing feelings of anger, disappointment, love, hate and worry than the males. There were slight differences in expressing boredom between the two genders, whereas the same percentage of participants used memes to express disapproval.

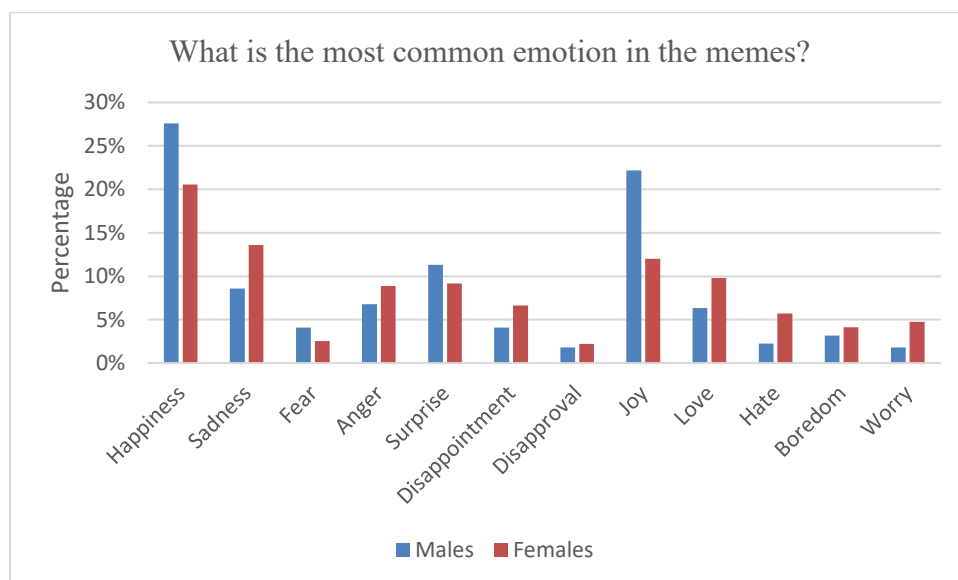


Figure 7. The Most Common Emotions Expressed by Males and Female Participants in Their Use of Memes

When the participants were asked whether they face difficulty comprehending internet memes, both genders reported that they do not. This could be attributed to their early exposure to memes and long history of using them. The male participants reported a better level of understanding of memes (93%) than the female participants (84%).

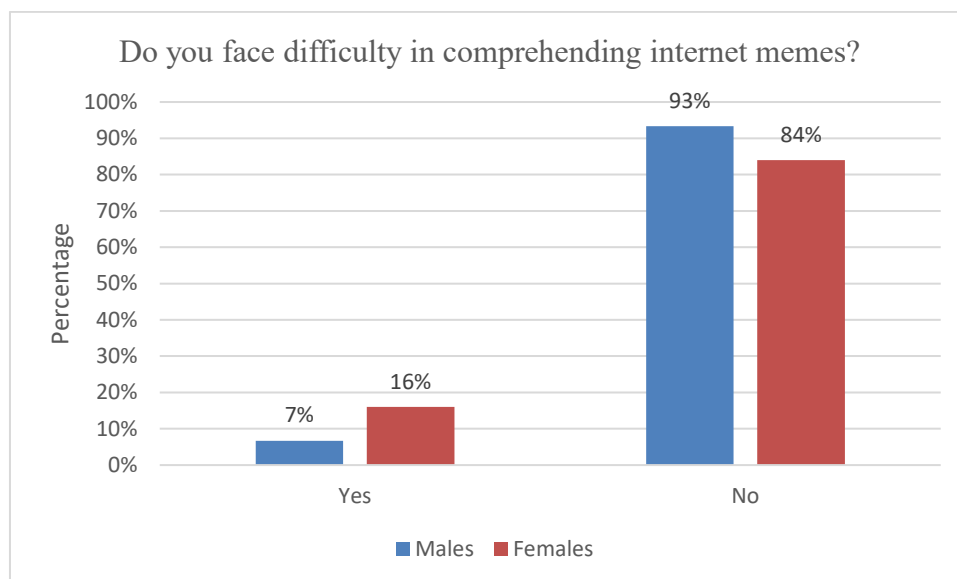


Figure 8. Level of Difficulty in Comprehending Internet Memes

Figure 9 presents the results on whether the male and female participants feel comfortable using memes from different cultures. The findings show that the majority of the male and female participants (73% of females and 72% of males) reported feeling comfortable using internet memes from different cultures; the differences between them were negligible. This finding could be attributed to the fast spread of internet memes causing what Dawkins (1976) described as cultural information spread. On the other hand, 28% of the males and 27% of the females reported feeling uncomfortable using memes from different cultures. The most common reason mentioned by both the male and female participants was a fear of being misunderstood. For instance, a female participant explained that she prefers not to use memes from a different culture because “using memes from other cultures can be challenging, especially when the listener isn’t familiar with that culture. The references might come across as confusing or inappropriate. Additionally, some memes may not resonate with your own society and could be rejected by the audience”. Another female participant said a meme from another culture might not be understood by the receiver. A further female participant mentioned that she is afraid when using memes from a different culture because she does not know much about their culture or the things that are forbidden to them. Regarding the male participants who prefer not to use memes from different cultures, their main reason was a fear of being misunderstood or of using memes that might have an offensive meaning. This can be explained using politeness strategies since the participants do not want to offend the receiver of their memes and do not want to use memes from other cultures that might be misunderstood or carry an offensive meaning. Such an explanation can be understood by referring to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model, which is centred on the concept of face, specifically positive face, where the speaker wants other people to like them.

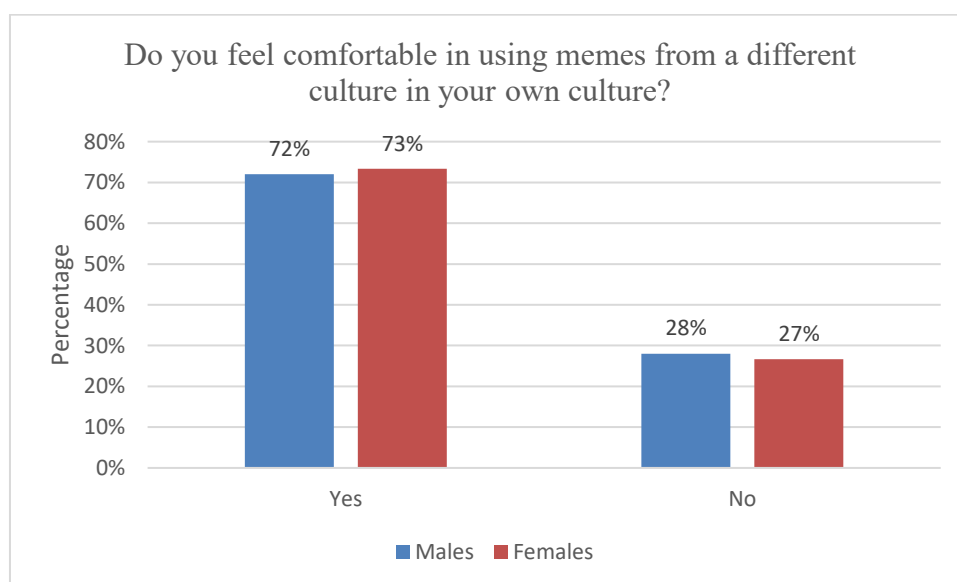


Figure 9. Male and Female Participants’ Use of Memes From Different Cultures

To sum up this section, most of the Saudi male and female undergraduate students showed considerable use of internet memes, mainly on a daily basis, with variation in the frequency of their use. They reported encountering internet memes at an early age (i.e. between 11 and 14 years old). Regarding the pragmatic functions of using memes, both genders showed a strong preference for using memes for joking or humour. Males frequently used memes for entertainment or satire, whereas females used them to express their emotions, a purpose less often used by the males. When examining the most common emotions expressed, it was found that the male participants used memes to express happiness and joy more often than the females, whereas the female participants tended to use internet memes to express the emotions of sadness, anger, love and hate more frequently than the males. Therefore, this highlights differences between males and females in the pragmatic functions of using internet memes.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to investigate the behaviour of Saudi male and female EFL students in their use of internet memes and to identify the common pragmatic functions intended by each gender group. It also aimed to identify the similarities and differences in the pragmatic functions intended by each group. The data were gathered using an electronic questionnaire, which was completed by 150 participants (75 males and 75 females). The findings suggest that both genders show considerable use of internet memes in their daily communication, with variations in the frequency of usage. However, they were less engaged in creating memes. Both male and female participants revealed that they prefer to use internet memes with their friends and family.

In terms of the pragmatic functions of memes, joking was the most common purpose, especially among male participants. The female participants used internet memes to express emotions more often than the males, while the male participants used memes for the purpose of entertainment, sports and satire more often than the females. Happiness was the most common emotion expressed by using memes, especially among males, who also displayed a preference for expressing joy. The female participants tended to more often use memes expressing love, sadness, hate, anger and worry. Most of the participants felt comfortable using internet memes from different cultures, whereas few of them preferred not to because they were afraid of being misunderstood or that the memes might have an offensive meaning in their culture.

The current study also has a number of limitations that can be addressed in future research. The analysis was confined to comparing internet meme use by male and female EFL undergraduate students. Further research should be conducted to compare groups of people of different ages, including older participants, to identify similarities and differences between them in the pragmatic functions of using internet memes. Moreover, since internet memes are considered a type of written language, they should be studied in relation to politeness strategies. A study could also be carried out to investigate the recipients of internet memes, assessing whether they understand the meaning of internet memes or whether this type of communication could lead to misunderstandings.

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Writing Literacy Motivation and Habits and Their Relations With Learning Technology Among Students in Rural Indonesian Schools

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Abstract—Technology learning has become an integral part of contemporary education and has a significant impact on students' writing literacy motivation. This study aims to review the level of motivation for writing literacy in Public Junior High Schools (SMPN) in rural areas of Indonesia. In addition, this study aims to review the relationship between learning technology and students' writing habits. This study uses a quantitative approach with an online survey data collection technique using the Qualtrics system. The analysis technique used in this study is the Structural Equation Model-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS). The test results showed that learning technology had a significant influence on writing literacy with a path coefficient of 0.798. This shows that mastery of learning technology provides a positive boost to students' motivation to write. Learning technology on habits and behavior also has a significant direction with a path coefficient of 0.798. The use of technology has increased students' motivation for writing literacy because of the easy access to the necessary resources. Learners feel more motivated to explore new topics and ideas and offer opportunities to express themselves through writing. For further development, several recommendations were put forward to deepen understanding and improve the quality of students' digital literacy. The government can design a digital literacy curriculum that focuses on developing a student writing practice platform. In addition, there needs to be an equal distribution of adequate access to technology and digital learning tools to reach all regions, including rural areas, so that there is no gap in writing literacy and digital literacy skills.

Index Terms—habit and behavior, learning technology, rural school, students, writing literacy

I. INTRODUCTION

In an era filled with technological advancements, the approach to education has undergone a significant transformation. One of the main changes that has had a big impact is the use of technology as one of the learning series in strengthening reading literacy and increasing reading motivation among students (Hall & Lundin, 2024, p. 1). Sampling in this study used a cross-sectional design method. In this context, the influence of learning technology on reading literacy and reading motivation is the focus of attention for education practitioners, researchers, and other education stakeholders (Huntington et al., 2023, p. 1). This paradigm shift is reflected in efforts made to understand how technology can be used effectively to stimulate reading interest and improve students' reading skills at different levels of education (Schwartz et al., 2023, p. 1).

However, along with the rapid growth of technology, questions arise about the extent of the influence of learning technology on students' literacy and learning motivation (Cárdenas-Sainz et al., 2023, p. 1). Several studies show that the use of technology can increase students' interest in reading through interactive multimedia content (Wijayanti, 2020). However, there are concerns, such as the use of digital use that can obscure students' focus (Bergdahl et al., 2020, p. 1). As is the case Gallardo-Echenique et al. (2016) explained the condition of rapid technological growth distracts students. Students' reading habits decline along with technological advances (Giannini & Bowen, 2019). This is because students are more interested in using technology for interaction and communication activities with their peers than in things related to academics (Siegel, 2023, p. 1).

Technological developments in Indonesia during the period 2018 to 2022 reflect positive progress, with a significant increase in the index of technological development and internet usage. According to the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2023), there was an increase of 0.78 points in the five years. Internet usage in Indonesia has also increased by 13% in one year. However, there are still significant inequalities in access and utilization of technology, especially in remote

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areas. Indonesia still faces challenges in leveling the accessibility of technology and information, with technology development centers still focusing on the island of Java. Data reported by BPS (2023) shows that eastern Indonesia, such as Papua and East Nusa Tenggara, has a low technology and information development index when compared to Jakarta.

This inequality reflects the challenges that need to be overcome in expanding access and utilization of technology throughout Indonesia (Belcher et al., 2024, p. 1). In addition, the era of information-rich digitalization also brings new challenges in information processing and management (Giannini & Bowen, 2019). These challenges are important to understand to integrate technology effectively in the learning environment (Sageengrana et al., 2024, p. 1). By understanding the challenges faced and the potential of existing technologies, steps can be taken to maximize the benefits of technology in the context of learning (Rosen, 2009). Efforts to formulate effective strategies in integrating technology into learning are very important to ensure that the benefits of technology can be felt equally by all Indonesian people, as well as to overcome the challenges that arise along with this era of digitalization.

Thus, this study will trace the influence of learning technology on writing literacy motivation. This study will also outline how learning technology can provide more detailed measurements of the progress of writing literacy. Through a deeper understanding of the dynamics that have been described, it is hoped that this research can formulate a more effective strategy for integrating technology into the learning environment. So that it can strengthen reading literacy and foster sustainable writing motivation for students at various levels of education.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Literacy Motivation

Literacy is a process of developing individual knowledge and potential that refers to understanding, assessment, use, and involvement in written texts. Good literacy skills allow individuals to access information, analyze texts, and make decisions based on a deep understanding of the material being read (Esmer, 2019). This emphasizes that literacy is not only about technical ability, but the ability to understand, evaluate, and interpret the information contained in written texts (Su et al., 2024, p. 1). The emphasis on cognitive skills required in the reading process shows that reading is a process that requires a variety of complex cognitive skills.

Several studies reveal that achievement in literacy is influenced by a variety of complex and multidimensional factors (Koyuncu & Firat, 2021). The first influence is the ability to read fluently (Zhao & Huang, 2024, p. 1) and understanding the structure of the text in helping to interpret and relate the information read (Teng & Ma, 2024, p. 1). This is because understanding the structure of a text is a form of cognitive construction that plays an active role in the individual (Zhu et al., 2024, p. 1). The use of cognitive and metacognitive strategies plays an important role in understanding and managing the information obtained from reading texts (Zheng et al., 2024, p. 1). Lastly, high motivation for reading will encourage individuals to be actively involved in understanding reading texts (Wurster et al., 2023, p. 1). A deep understanding of these factors can help in the development of effective educational strategies to improve students' reading comprehension holistically.

The association between students' reading literacy levels and writing literacy has a close relationship and influences each other in the development of a person's language skills (Xu & Zheng, 2024, p. 1). A person who has a high level of reading literacy tends to have a better understanding of grammar, vocabulary, or sentence structure and these components are very important in effective writing (Koyuncu & Firat, 2021). Reading diverse books, stories, and articles can expand one's imagination and stimulate creativity. This helps in generating new ideas and crafting interesting stories or writings (Weng et al., 2024, p. 1). Good reading literacy can provide inspiration and fuel for a person's writing ability (Juanda et al., 2024; Lee & Mao, 2024, p. 1). As such, the emphasis on literacy development in schools and other learning environments is an important step in improving the overall quality of education and preparing students for success in various aspects of academic and professional life (Esmer, 2019).

Empirical studies have shown a positive and moderate relationship between intrinsic motivation and literacy (Kowalski et al., 2022; Liu, 2023). Reading motivation arising from an individual's inner interest and pleasure is considered the most important type of motivation (Herrewijn et al., 2021, p. 1). When individuals feel intrinsic motivation to read, this tends to increase their level of engagement in the reading process, which in turn can lead to improved reading skills and achievement (Honko et al., 2023, p. 1; Juanda et al., 2024). This emphasizes the importance of creating an environment that supports and fosters interest and enjoyment in literacy, which will ultimately help improve an individual's overall writing literacy skills and achievement (Chiu et al., 2024, p. 1).

B. Student Habits in the Use of Technological Tools

The use of literacy learning resources facilitated by the use of technology is becoming increasingly important in the world of education (Rusydiyah et al., 2020). This is because technology-based learning can present instructional materials in a contextual, visual, and auditory manner that is interesting and interactive (Imjai et al., 2024, p. 1). In line with the Decree of the Minister of Education Number 22 of 2016 concerning standards for the primary and secondary education process, information and communication technology must be applied integratively, systematically, and effectively by considering conditions and situations in the field. By utilizing digital literacy, teachers can present

learning materials more dynamically and interestingly to students (Rusydiyah et al., 2020). This not only makes the learning process more interesting but also helps students to be more engaged and understand the material being taught.

Learning technology creates wider access to a variety of reading resources, such as e-books, online articles, and interactive learning platforms (Imjai et al., 2024, p. 1). These innovations can help improve accessibility to diverse reading materials, providing more options for students to expand their knowledge and deepen their understanding of various topics (Wang & Wang, 2025). Learning technology can be packaged interactively and interestingly through various media, such as video, audio, animation, and educational games (Gallardo-Echenique et al., 2016). Packaging learning using technology can increase students' interest and involvement in reading materials. By presenting information through various media, students can have a more varied and interesting learning experience (Ford, 2024). This can strengthen students' motivation to read more because engaging learning tends to stimulate students' interest in a topic (Booton et al., 2023).

The integration of information and communication technology in the learning process has been proven to help students develop digital skills that are very important in the current era (Gómez-Trigueros et al., 2019). Technological skills are an integral part of the concept of literacy (Parrila & Georgiou, 2024, p. 1). So the meaning of literacy here includes not only the technical ability to use technology, but also a deep understanding of how technology can be used effectively to learn, work, and collaborate (Beck, 2020; Kyrilova et al., 2023). Therefore, literacy includes not only technical abilities but also a contextual understanding of the role of technology in daily life (Shafiee Rad & Alipour, 2024, p. 1). The importance of these technology and literacy skills is becoming increasingly relevant in students' preparation for an increasingly digitally connected future (Rieh et al., 2022, p. 1). The ability to use technology wisely and effectively is an important asset that can help students adapt to developments and changing times.

III. METHODS

The sample withdrawal in this study uses a cross-sectional design method. The cross-sectional method is a research approach that involves collecting data at one specific point in time from a variety of different individuals, groups, or variables. It aims to provide a representative picture of the situation or relationship between variables at a given moment. This approach does not involve collecting data from the same individuals or groups at regular intervals over some time. The research hypothesis is as follows:

H1: The influence of learning technology on students' habits and behavior

H2: The influence of learning technology on students' writing literacy motivation

The analysis method used to answer the hypothesis in this study is the Structural-Partial Least Square Equation Model (SEM-PLS) with the help of SmartPLS3 software. SEM-PLS is a powerful analysis method because it does not assume data with scale measurements and small samples and can be used for nominal, categorical, ordinal, interval, and ratio data (Hair et al., 2017). In addition, SEM-PLS also has the advantage of its flexibility to handle complex models, overcome multicollinearity, and estimate asymmetrical models well. This makes it an ideal choice for studies with relatively small samples or when the data do not meet the assumptions of normal distribution (Hair et al., 2017).

The participants in this study are students in several junior high schools in Indonesia, both boys and girls, who study in rural schools, with the category of grades 7, 8, 9, and aged 12-15 years. This survey is a self-report survey distributed over 5 months, with a total of 1. 214 participants. The following are the results of the description of the characteristics of the respondents.

TABLE 1
SAMPLE STRUCTURE

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage	Accumulated
Gender			
Male	586	48.3	48.3
Female	628	51.7	100.0
Age			
12 years old	167	13.8	13.8
13 years old	484	39.9	53.6
14 years old	360	29.7	83.3
15 years old	203	16.7	100.0
Period of use of learning technology			
0-1 years	124	10.2	10.2
1-2 years	339	27.9	38.1
3-5 years	751	61.9	100.0

Table 1 illustrates the structure of the research sample based on demographic characteristics and factors related to the use of learning technology. In terms of gender, as many as 586 students (48.3%) were male, while the rest, as many as 628 students (51.7%), were female. In terms of age, 13-year-old students have the highest proportion with 484 students (39.9%), followed by 14-year-old students as many as 360 students (29.7%). From the period of use of learning technology, the majority of students have used learning technology for 3-5 years, namely 751 students (61.9%).

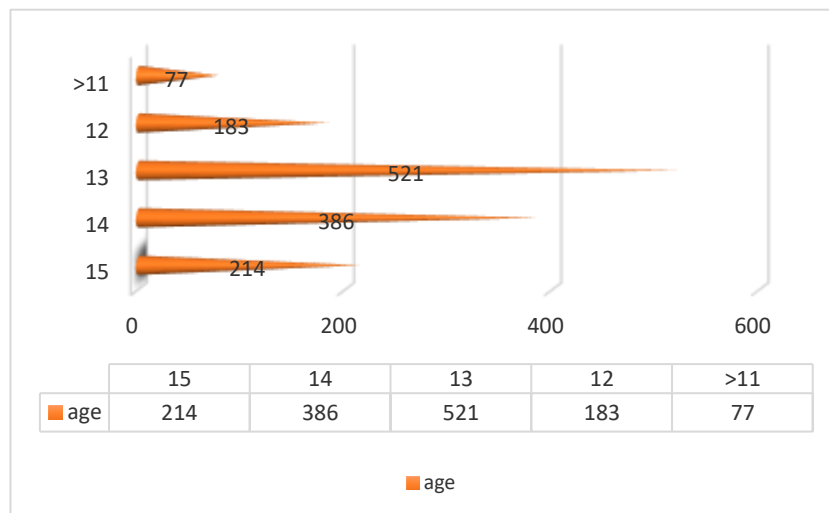


Figure 1. Total Participant Based on Age

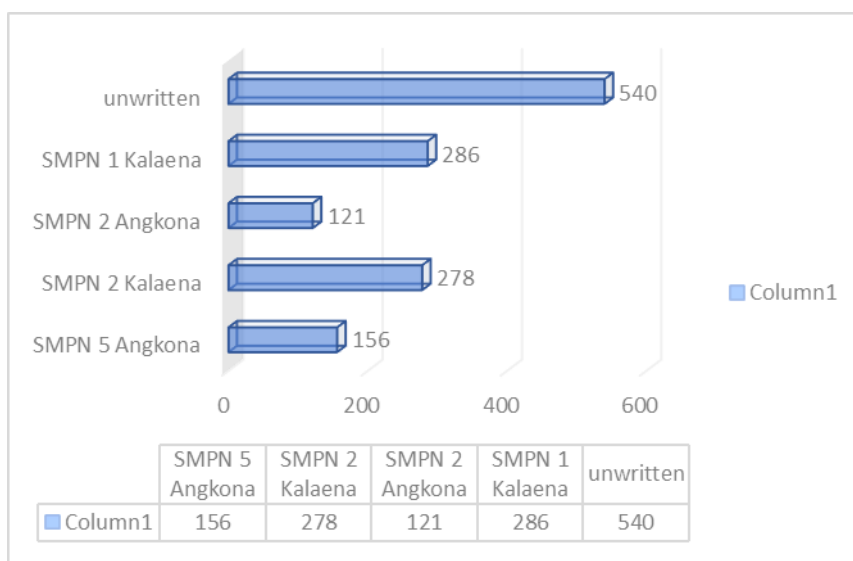


Figure 2. Total Participant Based on School

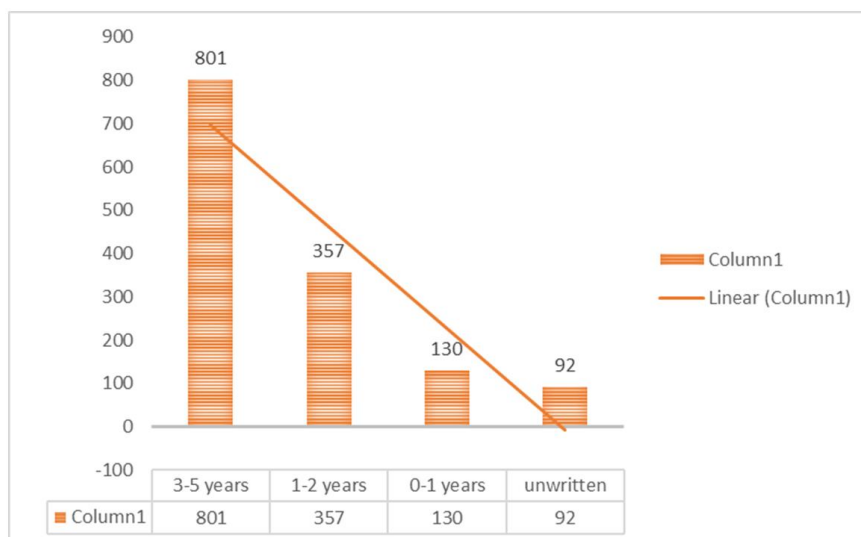


Figure 3. Total Participant Based on Period of Use of Learning Technology

IV. RESULTS

Table 2 displays the results of a descriptive analysis for the variable "Learning Technology" based on five question

items using a Likert scale of 1-7. The overall average for the variable "Learning Technology" is 4.98, indicating the level of students' preference for the use of learning applications or technologies in the learning process. This result is also reinforced by the second highest ranking on the question item "I enjoy using learning applications or technologies in the learning process," with an average of 5.31.

TABLE 2
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

Items	Mean	SD
I like to use learning applications or technology in the learning process.	5.31	1.51
The learning technology that has been prepared is very easy to use and the features provided are interesting.	5.05	1.39
Learning technology or ASCL helps me gain new knowledge such as socio-cultural knowledge and other knowledge.	4.77	1.54
The learning technology that I have used has made a significant contribution, making me more effective and productive in completing tasks, saving time, meeting learning needs, and meeting my expectations.	5.01	1.47
Ideally, the application of sociocultural literacy and similar learning technologies should be applied in the early stages of learning for all subjects or used every day.	4.77	1.46

In addition, a high average is also seen in the question item "The learning technology I have used has made a significant contribution, making me more effective and productive in completing tasks, saving time, meeting learning needs, and meeting my expectations," with an average score of 5.01. This shows that students feel significant benefits from the use of learning technology in increasing their effectiveness and productivity in the learning process. Nevertheless, the question items "Learning technology or ASCL helps me gain new knowledge such as socio-cultural knowledge and other knowledge" and "Ideally, the application of socio-cultural literacy and similar learning technologies should be applied at the initial stage of learning for all subjects or used daily" received relatively lower average scores, namely 4.77 and 4.77 respectively.

TABLE 3
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF STUDENT HABIT AND BEHAVIOUR

Items	Mean	SD
I always want to go to the library or bookstore to find a book that I enjoy.	4.67	1.51
I always open the application of learning technology or social media to read whatever information is available in it.	4.78	1.50
I like to participate in reading organizations or activities either carried out by the school or outside the school.	4.69	1.48
I love to read anything my eyes can see.	4.81	1.42
I enjoy seeing or paying attention to my friends, teachers, or social environment if I'm reading.	4.66	1.38

Table 3 shows the results of descriptive analysis for the variable "Student Habit and Behaviour" based on five question items using the Likert scale 1-7. The overall mean for this variable was 4.98, indicating students' tendency in reading habits and behaviors. The question item that received the highest average was "I enjoy reading anything that my eyes see" with an average score of 4.81. This shows that the majority of students tend to read whatever material they see around them. Followed by the question item "I always open learning technology applications or social media to read whatever information is available in it" with an average of 4.78, indicating that students tend to use learning technology and social media as additional reading resources. In addition, a relatively high average score was also seen in other question items, such as "I always want to go to the library or bookstore to find books that I like" with an average score of 4.67 and "I like to participate in reading organizations or activities either carried out by the school or outside of school" with an average score of 4.69. However, the question item "I enjoy seeing or paying attention to my friends, teachers, or the social environment if I'm reading" scored the lowest average score, which was 4.66, indicating that students tended to focus more on reading than social interaction while reading.

TABLE 4
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF WRITING LITERACY MOTIVATION

Items	Mean	SD
I feel happy to express my writing through technology platforms such as writing apps, social media, and various accessible digital learning tools.	4.62	1.39
Every day I write a diary, do schoolwork, and write to communicate on social media.	4.50	1.40
I got intrinsic motivation (attitude and belief) to keep writing.	4.61	1.35
I feel motivated to continue writing because of external (extrinsic) factors, such as support and encouragement from teachers, friends, and parents.	4.59	1.38
I feel motivated to read thanks to the use of several technologies, participation in the writing process in the application platform that has been prepared increases my motivation level in writing literacy.	4.71	1.43

Table 4 displays the results of the descriptive analysis for the variable "Writing Literacy Motivation" based on five question items using a Likert scale of 1-7. The overall average for this variable is 4.61, indicating the level of motivation of students in writing literacy. The question item with the highest average score was "I feel motivated to read thanks to the use of several technologies, participation in the writing process in the application platform that has been prepared increases my motivation level in writing literacy" with an average score of 4.71. This shows that the use of technology, especially in writing on application platforms, can increase students' motivation in writing literacy. Followed by the question item "I feel excited about expressing writing through technology platforms such as writing apps, social media, and various accessible digital learning tools" with an average of 4.62, indicating that students feel joy in writing through technology platforms. In addition, a fairly high average score was also seen in other question items, such as "I got intrinsic motivation (attitude and belief) to continue writing" with an average score of 4.61. However, the question item "Every day I write daily notes, schoolwork, and writing to communicate on social media" scored the lowest average score, which is 4.50, indicating that not all students actively engage in writing activities every day.

TABLE 5
CONVERGENT VALIDITY

Variable	Items	MLE Parameter Estimation		SMC	AVE	CR
		Item Loading (λ_x/λ_y)	Measurement Error (δ/ϵ)			
Learning Technology	LT1	0.735	0.460	0.540	0.551	0.859
	LT2	0.757	0.427	0.573		
	LT3	0.690	0.524	0.476		
	LT4	0.781	0.390	0.610		
	LT5	0.744	0.446	0.554		
Student Habit and Behaviour	SHB1	0.716	0.487	0.513	0.533	0.850
	SHB2	0.780	0.392	0.608		
	SHB3	0.780	0.392	0.608		
	SHB4	0.709	0.497	0.503		
	SHB5	0.657	0.568	0.432		
Writing Literacy Motivation	WLM1	0.805	0.352	0.648	0.640	0.899
	WLM2	0.769	0.409	0.591		
	WLM3	0.801	0.358	0.642		
	WLM4	0.812	0.341	0.659		
	WLM5	0.811	0.342	0.658		

Convergence analysis is one of the important aspects of the validity of the construct of a measurement instrument. Table 4-6 show the results of convergence analysis for the variables "Learning Technology", "Student Habit and Behaviour", and "Writing Literacy Motivation" in this study. The results of the loading measurement (λ_x/λ_y) for all question items on each variable showed a fairly high number, with a range between 0.657 to 0.812, indicating that all question items were able to measure the desired construct well.

Furthermore, Shared Mean-Variance (SMC) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) are measures used to evaluate how well the observed variable reflects the observed latent variable, where high values indicate a better degree of convergence. The results of the analysis showed that all variables had fairly high SMC and AVE values, with a range between 0.513 to 0.659 for SMC and 0.432 to 0.659 for AVE. This showed that the observed variable was well representative of the observed latent variable.

In addition, the Composite Reliability (CR) value is also used to measure the internal reliability of the measuring instrument, where a high value indicates a better level of reliability. The results of the analysis showed that all variables

had high CR values, with a range between 0.850 to 0.899, indicating that the measurement instruments used in this study had good reliability.

Overall, the results of the convergence analysis show that the measurement instruments used in this study have good constructive validity, with all question items being able to measure the desired latent variables consistently and reliably. This interpretation gives confidence in the use of such measurement instruments in this study.

TABLE 6
CORRELATION MATRIX FOR MEASUREMENT SCALES

Construct	LT	SHB	WLM	AVE	CR
LT	0.742			0.551	0.859
SHB	0.751	0.730		0.533	0.850
WLM	0.886	0.816	0.800	0.640	0.899

Correlation analysis is one way to evaluate the relationship between variables in a study. Table 4-7 show the correlation matrix between the constructs "Learning Technology" (LT), "Student Habit and Behaviour" (SHB), and "Writing Literacy Motivation" (WLM), as well as the average values of AVE (Average Variance Extracted) and CR (Composite Reliability) for each construct.

The results of the analysis show that there is a significant relationship between the LT, SHB, and WLM constructs. The highest correlation occurred between the LT and WLM constructs, with a correlation value of 0.886. This shows that there is a strong relationship between the use of learning technology and students' motivation for writing literacy. In addition, the SHB construct also showed a significant relationship with LT (correlation 0.751) and WLM (correlation 0.816), indicating that students' reading habits and behaviors were also closely related to the use of learning technology and writing motivation.

Furthermore, the high AVE and CR values for each construct (LT: AVE = 0.551, CR = 0.859; SHB: AVE = 0.533, CR = 0.850; WLM: AVE = 0.640, CR = 0.899) indicate that the construct has good constructive validity and internal reliability. Overall, the results of the correlation analysis show that there is a significant relationship between the LT, SHB, and WLM constructs in the context of this study.

TABLE 7
RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Variable	Items	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Alpha If Item Deleted	Cronbach's α
Learning Technology	LT1	0.678	0.839	0.865
	LT2	0.721	0.829	
	LT3	0.643	0.848	
	LT4	0.712	0.830	
	LT5	0.680	0.838	
Student Habit and Behaviour	SHB1	0.658	0.821	0.851
	SHB2	0.671	0.817	
	SHB3	0.710	0.807	
	SHB4	0.654	0.822	
	SHB5	0.615	0.832	
Writing Literacy Motivation	WLM1	0.751	0.875	0.898
	WLM2	0.718	0.883	
	WLM3	0.756	0.874	
	WLM4	0.763	0.873	
	WLM5	0.754	0.875	

Table 7 displays the results of reliability analysis for the variables "Learning Technology" (LT), "Student Habit and Behavior" (SHB), and "Writing Literacy Motivation" (WLM) in this study, using the item-total and alpha Cronbach correlation methods. The results of the analysis showed that all question items for each variable had a fairly high item-total correlation, with a range between 0.615 to 0.763 for LT, 0.615 to 0.710 for SHB, and 0.718 to 0.763 for WLM. This shows that all question items have a strong relationship with the total score of the variable in question.

Furthermore, the Cronbach alpha for each variable also showed a high level of reliability, with values between 0.851 to 0.898 for LT, 0.807 to 0.832 for SHB, and 0.873 to 0.898 for WLM. This shows that the measurement instruments used in this study have good consistency in measuring the desired construct. Overall, the results of the reliability analysis show that the measurement instruments for the LT, SHB, and WLM variables in this study have a good level of reliability, so they can be trusted in measuring the desired construct. This interpretation gives confidence in the use of such measurement instruments in this study.

TABLE 8
EXAMINATION OF COMMON METHOD VARIANCE-EXPLORATORY FACTOR ANALYSIS

Components	Total	%	Cumulative
1	3.518	23.453	23.453
2	2.228	14.857	38.310
3	1.707	11.379	49.690
4	1.574	10.491	60.181
5	1.544	10.297	70.477
6	1.120	7.465	77.942

All indicators were analyzed by factors with the results in tables 4-9 produced on the first factor having a variance value of 23.45% which is lower than 50%. The EFA results show that there is no significant variance problem from the general method data.

TABLE 9
PROPOSED MODEL RESULTS

Symbol	Paths	Coefficients	R2	Hypotheses	Test Results
γ_{11}	LT $\rightarrow$ SHB	0.920***		H1	
γ_{21}	LT $\rightarrow$ WLM			H2	

The analysis of the proposed model in Table 9 shows significant results related to the relationship between the variables "Learning Technology" (LT) and "Student Habit and Behaviour" (SHB), and LT with "Writing Literacy Motivation" (WLM), both of which are variables that represent student performance. The results of the analysis showed statistically significant path coefficients, namely 0.920 for the LT $\rightarrow$ SHB line and 0.798 for the LT $\rightarrow$ WLM line, with a significance level of $p < 0.001$. This indicates that the use of learning technology has a strong positive influence on students' habits and behaviors in learning (SHB) and writing literacy motivation (WLM).

The results of the analysis show that the path coefficients between Learning Technology (LT) and Student Habit and Behaviour (SHB) are 0.920, while between LT and Writing Literacy Motivation (WLM) is 0.798. These two values show a strong and positive relationship between the use of learning technology and students' learning habits and behaviors, as well as their motivation for writing literacy. A high path coefficient indicates that any increase in the use of learning technology will contribute positively to the improvement of students' learning habits and their writing motivation.

In addition, a significance value (p-value) of less than 0.001 confirms that the relationship between LT SHB and WLM did not occur by chance. This means that these results are reliable and not just a result of chance. These results are in line with theories that state that the use of technology in learning can affect students' motivation and learning behavior. In this context, learning technology is not only a tool but also an important factor in forming a learning environment that is conducive to improving student performance.

Thus, the results of this analysis support both research hypotheses, namely H1 which states that LT has a positive effect on SHB, and H2 which states that LT has a positive effect on WLM. This interpretation shows the importance of integrating learning technology in education to improve student's learning habits and behaviors as well as their motivation in writing, which can ultimately have a positive impact on overall student performance.

V. DISCUSSION

Technology has given birth to fundamental changes in the world of education, especially in the context of learning. These changes not only affect the way we access information, but also have a significant impact on students' motivation, habits, and writing behavior. Technology acts as a mediator that stimulates the imagination to create new ideas and strengthen students' independence during the learning process (Koyuncu & Firat, 2021). In addition, technology-enabled learning encourages critical thinking processes in students, which has the potential to improve their academic achievement (Zheng et al., 2024, p. 1). Through technology, students have wider access to educational resources, including learning materials, reading materials, and writing tools (Koyuncu & Firat, 2021). This allows them to explore a variety of topics and express their ideas more creatively and innovatively. With technology, students can also learn independently and develop their writing skills without depending on the traditional learning environment.

The results of the study showed that there was a significant relationship between the use of technology in writing literacy and literacy motivation. This confirms that mastery of learning technology can provide a positive boost to students' motivation to write. In line with the findings of Weng et al. (2024) who highlight that learning technology has great potential to increase student motivation in writing. Using various technology tools and platforms, students can experience a more engaging and interactive writing experience. The use of technology can also help students feel more connected to the topic they are writing about, as well as provide opportunities to explore various social and cultural aspects related to the topic (Tran & Ma, 2025). Furthermore, the use of technology is no longer just a process of pouring ideas but also transformed into a schematic framework for writing (Zhu et al., 2025). Technology helps students to be more involved in the writing process, broadens their understanding of the topic being discussed, and provides space for creative exploration in their written expression.

The results of the study also showed that there was a significant relationship between the use of technology and

student habits and behavior. Through technology, students can access a variety of educational resources that can improve their learning abilities and enrich their knowledge beyond the material taught in the classroom (Varona-Gomez et al., 2025). This allows students to be more motivated in learning and exploring the material independently. In addition, another benefit of using technology in learning is the ability of students to better manage time. Technology helps student complete assignments on time through productivity and time management apps, which in turn can improve their academic performance. Another positive impact of the use of technology is the strengthening of social relationships and the building of a wider support network (Yang, 2025). Technology allows students to communicate and collaborate with classmates and teachers, both through online learning platforms and social media. This enhances students' collaborative and communication skills, which are crucial in a modern learning environment.

The use of technology must be directed effectively and sustainably. A planned and directed approach to integrating technology into writing literacy can ensure that students are truly engaged and motivated to write actively. Educators need to consider a variety of factors, including choosing a platform or app that suits students' needs and interests, as well as providing constructive guidance and feedback to help them develop their writing skills (Zheng et al., 2024, p. 1). The next problem that must be addressed is to ensure that there is no gap in access to technology and information between rural and urban areas (Xu & Zheng, 2024, p. 1). Therefore, educators need to develop the right strategies to integrate technology into learning so that they can maximize its benefits while overcoming potential risks and obstacles (Imjai et al., 2024, p. 1). As such, educators need to be aware of the potential of technology in increasing students' motivation to write, while paying attention to effective strategies in applying it (Rusydiyah et al., 2020). With the right approach, learning technology can be a powerful tool in strengthening students' writing literacy and stimulating their interest in exploring the world of writing more deeply.

It is important to pay attention to how technology is applied in forming positive habits in students' writing literacy, although it has advantages in increasing writing literacy motivation (Wang & Wang, 2025). The results of the study show that there is a significant relationship between the use of technology in the formation of students' writing habits. The flexible nature of technology opens up opportunities for learners to express ideas and ideas in various ways (Beck, 2020; Kyrilova et al., 2023). They can use various platforms to share their writing and get feedback from fellow writers. The feedback received is a crucial element in continuously improving the quality of students' writing. Through feedback, learners have the opportunity to improve and develop their writing skills (Gómez-Trigueros et al., 2019). The existence of this feedback is one of the advantages of using technology in writing literacy.

Students can also collaborate in the writing process, provide feedback to each other, and learn from other people's writing experiences. Collaboration between learners not only enriches the learning experience but also allows them to hone their writing skills together (Bootton et al., 2023). In addition, through technology, students can deepen their understanding of grammar, writing structure, and the use of appropriate writing styles (Juanda et al., 2024; Lee & Mao, 2024, p. 1). With interactive and collaborative learning experiences, students can feel motivated to write naturally (Herrewijn et al., 2021, p. 1). The integration of technology in writing learning has a significant positive impact on the formation of students' writing habits (Kowalski et al., 2022; Liu, 2023). A wise approach to the use of technology not only strengthens students' writing skills but also stimulates their interest in exploring the world of writing more deeply and diversely (Rusydiyah et al., 2020). Thus, learning technology can be an effective tool in strengthening students' writing skills and building a sustainable interest in writing literacy.

VI. CONCLUSION

Learning technology has brought significant changes in students' motivation related to writing literacy. The use of technology in writing learning has increased student motivation by providing easy access to learning resources. Students demonstrate increased motivation to explore new topics and ideas, while simultaneously being provided with opportunities to express themselves through writing. The quick and measurable feedback from the technology allows students to see their progress more clearly and provides an opportunity to improve their writing skills firsthand.

However, it is important to pay attention to the negative impact of using technology in learning to write, such as distractions from social media or confusion due to too many choices. Therefore, educators need to take a balanced approach in integrating technology in writing learning, by ensuring that its use supports and increases student motivation rather than hindering it. Overall, learning technology has opened the door for the development of students' writing skills significantly. By harnessing the potential of technology wisely and being aware of the challenges associated with it, it can continue to advance students' motivation and writing skills to face the demands of an increasingly digital and connected world.

The researchers believe that the results of the study are important findings, but the researchers are also aware of the limitations in this study, such as the researcher choosing to use a cross-sectional design to make it easier to find respondents and also because of the limited funds and time that this research team has.

This study has unraveled the correlation between technology learning and writing literacy motivation in junior high school students in rural Indonesia. For further development, several recommendations were put forward to deepen understanding and improve the quality of students' digital literacy. The government can design a digital literacy curriculum that focuses on developing a student writing practice platform. In addition, there needs to be an equal distribution of adequate access to technology and digital learning tools to reach all regions, including rural areas, so that

there is no gap in writing literacy and digital literacy skills.

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The Speech Act of Requests in Arabic Used by Saudi Facebook Users

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Abstract—This study investigates the direct and indirect strategies of the speech act of request in an academic online community. Grounded in speech act and politeness theory, it attempts to explore how Saudi digital interlocutors employ request strategies in terms of directness and indirectness, as well as gender differences in request formulation. While most previous studies focus on face-to-face communication, few have examined online requests. Data were collected from a public Facebook page for Saudi teaching assistants and lecturers, comprising 550 posts (300 from males, 250 from females). Quantitative content analysis revealed that direct strategies, particularly direct questioning, were predominant, supporting the preference for clarity in online discourse. Male users employed more direct strategies than females, reflecting subtle gender differences in politeness strategies. Although males also used indirect strategies more frequently, both genders equally employed query preparatory strategies. The preference for direct strategies does not indicate impoliteness but rather a need for clarity due to the lack of verbal and non-verbal cues in online discourse. Social media interactions are characterized by their informality and egalitarianism, lacking obligation statements and suggestory formulas. This study demonstrates that the use of digital platforms is revolutionizing the way Saudi users communicate, leading to greater directness while remaining attuned to politeness markers. This study enriches general perspectives on the social use of language in online environments, informing the understanding of cultural differences in language practices, providing implications for digital etiquette training, and highlighting shifts within the gendered nature of speech acts in virtual spaces.

Index Terms—online speech act, online request, Saudi Arabic, Facebook, social media

I. INTRODUCTION

In the digital prosperity, social media has become a crucial arena for both communicating and developing new linguistic practices, as well as altering established interactional norms. The rise of platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram have introduced new forms of interpersonal communication in Saudi Arabia, where politeness, respect, and sometimes indirectness dictate the nature of social exchanges. This study explores the structure of requests as a type of directive speech act, which necessarily involves potential imposition on the addressee. Drawing on Searle's (1969) speech act theory and Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness model, it explores how Saudi users navigate direct and indirect communication styles in order to maintain the pragmatic foundations of politeness in online discourse. However, speech acts, i.e., directives and requests, which are important tools of social coordination, are heavily influenced by cultural and contextual factors. In Saudi Arabia, where social hierarchy is deeply ingrained, indirect speech combined with deference indicates respect for certain values (Alshraah et al., 2023). However, the informality of social media erodes formal boundaries, fostering an environment where minimal language achieves maximum effect. This dynamic raises urgent questions about the intersection of tradition and modernity in linguistic practices.

This study examines how Saudi Facebook users negotiate between cultural expectations and the affordances of social media. By overcoming geographical, temporal, and social barriers, social media has become a platform for exchanging academic, professional, and personal information, giving rise to hybrid communication norms. In particular, Facebook is an interactive forum where Saudi users discuss academic matters, engage in collaborative learning, share knowledge, and request information, resources, or assistance. While little empirical research has explored the extent to which Saudi users adhere to indirectness and politeness strategies in various contexts, including on Facebook, widespread beliefs persist. Addressing this gap, this study examines real-world request exchanges to identify the strategies utilized in making requests and examine the role of gender in shaping these exchanges online, regardless of the social hierarchy between interlocutors. This study is significant in that it contributes to understanding the evolution of politeness and pragmatics in the Saudi Arabian context, using a fine-grained perspective to investigate linguistic adaptation in digital spaces. Grounded within the broader frameworks of speech act theory and politeness strategies, this study not only contributes to intercultural pragmatics but also provides insights into language education, digital literacy, and cross-cultural communication in technological innovation, where Saudi social media users communicate their cultural identity in online interactions. The following questions are addressed in this study:

- 1- What types of direct request strategies do Saudi Facebook users employ?
- 2- What types of indirect request strategies do Saudi Facebook users employ?

- 3- What similarities and differences exist between male and female Saudi Facebook users in their use of request strategies?
- 4- How frequently are the types of request strategies used by Saudi Facebook users?

Theoretical Background

As Searle (1969) noted, speech acts accomplish communicative functions extending well beyond the transfer of information, encompassing requests, commands, and questions—forms of directives intended to prompt action from the interlocutor(s). As requests are inherently a face-threatening act (FTA), they impose on the hearer's autonomy and create an obligation for them to comply with the face saver. Consequently, speakers employ different mitigation strategies along a continuum, ranging from direct, explicit requests, to more indirect, conventionally polite forms (Searle, 1969). This study applies Searle's classification of illocutionary acts to analyze direct and indirect request strategies in digital environments, enabling a nuanced consideration of pragmatic options.

As directive speech acts, requests are fundamental to pragmatics and interpersonal communication because they represent urging the hearer to perform or refrain from an action (Almathkuri, 2021; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Searle, 1969). The way these acts are directed depends on social power, distance, and imposition levels, which determine directness or indirectness in communication (Brown & Levinson, 1987). The realization of requests shows cross-lingual and cultural variation, reflecting different politeness norms and cultural expectations. In Arabic speaking societies, social hierarchy, respect, and face-saving strategies influence language in request formulation, often leading to a preference for indirectness in high power or socially distant requests (Tawalbeh & Al Oqaily, 2012). However, the rise of digital communication has introduced new dynamics that challenge traditional pragmatic patterns, prompting further investigation into how speech acts are adapted in online environments (Al-Ageel, 2016).

Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) classification of request strategies serves as the basis for identifying the request-making strategies employed by Saudi Facebook users, focusing on directness levels that encompass direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect request strategies, as outlined in the project of Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Pattern (CCSARP) framework. Direct strategies include mood derivable, explicit performative, hedged performative forms, etc. Conventionally indirect strategies include suggestory formulas and query preparatory strategies. Non-conventionally indirect strategies include strong and mild hints. Analyzing the level of directness between the two groups is crucial to understanding the similarities and differences in how high achievers and low achievers employ these strategies. Linguistic and cultural influences allow for extreme directness, particularly in interactions with individuals of lower status or close acquaintances.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media has emerged as a growing force in shaping modern speech acts. Directive speech acts dominate online communication, as users tend to use direct, clear, and unambiguous expressions for concise interaction. Hidayatillah et al. (2021) found that direct requests and explicit performatives are prevalent in X interactions, reflecting the fast-paced, high-visibility nature of social media communication.

In recent years, a growing body of research has begun to address speech acts in digital contexts with more focus on English-dominant platforms or users. For instance, Hidayatillah et al. (2021) examined speech acts on Instagram and X, highlighting the influence of platform-specific norms on politeness strategies. Despite the importance of these studies for the analysis of speech act realization in online spaces, they often lack cultural and linguistic specificity regarding Arabic users. This gap raises questions about how Arabic-speaking communities, specifically in Saudi Arabia, navigate pragmatic politeness and request strategies in digital spaces like Facebook. Directness in Arabic online discourse may not necessarily indicate impoliteness, nor do direct requests inherently constitute face-threatening acts. In line with such insights, this study provides empirical data on Saudi Facebook users to demonstrate how politeness norms change in online, low-power, and socially distant interactions within the social media environment.

Research on speech acts and politeness strategies in Saudi Arabic has primarily focused on face-to-face contexts (Alharbi & Aldaghri, 2024; Al-Ageel, 2016; Almathkuri, 2021; Moussa Farrag, 2022). Other studies have extended to cross-cultural comparisons, exploring differences between Saudi Arabic and Western communication styles (Alkhonini et al., 2024; Alzahrani, 2023; Al-Gahtani, 2017; Alqahtani, 2015; Qari, 2017; Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily, 2012). Most studies have explored request strategies in Saudi Arabic in face-to-face interactions. For instance, Al-Ageel (2016) investigated the requesting behaviour of Saudi females and the influence of gender, social distance, power, status, and the degree of imposition. Their findings indicated that these variables influenced request strategies, with a preference for directness, suggesting a tendency toward positive politeness. Similarly, Almathkuri (2021) examined the influence of social power and distance on request strategies in Saudi Arabic, revealing that direct strategies were the most frequently used, while non-conventional indirect strategies were the least common. Additionally, Moussa Farrag (2022) explored how years of experience influenced Saudi female faculty members' request strategies. The study found that older faculty members used longer, more elaborate requests for two reasons: first, to minimize the perception of their social power, and second, to save the face of their colleagues. Indirectness was interpreted as a means of conveying respect between generations. Other studies have examined Saudi Arabic in a cross-cultural context, comparing it with different varieties of English.

For example, Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily (2012) examined directness and indirectness in request strategies to compare Saudi Arabic with American English. The results showed that Saudis employed various strategies based on social

variables such as power and distance, while Americans used conventional indirectness more frequently. The level of directness across the two groups, which was considered polite rather than impolite, served to express affiliation, closeness, and group-connectedness. Additionally, Alqahtani (2015) investigated the speech act of request in Saudi Arabic, focusing on the influence of imposition, social distance, and power on request structures. The research compared the results with Kuwaiti Arabic and American English, using a discourse completion test. The results revealed that Saudis used direct and conventionally indirect strategies more frequently, which were influenced primarily by the degree of imposition and social power. However, modifications in these strategies were influenced by all social factors. The results also found that Saudi Arabic was more similar to Kuwaiti Arabic than American English in the use of request strategies and modifications. Furthermore, Alkhonini et al. (2024) compared Saudis and Americans in their use of request strategies and politeness features. They found that Saudis employed more direct strategies than Americans, categorizing them as positive politeness to promote informality and minimize social distance. In contrast, Americans were less direct and tended to be more formal than Saudis, categorized as negative politeness due to not aiming to remove social borders. The study highlighted how culture shapes the construction of speech acts of request between Saudis and Americans. Other studies have compared Saudi Arabic with Australian English and British English in their use of request strategies.

For instance, Al-Gahtani (2017) compared Saudi Arabic and Australian English in the sequence organization of requests, examining pre-expansions, pre-pres (e.g., “Can you do me a favor?”), accounts within request turn, insert-expansions, and post-expansions, as well as the influence of power on these features. While both languages shared similarities in certain aspects of sequence organization, they differed in others, particularly in terms of the influence of power. Both languages used pre-expansions and multiple pre-expansions before requests to mitigate their request directness, though these were more commonly used in Saudi Arabic than in Australian English. Additionally, there was a preference for using accounts in Saudi Arabic to soften the illocutionary force of direct requests, whereas Australian English employed more indirect forms. Using pre-pres was more common in Saudi Arabic than in Australian English. Finally, insert-expansions showed no marked differences between the two languages. For British English, Qari (2017) examined the speech act of request in Saudi Hijazi Arabic, Saudi EFL learners, and British English. She found that Saudis preferred using direct strategies of requests more than both EFL and British groups, who preferred indirect strategies. Additionally, Saudis employed more modifiers, such as religious softeners and prayers, to mitigate direct requests. In another study, Alzahrani (2023) investigated requestive behavior in Saudi Arabic, Saudi learners of English, and British English. Although the results found similarities and differences in the use of strategies and supportive moves, there was strong tendency among all three groups to use the conventionally indirect strategy of query preparatory.

These findings align with the broader politeness and CCSARP frameworks (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), where speech acts are seen as culturally contingent, and indirectness is interpreted as a signal of deference and formality. While such studies have contributed to our understanding of how politeness and request strategies are affected by cultural norms, they generally overlook the digital realm of communication. This study aims to fill this gap.

Alharbi and Aldaghri (2024) compared face-to-face communication with WhatsApp text-based interactions in terms of the number of words and the types of modification devices used by Saudi females. The researchers found that more words were used in WhatsApp than in face-to-face communication. Additionally, external modifiers were used more frequently than internal ones. Grounders were the most common external modifier, while interrogatives and politeness markers dominated as internal modifiers, which were interpreted as obligatory and not optional in Saudi culture. Although the study focused on WhatsApp, the data were collected using a discourse completion test.

This leaves a significant gap in understanding how native Saudi Arabic speakers perform speech acts in casual online environments outside of hierarchical contexts. This gap is addressed by the present study, which examines interactions in a public Facebook group—a real public group where social power dynamics are minimal, and interactions are peer-to-peer. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of gendered differences, direct and indirect strategies, and how public digital spaces shape politeness and pragmatic choices, providing a more holistic understanding of Saudi Arabian digital discourse.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Data Collection

This study aims to identify the request strategies used by Saudi Facebook users and explore gender differences in their employment. Data were collected from a public Facebook page for Saudi teaching assistants and lecturers from different fields at Saudi universities. The page serves as a platform for members to exchange experiences, solve problems, and respond to inquiries related to academia in general and MA and PhD programs abroad. This Facebook page is public and anyone can access the page and view the members and their posts. It means that permission or membership are not required to access the data. The page was created in 2011 and includes more than 8,000 members, mostly in their mid-twenties and thirties. The researcher manually collected 550 posts (300 from males and 250 from females) in November 2021, with posts dated from January to November of the same year. The collected posts contained 19 571 words with an average word count of 35.58 per post. The data were transferred to an Excel sheet for coding. IRB approval was obtained from the university to conduct this study. The collected data were analyzed using quantitative content analysis to identify patterns in request strategies. Finally, the types of strategies used by male and female participants were analyzed and compared using simple statistical measures, such as frequency counts and percentage distributions.

B. Data Analysis

The researcher adapted Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) model of request strategies through the directness scale to examine how Saudi Facebook users manage these variables when making requests in a public, low-power, and low-distance environment. Two new categories were added to the model to accommodate Saudi online requests: questions and nominal requisites. Several rounds of coding were conducted to categorize the request strategies, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion. Microsoft Excel was used for coding the data and extracting the frequency counts. Finally, no changes were made to the spelling mistakes in the Arabic examples used in the results. Table 1 provides a detailed discussion of the levels of directness, including direct, conventionally indirect, and non-conventionally indirect strategies.

TABLE 1
THE LEVEL OF DIRECTNESS FOR REQUEST STRATEGIES (BLUM-KULKA ET AL., 1989)

Strategy	Definition	Example
Direct strategies		
1. Mood derivable	The request is indicated by the grammatical mood of the verb.	Help me with my computer.
2. Performative	The request is explicitly named.	I am asking you to move this chair.
3. Hedged performative	The request is modified by hedging.	I would like to ask you to give me more time to submit my assignment.
4. Obligation statement	The hearer's obligation to carry out the task is explicitly stated.	You will have to come on Monday.
5. Want statement	Indicates the speaker's desire that the hearer perform the task.	I really wish you'd postpone the exam.
Conventional indirect strategies		
1. Suggestory formula	The speaker makes a suggestion for the hearer to perform the task.	How about typing this letter?
2. Query preparatory	The speaker inquires about the possibility of carrying out the request by the hearer.	Can you open the window?
Non-conventional indirect strategies		
1. Strong hints	Explicit reference to an object necessary for completing the task is made.	You left the door open.

IV. RESULTS

This section shows the results of the different types of request strategies used by Saudi Facebook users, divided into three sub-sections. The first illustrates the total number of request strategies in terms of directness and indirectness, as well as their types across all strategies. The second outlines the types of direct strategies. The third discusses the types of indirect strategies.

A. Types of Direct and Indirect Strategies

Based on the analysis of 550 Facebook posts, it was observed that some users employed more than one request strategy in the same post. As a result, a total of 654 request strategies were identified, as shown in Table 2. The analysis of these 654 strategies revealed a strong preference for direct over indirect request strategies (see Figure 1). Additionally, male users tended to employ more direct strategies than female users. Similarly, male users employed more indirect strategies than female users.

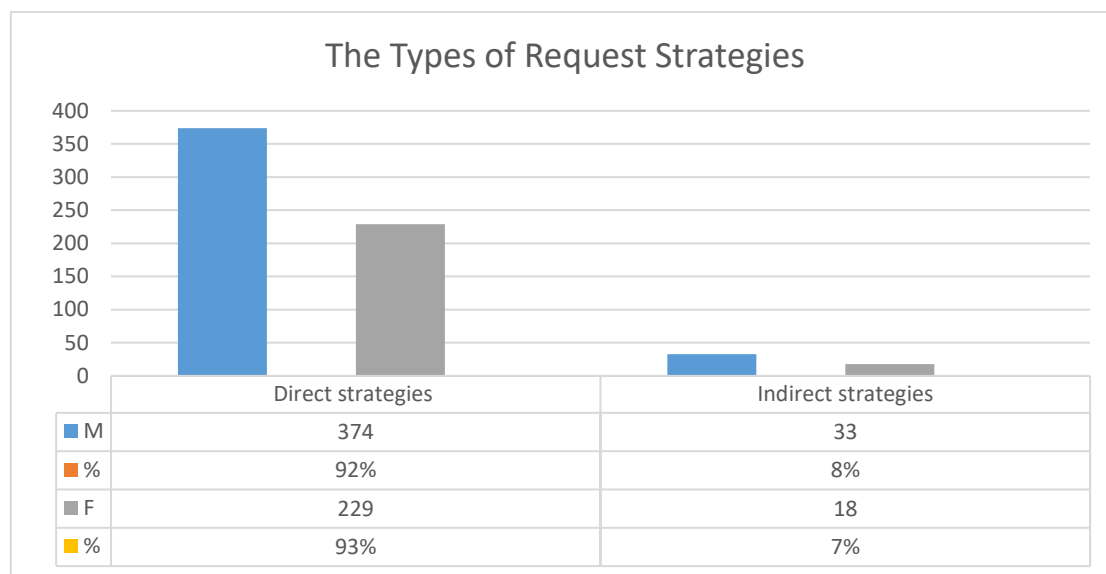


Figure 1. The Frequency of the Types of Request Strategies

As shown in Table 2, male and female users employed direct questioning more often than any other form of request, which aligns with the online preference for a direct and straightforward approach. Conventional indirect strategies, such as query preparatory forms, were used less frequently, while non-conventional indirect strategies (hints) were the least used. Notable gender differences were observed in all categories, except for the use of explicit performatives and query preparatory forms. Explicit performatives were used exclusively by female users, while both male and female users used query preparatory forms equally.

TABLE 2
THE FREQUENCY OF TYPES OF DIRECTNESS AND INDIRECTNESS ACROSS ALL STRATEGIES

Directness/Indirectness	Strategies	M	%	F	%	Total	%
Directness	Mood derivable	22	5%	16	6%	38	6%
	Explicit performative	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%
	Hedged performative	23	6%	8	3%	31	5%
	Obligation statement	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Want statement	70	17%	39	16%	109	17%
	Question	255	63%	163	66%	418	64%
	Nominal requestives	4	1%	2	1%	6	1%
Conventional Indirect	Suggestory formula	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Query preparatory	14	3%	14	6%	28	4%
Non-conventional Indirect	Strong Hint	15	4%	3	1%	18	3%
	Mild hint	4	1%	1	0%	5	1%
Total		407	100%	247	100%	654	100%

According to Table 2, direct questioning was the dominant strategy. It shows that 255 requests by males (63%) and 163 requests by females (66%) involved direct questions, making it the most commonly utilized strategy for both genders. This indicates a preference for clear, explicit communication when making requests. Want statements were the second most common form of directness, with males using this strategy 70 times (17%) and females 39 times (16%). This suggests that users often expressed requests through desire-based statements, showcasing a direct but polite approach to request-making. Hedged performatives show notable gender differences: males used them 23 times (6%), while females used this strategy only eight times (3%). This suggests that male users slightly favored softening their requests with hedges more frequently than female users. Mood derivable forms were used sparingly. This strategy was used 22 times (5%) by males and 16 times (6%) by females, reflecting direct commands. This indicates that explicit directive language was relatively uncommon, but slightly more frequent among females. Non-conventional indirect strategies were rare. Strong hints were used by 15 males (4%) and only three females (1%), suggesting that men may rely more on indirect implications than women. Mild hints were infrequent across both groups, totaling only five instances (1%) overall. For conventional indirect strategies, only query was used, and it was employed equally by males and females (14 times each). Explicit performatives and nominal requestives were minimally used. Only one explicit performative (less than 1%) by a female and six nominal requestives (1%) were observed overall, indicating that these strategies were not favored by either gender. No obligation statements or suggestory formulas were found in the data, suggesting that direct requests were preferred over obligation-based or suggestion-driven strategies. This summary further validates the predominance of

direct request strategies in focus group research, with these strategies being used more frequently by male users than female users.

B. Direct Strategies

To further explore the specific request strategies used, it is necessary to summarize the results for each type. This section provides an overview of the direct strategies. Table 3 shows the frequency of the different types of direct strategies.

TABLE 3
THE FREQUENCY OF THE TYPES OF DIRECT STRATEGIES

Direct Strategies	M	%	F	%	Total	%
Mood derivable	22	6%	16	7%	38	6%
Explicit performative	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%
Hedged performative	23	6%	8	3%	31	5%
Obligation statement	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Want statement	70	19%	39	17%	109	18%
Question	255	68%	163	71%	418	69%
Nominal requestives	4	1%	2	1%	6	1%
Total	374	100%	229	100%	603	100%

From the analysis of 550 posts, it was found that 603 direct strategies were employed, with both male and female users showing a strong reliance on direct questioning. This reinforces the preference for clear and direct communication in Saudi online interactions. Among the strategies, questions were used most frequently, far more than want statements, mood derivable forms, or hedged performatives. Gender differences were observed across all strategies, with males using them more frequently than females, except for explicit performatives, which were used only by female users. The absence of obligation statements reflects the nature of relationships between Saudi social media users, where there is no power hierarchy.

Direct questioning was the dominant strategy, with 255 instances (68%) by males and 163 instances (71%) by females, indicating that asking direct questions was the preferred approach across genders. This aligns with the study's focus on the balance between traditional politeness and online directness. Direct questioning was the most commonly utilized strategy by Saudi participants, a phenomenon not included in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) classification. This result is consistent with Qari's (2017) findings. The Facebook users employed different types of questions (See Examples 1-18).

Question	Arabic Examples	Transliteration	Translation
Example 1	هل أحد عنده علم	hal 'aḥad 'indah 'ilm	Does anyone know that?
Example 2	كيف تتم الترقية؟	kayf tatim al-tarqiyah?	How to upgrade?
Example 3	كم العدد المناسب للعينة؟	kam al- 'adad al-munāsib lil'ayyinah?	What is the appropriate number for a sample?
Example 4	ما هو البرنامج المناسب لتحليلها	mā huwa al-barnāmaj al-munāsib liṭahlīlīhā	What is the appropriate program to analyze it?
Example 5	كم عادة يستغرق تحليل البيانات؟	kam 'ādatan yastaghriq ṭahlīl al-bayānāt?	How long does it usually take to analyze data?
Example 6	كم تأخذ وقت عادتنا	kam ta'kuth waqt 'ādatan	How long does it usually take?
Example 7	أي موقع يعلم أساسيات البحث العلمي؟	'ay mawqi' yu'allim 'asāsiyyāt al-baḥṭh al-'ilmi?	Which website teaches the basics of scientific research?
Example 8	هل ممكن تواجهني مشكلة	hal mumkin tuwājihni mushkilah	Would I face a problem?
Example 9	مين يعرف اذا ...	mīn ya'rif 'ithā... .	Who knows if...
Example 10	هل تنصحوني أرجع ولا؟	hal tanṣaḥūni arja' walla la?	Do you advise me to come back or not?
Example 11	كيف اعرف ان المشرف راح ينفعني خلال مرحلتي	kayf 'a'rif 'inna al-mushrif rāḥ yinfac'ni khilāl marḥalati	How do I know that the supervisor will benefit me during my study?
Example 12	هل في مبتعثين من الجامعه طلعوا لغه و ماستر في أمريكا	hal fī mubta'athīn min al-jāmi'ah ṭala'u lughah wa mastar fī 'amrīkā	Are there students on scholarship from the university who have obtained a language and master's degree in America?
Example 13	هل إرساله بالبريد آمن؟	hal 'irsālīh bilbarīd 'āmin	Is it safe to mail it?

Example 14	كم يحق لعضو هيئة التدريس اجازة اضطرارية؟	kam yaḥiq li'ūdu hay'at al- tadrīs 'ijāzah 'idtirāriyyah?	How much is a faculty member entitled to emergency leave?
Example 15	متى يتم احتساب المكافئة	matā yatim 'ihtisāb al- mukāfa'ah	When is the allowance calculated?
Example 16	ماذا اعمل في هذه الحالة؟	māthā 'a'mal fī hāthihi al- hālah?	What should I do in this case?
Example 17	ايش الطريقة عشان اخذ ضمان مالي	aysh al-ṭarīqah 'ashān 'ākhuth ḍamān māli	What is the way to get a financial guarantee?
Example 18	وشلون كانت الاجراءات وهالامور	wishlaw'n kānat 'alijrā'at wa hal'umūr	What were the procedures and things like?

Want statements reflect a polite form of directness. Males used this strategy 70 times (19%), while females used it 39 times (17%), suggesting that expressing desires was a common yet less dominant form of direct communication (See Examples 19-21).

Want statement

Example 19	أحتاج نصائحكم 'aḥtāj naṣā'ihkum I need your advice
Example 20	اتمنى منكم توجيهه او نصحه 'atmanna minkum tawjīhih 'aw nushih I wish you can guide or advise him
Example 21	يا ليت تعطوني تجاربكم yā layt ta'tūni tajārubkum I hope you give me your experiences

Mood derivable requests were sparingly employed. There were 22 instances (6%) by males and 16 instances (7%) by females, indicating that direct commands are used but remain secondary to questions and want statements (See Examples 22-27).

Mood derivable

Example 22	شاركونا تجاربكم Sharikunā tajarubkum Share your experiences with us
Example 23	افيدونا مشكورين لتجاربهم وأرائكم 'afidunā mashkurīn litajarubkum wa 'arā'ukum Please advise us with your experiences and opinions
Example 24	عطوني تجاربكم 'aṭūni tajarubkum Give me your experiences
Example 25	انصحوني 'inṣaḥūni Advise me
Example 26	طمنونا ṭamminūnā Let us know
Example 27	عطوني نصايح 'aṭūna naṣāyiḥ Give me advice

Hedged performatives were used less frequently than mood derivable requests. Male users employed 23 instances (6%), while females used only eight instances (3%), suggesting that men may prefer to soften their requests more often through indirect phrasing (See Examples 28-33).

Hedged performative

Example 28	فضلا أتطلع لكريم مشاركتكم في هذا الاستبيان faḍlan 'ataṭalla' likarīm mushāratikm fī hāthā alistibyān Please, I look forward to your generous participation in this survey
Example 29	انا بسال الان 'ana bas'al al'ān

- Example 30 I'm asking now
أود أسأل
'awad 'as'al
- Example 31 I want to ask
حاب أسأل
hāb 'as'al
- Example 32 I would like to ask
حاب اعرف
hāb 'a'rif
- Example 33 I would like to know
حببت استفسر
hābbayt 'astafsir
- I would like to inquire

The use of explicit performatives and nominal requestives was minimal. Only one explicit performative was used by a female, while six nominal requestives (1%) were used more frequently by male users than females, highlighting that these direct strategies were rare (See Examples 34-37, respectively).

Explicit performative

- Example 34 أنت مدعو للمشاركة في دراسة بحثي
'anta mad'u lilmushārahah fī dirāsah baḥṭhi
You are invited to participate in my research study

Nominal requestives

- Example 35 اقتراحاتكم
'iqtirāhātikum
Your suggestions
- Example 36 رأيكم
ra'yukum
Your opinion
- Example 37 نصائحكم
naṣā'ihkum
Your advice

Obligation statements were entirely absent. This absence reflects a tendency to avoid authoritative or imposing language, emphasizing the polite nature of requests even in direct communication.

These results indicate that while directness was a key feature of requests among Saudi Facebook users, there was also a preference for strategies that combine clarity and politeness. This aligns with wider pragmatic strategies involving politeness and respect prevalent in Saudi communication norms.

C. Indirect Strategies

Various types of indirect strategies occurred in the collected data. Table 4 shows the frequency of these indirect strategies.

TABLE 4
THE FREQUENCY OF THE TYPES OF INDIRECT STRATEGIES

Indirectness	Strategies	M	%	F	%	Total	%
Conventional Indirect	Suggestory formula	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
	Query preparatory	14	42%	14	78%	28	55%
Non-conventional Indirect	Strong Hint	15	45%	3	17%	18	35%
	Mild hint	4	12%	1	6%	5	10%
Total		33	100%	18	100%	51	100%

Further, users employed 51 indirect request strategies, showing a clear preference for conventional indirectness. Among these, 28 instances of query preparatory forms stood out, indicating a preference for structured, polite requests over vague or ambiguous hints. This strategy was used equally by both male and female users, with 14 instances each.

The highest frequency of non-conventional indirect strategies was observed in the use of strong hints, which were employed 15 times (45%) by males compared to three times (17%) by females. Overall, mild hints (10%) were infrequently used by both genders, and suggestory formulas were completely absent. This pattern aligns with the pragmatic tendency to reduce imposition while maintaining clarity, which is consistent with the broader sociocultural emphasis on respect and politeness in Saudi communication.

Query preparatory strategies dominated indirect requests, with 14 instances (42%) by males and 14 instances (78%) by females. This reveals a strong preference for polite, conventionally recognized forms of indirectness, reflecting a structured approach to softening requests (see Examples 38-45).

Query preparatory

- Example 38 ممكن تشاركوني اذا رجعتو قريب وغيرتو الفيزا
mumkin tshār kūni 'ithā raja^ctu qirīb wa ghayyartū al-fīzā
Can you share with me if you have come back recently and changed your visa?
- Example 39 ممكن تدلوني اش الجامعة او الكلية المناسبة
mumkin tudullūni 'aysh al-jāmi^cah 'aw al-kulliyyah al-munāsibah
Can you tell me which university or college is suitable?
- Example 40 اذا قدرتوا تساعدوني
'ithā qadartū tsā^cdūni
If you can help me
- Example 41 من يستطيع ان يحصل عالبحث هذا
man yasta^cī 'an yahsul 'alā al-baḥth hāthā
Who can access this research paper?
- Example 42 ممكن احد يفيدني عن متطلبات حضور مؤتمر ثاني لطالب الدكتوراه
mumkin 'ahad yifidni 'an mutaṭallabāt ḥudūr mu'tamar thāni
liṭālib al-duktawrah
Can anyone tell me the requirements for attending a second conference for a doctoral student?
- Example 43 ممكن احد يوصلني ضروري بقروبات مدينه فلادلفيا
mumkin 'ahad yuwassilni darūri biqrūbāt mad īnat flādilfiyā
Can anyone connect me to groups in Philadelphia?
- Example 44 ممكن تساعدوني في ترجمه هذه المناصب
mumkin tsā^ciduni fī tarjamat hāthihi al-manāṣib
Can you help me in translating these positions?
- Example 45 ممكن اتواصل مع احد يدرس في (اسم الجامعة)
mumkin 'atwāsal ma^c 'ahad fī ('ism al-jāmi^cah)
Can I communicate with someone who is studying at (name of university)

Strong hints were more frequently used by male users, who employed them 15 times (45%) compared to only three instances (17%) by females, suggesting that men may be more inclined to rely on implicit or context-driven indirectness (see Example 46).

Strong Hint

- Example 46 انا ادور قبول دكتوراه في ادارة الاعمال في امريكا التخصص الدقيق ادارة عامة او ريادة الاعمال في أمريكا
'anā 'adawwir qabūl duktawrah fī 'idārat al-'a^cmāl fī 'amrīkā al-takhaṣṣus al-daḡīq 'idārah 'āmmah aw riyādat al-'a^cmāl fī 'amrīkā
I am seeking a PhD admission in business administration, with a specialization in public administration or entrepreneurship in America.

Mild hints were infrequent for both genders. There were used in only four instances (12%) by males and once (6%) by females, making mild hints the least favored form of indirectness, indicating that subtlety was less effective or preferred in the online context (see Example 47).

Mild hint

- Example 47 نزول المكافأة في الحساب 😊
nuzūl al-mukāfa'ah fī al-ḥisāb 😊
The allowance is credited to the account 😊

The use of suggestory formulas was not found in the data. The absence of suggestory formulas (0%) on both genders highlights a lack of reliance on indirect suggestions, reinforcing the preference for clearer, more structured forms of indirect requests.

V. DISCUSSION

Analysis of Saudi Facebook users' request strategies highlights the complex interrelation between directness and indirectness in online communication, reflecting broader sociocultural politeness and pragmatic norms. The findings suggest that a preference for direct request strategies—especially direct questioning and want statements—is consistent with the theoretical assumption that digital platforms generally favor more explicit communication (Hidayatillah et al., 2021). This preference for directness is consistent with previous studies on Saudi Arabic in face-to-face communication (Alkhonini, 2024; Almathkuri, 2021; Al-Gahtani, 2017; Qari, 2017; Al-Ageel, 2016; Alqahtani, 2015). The tendency of Saudis to use direct strategies in face-to-face interactions may influence their online communicative style, alongside the need for clarity in digital interactions. This trend aligns with Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) speech act theory, which asserts that when making a request—a type of directive speech act—there is a propensity to adopt a direct approach to accomplish the intended goal. However, our results do not align with Moussa Farrag's (2022) findings, which found a preference for indirect strategies to convey respect between older generations and younger colleagues in the workplace. This discrepancy may stem from contextual differences, particularly the motivation behind using indirect strategies. Despite the directness apparent in this corpus, the nuanced usage of hedged performatives and mood derivable forms by Saudi users suggests that, instead of being straightforward, Saudi performatives are often softened with polite modifications. This aligns with Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. The duality between Saudi traditional beliefs—such as respect and hierarchy—and the more informal nature of web discourse is reflected here.

A major finding is the extensive use of direct questioning (69%) as the primary request strategy, regardless of gender. Similar results were obtained by Hidayatillah et al. (2021) on Instagram and X, highlighting a tendency toward clearer, less ambiguous expressions in online communication to avoid misunderstandings. The predominance of questioning in Saudi online discourse shows that instructions in social media occur as questions or in imperative structural forms. However, Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily (2012) suggested directness is typical in face-to-face Saudi interactions and is not considered impolite in Arab culture when used for direct requests (Umar & Majeed, 2004). This may suggest that the digital context lowers barriers to direct communication. Ultimately, this is indicative of broader patterns beyond online platforms, where a heightened sense of implicit and explicit urgency shapes interactions, and elaborate indirect strategies are less encouraged.

The use of hedged performatives (6% of male requests, 3% of female requests) suggests that women use less cautious or mitigated language than men in online settings. However, in this study, Saudi women showed strong preference for straightforward direct questions (71%), consistent with Al Sulaiti and Baker's (2009) observation that Arab women use digital platforms for open, clear communication. Women now seem to use more direct speech, perhaps indicating a redefinition of gender norms of politeness in online spaces, where the immediacy and accessibility of digital interactions reduce the need for elaborate verbal negotiation.

Where it matters most, the absence of obligation statements and suggestory formulas highlights the lack of strategies designed precisely to impose on the addressee. According to Tawalbeh and Al-Oqaily (2012), in offline contexts, obligation statements in Saudi Arabic are rare and typically reserved for hierarchical and formal interactions. The absence of such strategies in this study reflects the egalitarian ethos inculcated by social media platforms, where users coexist as peers and not as superiors and subordinates.

Less frequent but noteworthy are indirect strategies, which show interesting gender-based distinctions. Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of negative politeness and the prevalence of query preparatory strategies (female indirect requests: 78%) share common ground, as women tend to use polite, conventionalized forms of indirectness to maintain social harmony. Similarly, Aditiya et al. (2021), found that female pre-service teachers in online learning environments frequently used query preparatory forms to make requests less direct. On the other hand, male users rely more heavily on strong hints (45%) than female users, aligning with Hidayatillah et al.'s (2021) findings that men on social media tend to prefer implicit cues requiring contextual interpretation. While directness remains the dominant style, these findings suggest that men feel more comfortable with ambiguity than their female counterparts.

Regarding the limited use of mild hints (10% across both genders), it seems that subtlety is not highly effective in online discourse. Holtgraves (2021) argued that the use of emojis and visual cues in digital platform speech acts inherently reduces linguistic subtlety. This trend may reflect a preference for pragmatic efficiency in online interactions, where clarity favored over elaborate politeness. At 18%, want statements strike a balance between stating needs directly while maintaining a level of politeness. This finding is comparable to that of Aditiya et al. (2021). Together, these strategies enable users to express their wants while avoiding face-threatening acts, supporting Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) claims that speech acts are inherently goal-oriented but context dependent.

This study's findings indicate a hybrid model of communication, where directness is the primary strategy but is mitigated and supported through politeness markers such as hedging and preparatory forms. This aligns with the hypotheses of Brown and Levinson (1987) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), which suggest that politeness is adaptive but conditioned by cultural norms. Additionally, this hybridization illustrates how the affordances of digital platforms influence cultural communication norms. Gender, social media norms, and traditional politeness expectations intertwine, highlighting the evolution of Saudi discourse as it navigates between cultural heritage and modern online interaction.

VI. CONCLUSION

In this paper, the researcher investigated the pragmatic and politeness strategies utilized by Saudi Facebook users when making requests in Arabic. It was found that Saudi Facebook users have a preference for direct language, particularly through direct questioning and want statements. The results highlight how social media platforms can provide flexibility for politeness strategies, such as hedged performatives and query preparatory forms. A gender-based analysis showed that female users favor conventionally indirect strategies, while male users tend to use non-conventionally indirect strategies, such as strong hints. These differences reflect wider sociocultural dynamics, as online communication occupies a hybrid space that combines formal Saudi politeness norms with the informal, egalitarian nature of social media. Ultimately, this study reaffirms that digital platforms are fundamentally changing communication practices, fostering more direct conversations that are less hindered by hierarchy.

The prevalence of direct requests is nonetheless accompanied by findings that reaffirm the importance of politeness strategies, reflecting Saudi Arabia's deeply respectful and socially harmonious culture. The data indicate that users pay attention to the face-threatening potential of requests, even in a public, informal online space, employing strategies such as hedging and query preparatory to minimize imposition. This pattern aligns with established speech act theory and politeness models, indicating that cultural values persist even in the modern context of social media. However, the absence of obligation statements and suggestory formulas suggests a conscious effort by users to avoid the formal approaches that other types of formal communities would pursue as an obligation—maybe because the community emerged informally, such as an online community. These results contribute to a broader understanding of how speech acts adapt in digital environments and reinforce the idea that the relationships among culture, technology, and communication are dynamic.

Based on these findings, the researcher proposes several recommendations. First, teachers and trainers of communication must emphasize the balance between directness and politeness strategies, especially in professional and academic online communication. Users can be trained to craft requests that are clear but respectful, fostering improved online collaboration. Additionally, the findings can inform educators, digital platform designers, and policymakers regarding challenges and opportunities in online communication that shape digital relationships. This insight can support the development of more inclusive and culturally appropriate digital environments. Future research could extend this study by including other social media channels, such as Instagram, X, or LinkedIn, as communication styles may differ based on platform-specific social norms. Further exploration of internal and external modifications is also recommended. Furthermore, cross-cultural comparisons—such as between Saudi Arabia and other Arab or non-Arab countries—could provide deeper insights into how cultural values shape contemporary online discourse. Longitudinal studies on changes in request strategies over time would also be valuable, offering a perspective on how digital politeness norms evolve in response to shifting societal and technological trends.

APPENDIX. TRANSLITERATION SYMBOLS FOR ARABIC VOWELS AND CONSONANTS

Arabic Letter	English Symbol	Arabic Example	English Equivalent
أ	a	amal	hope
ب	b	bāb	door
ت	t	tibn	chaff
ث	th	tha'lab	fox
ج	j	jamal	camel
ح	h	hubb	love
خ	kh	khubz	bread
د	d	dubb	bear
ذ	dh	dhahab	gold
ر	r	rabb	Lord
ز	z	zayt	oil
س	s	sabt	Saturday
ش	sh	shams	sun
ص	s	sayf	summer
ض	d	dayf	guest
ط	t	tin	mud
ظ	z	zuhr	noon
ع	ʿ	ʿabd	slave
غ	gh	gharb	west
ف	f	famm	mouth
ق	q	qalam	pen
ك	k	kitāb	book
ل	l	layl	night
م	m	makr	guile
ن	n	nawm	sleep
هـ	h	hudhud	hoopoe
و	w	ward	rose
ي	y	yawm	day
ء	'	dā'	disease
ا (فتحة)	a	kataba	he wrote
و (ضمة)	u	kutub	books
ي (كسرة)	i	sinn	tooth
مد طول الـ	ā	kātib	writer
ضمة طويلة	ū	fūl	beans
كسرة طويلة	ī	fil	elephant
أصوات مدغمة	aw	mawt	death
أصوات علة مركبة	ay	bayt	house

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A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Speech Act of Congratulation in Vietnamese and American Contexts

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Abstract—This study investigates the cross-cultural pragmatics of congratulatory speech acts by comparing Vietnamese and American speakers. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research integrates both quantitative and qualitative analyses to examine strategy usage and formulation. Data were collected through a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) administered to 78 Vietnamese and 78 American participants. The DCT presented three situational scenarios reflecting varying power dynamics. Findings indicate that while both groups primarily employ Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices, cultural variations shape secondary strategies. Vietnamese speakers favor Offering good wishes and Suggestion to Celebrate, reflecting their collectivist cultural values, while American speakers frequently use Expression of Positive emotions and Expression of Personal happiness, in line with individualistic communication norms. Power dynamics influence strategy selection, with lower-power individuals favoring direct strategies to enhance social rapport. Vietnamese participants uniquely suggest that the congratulated individual host a celebration, while Americans maintain consistent emotional expressiveness across hierarchical contexts. Data coding followed Elwood's (2004) taxonomy, with adaptations to reflect context-specific findings. This study contributes to the field of intercultural pragmatics by demonstrating how sociocultural factors and power dynamics shape congratulatory expressions. The results have implications for cross-cultural communication, language education, and professional intercultural interactions.

Index Terms—cross-cultural pragmatics, congratulatory speech act, Discourse completion task, power in language use

I. INTRODUCTION

The study of speech acts plays a crucial role in cross-cultural pragmatics, offering insights into how language is used not only to convey information but also to maintain social relationships (Le Do et al., 2025). Speech acts, as defined by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1969), encompass various communicative functions such as requests, apologies, and compliments, each shaped by cultural norms and social expectations. Understanding these acts in cross-cultural settings is essential for fostering effective intercultural communication and mitigating misunderstandings, particularly in an increasingly globalized world (Thomas, 1983). Among these speech acts, congratulation holds a unique position as a social lubricant that strengthens interpersonal bonds by acknowledging and validating others' achievements (Elwood, 2004). Scholars in pragmatics have identified two key dimensions of variation in the production and interpretation of speech acts: pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic differences (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014). The linguistic strategies employed by speakers to perform speech acts provide valuable insights into sociolinguistic and sociocultural differences in language use. This research examines the pragmalinguistic realizations of the speech act of congratulation in Vietnamese and American English. It also explores the sociopragmatic implications that arise from these realizations.

The speech act of congratulation denotes an expression of praise and goodwill, reflecting a speaker's positive evaluation of a joyful event or situation (Culpeper & Haugh, 2014). In its simplest form, congratulation may be seen as a customary or traditional behavior unique to each culture. However, with the development of linguistic theories and

politeness research, congratulation has increasingly been recognized as a vital speech act closely tied to rituals and politeness in everyday communication (Brown & Levinson, 1987). According to Searle's (1969) classification, congratulations fall under the category of expressive speech acts, which serve to maintain and strengthen relationships between the speaker and the recipient. In cross-cultural settings, the way congratulations are expressed and responded to can reveal underlying societal structures, including power relations, social distance and imposition (Brown & Levinson, 1987). This study aims to compare the realization of the speech act of congratulation in Vietnamese and American contexts and to analyze how power dynamics influence the choice of congratulatory strategies in both cultures. Power relations play a crucial role in influencing communication approaches across different cultures (Le Do et al., 2025). In high-context societies like Vietnam, where social hierarchy and respect are ingrained in everyday exchanges, the speech act of congratulation often demonstrates politeness and deference, especially when addressing those in higher status (Nguyễn, 2019). Conversely, in low-context cultures like the United States, where egalitarianism is more pronounced, congratulatory expressions tend to be more direct and informal, regardless of the interlocutors' relative social positions (Kasper, 2006).

The rationale for comparing Vietnamese and American speech acts lies in their contrasting cultural frameworks, particularly concerning power relations. Vietnam's collectivist orientation emphasizes group harmony and respect for authority, influencing how individuals communicate in hierarchical relationships (Hofstede, 2001). In contrast, the United States' individualistic culture promotes equality and personal achievement, often reflected in more straightforward and expressive communicative styles (Ting-Toomey, 1999). This study aims to examine the cultural subtleties of congratulation, highlighting both the similarities and differences between the strategies used in Vietnam and the United States, while also exploring how the power of the addressee shapes these strategies in each cultural setting. The research questions are as follows:

1. To what extent do Vietnamese and American speakers use the realization strategies of the speech act of congratulation differently?

2. What are the effects of the addressee's power on the choice of congratulatory strategies in each culture?

The significance of this study lies in its contribution to the growing field of variational pragmatics, which seeks to examine how factors such as region, power, gender, age, and ethnicity influence communicative language use (Schneider & Barron, 2008). Analyzing the speech act of congratulation in Vietnamese and American English provides valuable insights into cross-cultural communication. Furthermore, although speech acts have been widely studied, the speech act of congratulation remains relatively underexplored, especially in non-Western contexts (Alghazo et al., 2021). This study enhances existing literature by presenting findings from a cross-cultural comparison of congratulatory practices in two linguistically and culturally distinct contexts.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is grounded in the two pragmatic theories of Speech Acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979) and Politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1979), providing a theoretical basis for analyzing language use in communication.

A. Speech Act Theory

In communication, speakers perform various actions through language, which are collectively referred to as speech acts, despite being expressed in different forms. The concept of speech acts was initially introduced by Austin (1962) and subsequently developed by scholars such as Searle (1979) and Yule (1996). Austin proposed that producing an utterance inherently involves performing an action. He identified three distinct layers of action within an utterance: the locutionary act (the act of producing meaningful linguistic expressions), the illocutionary act (the communicative intent behind the utterance), and the perlocutionary act (the intended effect of the utterance on the listener) (Yule, 1996).

According to Yule (1996), the locutionary act involves the production of a meaningful sentence, the illocutionary act conveys the speaker's intended meaning, and the perlocutionary act reflects the impact of the utterance on the listener. Searle (1979) emphasized that speech acts are the fundamental components of linguistic communication.

Austin (1962) categorized speech acts based on their communicative functions into five types: verdictives (e.g., appraising); exercitives (e.g., appointing, ordering, advising, warning); commissives (e.g., promising, proposing); behabitives (e.g., apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling); and expositives (e.g., conceding, assuming).

However, Searle (1979) presented an alternative classification that has become more widely accepted, focusing on how listeners interpret utterances rather than how speakers express their intentions. Searle's taxonomy includes five categories: commissives (commit the speaker to future actions, such as promises or threats), declarations (change the existing state of affairs, such as legal pronouncements), directives (aim to get the listener to perform an action, such as requests or suggestions), expressives (convey the speaker's emotions or attitudes, such as apologies or compliments), and representatives (describe states or events, such as assertions or reports).

Within these classifications, the speech act of congratulation is categorized as a behabitative according to Austin's framework and as an expressive in Searle's taxonomy. The term is defined in multiple ways in Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (2003, p. 262). The first definition describes it as "to express pleasure to (a person) on the occasion of success or good fortune". The second definition extends this notion to "expressing sympathetic pleasure at (an event)". The third definition characterizes congratulation as "to express a salute or greeting".

Building on the foundational theories of speech acts by Austin (1962) and Searle (1979), which categorize and explain the functions of speech acts, the assumption that these acts are governed by universal structures has been a topic of debate. While Austin and Searle proposed that speech acts are universal, with their realization rooted in shared linguistic frameworks, subsequent cross-cultural studies have challenged this view. Rosaldo (1982) noted that Searle, influenced by Austin's work, relied on English performative verbs as a framework for what he considered universal linguistic principles. However, research in cross-cultural pragmatics (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1987; Wierzbicka, 2003) has demonstrated significant variations in how speech acts are realized across languages and cultures, particularly in terms of pragmalinguistic forms and sociopragmatic norms. Additionally, studies in interlanguage pragmatics have shown that communication breakdowns often result from pragmatic failures speech act execution (Guo, 2012). Therefore, thorough investigations of the two key dimensions of variation- pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic differences- in speech act production and interpretation are crucial for understanding effective communication across cultures.

B. Politeness Theories

The second theory directly relevant to this study is Politeness Theory (Leech, 1983; Brown & Levinson, 1987). Politeness may be defined as a factor that shapes the way members of a cultural community think and behave appropriately. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory is grounded in the concept of face, initially introduced by Goffman (1967). According to Brown and Levinson (1987), face refers to an individual's public self-image that they aim to maintain during social interactions. They distinguish between two types of face: negative face and positive face. Negative face reflects an individual's desire to act freely without interference from others, whereas positive face represents the need to be accepted and appreciated by others. Building on this concept, Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed two types of politeness strategies: positive politeness, which attends to the hearer's positive face by showing closeness and solidarity, and negative politeness, which respects the hearer's negative face by minimizing imposition. When a speaker disregards either the positive or negative face of the hearer, they commit a face-threatening act (FTA), which Brown and Levinson (1987) define as actions that inherently challenge the face needs of the hearer or speaker. They further classify FTAs into two categories: those that threaten negative face-by indicating that the speaker imposes on the hearer's autonomy-and those that threaten positive face-by suggesting that the speaker is indifferent to the hearer's desires or feelings.

According to Leech (1983), certain speech acts are intrinsically polite, such as congratulation, because they provide material or emotional benefits to the hearer and serve the function of expressing politeness. Congratulation fulfills several maxims of politeness, including modesty, agreement, and sympathy. Leech also posits that congratulation is a face-enhancing act, which can elevate the face of either the speaker or the hearer. Therefore, congratulation can be viewed as a positive politeness strategy. Positive politeness strategies aim to foster intimacy and expand social relationships by expressing the speaker's intent to connect with others (Brown & Levinson, 1987). As such, congratulatory acts need not be mitigated but rather expressed with intensified structures to enhance politeness. However, in certain cultures and contexts, congratulation can also be perceived as a face-threatening act to the hearer's negative face, as it may impose on their freedom of action and compel them to respond or reciprocate appropriately (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Additionally, the hearer's positive face may be compromised if they feel embarrassed or undeserving of the congratulation, particularly in public settings. Moreover, congratulation can threaten the speaker's positive face, as the act of offering congratulations may implicitly position the speaker as less successful than the hearer or expose potential envy, especially if the speaker feels compelled to offer congratulations despite personal reluctance (Holtgraves, 2013). Therefore, congratulation must satisfy two conditions: it should not threaten the hearer's face, and it should not undermine the speaker's face. Consequently, politeness and face are fundamental pragmatic aspects that the act of congratulation consistently aims to uphold.

C. Related Studies

Speech acts have become a significant area of research in linguistics and communication studies. However, existing studies on the similarities and differences in congratulatory speech act (CSA) across British English, American English, and other languages remain relatively limited (Lê et al., 2025). Significant contributions in this field include the works of Saleem et al. (2022), Avazpour (2020), Alameen (2017), Dastjerdi and Nasri (2012), and Elwood (2004).

Elwood (2004) conducted one of the first cross-cultural studies on CSA, analyzing American and Japanese university students using the Discourse Completion Task (DCT). Both groups frequently used *Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)*, such as *Congratulations*, but cultural differences emerged. Americans asked more questions, while Japanese speakers compared themselves to the recipient. Although Elwood's study provided a foundational CSA classification, overlapping strategies and limited situational contexts reduced its generalizability.

Dastjerdi and Nasri (2012) explored the influence of power and social distance on congratulatory selection in American, Persian, and Syrian Arabic speakers. While all groups were sensitive to status, cultural norms influenced strategy choices. Americans used more inquiries with lower-status individuals but reduced them with higher-status recipients, reflecting an individualistic culture. Syrians offered more well-wishes to lower-status individuals, emphasizing collectivist values, while Persians increased their use of congratulations for higher-status recipients to show respect. Social distance also influenced CSA, with closer relationships favoring emotional expressions and

acquaintances preferring neutral strategies such as *IFID*. Both Persian and Arabic speakers incorporated culturally specific elements, such as requesting sweets in celebratory contexts.

Alameen's (2017) study compared the congratulatory strategies of Sudanese and British speakers, focusing on event type and the influence of age. The study involved 38 Sudanese and 19 British participants, and revealed that Sudanese speakers used congratulatory expressions more frequently and warmly, often incorporating direct *IFID* along with religious and emotional elements. In contrast, British speakers tended to be more concise and direct in their congratulatory expressions. Although age significantly influenced strategy selection, the imbalance and limited age diversity within the British sample weakened the generalizability of this conclusion.

Avazpour (2020) examined CSAs among American, Indian, and Spanish English speakers. *IFID* was the most commonly used strategy across all groups. However, Americans preferred direct congratulatory remarks such as *I'm so happy for you!*, reflecting a low-context communication style. Indian English speakers favored well-wishes and honorifics, characteristic of a high-context culture where respect and hierarchy are emphasized. Spanish speakers balanced formality and emotional engagement, often incorporating additional remarks to express enthusiasm. Power and social distance influenced CSA selection. Americans maintained directness but increased politeness when addressing higher-status individuals. Indian English speakers integrated honorifics and religious references, demonstrating hierarchical sensitivity. Spanish speakers combined formality with warmth, frequently adding evaluative comments.

Saleem et al. (2022) analyzed CSAs among Pakistani ESL learners and native English speakers. While *IFID* was the most commonly used strategy overall, strategy selection varied by social class. Upper-class Pakistani speakers exhibited patterns similar to those of native English speakers, whereas middle- and lower-class speakers relied more on *IFID* and combination strategies, influenced by their native language. Social distance also played a role: emotional expressions preferred for close acquaintances, while formal strategies were used for strangers. Pakistani speakers often incorporated religious elements, reflecting collectivist cultural values, while native English speakers tended to emphasize personal achievements.

In the Vietnamese contexts, CSA in Vietnamese remain underexplored. Existing studies focus on their linguistic and cultural characteristics, cross-linguistic comparisons, and wedding contexts. Phạm (2003) analyzed Vietnamese CSA as expressions of shared joy and goodwill, reinforcing social bonds. Linguistically, they are highly expressive and follow structured direct and indirect patterns, often accompanied by nonverbal gestures. While responses typically involve simple acknowledgments, the study provided limited discussion on response strategies. Vo (2008) compared CSA in Vietnamese and English, highlighting differences in directness and politeness. English speakers used more direct strategies, while Vietnamese speakers favored indirectness, reflecting politeness norms. However, the study lacked in-depth cultural analysis and omitted response strategies, limiting its applicability. Nguyễn (2015) examined CSA in Southern Vietnamese weddings, noting their formality and structured phrasing. However, the study focused solely on wedding contexts without exploring broader social applications or response strategies.

In summary, previous studies suggest that the realization of CSAs varies across contexts, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and is influenced by factors such as power, social distance and age. However, there remains a lack of cross-cultural comparative research examining CSAs in Vietnamese and American English, particularly regarding the impact of power on strategy selection for enhancing communicative effectiveness. Given the frequent use of congratulations in daily interactions, investigating how Vietnamese and American speakers perform this speech act and how power dynamics shape their strategic choices is particularly valuable.

III. METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a descriptive design, employing a mixed-methods approach that incorporates both quantitative and qualitative techniques for data collection and analysis. The quantitative analysis identifies the frequency of strategy use among participants, while the qualitative analysis provides illustrated examples of how participants constructed the speech act of congratulation. The study employed a Discourse Completion Task as the primary research instrument.

A. Participants

The participants in this study consisted of Vietnamese and American individuals, aged between 18 and 54, with most participants falling in the 18-34 age range. However, age was not a variable of in this study as it did not significantly impact the analysis, given the predominantly young adults sample. All participants had completed at least an undergraduate degree. A total of 78 Vietnamese participants (33 males and 45 females) completed the DCT in Vietnamese, while an equivalent number of 78 American participants (22 males and 56 females) completed the DCT in English. The Vietnamese participants were recruited from both undergraduate and graduate students at Can Tho University, Vietnam. The American participants were selected from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, participants in the Coach for College program, former Princeton in Asia volunteers at Can Tho University, and their relatives.

Note: This study forms part of a broader research project that examines both congratulatory speech acts and responses to congratulation across cultures. While this article focuses on the analysis of congratulatory behavior, a separate paper has discussed the responses to congratulation (Le Do et al., 2025). The same participant group (comprising 78 Vietnamese and 78 American individuals), experts for validation process and data collection procedure

were used in both studies. The data collected for these two aspects of speech acts were analyzed independently, and each paper represents a distinct exploration of the research topic.

B. Research Instrument

A written DCT was employed to gather data for the contrastive analysis of congratulatory performance for the following reasons. According to Ogiermann (2018), the DCT is one of the most widely used tools in cross-cultural pragmatics research, particularly for examining speech act production. Secondly, elicited data is considered equally valid as naturally occurring data in cross-cultural pragmatics, as noted by House and Kádár (2021). Thirdly, DCTs allow researchers to control social variables, efficiently gather data across various contexts, and build comparable corpora—an aspect that is often challenging when relying on naturally occurring data, particularly in comparative studies (Qiu et al., 2023). Lastly, its flexibility allows researchers to use it in different languages, making it easier to compare speech act strategies in various communities under similar situations (Nelson et al., 2002).

In this study, a DCT comprising 3 scenarios was developed based on situations from previous studies on Vietnamese and American congratulatory speech acts (Le Do et al., 2025; Avazpour, 2020; Dastjerdi & Nasri, 2012; Vo, 2008). These prior studies have established the validity of the DCT as an effective tool for collecting data on congratulatory speech acts. Accordingly, the adoption of a DCT grounded in these studies ensures the validity and reliability of the data collected in the present research. Furthermore, the findings of this study can be readily compared with those from both national and international research. The DCT was developed in two versions: one in Vietnamese and one in English. The English version was reviewed by two American colleagues to ensure accuracy in wording and grammar.

The DCT consists of two sections:

Section A gathers demographic information about the participants, including nationality, native language, occupation, gender, and age.

Section B collects participants' congratulatory expressions and responses based on the three selected scenarios. The situations were categorized based on different levels of power as follows: Situation 1 represents a low-to-high power, Situation 2 reflects an equal power level, and Situation 3 illustrates a high-to-low power.

Situation 1: *You are working as a junior lecturer at the English department in a university. Recently, a new Head of the English department has been appointed. At your first meeting with him/her, what will you say to congratulate him/her on his/her appointment as the Head of the English department?*

Situation 2: *You work in a company. While working in your office, Mr. X, with whom you are not close, comes and wants to speak with your colleague in the same office. Your colleague informs you that Mr. X's child was born a week ago. What will you say to congratulate him?*

Situation 3: *You are the boss of a company. You run into your employee in the parking lot and (s)he tells you that (s)he has bought a new car. What will you say to congratulate your employee?*

C. Data Collection Procedure

For the Vietnamese participants, the survey was conducted in Vietnam, targeting undergraduate and graduate students at Can Tho University. Participants were informed about the study's purpose at the beginning, and their consent to participate was obtained. Detailed guidelines were provided to clarify the expected length of responses and the contextual factors influencing the selection of congratulatory speech acts in the DCT scenarios. Participants were instructed to provide written answers to the DCT situations. Most participants completed the survey in about 15 to 20 minutes, as no time limit was set.

The English version of the survey was distributed to American participants through two methods. The first involved distributing the survey to American students in the Coach for College program in Vietnam. The second method was conducted using an online Google Form. The survey link was shared through email and Facebook with American participants who had previously participated in the Princeton in Asia program at Can Tho University and those who were acquaintances. Furthermore, a colleague teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Madison was asked to forward the survey link to American students at that institution. Data collection occurred from December 2023 to March 2024, with a total of 468 responses, including 234 from American participants and 234 from Vietnamese participants. All data were entered, coded, categorized, and analyzed using Microsoft Excel.

D. Data Coding and Analysis

Each response was coded based on the chosen strategy to express congratulations. The coding scheme was developed by identifying patterns within the collected data, with reference to prior studies, particularly Elwood (2004), whose taxonomy of congratulatory strategies has been widely applied in prior research (e.g., Avazpour, 2023; Alghazo et al., 2021; Saleem et al., 2022). Commonly used strategies in Elwood's taxonomy include the following (Elwood, 2004):

1. IFID
2. Expression of happiness
 - a. Expression of personal happiness
 - b. Statements assessing the situation positively
3. Request for information
 - a. Specific questions

- b. General requests for information
- 4. Expression of validation
 - a. Statements indicating the situation was warranted
 - b. Praise
 - c. Statements of prior certainty
- 5. Self-related comment
 - a. Expression of envy, longing, or chagrin
 - b. Comment of one's future effort
 - c. Prediction of one's own future success
- 6. Exclamation/ expression of surprise

Adaptations were made to ensure the coding framework aligned with the current data, including retaining strategies found in both datasets, reclassifying overlapping categories, and simplifying lengthy category labels while generalizing context-specific strategies (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
TAXONOMY OF CONGRATULATIONS ADOPTED IN THIS STUDY

1	Illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) a. Full-form IFID b. Abbreviated IFID c. Mentioning occasion	7	Expression of Positive emotions a. Expression of Expectation b. Expression of Affection c. Expression of Surprise/ Exclamation d. Assessing situation positively
2	Expression of Personal happiness	8	Delivery of compliment
3	Suggestion to celebrate	9	Joking/ Statement assessing the situation negatively
4	Request for information a. Specific questions b. Affirmative questions	10	Expression of Validation a. Indicating situation was warranted b. Statements of prior certainty
5	Offering good wishes	11	Expression of Encouragement
6	Prediction regarding the promoted person's future	12	Silence

After identifying the congratulatory strategies and completing the initial analysis, we conducted a validation process to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the classification system. Two colleagues- one a linguistics expert and the other a doctoral candidate in the field - were asked to help with the data coding. Both individuals coded the data independently, and any discrepancies were addressed through discussions, supported by our guidance.

The coding of congratulatory expressions enabled a more systematic classification. Below is an illustrative example of the coding process applied to a congratulatory expression from DCT:

"Congratulations on the new position. Well deserved!"

The above expression consists of two congratulatory strategies:

1. IFID: *"Congratulations on the new position."*
2. Expression of Validation: *"Well deserved!"*

IV. FINDINGS

A. Congratulatory Strategies

(a). Frequency of Usage of Congratulatory Strategies

As previously mentioned, Elwood's (2004) modified framework was employed to classify the congratulatory strategies. Regarding the frequency of strategy usage, the analysis reveals differences in the numbers. Table 2 provides a statistical comparison of the congratulatory strategies and sub-strategies employed by Vietnamese and American respondents.

TABLE 2
FREQUENCY OF USAGE OF CONGRATULATORY STRATEGIES BY THE PARTICIPANTS

Strategies	Vietnamese		American	
	N	%	N	%
IFID	189	49.9	189	46.7
a. Full-form IFID	96	25.4	75	18.5
b. Abbreviated IFID	2	0.5	19	4.7
c. Mentioning occasion	91	24	95	23.5
Expression of Personal happiness	11	2.9	24	5.9
Suggestion to celebrate	29	7.7	0	0
Request for information	16	4.2	8	2
a. Specific questions	5	1.3	7	1.7
b. Affirmative questions	11	2.9	1	0.2
Offering good wishes	40	10.6	29	7.2
Prediction regarding the promoted person's future	4	1.1	7	1.7
Expression of Positive emotions	35	9.3	108	26.7
a. Expression of Expectation	16	4.2	25	6.2
b. Expression of Affection	3	0.8	3	0.7
c. Expression of Surprise/ Exclamation	12	3.2	31	7.7
d. Assessing situation positively	4	1.1	49	12.1
Delivery of compliment	38	10	25	6.2
Joking/ Statement assessing the situation negatively	3	0.8	2	0.5
Expression of Validation	3	0.8	11	2.7
Expression of Encouragement	10	2.6	0	0
Silence	1	0.3	2	0.5
Total	379	100	405	100

While both groups exhibited a similar preference for *IFID* as the most frequently employed strategy, notable differences emerged in their secondary choices. Vietnamese speakers demonstrated a stronger tendency toward *Offering good wishes* strategy, whereas American speakers more frequently utilized *Expression of Positive emotions* compared to other strategy categories.

Notably, *IFID* remained the predominant strategy in both groups, accounting for 49.9% of the responses among Vietnamese speakers and 46.7% among American speakers. The second most frequently used strategy among Vietnamese participants was *Offering good wishes* (10.6%), whereas American speakers ranked this strategy as their third most preferred, with a usage rate of 7.2%. Conversely, *Expression of Positive emotions* was the second most frequently employed strategy among American respondents, with a significant 26.7% usage rate, compared to only 9.3% among Vietnamese participants. In terms of the third most commonly used strategies, *Delivery of Compliment* ranked third for Vietnamese speakers at 10%, while for American speakers, it accounted for 6.2% of responses. Moderately used strategies included *Expression of Personal happiness*, which was employed by 2.9% of Vietnamese participants and nearly double that (5.9%) among American speakers. Similarly, *Request for Information* appeared in 2% of American responses but was twice as frequent among Vietnamese respondents (4.2%). The least frequently employed strategies in both groups included *Prediction regarding the promoted person's future*, *Joke*, *Expression of Validation*, *Expression of Encouragement*, and *Silence*. A significant finding is that two strategies were employed by Vietnamese speakers but were not observed among American participants: *Suggestion to Celebrate* (7.7%) and *Expression of Encouragement* (2.6%).

(b). Construction of the Speech Act of Congratulation

The preceding section presented a statistical examination of the congratulatory strategies employed by the two participant groups. This section focuses on a qualitative analysis of how the act of congratulation is structured in both languages.

As indicated in the previous analysis, *IFID* was the most frequently used strategy by both groups. Vietnamese speakers commonly used the full-form *IFID*, such as (1) “*Em chúc mừng thầy*” (I congratulate you), or the abbreviated form, as in (2) “*Mừng cậu đã mua chiếc xe*” (Congrats on buying the car). Notably, in example (2), the occasion for the congratulation is explicitly mentioned.

In contrast, English speakers employed a variety of expressions, three of which are illustrated below:

(3) “*Congratulations!*”

(4) “*Congrats!*”

(5) “*Congratulations on your newborn.*”

In addition to using the noun *congratulations* or *congrats* to explicitly convey their congratulatory messages, American speakers also frequently referenced the occasion for the congratulation.

Offering good wishes emerged as the second most preferred strategy among Vietnamese speakers and the third most frequently used among American speakers. In Vietnamese, typical expressions of this strategy include:

(6) “*Chúc thầy công việc thuận lợi.*” (Wishing you success in your work.)

(7) “*Tôi hi vọng những điều tốt đẹp sẽ đến với thiên thần nhỏ của gia đình anh.*” (I hope all the best things will come to your little angel).

Among American speakers, the following expressions were commonly used:

(8) “May God bless you and your precious baby!”

(9) “Best wishes for mother and baby’s health.”

(10) “Wishing you all the happiness and blessings as you embark on this incredible journey of parenthood!”

Expression of Positive emotions, by contrast, was the second most frequently used strategy among American speakers, occurring 108 times out of 405 in three different situations. The dominant sub-strategy within this category was *Assessing Situation Positively*, through which speakers expressed positive evaluations of the situation. Common expressions included terms such as (11) “exciting, great, wonderful, fantastic, amazing, awesome, and cool”. The typical expressions for *Exclamation* included (12) “Wow, Oh, Ah, Ooo”. Additionally, the predominant linguistic realization of *Expression of Expectation* was (13) “I look forward to working with you”.

Notably, American participants employed *Expression of Positive emotions* more frequently than Vietnamese participants, with 108 occurrences compared to 35 out of 379 responses. Among Vietnamese speakers, *Expression of Expectation* emerged as the dominant sub-strategy within this category, reflecting an emphasis on mutual support following the new appointment. The dominant response in this context was (14) “Rất mong được cộng tác cùng anh.” (I look forward to collaborating with you).

One of the most commonly used strategies in the data was *Delivery of Compliment*, which appeared more often among Vietnamese speakers than American speakers. This strategy was particularly prevalent in contexts such as the birth of a child and the purchase of a new car. A representative example from the Vietnamese data included:

(15) “Chiếc xe đẹp đấy!” (Your car is nice!)

Similarly, in the responses of American speakers, common expressions included:

(16) “Nice car!”

(17) “What a nice-looking car!”

Another frequently employed strategy was *Expression of Personal happiness*, which explicitly conveys the speaker’s joy and positive emotions in response to the listener’s success. An example of this strategy in Vietnamese is illustrated in the following expression:

(18) “Em rất vui khi được làm việc với thầy.” (I am happy to work with you.)

In American English, similar expressions were used to communicate happiness, as demonstrated in the following examples:

(19) “I’m so happy for you.”

(20) “We’re glad to have you aboard.”

Two strategies found in the responses of Vietnamese speakers, but not in those of American speakers, were *Suggestion to Celebrate* and *Expression of Encouragement*. *Suggestion to Celebrate* was employed 29 times by Vietnamese participants, particularly in scenarios involving the purchase of a new car. An interesting pattern observed in the data was the reversed nature of this strategy. Rather than the congratulatory extending an invitation to celebrate the recipient’s new car, the congratulator instead suggested that the recipient hosted a celebration. This unexpected shift in social dynamics is exemplified in the following responses:

(21) “Ăn mừng đi.” (Let’s celebrate.)

(22) “Vậy tối nay dẫn anh em đi rửa xe.” (So tonight, let’s take the guys out to celebrate.)

Expression of Encouragement appeared ten times in the responses of Vietnamese speakers. This strategy was often employed to complement a congratulatory message, reinforcing motivation and support for the recipient. For instance, in a scenario where an employer congratulated an employee on purchasing a new car, the congratulation was accompanied by an encouragement to achieve further success, as illustrated in the following examples:

(23) “Cố gắng thêm một chiếc nữa nhé.” (Try to get one more.)

(24) “Ràng phần đầu hơn nữa nhé.” (Keep striving harder.)

Request for Information was used twice as often by Vietnamese speakers as American speakers. It occurred 16 times in the responses from Vietnamese participants, while American speakers used it only 8 times. This strategy was mainly observed in Situation 2 (newborn) and Situation 3 (buying a new car). Vietnamese speakers frequently utilized this strategy to inquire about specific details related to the congratulatory event, as demonstrated in the following examples:

(25) “Con trai hay con gái?” (A boy or a girl?)

(26) “Con anh chào đời rồi hả?” (Has your baby been born?)

Expression of Validation was employed to acknowledge, affirm, or emphasize the recipient’s merit and to recognize that their achievements were a result of their efforts. This strategy served to validate the recipient’s accomplishments by reinforcing the idea that their success was well-earned. American speakers used this strategy 11 times out of 405 responses, whereas Vietnamese speakers employed it 3 times out of 379 responses. For instance, an American participant highlighted the deserving nature of a newly appointed department head when offering congratulations, as illustrated in the following expressions:

(27) “It’s a well-deserved recognition of your expertise and leadership.”

(28) “I know you’ve work hard to buy that.”

Among Vietnamese speakers, a similar validation was observed in the following example:

(29) “Mọi cố gắng của em đã được đền đáp rồi đó.” (All your efforts have been rewarded.)

Joking was employed infrequently, appearing only 3 times in the responses of Vietnamese speakers. This strategy was used to add humor to the congratulatory exchange, often in a lighthearted or playful manner. For example, a Vietnamese manager, upon learning that a subordinate had purchased a new car, responded with the following remark:

(30) “*Hôm nào cho anh mượn dạo phố nhé.*” (Let me borrow you for a stroll around the city sometime.)

Similarly, the use of humor was also observed in the responses of American speakers. One participant incorporated a joke after congratulating a colleague on the birth of his child, as illustrated in the following example:

(31) “*Terrible twos on their way!*”

Prediction regarding the promoted person's future was utilized by both groups, allowing speakers to express confidence in the recipient's future success or anticipate positive outcomes following their promotion. In Vietnamese, this strategy was realized through expressions such as:

(32) “*Em tin thầy sẽ làm tốt ở vai trò mới này.*” (I believe you will do well in this new role.)

Similarly, among American participants, the following expression exemplifies this strategy:

(33) “*I know the English Department will thrive under your leadership.*”

The final strategy observed in the data was *Silence*. One Vietnamese and two American participants opted for silence as their responses, believing that acknowledging Mr. X's newborn might make him uncomfortable, as it pertained to his private life. Instead of verbalizing congratulations, they chose to remain silent while offering a polite smile. This is a new strategy that was not previously mentioned in Elwood's taxonomy.

B. Effects of Power in the Usage of Congratulatory Strategies

Regarding the impact of power on the use of the congratulatory speech act, the analysis revealed certain effects. Table 3 displays frequencies of usage based on power dynamics.

TABLE 3
EFFECTS OF POWER ON STRATEGY CHOICE

Strategies	P+ (low-high)		P= (equal)		P- (high-low)	
	V	A	V	A	V	A
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
IFID	66 (84.6)	73 (93.6)	74 (94.9)	73 (93.6)	49 (62.8)	43 (55.2)
d. Full-form IFID	34 (43.6)	15 (19.2)	35 (44.9)	42 (53.9)	27 (34.6)	18 (23.1)
e. Abbreviated IFID	0 (0)	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)	10 (12.8)	1 (1.3)	8 (10.3)
f. Mentioning occasion	32 (41.0)	57 (73.1)	38 (48.7)	21 (26.9)	21 (26.9)	17 (21.8)
Expression of Personal happiness	9 (11.5)	14 (17.9)	1 (1.3)	4 (5.1)	1 (1.3)	6 (7.7)
Suggestion to celebrate	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1.3)	0 (0)	28 (35.9)	0 (0)
Request for Information	0 (0)	0 (0)	7 (9.0)	4 (5.1)	9 (11.5)	4 (5.1)
c. Specific questions	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2.6)	4 (5.1)	3 (3.8)	3 (3.8)
d. Affirmative questions	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (6.4)	0 (0)	6 (7.7)	1 (1.3)
Offering good wishes	21 (26.9)	0 (0)	16 (20.5)	17 (21.8)	3 (3.8)	10 (12.8)
Prediction regarding the promoted person's future	3 (3.8)	7 (9.0)	1 (1.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Expression of Positive emotion	18 (23.1)	26 (33.3)	8 (10.3)	25 (32.1)	9 (11.5)	57 (73.1)
e. Expression of Expectation	16 (20.5)	25 (32.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
f. Expression of Affection	2 (2.6)	0 (0)	1 (1.3)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (3.8)
g. Expressions of Surprise/ Exclamation	0 (0)	0 (0)	6 (7.7)	8 (10.3)	6 (7.7)	23 (29.5)
h. Assessing situation positively	0 (0)	1 (1.3)	1 (1.3)	17 (21.8)	3 (3.8)	31 (39.8)
Delivery of compliment	1 (1.3)	0 (0)	7 (9.0)	0 (0)	30 (38.5)	25 (32.1)
Joke/ Statement assessing the situation negatively	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1.3)	3 (3.8)	1 (1.3)
Expression of Validation	1 (1.3)	5 (6.4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2.6)	6 (7.7)
Expression of Encouragement	0 (0)	0 (0)	3 (3.8)	0 (0)	7 (9.0)	0 (0)
Silence	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (1.3)	2 (2.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)

ABBREVIATIONS: P = Power; V = Vietnamese; A = American

Table 3 presents variation in the distribution of congratulatory strategies based on power. In Situation 1, the congratulator is a faculty member, and the recipient is the newly appointed Head of the English Department, an individual in a higher position of authority. This context is characterized by a formal communicative setting where the two interlocutors are relatively unfamiliar with each other. Both Vietnamese and American participants predominantly employed direct congratulatory expressions through *IFID*, with respective frequencies of 84.6% and 93.6%. In Vietnamese, the second and third most commonly used strategies were *Offering good wishes* (17.6%) and *Expressing of Positive emotions* (15.1%), respectively. In contrast, in English, the strategies *Expressing of Personal happiness* (32.1%) and *Expressing of Positive emotions* (32.1%) were equally prevalent as the second most frequently employed strategies, with their usage rates being nearly double those observed in Vietnamese. Notably, *Offering good wishes* was infrequently used in English, accounting for only 1.3% of responses.

In Situation 2, the congratulation recipient is Mr. X, a distant colleague who has recently welcomed his first child. The workplace setting is moderately formal, with both the congratulator and the recipient holding equal power and lacking prior acquaintance. In this scenario, *IFID* remained the most commonly employed by both groups, with 94.9% of Vietnamese speakers and 93.6% of American speakers utilizing it. This high frequency suggests that direct congratulatory expressions are the default strategy when congratulating an unfamiliar colleague of equal status in a

professional environment. *Offering good wishes* ranked as the second most frequent in Vietnamese and the third most frequent in English, with its usage being almost identical in both groups (20.5% and 21.8%, respectively). However, a notable cultural difference emerged in the use of *Expressing of Positive emotions*, which Americans employed at more than twice the rate of their Vietnamese counterparts (25.7% vs. 10.3%), reflecting a variation in emotional expressiveness across cultures. Additionally, *Silence* appeared in this scenario, albeit infrequently.

In Situation 3, a manager congratulates a subordinate upon learning that he has purchased a new car. The interaction occurs informally in a parking lot, where the power difference is still apparent, even though the individuals share a collegial relationship within the same organization. While *IFID* continued to be the most frequently employed strategy (62.8% among Vietnamese and 55.2% among Americans), its usage was significantly lower than in the previous scenarios. Instead, Americans prioritized *Expressing of Positive emotions*, which emerged as the most commonly used strategy at 73.1%. In contrast, Vietnamese speakers frequently adopted *Suggesting to Celebrate* (35.9%), a strategy entirely absent among Americans (0%). Additionally, *Delivery of Compliment* was relatively prevalent in both groups, with a slightly higher frequency among Vietnamese (38.5%) compared to Americans (32.1%). The use of compliments in this context highlighted a recognition of the subordinate's personal achievement while fostering motivation and workplace rapport.

Based on the preceding analysis, it is evident that the selection of a congratulatory strategy is influenced by the recipient of the congratulation. Furthermore, this choice is shaped by the relationship between the interlocutors, as well as the cultural background and affiliations of the respondents.

V. DISCUSSION

This study examines the speech act of congratulation from a cross-cultural perspective by comparing its use in two distinct languages: Vietnamese and American English. Grounded in the theoretical frameworks and literature review presented earlier, the findings reveal certain similarities with those observed in previous research. Notably, the study identifies *IFID* as the most frequently employed strategy across all DCT scenarios. This result aligns with prior studies, including those conducted by Avazpour (2020), Alameen (2017), Dastjerdi and Nasri (2012), and Elwood (2004). Psychologically, this tendency can be attributed to the inherent nature of human communication- when offering congratulations, the immediate and instinctive response is to express the illocutionary force of the speech act explicitly. However, this result contradicts Vo (2008), who concluded that Vietnamese speakers preferred indirectness when expressing congratulation.

Additionally, *Offering good wishes* is frequently employed by Vietnamese speakers. In Vietnam's collectivist society, offering good wishes serves as an expression of hope for prosperity and good fortune for others. This practice extends beyond a mere social convention; it is a deeply rooted tradition that signifies genuine care and reinforces social bonds (Nguyễn, 2014). In her study, Nguyễn (2015) concluded that offering good wishes plays a crucial role in narrowing both power distance and social distance between interlocutors. For American speakers, in addition to the direct congratulatory strategy *IFID*, the strategies of *Expression of Positive emotions* and *Expressing of Personal happiness* are also highly preferred. In American culture, expressing personal emotions toward others is considered a common and positive form of communication, allowing individuals to acknowledge and appreciate personal achievements, even when addressing someone of higher status. This finding aligns with the results of studies by Avazpour (2020) and Dastjerdi and Nasri (2012), which suggest that this congratulatory strategy is consistent with the individualistic nature of American culture. In this context, openly expressing emotions- such as sharing joy and personal happiness in response to another's success- is regarded as an essential aspect of interpersonal communication.

When examining the influence of power dynamics on the selection of congratulatory strategies, it becomes evident that individuals with lower or equal power tend to express congratulations more directly through *IFID*. This reflects their intent to enhance the positive face of the interlocutor, reinforcing social rapport. According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory, congratulatory acts serve to strengthen social connections and increase intimacy by signaling the speaker's intention to establish a bond with others, which aligns with this finding.

When congratulating someone of lower status, strategy selection varies between the two cultural groups. Among Vietnamese speakers, an intriguing cultural phenomenon emerges, particularly in Scenario 3, where they frequently employ *Suggestion to Celebrate*. Rather than simply offering congratulations followed by an invitation for a meal or coffee, the congratulator often suggests the recipient to host a gathering in recognition of their joyous occasion. This practice exemplifies a distinctive social dynamic where acts of goodwill are closely linked to communal celebrations and mutual exchanges. This once again affirms and reflects a distinctive feature of Vietnamese culture, which places great emphasis on collective connections and the sharing of joy with others through communal gatherings and celebratory feasts (Quách, 2008). Furthermore, this finding supports Đỗ's (2012) observation that a large power distance does not necessarily create emotional detachment- in Vietnamese workplace culture, a close and familial relationship can still exist between supervisors and their subordinates. However, the act of suggesting a celebratory gathering also reflects the hierarchical nature of Vietnamese society, where status and rank remain influential in social interactions. This observation aligns with Hofstede's (2001) six-dimensional cultural model, which highlights power distance as a key characteristic of Vietnamese cultural norms.

Among American participants, the recipient's power status also influences the choice of congratulatory strategies, albeit to a lesser extent. Americans tend to express positive emotions more frequently when congratulating someone of lower status, rather than focusing solely on direct congratulatory expressions. However, the influence of power on the selection of strategies remains minimal. This finding aligns with the results of Le Do et al. (2025), which suggest that Americans tend to express positive emotions more frequently when responding to congratulations, regardless of the other person's power status. It further reinforces the general tendency in American culture to value open and explicit expressions of personal emotions. Even when addressing individuals in higher positions of authority, American speakers still prioritize expressing positive emotions, viewing it as a way to foster social connection and offer acknowledgment.

An intriguing aspect of this study's findings is that in formal situations involving a low-to-high power dynamic, American participants continue to use informal address forms. This suggests that Americans place less emphasis on social hierarchy and interpersonal power relations in communication. Similar results were observed in Saleem et al.'s (2022) study, which examined formal congratulatory exchanges between individuals who were neither close nor of equal status. In contrast, Vietnamese respondents demonstrated a distinct formal register in such contexts. For instance, in Situation 1, they employed honorifics such as "*thầy/cô*" (teacher), "*trưởng Khoa*" (department head), "*tân trưởng Khoa*" (newly appointed department head), or "*thầy trưởng Khoa*" (professor department head), which serve to convey respect and deference toward the addressee. When contextualizing these findings within previous research on politeness and face theory, it is evident that high-context cultures such as Vietnam are typically associated with a greater emphasis on power distance (Nguyễn, 2019). The use of formal expressions and honorifics by Vietnamese speakers in the analyzed scenarios likely reflects this cultural trait, as it serves to acknowledge and reinforce hierarchical distinctions within social interactions, similar to the findings of Le Do et al. (2025).

VI. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the cultural and linguistic differences in the use of congratulatory speech acts between Vietnamese and American speakers. Twelve categories of strategies and a new strategy were identified to be used by both groups in performing congratulation. Both groups primarily employ *IFID* as their dominant strategy, reflecting a universal tendency to express congratulations directly. However, cultural variations emerge in secondary strategies. Vietnamese speakers favor *Offering good wishes*, *Suggestion to Celebrate*, and *Expression of Encouragement*, reflecting their collectivist cultural values and emphasis on social bonding. In contrast, American speakers more frequently employ the *Expression of Positive emotion* and *Expression of Personal happiness*, aligning with their individualistic culture, which values personal acknowledgment and emotional expressiveness.

Power dynamics also play a role in strategy selection, with lower-power and equal-power individuals favoring direct strategies to reinforce social harmony. Vietnamese speakers exhibit a unique social pattern by suggesting that the congratulated individual hosts a celebration, reinforcing hierarchical yet communal values. American speakers, in contrast, maintain a consistent emotional expressiveness regardless of hierarchical differences.

The findings contribute to the understanding of intercultural pragmatics by providing empirical evidence of the influence of cultural values on speech acts. They underscore the importance of sociocultural awareness in cross-cultural communication. Future research could expand on these findings by examining other cultural groups or considering additional social contexts, such as online communication and corporate environments.

While this study offers valuable contributions, certain limitations remain. Firstly, the findings are constrained to the languages and language variations analyzed, as well as the three specific contexts examined. The second limitation of the study is the lack of representativeness among participants, as a random sampling method was not employed, and variables such as age and gender were not considered. Consequently, the results cannot be generalized to a broader population.

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An Intertextual and Multimodal Analysis of Jordanian Arabic Advertisements on Facebook

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Abstract—This study explores the use of intertextuality and multimodality in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook, analyzing how brands reference existing texts, cultural symbols, and linguistic elements to construct meaning and engage audiences. Drawing on Fairclough's (1992) intertextuality framework and Machin and Mayr's (2012) Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA), the study examines how advertisers blend textual and visual elements to shape consumer perception and enhance persuasiveness. The corpus consists of 100 advertisements, of which a representative sample of seven was selected for qualitative analysis. The findings reveal that intertextuality is a key persuasive strategy, with advertisers frequently referencing global brands, cultural symbols, and widely recognized textual conventions, such as warning messages and medical language. Humor and irony emerge as dominant rhetorical techniques, particularly through the subversion of formal discourses to create engaging and memorable advertisements. In addition, multimodality is essential for reinforcing intertextual references. Visual elements work alongside text to clarify meaning, intensify emotional impact, and solidify brand identity. The study concludes that Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook rely on intertextuality and multimodality to entertain, persuade, and connect with audiences. However, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on the audience's familiarity with the referenced texts and cultural symbols.

Index Terms—advertising, critical discourse analysis, intertextuality, Jordanian Arabic, multimodality

I. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is a powerful communicative tool that relies on intertextuality and multimodality to capture audience attention and influence consumer behavior.

A. Intertextuality and Multimodality in Advertising

Intertextuality in advertising refers to how texts reference and reshape existing content to create meaning. Kristeva (1980) expanded on Bakhtin's idea that all texts are "constructed as a mosaic of quotations" (Kristeva, 1986, p. 37). Fairclough (1992) describes intertextuality as "the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts" (p. 84), highlighting how texts absorb and transform prior ideas. In advertising, intertextuality allows brands to reference familiar texts, cultural symbols, and narratives to engage audiences and shape perception. Nike's "Just Do It" campaign draws on cultural figures to evoke empowerment (Chandler, 2007), while Coca-Cola's holiday ads integrate traditional Christmas imagery to evoke nostalgia (Barthes, 1977). Bakhtin (1986) further argued that language is "filled with dialogic overtones," shaped by past discourse (p. 92). Through intertextuality, advertisements borrow from cultural narratives while contributing to an ongoing dialogue that shapes meaning. Beyond intertextuality, advertising also relies on multimodality, which examines how communicative modes interact to create meaning. Kress (2010) defines multimodality as "an approach that looks at multiple modes of communication such as text, color, and images" (p. 1), emphasizing how meaning extends beyond linguistic features. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) propose that meaning emerges through the combination of modes, composition shapes interpretation, and semiotic resources evolve with cultural and technological changes. Luxury brands use minimalist design to convey exclusivity (Machin & Mayr, 2012), while fast-food brands rely on vibrant colors to evoke excitement (Ledin & Machin, 2020). Lyons (2016) explains that semiotic resources, such as facial expressions and body language, shape meaning. Nike's "Equality" campaign combines black-and-white imagery, bold typography, and socially charged narratives to reinforce its identity (Van Leeuwen, 2005).

B. Aims and Questions of the Study

The present study aims to explore how intertextuality and multimodality function in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook. Specifically, it examines the extent to which intertextuality is utilized in these advertisements, analyzing how brands reference existing texts and cultural symbols to shape consumer perception and enhance persuasiveness. The study also investigates how different semiotic resources, including text and imagery, interact to reinforce brand identity, engage audiences, and appeal to consumer groups. By conducting an intertextual and multimodal analysis, the

study seeks to reveal how Jordanian advertisers blend local cultural narratives with advertising strategies and how this interaction influences audience perception and decision-making. In addition, it explores how Jordanian Arabic linguistic and visual elements are strategically used to construct meaning and resonate with online audiences. To achieve these objectives, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent and in what ways is intertextuality employed in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook, particularly in referencing cultural symbols and existing texts?
2. How do different semiotic resources, including text and imagery, interact in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook to construct meaning?

C. Significance of the Study

This study contributes to both intertextuality and multimodality research by examining how Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook integrates textual and visual elements to construct meaning. While intertextuality has been widely explored in linguistic studies, its application in digital, multimodal advertising, particularly in Arabic-language contexts, remains underexamined. By expanding Fairclough's (1992) intertextuality framework to incorporate multimodal analysis, this study provides a comprehensive approach to understanding how advertisements reference cultural symbols and existing texts while strategically using semiotic resources, such as imagery and color. Beyond theoretical contributions, the study has practical implications for advertisers, marketers, and media professionals seeking to craft more culturally resonant and persuasive digital campaigns. Understanding how intertextuality and multimodality function in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook can help brands enhance engagement, strengthen brand identity, and appeal to diverse audiences. Moreover, this study adds to the growing body of work on Arabic digital communication, offering insights into how linguistic and visual elements interact in regional advertising strategies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section aims at placing available research in the context of existing knowledge concerning intertextuality and multimodality in Arabic advertising.

A. Studies on Intertextuality in Arabic Advertising

The concept of intertextuality and its application in advertising has attracted the attention of many Arab researchers, including Gully (1997), Abuhakema (2013), and Al-Siyami (2013). In this regard, Gully (1997) investigated the discourse of Arabic advertising, analyzing how language levels, rhetorical structures, and intertextual references contribute to persuasive communication. The study highlighted that Arabic advertisements frequently borrow from religious texts, classical poetry, and historical narratives to enhance their credibility and appeal. He also observed code-switching between Modern Standard Arabic and vernacular Arabic, which serves as an additional persuasive technique to engage audiences across different social and educational backgrounds. While Gully's study remains foundational, its focus on traditional print and broadcast media means that further research is needed to explore how intertextuality has evolved in the digital age, particularly in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on social media platforms.

Abuhakema (2013) examined code-switching and intertextuality in Jordanian and Palestinian advertisements, particularly focusing on how advertisers blend vernacular Arabic, Modern Standard Arabic, and English loanwords to craft persuasive messages. His study demonstrated that code-switching functions as an intertextual strategy, signaling modernity, prestige, and authenticity. Additionally, the study revealed that advertisers often embed well-known Arabic proverbs and colloquial expressions into ad slogans, making them more memorable and culturally relevant. This study provides insight into how linguistic intertextuality shapes consumer perceptions, but it does not explore the visual and multimodal dimensions of intertextuality, which are increasingly relevant in Jordanian Arabic advertisements.

Al-Siyami (2013) examined intertextuality in Saudi newspaper advertising, focusing on how cultural and religious references shape advertising discourse. The study revealed that religious expressions, symbols, and locally recognized phrases were frequently used to align advertisements with Saudi society's identity, values, and social behaviors. These intertextual elements reinforced credibility and relevance, making the promoted products more culturally resonant. The study highlighted that intertextuality is an effective promotional tool, particularly when closely linked to societal identity. However, it did not explore how such references persuade consumers to act toward purchasing products. In addition, the study was limited to print media, leaving a gap in understanding how intertextuality functions in digital advertising platforms like Facebook, where multimodal elements such as images, videos, and interactive content contribute to meaning-making. This limitation contrasts with Jordanian advertising, where intertextual strategies are similarly employed to evoke cultural familiarity and emotional engagement across both textual and visual modalities.

B. Studies on Multimodality in Arabic Advertising

The study of multimodality in Arabic advertising has gained increasing attention in recent years, as evidenced by studies, such as those by Alsalem (2020), Jarad and Abdul Hadi (2021), and Jahameh and Zibin (2023). Alsalem (2020) conducted a multimodal discourse analysis of Saudi Arabic TV commercials, examining how language, visuals, music, and gestures interact to convey persuasive messages. The study found that Saudi ads blend traditional cultural symbols with modern imagery to appeal to diverse audiences. Classical Arabic is used to evoke authority and tradition, while

colloquial Arabic targets younger consumers for relatability. Visuals reinforce cultural identity through traditional attire, architectural motifs, and desert landscapes, symbolizing heritage and authenticity. Music, often incorporating Arabian melodies, evokes nostalgia and national pride. Gestural communication, including hand movements and facial expressions, enhances persuasion. However, the study focused on TV ads, leaving a gap in understanding digital and interactive media. With the rise of social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, where ads use videos, animations, and user engagement, further research is needed to explore multimodal strategies in online advertising.

Jarad and Abdul Hadi (2021) analyzed beauty product advertisements on Arabic television, examining verbal and non-verbal elements in shaping consumer perception. Their study found that female figures dominate beauty ads, reinforcing societal beauty standards. Women are portrayed as symbols of perfection, with smooth skin, flawless makeup, and idealized features. The study found that language plays a key role in persuasion, with imperative verbs and adjectives enhancing credibility (e.g., “Reveal your true beauty,” “Experience radiant skin”). Advertisements blend scientific claims with emotional appeals, using phrases like “Clinically proven formula” alongside “Feel confident every day” to engage both logic and emotion. Visually, color symbolism and typography reinforce brand messaging. Skincare ads often use soft pastels and gold hues to convey luxury, while bold typography highlights scientific advancements. Advertisers also employ slow-motion shots, close-ups, and lighting techniques to enhance models’ luminous skin.

Jahameh and Zibin (2023) conducted a comparative study analyzing the use of monomodal and multimodal metaphors in advertising Jordanian and American food products on Facebook. Their research applied Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to examine how verbal and visual elements contribute to meaning-making in advertisements. The study involved collecting 180 advertisements from the Facebook pages of 12 well-known restaurants in Jordan and the USA. The analysis revealed that both monomodal and multimodal metaphors serve as persuasive strategies in food advertisements, not merely to facilitate understanding of the target domain, which is concrete, but to create imaginative depictions of the advertised product, making it more appealing to consumers. Contextual monomodal metaphors were found to be pervasive in the corpus, allowing advertisers to make their advertisements more memorable and encouraging viewer engagement in interpreting the metaphors. In addition, the study found that culture-specific metaphors in food advertisements could be used to show viewers they are an important part of the advertising process. However, the study did not deeply examine the intertextual aspects of these advertisements, leaving room for further exploration into how Jordanian food ads borrow from local folklore, proverbs, and historical discourse to strengthen consumer connection.

This study explores intertextuality and multimodality in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook, an underexplored area. While intertextuality in Western ads is well studied, its role in Arabic advertising remains limited. By examining how traditional references adapt within multimodal frameworks, the present study offers insights into advertising effectiveness and consumer engagement in digital contexts.

III. METHODOLOGY

This section explains corpus and data collection, the framework of the study, and the analysis method.

A. Corpus and Data Collection

The corpus consists of 100 Jordanian Arabic advertisements collected from the researchers’ Facebook pages. The data was randomly gathered over April and May 2021. Since Facebook tracks user activity through cookies and algorithms, the advertisements displayed on a user’s news feed are generally tailored to their interests. To ensure relevance to the study, the researchers manually reviewed the collected advertisements and identified those that incorporated both multimodal features and intertextual references. The final selection for analysis was based on the criterion that each advertisement exhibited a combination of textual and visual elements while also drawing on intertextual references, thereby reflecting a mix of genres suitable for analysis.

B. Framework of the Study

The study adopted Fairclough’s (1992) intertextuality framework, expanded through Machin and Mayr’s (2012) Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis (MCDA), to explore how both intertextuality and multimodality are employed in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook. Fairclough’s framework emphasizes that texts exist within broader sociocultural discourses, which aligns with how advertisements reference cultural symbols, linguistic elements, and existing texts to construct meaning and persuade audiences. However, traditional intertextuality studies have primarily focused on textual elements, whereas modern advertising is inherently multimodal. To address this gap, the study integrates Machin and Mayr’s (2012) MCDA, which extends Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by incorporating multimodal elements, such as typography, color, imagery, and composition alongside textual analysis. By expanding Fairclough’s framework through MCDA, this study provides a comprehensive analytical approach to examine the interaction between intertextuality and multimodal elements in advertising discourse. The analysis focuses on how Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook employ linguistic and cultural intertextual references while strategically using semiotic resources to enhance brand identity, engage audiences, and shape consumer perception.

C. Analysis Method

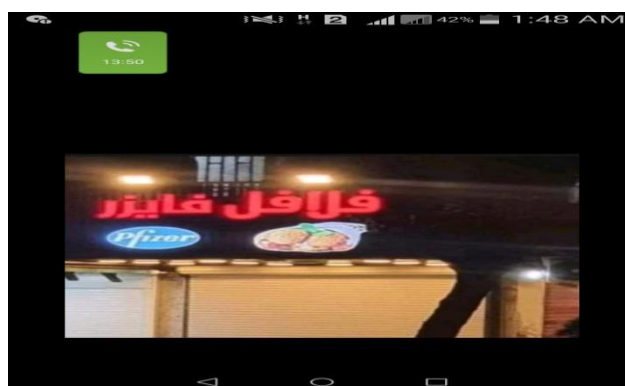
The study conducted a qualitative analysis of intertextual and multimodal elements in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook, using an expanded version of Fairclough's (1992) intertextuality framework. At the linguistic level, it examined intertextuality, genre mixing, and lexical and rhetorical strategies, including explicit references to Quranic verses, proverbs, poetry, slogans, cultural allusions, and implied references to prior discourses. At the multimodal level, the study expanded Fairclough's framework to analyze visual intertextuality, focusing on semiotic resources such as imagery, typography, color, and composition. It explored how advertisers reference cultural symbols, Jordanian landmarks, and historical motifs to construct intertextual meaning. This dual-level analysis highlights how Jordanian Arabic advertisements strategically blend textual and visual intertextuality to enhance persuasive impact.

IV. RESULTS

This section presents the results of analysis by addressing the research questions: "To what extent and in what ways is intertextuality employed in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook, particularly in referencing cultural symbols and existing texts?", and "How do different semiotic resources, including text and imagery, interact in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook to construct meaning?". From the initial corpus of 100 Arabic advertisements on Facebook, many were deemed unsuitable for analysis due to their lack of a clear intertextual dimension. While many incorporated textual and visual elements, they did not effectively engage with existing texts, cultural symbols, or historical references, which are essential for intertextual analysis. To ensure objectivity and analytical depth, seven advertisements were randomly selected from those that met the established criteria, each exhibiting a blend of textual and visual elements while drawing on intertextual references. Random selection minimized bias, while limiting the sample to seven allowed for a focused and in-depth, qualitative examination of key patterns.

Example 1

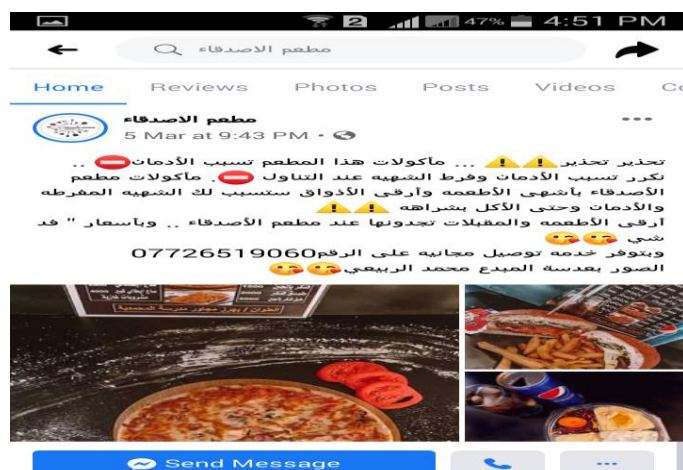
The advertisement explicitly references the Pfizer vaccine, a globally recognized brand associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The use of the term "Pfizer" creates an immediate intertextual link, drawing on the vaccine's reputation for effectiveness and trustworthiness. By juxtaposing "falafel," a traditional and culturally significant food in the Arab world, with a renowned pharmaceutical brand, the advertisement employs genre blending, combining the discourses of food and medicine to humorous and attention-grabbing effect. This intertextual strategy suggests that the falafel offered is as trustworthy and high-quality as the Pfizer vaccine, increasing the audience's familiarity with both to enhance the credibility and appeal of the product. The visual inclusion of the Pfizer logo reinforces textual reference, creating a direct and recognizable intertextual connection. This use of the logo not only authenticates the reference but also expands the ad's humorous hint by visually associating the falafel shop with the prestigious vaccine. In addition, the image of a falafel plate grounds the advertisement in its local cultural context, linking the global (Pfizer) and the local (falafel). The bright red Arabic text, paired with the illuminated design, mirrors the professional aesthetic often associated with medical branding, further enhancing the perceived quality of the falafel shop and aligning with the intertextual comparison. The advertisement exemplifies effective multimodal integration through the interaction of textual and visual elements. The text "Falafel Pfizer" grounds the visual components, providing clarity to the humorous intent behind the use of the Pfizer logo. Without the text, the visual message could risk being misinterpreted. Equally, the visuals, including the logo and the falafel image, complement the text by reinforcing the intertextual comparison and grounding the ad in both global and local contexts. This seamless integration aligns with Fairclough's (1992) intertextuality framework, demonstrating how multimodal elements combine to construct a unified and persuasive message. The ad's success lies in its timely reference to the COVID-19 pandemic and the widespread trust in the Pfizer vaccine. By humorously contrasting a traditional food item with a globally recognized pharmaceutical brand, the advertisement captures the audience's attention and ensures memorability. This strategy reflects Fairclough's emphasis on drawing from familiar texts and discourses, allowing audiences to engage with the ad through shared cultural and global knowledge. However, the ad's impact depends on the audience's familiarity with both the Pfizer vaccine and the cultural significance of falafel. For those unaware of either reference, the message and humor may lose effectiveness.



<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=3607001402753858&set=a.1381648881955799>

Example 2

The advertisement takes advantage of linguistic intertextuality by creatively adapting elements from warning and medical discourses to promote the restaurant's food. The phrase "Warning. Warning. Food served by this restaurant causes addiction" mirrors the language and tone of health warnings typically associated with dangerous substances. By incorporating terms such as "addiction" and "hyperorexia" (a medical term for excessive appetite), the ad ironically appropriates medical language to humorously exaggerate the appeal of its food. This ironic inversion of a serious warning message into a playful promotional statement encourages the audience to perceive the food as irresistibly delicious and unique. The intertextual strategy lies in the ad's ability to subvert the warning genre, using familiar structures from cautionary discourse to create humor. This clever manipulation of language draws attention to the restaurant's offerings by playing on the audience's understanding of how such warnings are usually framed. The non-linguistic elements further enhance the intertextuality through visual symbols, particularly the use of traffic signs like "No Entry" and other warning symbols. These visual references emphasize the cautionary tone of the text, yet their inclusion adds a layer of humor, suggesting that the food is "dangerously tempting" and impossible to resist. The contrast between the seriousness of the symbols and the playful intent of the message creates a layered meaning, making the ad both engaging and memorable. In addition, the images of food included in the ad visually complement the warning message. The appetizing presentation of the food contrasts sharply with the cautionary tone of the text, reinforcing the irony and inviting the audience to indulge despite the "warning." The visuals effectively serve as a bridge, amplifying the textual message and ensuring that the humor is clearly understood. From a multimodal perspective, the interaction between text and visuals is highly effective in conveying the ad's message. The text supports the visual elements, providing a clear context for interpreting the warning symbols and medical references as humor. At the same time, the food visuals serve to heighten the temptation, ensuring that the audience associates the humor with a positive evaluation of the restaurant's offerings. This interaction between modalities creates a unified and persuasive promotional message. The advertisement achieves its desired impact by challenging audience expectations. By blending the warning and medical genres with food promotion, the ad creates a unique and attention-grabbing message that is both humorous and thought-provoking. The medical and traffic-related symbols used in the ad resonate with audiences familiar with such cautionary language, making the message relatable and engaging. This creative use of intertextuality aligns with Fairclough's (1992) view that drawing on familiar discourses can create new and impactful meanings. The ad not only captures attention but also leaves a lasting impression by framing the food as irresistibly good, so much so that it warrants a "warning." This humor, combined with the visual appeal of the food, makes the ad highly effective in persuading potential customers to engage with the restaurant.

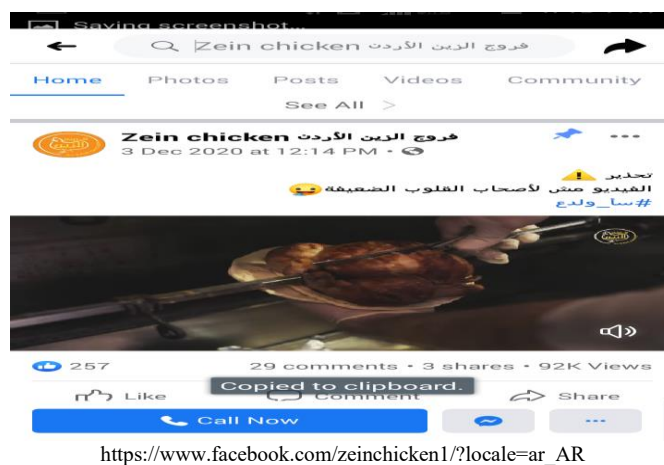


https://www.facebook.com/p/%D9%85%D8%B7%D8%B9%D9%85-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%AF%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A1-100063817915184/?locale=ar_AR

Example 3

The advertisement creatively uses linguistic intertextuality by adapting a familiar phrase often associated with warnings about sensitive or shocking content: "This video is not for people of weak hearts." Typically used to warn viewers about emotionally intense or shocking material, the phrase is humorously repurposed here to promote grilled chicken, suggesting that the food is so visually appealing and mouthwatering that it could overwhelm viewers. This deliberate irony and subversion of the warning genre attract attention, spark curiosity, and encourage viewers to engage with the content. The choice of the phrase taps into familiar discourses, drawing on the audience's prior exposure to similar warnings in entertainment or online content. This intertextual strategy not only creates humor but also positions the food as irresistibly desirable, amplifying its appeal. The non-linguistic elements in the advertisement significantly enhance the intertextual message. The video footage of sizzling, golden-brown grilled chicken, presented in close-up shots, evokes sensory engagement, encouraging viewers to imagine the taste, smell, and quality of the food. The visuals sharply contrast with the cautionary tone of the text, creating humor and ensuring that the intended irony is clear. This contrast reinforces the idea that the "danger" described in the text is not real but instead refers to the overwhelming

appeal of the food. The rich, golden colors and close-up visuals of the chicken are carefully designed to stimulate appetites, while the video format engages viewers more dynamically than static images would. Together, these visual choices complement the text by providing a cascading effect, where the video amplifies the humor and intrigue initiated by the warning phrase. From a multimodal perspective, the interaction between text and video is highly effective in delivering the message. The textual warning sparks curiosity and invites viewers to watch the video by framing it as a test of their emotional resilience. Meanwhile, the video footage fulfills the expectation of visual impact, but instead of delivering shock, it delivers sensory delight. This unexpected twist adds an extra layer of humor and ensures the audience remembers the advertisement. The integration of text and visuals exemplifies how intertextuality and multimodality work together to create a cohesive and impactful message. The advertisement resonates emotionally by increasing humor and curiosity to engage viewers. The playful challenge implied in the warning phrase (“not for people of weak hearts”) encourages viewers to interact with the content and positions the food as irresistibly good. By blending the warning genre with the context of food promotion, the ad creates an unexpected and memorable narrative that increases its shareability and audience engagement.



Example 4

The advertisement uses linguistic intertextuality by humorously adapting the tone and structure of a warning genre to promote the food offered by Ashour Restaurant. The phrase, “Warning: Ashour Restaurant is not legally responsible for clients who eat their fingers while having their meal”, employs an exaggerated metaphor that humorously suggests the food is so irresistibly delicious that customers might metaphorically “eat their fingers.” This playful manipulation of the warning tone draws on familiar cautionary discourses, transforming them into an engaging and memorable promotional message. The humor embedded in this metaphor creates a strong emotional connection with the audience, making the ad stand out. This intertextual strategy reflects Fairclough’s (1992) concept of transforming familiar discourse into new contexts. The use of humor combined with the metaphor not only captures the audience’s attention but also emphasizes the exceptional quality and appeal of the food being promoted. The non-linguistic elements in the advertisement complement the textual message and amplify its impact. The visual inclusion of a warning icon reinforces the cautionary tone of the text, creating a playful contrast with the humor of the message. The background imagery, featuring neatly arranged wraps with golden fries, visually conveys the freshness and quality of the food, further emphasizing its appeal. The choice of warm tones and close-up imagery makes the food look visually appetizing, creating a sensory pull that draws the viewer in. This deliberate use of visual intertextuality, combined with the metaphorical warning text, strengthens the ad’s humor and ensures the audience understands the lighthearted intent behind the message. From a multimodal perspective, the interaction between the text and visuals is unified and cohesive. The textual warning supports the message, directing the audience’s attention to the humor and exaggeration in the claim about the food’s irresistibility. Meanwhile, the food imagery relays the message, showcasing the product’s quality and reinforcing the humor through visual appeal. This interaction ensures that the ad’s message is not only clear but also memorable and persuasive. The interplay of textual and visual elements highlights the irresistible quality of the wraps while maintaining a humorous and engaging tone. This combination draws the audience’s attention to both the food’s appeal and the cleverness of the advertisement, ensuring it stands out in a competitive market. The advertisement effectively resonates with its audience by increasing humor and exaggeration, which are culturally relatable and engaging strategies. The playful use of intertextuality draws on the audience’s familiarity with warning genres and recontextualizes them into a food promotion context. This creates a unique and entertaining experience, encouraging viewers to associate the restaurant with creativity and high-quality offerings. This aligns with Fairclough’s (1992) framework, as the ad uses intertextuality to transform familiar discourses into new and impactful meanings. The humorous tone ensures the message is memorable, while the appetizing visuals increase the likelihood of viewer engagement and action, such as visiting the restaurant or ordering food. The advertisement successfully integrates linguistic and visual intertextuality into an effective promotional message.



https://www.facebook.com/ashoor.cr/?locale=ar_AR

Example 5

The advertisement employs linguistic intertextuality by incorporating the provocative phrase “Cancer for smoking” as its caption. The word “cancer” is a powerful intertextual reference, universally associated with the health risks of smoking, particularly in public health campaigns and warnings. By using this term, the advertisement creates an ironic and attention-grabbing contrast between the serious health warnings commonly associated with smoking and the promotion of smoking-related products, such as nargileh supplies. This bold strategy uses dark humor to resonate with the intended audience, particularly smokers who might dismiss health warnings in favor of indulgence. The irony inherent in this intertextual strategy ensures the ad is both intriguing and memorable. The phrase repurposes a familiar discourse on smoking and health risks, subverting it into a playful yet provocative promotional context. This aligns with Fairclough’s (1992) intertextuality framework, which highlights how familiar discourses can be transformed to create new meanings and engage audiences effectively. The non-linguistic elements of the advertisement reinforce and balance the provocative textual message. The image features an organized display of nargileh supplies and accessories, presented in a clean, colorful, and inviting store setting. This visually contrasts with the starkness of the term “cancer,” mitigating its negative connotations and emphasizing the lifestyle appeal of nargileh smoking. The store’s vibrant arrangement and bright lighting create a sense of professionalism and accessibility, drawing attention to the products rather than the risks associated with their use. The logo, featuring a figure in sunglasses and a suit, adds another layer of intertextuality, symbolizing a sense of sophistication, individuality, or coolness associated with nargileh smoking. This visual branding supports the text’s ironic tone, framing nargileh smoking as a lifestyle choice rather than a health concern. The interaction between the text and visuals is critical to the advertisement’s effectiveness. The textual caption acts as an anchor, immediately grabbing attention through its shocking and ironic tone. Meanwhile, the visual elements, including the organized display of nargileh products and the sleek logo, redirect focus from the health warning implied by “cancer” to the appealing aesthetic and cultural experience of nargileh smoking. This combination creates a dynamic and engaging advertisement that captures attention while normalizing the promoted lifestyle. This multimodal integration ensures that the ad’s message is cohesive, with each element reinforcing the other. The text provides the initial intrigue, while the visuals sustain the audience’s engagement by showcasing the products in a positive and desirable light. The advertisement’s impact lies in its ability to use dark humor and irony to engage its target audience. The phrase “Cancer for smoking” acknowledges the health risks associated with smoking in a way that resonates with smokers who might already dismiss such concerns. The cultural normalization of nargileh smoking as a relaxing and social activity further reinforces the ad’s appeal to its intended audience, while the visual presentation enhances the perception of nargileh as a sophisticated lifestyle product. This approach aligns with Fairclough’s (1992) framework, which emphasizes how intertextuality can reframe familiar discourses to create impactful new meanings. However, the ad’s reliance on irony and humor may alienate health-conscious or non-smoking audiences, as the provocative use of “cancer” might be seen as insensitive.



<https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=448822487262656&set=pb.100064047253760.-2207520000>

Example 6

The advertisement employs linguistic intertextuality through the use of the phrase “Beware! The most delicious shawarma is in front of you”, which humorously twists the traditional warning genre into a promotional message. Typically associated with danger or caution, the word “Beware!” is recontextualized here to highlight the irresistible appeal of the food being promoted. The playful and exaggerated tone creates humor and intrigue, encouraging viewers to engage with the message and consider trying the product. This clever manipulation of the warning discourse aligns with Fairclough’s (1992) intertextuality framework, which emphasizes the transformation of familiar genres into new contexts for impactful communication. The phrase uses a metaphor of caution, suggesting that the shawarma is so delicious that it poses a “risk” of being irresistible. This linguistic strategy draws on the audience’s familiarity with warning messages while simultaneously flipping their expectations to create a lighthearted and memorable advertisement. The non-linguistic elements in the advertisement amplify the intertextual message through visual references to traffic warning signs. The inclusion of a warning sign featuring the restaurant’s logo (Flora) reinforces the textual message, creating a cohesive metaphor of “delicious danger.” The design of the warning sign, with its triangular shape and bold yellow and red colors, mimics real traffic signage, lending a sense of urgency and immediately capturing the viewer’s attention. The large, visually appealing image of the shawarma complements the warning by emphasizing the product’s desirability. The golden-brown shawarma, presented in an upright and fresh manner, visually reinforces the concept of irresistible temptation implied in the text. This imagery directly supports the ad’s playful tone, making the shawarma the focal point of both the humor and the call to action. From a multimodal perspective, the interaction between the text and visuals is unified and effective. The textual warning serves as an anchor, setting the tone and context for the visual representation of the warning sign. The image of shawarma complements this message by visually delivering on the promise of an irresistible product. The use of familiar traffic warning symbols ensures the audience immediately understands the metaphor, while the appetizing imagery invites them to act, such as visiting the restaurant or ordering food. This dynamic interaction between text and visuals enhances the ad’s effectiveness by ensuring the humor and appeal are communicated clearly and memorably. The advertisement resonates emotionally by employing humor and exaggeration, strategies that are both culturally relatable and engaging. The recontextualization of a warning message into the domain of food promotion creates a lighthearted and fun narrative, making the advertisement more approachable and shareable. The cultural familiarity with shawarma as a popular and beloved food further enhances the ad’s relevance to its target audience. By incorporating humor and irony, the ad ensures its message is relatable and enjoyable, encouraging positive responses from potential customers.



Example 7

The advertisement employs linguistic intertextuality by humorously linking medical symptoms, such as dizziness and blurry vision, to a shortage of falafel in one's diet. This recontextualization of common health-related concerns into the realm of food promotion creates a lighthearted and relatable narrative, suggesting that falafel is not just a meal but a "cure" for these fictional "symptoms." The use of colloquial Arabic enhances the ad's humor and makes the message feel natural and conversational, fostering a connection with the local audience by speaking in their everyday linguistic style. By drawing on familiar medical language and twisting it into a humorous context, the advertisement aligns with Fairclough's (1992) framework, which emphasizes the transformation of familiar discourses to engage audiences. This clever manipulation ensures the ad is both memorable and engaging. The non-linguistic elements in the advertisement amplify the humor and relatability of the textual message. The image of falafel spilling out of a paper bag evokes feelings of simplicity, tradition, and accessibility, aligning with the cultural significance of falafel as a beloved staple in the Arab world. The warm tones and rustic presentation of the falafel reinforce the message by creating a sense of comfort and nostalgia. The visuals serve as the "solution" to the humorous symptoms described in the text. The falafel is portrayed as enticing and wholesome, creating a direct link between the product and the lighthearted "cure" presented in the narrative. This alignment between text and image ensures that the audience connects the humor of the message with the appeal of the product. From a multimodal perspective, the interaction between text and visuals is highly effective. The text draws the reader in with its humor and relatability, while the image of falafel visually complements the narrative by making the product look appetizing and accessible. The playful tone of the text is mirrored in the casual arrangement of the food, ensuring the advertisement's message is cohesive and impactful. The interaction between text and image highlights falafel as a "must-have" item, associating it not only with cultural familiarity but also with a humorous take on its importance in daily life. This integration of modalities enhances the overall message, making it both engaging and memorable. The advertisement resonates with its audience by employing humor and cultural familiarity. By presenting falafel as a playful "solution" to everyday issues, the ad emphasizes the cultural importance of falafel as a staple food. The use of colloquial Arabic strengthens this connection, making the message feel personal and accessible to the local audience. This approach aligns with Fairclough's (1992) framework, as the ad draws on familiar discourses (in this case, medical language and cultural staples) to create new, engaging meanings that resonate with the audience. The humor and cultural relevance ensure the advertisement leaves a positive and lasting impression.



https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=10158532766466617&id=257309316616&set=a.10152630743026617&locale=ar_AR

V. DISCUSSION

A. Intertextuality and Multimodality

The analysis of Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook reveals significant patterns in the use of intertextuality and multimodality to shape consumer perception and enhance persuasiveness. These advertisements strategically reference cultural symbols, linguistic structures, and well-known texts, often incorporating humor and irony to engage audiences. Additionally, the interplay between text and visuals plays a crucial role in reinforcing intertextual meanings and ensuring clarity. The following discussion examines these findings in greater detail, highlighting the ways in which intertextuality and multimodality function within the Jordanian Arabic digital advertising landscape. The findings of this study highlight the central role of intertextuality in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook, directly addressing the first research question by demonstrating how advertisers employ intertextual references to cultural symbols and existing texts. Advertisers strategically reference both global brands (such as Pfizer) and culturally significant elements (such as traditional food) to create engaging and persuasive messages. These intertextual references enhance audience engagement by evoking familiarity and shared cultural knowledge, allowing advertisers to craft messages that resonate emotionally and cognitively. Additionally, humor and irony emerge as dominant intertextual

strategies, particularly through the subversion of formal warning messages and medical discourse, reinforcing how intertextuality is applied within Jordanian Facebook advertisements. Advertisers play with familiar textual conventions, transforming them into humorous, exaggerated claims that capture attention and enhance memorability. In addition to intertextuality, the findings underscore the critical role of multimodality in meaning-making, responding to the second research question. The interplay between text and visuals is essential in reinforcing intertextual references, as different semiotic resources, such as images, logos, colors, and typography, interact to construct meaning. For example, warning symbols paired with humorous cautionary messages strengthen the ironic tone, while cultural imagery, such as local food items, anchors the advertisement within a specific sociocultural context. This demonstrates the ways in which text and imagery interact in Jordanian Arabic advertisements to shape meaning. The use of multimodal elements ensures that the intended intertextual references are accessible and interpretable by audiences, reducing ambiguity and enhancing persuasive impact. The findings suggest that advertisers strategically balance linguistic and visual cues to construct cohesive and compelling messages that blend global and local influences. All in all, the findings reveal that Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook rely on intertextuality and multimodality not only to inform and persuade but also to entertain and emotionally connect with audiences. The strategic blending of cultural references, humor, and visual reinforcement allows advertisers to create ads that are memorable and contextually relevant. However, the effectiveness of intertextuality depends on the audience's familiarity with the referenced texts and symbols, which may limit its reach. While multimodal integration helps clarify meaning, it also plays a vital role in ensuring that the intertextual references are effectively communicated, addressing the second research question. Advertisers must carefully calibrate intertextual references to ensure accessibility and avoid alienating or misinterpreted messages. The study thus highlights the nuanced and dynamic ways in which intertextuality and multimodality shape digital advertising discourse in the Jordanian Arabic context.

B. Comparisons With Previous Studies

This study extends existing research on intertextuality and multimodality in Arabic advertising by examining their combined role in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook. While prior studies treated them separately, this study offered an integrated perspective, addressing gaps in digital advertising analysis. The findings align with Gully (1997), who highlighted the use of religious texts and historical narratives in Arabic advertising. However, while Gully focused on traditional media, this study shows how intertextual references have evolved in digital advertising, incorporating global discourses and local vernaculars for humor and relatability. Similarly, it expands on Abuhakema's (2013) work on code-switching and proverbs by demonstrating how linguistic intertextuality interacts with visual elements to engage audiences. The study also supports Alsalem's (2020) study on semiotic resources in Saudi TV advertising but extends the discussion to digital media, where multimodal strategies adapt to social media's interactive nature. In addition, it builds on Jarad and Abdul Hadi's (2021) analysis of verbal and non-verbal interactions in beauty product advertisements, showing how similar strategies apply to Facebook ads. A key contribution is its focus on the interaction between intertextuality and multimodality, often overlooked in previous research. This study bridges gaps left by earlier work on print and television media by exploring how Jordanian advertisers integrate text, imagery, and cultural references in social media ads.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the interaction between intertextuality and multimodality in Jordanian Arabic advertisements on Facebook, addressing a gap in understanding their combined role in digital advertising. Using Fairclough's (1992) intertextuality framework and Machin and Mayr's (2012) MCDA, the analysis revealed that advertisers strategically integrate textual and visual elements to create persuasive, culturally resonant messages. The findings highlight the importance of cultural references, humor, and multimodal synergy in constructing engaging advertisements, as advertisers recontextualize global and local discourses, blending traditional and modern styles to suit Facebook's digital landscape. However, risks such as alienating certain audiences through culturally specific or provocative references were also identified. Intertextuality plays a crucial role in creating cultural resonance by drawing on local symbols, linguistic expressions, and historical narratives to foster emotional connections, while humor and irony emerge as dominant strategies that subvert familiar genres, such as medical discourse or warning messages, to capture attention and encourage audience interaction. Multimodality amplifies these effects, as textual and visual elements interact to enhance impact and memorability, demonstrating how advertisers adapt their strategies to Facebook's unique affordances, including visual storytelling and interactivity. To maximize engagement, advertisers should thoughtfully increase cultural references while maintaining inclusivity, balance humor and irony with cultural sensitivity, and prioritize multimodal synergy by ensuring visuals enrich textual messages. In addition, content should be tailored to digital platforms with interactive elements and dynamic visuals. Future research should explore intertextuality and multimodality across other platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to examine how strategies adapt in different environments, while audience-focused studies and cross-cultural comparisons could provide deeper insights into how diverse demographic groups respond to intertextual and multimodal elements in Arabic digital advertising.

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Utilization of the Bongal Site for Learning Indonesian Language History: An Archaeoanthropological Study

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Abstract—This research stems from dissatisfaction with how the history of the Indonesian language is taught in universities, which cannot explore historical sources relevant to the language. Therefore, this paper aims to identify archaeological evidence at the Bongal Site, Jagojago Village, Central Tapanuli Regency, which can be used as a new resource for learning the history of the Indonesian language. This research applies an archaeoanthropological approach, with data collection including observation of archaeological findings, interviews with residents, and review of related literature. The discovery of tin inscriptions and wooden boards inscribed with Old Malay script at the Bongal Site shows that this site has essential values related to the history of the Old Malay language, which can be utilized as more sophisticated learning materials in universities. The uniqueness of this site also lies in the older age of its inscriptions compared to the epigraphy of tombstones and Tamil inscriptions at the Old Lobu Site, Barus. In addition, this research proposes using this historical site in a web-based learning model, which will facilitate the learning process and increase accessibility. Thus, the results of this research offer a new approach to developing the learning of the history of the Indonesian language that is more innovative, relevant, and connected to local historical heritage.

Index Terms—archaeoanthropological study, Bongal site, Indonesian language history

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesian citizens are proud that the Indonesian language has been recognized as an official language of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) since November 20, 2023, at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris, France. As a result, Indonesian became the 10th official language acknowledged by the UNESCO General Assembly (Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2023: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2023), followed by English, Arabic, Mandarin, French, Spanish, Russian, Hindi, Italian, and Portuguese. Of course, in addition to being one of the official languages of UNESCO, Indonesian is the official language of Indonesia and is widely

spoken throughout Southeast Asia in places such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei Darussalam. Furthermore, there are other small Indonesian-speaking communities outside Southeast Asia in the Netherlands and Suriname. In the local context, Indonesian is understood as a regional language that is developed and enriched in the development of Indonesia.

Indonesian is a unifying language for Indonesians and is used in as many as 718 regional languages in Indonesia, 90% of which are spread across eastern Indonesia. Papua has 428 languages, Maluku is home to 80 languages, East Nusa Tenggara has 72 languages, and Sulawesi has 62 languages (Delima et al., 2024). Due to the many languages, Indonesia is the second largest country after Papua New Guinea, with the most significant number of regional languages. Indeed, Indonesian has a long history of policy and power (Andrian, 2020). Indonesian moves as an entity that is contested in the field of power. Policy forms a system formed on the authority of something to determine, rule, represent, and manage a matter through the Indonesian language field.

Malay gave birth to the Indonesian language, which is still used throughout the Indonesian archipelago as a unifying language today (Mamonto, 2023). Mamonto also claims that, influenced by the emergence of Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms, the development of the Indonesian language began with the maritime trade of Nusantara traders in the 7th century A.D. This development continued until the 17th century, when Islamic kingdoms emerged, and European imperialists began arriving in the archipelago. During that period, Malay was used as the language of trade, politics, and cultural instruction.

Today's Indonesian language is a symbol of national unity and integrity (Rabiah, 2013). As voiced by Indonesian youth in the declaration of the Youth Pledge on October 28, 1928, the Indonesian language and nationalism are two things that cannot be separated from one another. It also plays an important role in developing education, national culture, and science and technology (Boxtel et al., 2016; Kertiasih, 2019).

To understand the history of Indonesian language development, one need only start with some inscriptions written on stones found in Palembang, Jambi, and Bangka Island, some of which date back to the Sriwijaya Kingdom, evidence of the beginning of the Indonesian language (then Malay) (Almasyhur et al., 2024; Blagden, 1913). The inscriptions are written in Old Malay and use Pallawa letters (Chaer, 2010). In addition, based on paleographic research, the oldest document containing the Old Malay language is an inscription found in the Sajamerta Village adjacent to Pekalongan (Central Java), dating from the 7th century A.D. (Kridalaksana, 2018). The inscription is older than the Kedukan Bukit inscription in Palembang. Another Old Malay inscription in Central Java dates to 792 A.D., namely the Manjucirgra inscription at Sewu Temple (Yogyakarta-Solo border). An Old Malayu inscription was also found in the coffee garden near Bogor and dated 854 Caka (942 A.D.).

This paper reveals new historical traces of the Indonesian language based on archaeoanthropological research and studies. Malay culture can be interpreted as the result of Malay humans' creation, taste, and intention. Related to this, Prayogi (2016), in an archaeoanthropological study titled "The Dynamics of Malay Cultural Identity in Archaeoanthropological Review", found that Malay people are both indigenous people and migrants with all their discourses and cultural elements who have inhabited the Malay region (pp. 2-3). Archaeoanthropologically, Malay culture can be traced from the results of the material objects in various forms of artifacts of Malay culture that are widely spread throughout the Malay-Southeast Asia-Pacific region. Archaeoanthropologically, the cultural identity of the Malay people is still subject to multiple opinions. Archaeological remains show that, in fact, Malay humans already had their own culture and dialects and underwent changes with other cultures along with the increasingly complex patterns of human life.

Prayogi also mentioned that there are new concepts and offers related to the cultural identity of the Malay people, namely the Southeast Asian cultural civilization (Prayogi, 2016). This is motivated by Malay humans being geographically closer to the Southeast Asian region. Ultimately, Prayogi concluded that the archaeo-anthropological review still did not solve the problem of Malay identity with all its cultural derivatives. Prayogi's article shows that archaeoanthropology studies the relationship between archaeology and anthropology, especially in research on prehistoric humans and ancient civilizations (Cœdès, 1930). Archaeoanthropology is a branch of anthropology that examines the relationship between culture and the remains (artifacts, fossils, archaeological sites) of the past. According to experts, archaeoanthropology combines cultural anthropology and archaeology to understand how humans survived and interacted with their environment in the past.

Archaeoanthropology studies archaeological evidence and anthropological data to understand the development of human cultures from the past. Louis Leakey is one of the most famous archaeoanthropologists and ethnographers (Clark, 1989). He is known for his research in East Africa that helped us understand human origins. Other archaeoanthropologists such as Binford (1964, 1972, 1983), Goodall (1990), and Johanson (1985) also made significant contributions to the field. Archaeoanthropological research stems from the curiosity that drives a person to visit a place suspected of containing historical relics. Archaeologists examine many relics of society after humans recognize language and writing. Archaeologists use archaeological sources such as written sources (inscriptions) and artifacts or tools (weapons and kitchen utensils), among others, at the Bongal Site. This site is in Jagojago Village, Badiri Subdistrict, Central Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province, western Indonesia.

The North Sumatra Archaeology Center's research from 2019-2020 uncovered important archaeological findings around Bukit Bongal, including artifacts, ecofacts, and wooden structure remains. Among these were two inscriptions on wooden and tin artifacts found in Jagojago Village (Boechari, 2012; Soedewo, 2023). These inscriptions are key to understanding the history of the Indonesian language. The present research explores the Bongal Site's contribution to

developing the Indonesian language, focusing on how Old Malay evolved into Indonesian. By analyzing the language and cultural traces at the site, the study provides insights into the historical context of Indonesian language development. This approach also emphasizes the role of these findings as educational tools for learning the Indonesian language. By merging archaeoanthropology with the history of the Indonesian language, the research offers a fresh perspective on Malay culture's influence on the formation of Indonesian as a unifying global language.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Archaeoanthropology

Archaeoanthropology is a discipline that combines archaeology and anthropology to study human life through artifacts and other material evidence, providing an overview of the social and cultural aspects of past societies. Archaeology focuses more on analyzing the physical objects left behind, while anthropology examines the behavior and social structure of the community. By combining these two fields, archaeoanthropology allows us to understand the artifacts and the social and cultural context behind them. This research uses an archaeoanthropological approach to explore the relationship between archaeological findings at the Bongal Site and the socio-cultural developments that influenced the Indonesian language (Tilley, 1994).

Furthermore, this research investigates how artifacts from the Bongal Site, such as tools, pottery, and buildings, can provide clues about past communities' social activities and communication. An archaeoanthropological approach allows the analysis of the relationship between these artifacts and language development. These findings illustrate the interaction between the people at the site and other groups, which can influence their language development. For instance, trade interactions or cultural exchanges with other regions can enrich the vocabulary and language structures used by the people of the time (Binford, 1983).

Likewise, we can also understand how the social structure of the Bongal Site community influenced language development through this approach. Archaeoanthropology makes examining social patterns reflected in past societies' settlements, social practices, and culture possible. This research aims to identify how language was used in specific social contexts, such as whether language was used differently among the elite or other social groups and how changes in social structure impacted language use at the time. This approach provides a deeper understanding of Indonesian language development through a social and cultural lens (Jacoby & Kibbee, 2000).

Ultimately, this research utilizes archaeoanthropological theory to comprehend the connection between language and culture at the Bongal Site. This research uncovers the role of language in that cultural context by studying archaeological findings that depict daily social life, such as worship spaces or social gathering places found at the site, providing insight into how language is used in religious rituals or the formation of cultural identity. Thus, the Indonesian language is understood as a product that is not only based on linguistic rules but also the result of the complex interaction between culture, history, and language reflected in these archaeological sites (Christie, 2001; Schiffer, 2001).

B. Linguistics Contact

Linguistic contact is a theory that studies the interaction between two or more languages occurring within one community or region, which can affect changes in language structures and elements. When two languages encounter each other, this can give rise to various linguistic phenomena, such as vocabulary borrowing and changes in phonology, syntax, and morphology. This theory focuses on how the languages involved influence each other in adopting new words and changes to more complex language structures. This contact can happen for several reasons, such as trade, migration, colonization, or social interaction in communities that use multiple languages (Christie, 2001; Song, 2010; Thomason & Kaufman, 2023).

In this theory, interlanguage influence can take the form of borrowings, which is when one language adopts words or expressions from another language, as well as structural changes, where grammatical elements such as affixes, word order, or the way words are formed are influenced by another language (Agus et al., 2024; Garing, 2016; Iwuala & Imu, 2021; Morante & Sporleder, 2012; Salija et al., 2017). Vocabulary borrowings usually occur in words related to technology, culture, or novelty. Meanwhile, structural changes happen when languages interact over a long period, affecting grammar and sentence structure. For instance, in the history of Old Malay, many words from Sanskrit entered the language due to cultural and religious influences from the Srivijaya kingdoms (Adelaar, 2005; Christie, 2001; Teeuw, 1959; Zoetmulder, 2004).

Linguistic contact can also create the phenomenon of code-switching or code-mixing, where speakers switch from one language to another or combine elements from two languages in a single sentence or conversation. This occurs in societies that actively use multiple languages and shows how language can adapt to external influences. These changes relate to word borrowing and affect social communication patterns, ways of thinking, and the formation of new cultural identities. This process shows how languages evolve due to the social and political factors involved in interlanguage interaction (Christie, 2001; Haugen, 1950; Wurm & Wilson, 1977).

C. Contextual Learning Theory in Indonesian History Teaching

Contextual learning theory highlights the importance of linking learning with students' experiences and environment. This approach emphasizes that education will be more meaningful if the material taught is relevant to students' daily lives

so they can more easily relate the knowledge learned to their social context. Contextualized learning allows students to see the connection between the material taught and the reality around them, making it more meaningful and applicable. In this case, the theory is very relevant to research that uses the Bongal Site as a context for understanding the history of the Indonesian language because this site can present a more precise portrayal of the language development in the lives of past communities (Brown, 2007).

This research adopts a contextual learning approach to connect the teaching of the history of the Indonesian language with the Bongal Site as a tangible source of learning. Through this site, students can learn how the Indonesian language evolved along with social and cultural changes reflected in artifacts and archaeological findings. For example, artifacts found at the Bongal Site can reveal how language was used in social interactions, trade, and other cultural activities, providing deeper insights into language development in the historical context of past societies. Thus, learning Indonesian will cover the technical aspects of the language and the cultural context behind it (Ambrose et al., 2014).

The contextual learning theory also helps students understand language regarding social and cultural change. Language learning (Feiman-Nemser, 1983), often seen as simply the study of linguistic rules and vocabulary, can be better understood within a broader social framework if taught with a contextual approach. In this case, learning Indonesian through a site like Bongal allows students to see how language developed alongside cultural changes, interactions between social groups, and other factors that shaped society at the time. This will enable students to connect linguistic aspects with deeper cultural and social contexts, enriching their understanding of the evolution of Indonesian (Bruce & Calhoun, 2024; Gagne et al., 2005; Garim et al., 2023; Idawati et al., 2025; Wirawan et al., 2023).

By adopting contextualized learning, students can see the direct relevance between the material being studied and their real lives, which enhances engagement and understanding. The Bongal site is a learning object, allowing students to relate archaeological findings to language development in society. This context-based learning also encourages students to think more critically about the relationship between language, culture, and history and how these three elements influence each other (Harianto et al., 2020; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Zuchdi & Nurhadi, 2019). The contextual approach supports more interdisciplinary learning by combining different disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, and linguistics, thus providing a complete and more in-depth picture of the history of the Indonesian language (Anthony, 1990; Schunk, 2012).

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This research used a qualitative approach, centering on the Bongal Site to investigate how its archaeological discoveries help explain the development of Old Malay and its impact on the Indonesian language while examining the interplay between local and external cultural influences that shaped the language.

B. Procedure for Collecting and Analyzing Data

This study utilized qualitative methods to fully explore phenomena through non-numerical data, including interviews and observations (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Researchers analyzed artifacts and inscriptions at the Bongal Site, focusing on Old Malay and cultural aspects, and interviewed residents to gain insights into the historical and cultural importance of the discoveries. A detailed review of literature, such as books, articles, and research papers, helped broaden the understanding of Old Malay and the development of the Indonesian language. The data was analyzed in stages, with coding used to identify significant themes related to the language's history and Malay cultural identity. Overall, the research aimed to enhance the understanding of the Indonesian language's historical development and the Malay culture's contributions.

C. Population and Samples

The population of this study is the archaeological findings at the Bongal Site, which include artifacts, inscriptions, and other objects found at the site. The research sample includes artifacts containing writings, inscriptions containing language elements, and interviews with local people who know the site and the history of the Indonesian language. In addition, the sample includes relevant literature documents, both from written sources and oral traditions.

D. Materials

This study examines artifacts and inscriptions from the Bongal Site that provide valuable information about Old Malay. It also incorporates insights from resident interviews, highlighting the region's history and culture. A review of relevant literature further places the study within the broader framework of the Indonesian language and Malay cultural history (Harris, 2002). The research culminates in a detailed report that discusses the findings on the Bongal Site's role in understanding the development of the Indonesian language, aiming to offer a precise and unbiased account that enriches academic and general knowledge.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Ancient Malay: Archaeoanthropological and Linguistic Findings

The Bongal Site, located in Jagojago Village, Badiri Sub-district, North Sumatra, provides important evidence of the history of the Indonesian language. Discovered by gold miners in the tidal lands of Tapanuli Bay, it yielded a variety of artifacts, such as Middle Eastern pottery, glass, ceramics, metal objects, wooden artifacts, tin inscriptions, inscribed wooden boards, coins, and money printers, dating back from the 6th to the 11th centuries A.D. These findings suggest that between the 7th and 9th centuries A.D., the area served as a hub for production, trade, and cultural exchange, where Chinese, Indian, Arab, local, Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic influences converged. This ties the Bongal Site to the archipelago's spice trade route, which the Indonesian government currently emphasizes. Research by Soedewo (2023) shared in events like the Sigarda Forum, Mimbar Budaya podcast, and BRIN's Kebinekaan webinar has provided insights into the paleographic and linguistic aspects of the Bongal inscriptions, underscoring the site's significance in Indonesian language history.



Figure 1. Video Still of Tin Inscription of Bongal Site and Other Sumatran Inscriptions in Sumatra

Link 1. <https://www.youtube.com/live/zgwZaSXEP8U?si=GUGO5Ru1Gg6M90cu>



Figure 2. Video Still of Bongal Site Tin Inscription

Link 2. <https://vt.tiktok.com/ZSYR4G2eF>



Figure 3. Video of Bongal Site, Indonesia's Hidden History

Link 3. https://youtu.be/ZFpgp9gz0Rc?si=ad_9-n-1Fbn1JCgC

Soedewo (2023) mentioned that the Bongal Site inscriptions, dating from the 7th to 11th centuries A.D., are written in Pallawa Grantha and Post Pallawa scripts. The language primarily features terms from the Wur language family, with significant influences from Indo-Aryan languages, particularly Sanskrit. Excavations indicate that the Bongal Site was a diverse cultural hub from the 7th to 9th centuries. The oft-studied Old Lobu Site in Barus in North Sumatra is around two

centuries younger. Artifacts from Bongal, including coins from the Umayyad (694 to 713 A.D.) and Abbasid (760 A.D.) dynasties and ceramics from the Tang Dynasty (7th to 10th centuries A.D.) and Persia (7th to 9th centuries A.D.), were found. The tin plates feature post-Pallava, ancient Javanese, and proto-Batak scripts, often inscribed with mantras. Carbon dating of palm fiber and wood inscribed with Pallawa characters showed dates from 663 to 778 A.D. and from 668 to 778 A.D., respectively. Notably, a wooden inscription from the 7th to 8th century in Pallawa Grantha is rare, as wood typically lasts over a millennium.



Figure 4. Wooden Board With the Date 668-778 A.D. at the Bongal Site (Soedewo, 2023)

Gold miners found at least six inscription materials at the Bongal Site, five of tin and one of wood. The six inscriptions were found in an excavation pit in the Bongal area, Jagojago Village, Badiri District, Central Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province. According to the Mimbar Budaya webinars, podcasts, and Soedewo's "*Maritime Southeast Asia History, Culture, and Religion*" chapter, three types of scripts were identified at the Bongal Site: Pallawa Grantha, post-Pallawa (ancient Sumatra), and proto-Batak (Soedewo, 2023, pp. 42-44). The vocabulary in the Bongal Site's metal inscriptions can be categorized into two language groups: Austronesian (formerly Malay-Polynesian) and Indo-Iranian (Indo-Aryan). Soedewo (2023) lists Austronesian words such as *ku*, *tutup*, *tan'an*, *mandhin'ar*, *tida*, *baruj 'ar*, *cari*, *jahat*, *kataña*, *sabutaña*, *marujar*, and *san'ddi*. For instance, *tutup*, which originates from the Austronesian term *tutup* (Wurm & Wilson, 1977), retains its original pronunciation and meaning, demonstrating linear inheritance.

The word *tan'an*, an old Malay term, originates from the Austronesian word *tan/an* (Wurm & Wilson, 1977), retaining its original sound and meaning through linear inheritance. Terms like *tida*, *barujâr*, *jahat*, and *marujar* are found in inscriptions from the Srivijaya period, such as the Palas Pasemah and Kedukan Bukit inscriptions. For example, the twelfth line of the Palas Pasemah Inscription includes the word *j*, while the seventh line has *niujari*, and the sixth line of the Kedukan Bukit Inscription features *man'ujarsi* (Boechari, 2012). The word *jahat* in the Bongal Inscription and *j "ahat* in the Palas Pasemah Inscription both still appear in modern Indonesian, meaning "bad" or "evil," while in ancient Javanese, it referred to something "ruined" or "destroyed" (Zoetmulder, 2004).

In the Bongal Inscription, the word *tida* is used similarly to how it appears in the eighth line of the Palas Pasemah Inscription, in the phrase *tida bhakti*. In both cases, *tida* acts as a negation marker, signifying the absence or non-occurrence of an action or condition (Garing, 2016; Iwuala & Imu, 2021; Morante & Sporleder, 2012). This usage is akin to how *tida* functions in modern Indonesian and Malay, where it negates the word or phrase that follows. In both inscriptions, *tida* indicates the rejection or absence of a particular situation or action. Despite their different historical contexts, using *tida* as a negation marker demonstrates continuity in language, remaining relevant in ancient texts and contemporary Indonesian and Malay.

The phrase *tida baruj 'ar* in the Bongal Inscription translates to "not speaking" or "not saying something." The term *baruj 'ar* (or *marujar*) originates from a root meaning "to speak" or "to utter." The *bar-* prefix forms an active verb, indicating that the subject is engaged in speaking. When used in the negative form *tida baruj 'ar*, it implies a prohibition or advice against speaking (Saliya et al., 2017). The related form *marujar* underscores the significance of the act of speaking. These expressions highlight societal norms governing when speaking or remaining silent is appropriate, reflecting cultural rules or regulations. In addition, the stem prefix in the Bongal tin inscription is also found in the Lokan "atha Gunung Tua statue inscription, notably in *barbvat* (to make). The prefix *batang-* in *barujar* parallels Malay/Indonesian prefixes like *berujar* (to say), *kata* (to say), and *berkumpul* (to gather). Similarly, *mar-* in *marujar* is akin to Batak *mar-* in words like *marhata* (to say) and *mardalan* (to walk). The word *manujarsi* in the Kedukan Bukit inscription shows how the *ma-* prefix and *-i* suffix modify the base word *say*, changing its form and meaning. This affixation process, used in Indonesian/Malay, alters verbs to indicate new meanings or aspects, demonstrating how word morphology works in ancient inscriptions (Agus et al., 2024).

The *niujari* form in Srivijaya-era inscriptions is an example of a passive verb formed through affixation. It consists of the prefix *ni-*, the base *ujari* (meaning "to speak" or "to utter"), and the suffix *-i*. In Indo-Aryan-influenced languages, the prefix *ni-* is commonly used to create passive verbs, changing the meaning of the base word to show that the subject is

receiving the action rather than performing it. Therefore, *niujari* translates to “spoken” or “said.” Furthermore, the Bongal inscription contains words from Indo-Iranian (Indo-Aryan) languages, such as *swaha*, *om*, *buddha*, and *brahma*, revealing the strong linguistic influence of these languages on the period. These terms were crucial in the religious and cultural practices of the time, especially within Buddhism and Brahmanism (Christie, 2001; Haugen, 1950; Song, 2010; Thomason & Kaufman, 2023). The presence of these words highlights the use of Sanskrit and other Indo-Aryan languages in communication, particularly for religious and administrative purposes in the Srivijaya kingdom. The inscription offers evidence of the linguistic and cultural exchange between Srivijaya and South Asian traditions.

Furthermore, *Om* is a sacred Sanskrit word, usually used as an introduction to mantras or words of praise. *Sw* “*ah*” *a* is a Sanskrit word used when offering to the gods; an exclamation, which can be translated as *Yuddha*, is a Sanskrit word meaning war, fight, and battle. *Cela* is adapted from the Sanskrit *chala*, meaning lie and evil. *Warsa* is adopted from Sanskrit, which means year. *Siddhi* is a Sanskrit word that means success, perfection, intelligence, or extraordinary ability. *Khala* is a Sanskrit word that means evil, dishonorable, or fraudulent. *Bajra* is adapted from the Sanskrit *vajra*, which means diamond, lightning, and ‘hard one’ (Zoetmulder, 2004).

B. The Evolution of the Old Malay Language and Its Influence on the Indonesian Language

Experts argue that Old Malay was the lingua franca of Southeast Asian traders, especially in the archipelago (Indonesia). The vocabulary of Old Malay was heavily influenced by Sanskrit, which in the early centuries A.D. became the language of Hindu and Buddhist scriptures that began to be recognized in Southeast Asia so that words were absorbed in the form of sacred words. Other terms still use Sanskrit vocabulary, but the grammar is in Old Malay. Indonesian is an evolution or development of the Old Malay language. Indonesian evolved and expanded from the Malay language, which has served as a lingua franca for communication in the archipelago and across much of Southeast Asia. However, Indonesian in modern times has very different characteristics from Malay because it has been mixed with many foreign languages.

The Malay language, which originated in the first millennium, is referred to as Old Malay and belongs to the Austronesian language family. The Malay language has experienced multiple layers of foreign influence over two millennia through trade between nations, religious expansion, colonization, and emerging socio-political developments. The earliest version of Malay derived from the Old Malayo-Polynesian language spoken by the first Austronesian migrants to Southeast Asia. Over time, it evolved into Old Malay as Indian religious influences spread throughout the region, likely accompanied by using the Kawi and Rencong scripts.

Old Malay includes certain words that are still present today but are not understood by contemporary speakers, while the modern language is broadly identifiable in Classical Malay, written in 1303 A.D. (Teeuw, 1959). The Old Malay language found in the source inscriptions uses Sanskrit vocabulary. It uses the Pallawa and Brahmi scripts, so some adjustments were made to accommodate the Old Malay phonology, which differs from Sanskrit. Archaeologists and linguists did not initially use a specific name to refer to the language found in Malay inscriptions discovered in Sumatra and Java. Linguist Blagden (1913) and archaeologist Cœdès (1930) used references such as “ancient form” or “most ancient text” of Malay, while linguist Gabriel Ferrand used the name Malayo-sanskrit (“Malay-Sanskrit”) in his 1932 paper (Adelaar, 2005). Indologist J.G. de Casparis started using Oud-Maleise (“Old Malay”) in his first volume of Indonesian Inscriptions, published in 1950 (Almasyhur et al., 2024). The name was later used by Teeuw (1959) in writing an Old Malay short article on the history of the Malay language.

C. Utilization of the Bongal Site as an Indonesian Language Learning Resource

The Bongal site provides valuable historical and linguistic insights for language learning through its inscriptions and artifacts. Exploring this site helps students understand the evolution of the Indonesian language, expands their vocabulary, and gives them a better appreciation of their nation's linguistic heritage. Moreover, the site supports constructivist learning theory, as students can relate new knowledge to prior experiences. Learners can also use the Bongal site to connect classroom lessons with real historical contexts for a more profound, more contextual learning experience.

The concept of language ecology, which examines the link between language and its cultural context, further justifies including this site. The Bongal inscriptions highlight linguistic and social interactions, showing how language evolves with societal changes. This research can inform new language education methods by incorporating historical materials. Integrating the Bongal site into lessons boosts language skills while preserving cultural heritage, emphasizing the value of local resources in Indonesian education. Educators should design activities that align with children's developmental needs, focusing on goals, structure, environment, and management (Feiman-Nemser, 1983).

Bruce and Calhoun (2024) stated that learning models contain five essential components: 1) syntax, which is the sequence of activities, steps, or phases of the implementation of the model; 2) a social system (the role and relationship of children with social beings); 3) reaction principles (how the teacher views and responds to children to what is done); 4) a support system (the requirements and support); and 5) instructional and accompanying impacts. Syntax, here, is the implementation of an Indonesian history learning model. The model consists of several steps:

1. Students learn independently online and openly. While studying the history of the Indonesian language, students can use smartphones (e.g., Android and iOS tablets). The result of this course is that students who meet the learning objectives of the Indonesian language course are competent in the history of the Indonesian language material.

2. Students study the Indonesian Language History learning module, tracing the archaeoanthropology of the Bongal Site. The learning module is developed with site-based content containing the following steps:
 - a) Select a suitable learning site, such as <https://sejarahbahasaindonesia.com/>, that aligns with the topic. The web-based learning process begins with choosing content that meets learning objectives. Ensure the site offers valuable, relevant information and is designed with engaging graphics, a user-friendly layout, and easy navigation.
 - b) Ensure the site can be accessed smoothly and has features supporting learning, such as text, images, videos, articles, discussion forums, and interactivity. This helps learners to understand the learning material better.
 - c) Explore the site for information on Indonesian history relevant to the study topic.
 - d) Follow the instructions or guidelines provided by the site to access learning materials, such as watching videos, reading articles, or taking quizzes.
 - e) Study the historical materials on the site carefully and note the key points you want to understand.
 - f) Use interactive tools such as discussion forums, chats, documentary videos, maps, and photo galleries to deepen your understanding of Indonesian history.
 - g) Note the essential things learned while accessing the learning site. A good web-based learning syntax will pay attention to the availability of reference sources that learners can use to explore the learning materials, for example, providing links to reliable sources relevant to the learning material.
 - h) Keep updated on Indonesian history by visiting the site regularly to get the latest information about the progression of the Indonesian language history you are exploring.
 - i) Participate in assignments and exercises to solidify your comprehension. Utilize interactive features such as quizzes, exams, and discussion forums to improve your learning and evaluate your understanding of Indonesian history.
 - j) Engage in site activities like discussion forums or online classes. Share and discuss what you have learned with friends or lecturers, both online and offline, to enhance your understanding. Join forums or groups to exchange knowledge and experiences with others interested in Indonesian history.
 - k) Participate in forums or discussion groups on the site to share knowledge and experiences with others interested in the same topic, such as Indonesian history.
 - l) After finishing the learning site, evaluate your grasp of the material and revisit earlier steps to strengthen your understanding if necessary. Web-based learning should also incorporate assessments and feedback to gauge learners' comprehension.
3. By studying the module, students are expected to have the ability to:
 - a) Conceptualizing the archaeological traces of Indonesian language history.
 - b) Describe the historical archaeological traces of the Indonesian language.
 - c) Can check and recheck the history of the Indonesian language.
 - d) Have basic skills related to utilizing Indonesian historical archaeological trace sites.
 - e) Recognize the characteristics of Indonesian language historical sites.
 - f) Recognize various cultural heritage sites and Indonesian history learning website applications and
 - g) Utilize devices wisely, effectively, efficiently, safely, and productively.
4. In this site-based Indonesian language course, students must follow the following conditions:
 - a) Read the learning objectives to understand the target of each module.
 - b) Read the competency achievement indicators to understand the objects used as measurement criteria to achieve the objectives.
 - c) Read descriptions of learning materials to gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards the competencies to be achieved.
 - d) Perform the learning activities listed in the module.
 - e) Work on exercises and the End of Module Test (TAM).

By incorporating the natural environment, appropriate resources, and technology, teaching the history of the Indonesian language can be more engaging and effective for students. Integrating historical sites like Bongal into the learning process allows students to connect with the past and better understand Indonesia's cultural and historical development. Learning directly from the site through observation and analysis of artifacts encourages critical thinking and helps students link historical events with language and culture (Boxtel et al., 2016; Harris, 2002). The use of technology further enriches the learning experience by providing interactive and accessible tools (Gagne et al., 2005; Zuchdi & Nurhadi, 2019). This method also promotes collaborative learning, enhancing knowledge of history and social skills (Harianto et al., 2020; Johnson & Johnson, 2009), making the educational experience more dynamic and meaningful.

V. CONCLUSIONS

“Red Coat! Never forget history!” was the message given by Bung Karno to emphasize the importance of history in the journey of the Indonesian nation. Although many students consider history a boring topic, the importance of studying history cannot be ignored as it can provide insight into the past, which, in turn, helps us understand the current and future situation. The Old Malay language used during the Sriwijaya and Majapahit kingdoms became the basis for the Indonesian

language. As the connecting language of Southeast Asia, Malay evolved through the influence of foreign cultures and languages, especially Sanskrit, to eventually become the Indonesian language we speak today.

Studying the history of the Indonesian language is crucial in shaping the character and the nation's identity. Universities have a fundamental function in advancing science, including researching the history of the Indonesian language. The Bongal site, which stores Old Malay inscriptions, can be used as a learning resource that enriches our understanding of the history of the Indonesian language. By utilizing web-based learning technology, students can access information more quickly and learn the history of Indonesia in a way that is more interesting and relevant to the times. This approach will help make learning Indonesian history more meaningful and build awareness of national identity.

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Utilizing an Instructional Higher-Order Thinking-Based Strategy to Improve EFL Critical Reading Skills

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Abstract—This study aims to determine how teaching students English as a foreign language based on higher-order thinking skills enhances their critical reading capabilities. Fifty third-grade female students from Fatima Al-Zahraa Secondary School for Girls in Cairo were selected using a quasi-experimental design with a pretest and posttest model. A survey was also used to measure students' opinions on the effectiveness of the implemented teaching method. These results showed that embedding higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) into English language teaching significantly enhances students' ability to understand and critically analyze texts. The study also showed how these techniques improve students' ability to think individually and deal with complex reading texts. These findings highlight the value of using higher-order thinking techniques when teaching English to speakers of other languages and the need to prepare teachers to use them successfully.

Index Terms—Higher-Order Thinking, critical reading, EFL, pedagogical strategy, analytical thinking

I. INTRODUCTION

Higher-order thinking skills are essential for teaching English as a foreign language, ranging from simple insight to analysis, evaluation, and Outline of knowledge. According to Ghanizadeh et al. (2020), this teaching method promotes the development of complex cognitive abilities. These methods often use systematic techniques that guide students through multiple stages of text analysis, like initiating texts, stressing complex parts, identifying key concepts, and condensing data (Johansson, 2020).

These stages help students understand the surface information of texts and delve deeper into the topic, enhancing critical abilities for academic fulfilment and personal growth (Susanti et al., 2020; Indriyana & Kuswandono, 2019). By implementing these tactics, EFL teachers may foster a reflective and interactive learning Ecosystem where students can gain the skills to successfully understand, evaluate, and apply the material (Nurfallah, 2021).

One of the main goals of including higher-order thinking techniques in EFL teaching is to enhance critical reading skills. Students who read critically should be able to analyze, evaluate, summarize, and understand information. Students Boost their ability to engage critically with texts by engaging in strategic reading (Kirko & Wolderegawi, 2024). According to Elviana et al. (2024), these tactics include detecting and processing difficult passages, summarizing important elements, and surveying texts to make predictions. Several studies suggest that critical reading techniques improve reading Expertise in various student groups. For example, Rahman (2015) presented increased reading competence among high school students, while Secrets (2012) noted that these tactics enhanced reading skills in students with learning difficulties. Additionally, improving critical reading skills enhances overall academic performance and motivates the development of positive attitudes toward learning (Khunamri & Karimabadi, 2015).

As a result, focusing on these abilities is essential for improving students' reading competence in EFL settings. Recent research has exhibited the link between enhancing critical reading skills in EFL education and teaching techniques based on higher-order thinking.

Teaching strategies that integrate higher-order thinking concepts aim to address the complexity of reading tasks and encourage deeper cognitive participation (Setyowati & Kristiani, 2022). Teachers can improve students' critical reading skills by developing techniques that guide students through steps, including examining readings, identifying difficulties, finding main ideas, and Paraphrasing information. According to the literature, these teaching strategies greatly enhance students' critical thinking and reading perception abilities. For example, studies suggest that these tactics support an analytical approach to engaging with the text and enhancing reading proficiency (Yulian, 2021; Gunawan et al., 2022; Setyarini et al., 2023). Therefore, instructional strategies based on higher-order thinking are essential to bridge the gap between basic and advanced critical reading skills.

Using higher-order thinking techniques in the classroom is crucial for high school students in EFL situations. At this stage, children are expected to engage with more strenuous texts and acquire sophisticated cognitive abilities necessary

for success in the classroom. By implementing these tactics, high school students can enhance their critical analysis and explanation skills, essential for their overall academic growth (Sudana et al., 2020).

The research aims to investigate the impact of approaches based on higher-order thinking, compared to directly teaching critical reading approaches, on students' ability to engage with texts more profoundly and critically. The results of the current study are expected to yield insightful advice for improving reading instruction and raising student achievement in EFL settings.

In this sense, the following questions will be answered:

1. How well does a higher-order thinking-based teaching approach improve students' critical reading abilities in English as a foreign language?
2. Do high school students' critical reading comprehension abilities before and after using higher-order thinking techniques differ statistically significantly?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Utilizing a Higher-Order Thinking-Based Strategy

Higher-order thinking tactics are defined as educational techniques that aim to promote the development of advanced perceptual abilities such as Integration, analysis, and evaluation. These techniques help students think more deeply and beyond simple understanding (Carolina et al., 2023). By combining higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) into the syllabus, teachers hope to improve their students' ability to engage with texts critically and apply what they have learned in complex ways. In addition, Chi et al. (2020) in *Commercial Marketing Supervision* showed that including higher-order thinking skills in teaching methods helps students solve complex problems more successfully and use their expertise in new ways. Techniques to promote the development of advanced cognitive skills, such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, aim to inspire students to use complex thought processes. Li and Wang (2022) in the *Journal of Educational Psychology* claim that Integrating higher-order thinking skills into teaching processes helps students tackle complex problems and apply their understanding in new ways. Moreover, Zhang et al. (2021), in a review of scholarly research, confirms that combining advanced cognitive strategies into teaching curricula dramatically improves students' critical thinking skills, improving academic achievement and problem-solving abilities.

Tasks that require students to integrate and apply their knowledge in new situations are stressed through coaching strategies that aim to develop complex mental skills, such as critical analysis, critical thinking, and creative problem-solving. According to Aguzzoli et al. (2020) in the *British Journal of Management*, applying such techniques improves academic achievement and problem-solving by inspiring unconventional ideas. In addition, integrating these strategies into instruction promotes critical and evaluative thinking, leading to deeper understanding and more efficient use of knowledge, according to Zhang et al. (2021) in a review of educational research.

Higher-order thinking skills should be unified into teaching techniques to promote cognitive growth and enhance student attainment. These tactics include pedagogical approaches that underline advanced cognitive functions, including evaluation, synthesis, and analysis. These programs encourage students to think and solve higher-level problems beyond mere recalling and grasping. This increased involvement is essential for grasping difficult topics and ideas, considerably boosting academic execution and preparing students for future difficulties.

Higher-order thinking tactics are significant for children to advance rationally and achieve better academic results. Higher-order thinking skills must be blended into instructional methods. These techniques boost students' deeper levels of thinking and problem-solving. Understanding difficult material and concepts requires a deeper connection, which greatly improves academic execution and prepares students for future obstacles.

Research steadily supports the value of higher-order thinking in training. Their findings show that children improve academically and have better decision-making abilities when inspired to use higher-order thinking. Similarly, Qi et al. (2020) in *Corporate Marketing Management* assert that Including higher-order thinking in informative strategies enables students to solve difficult topics and use their knowledge Artfully. According to their research, higher-order thinking skills help students approach problems creatively, which is crucial for success in a fast-paced context. Tasks requiring students to apply their knowledge in new contexts are accentuated through educational strategies that aim to develop complex mental skills, such as critical analysis, appraising thinking, and creative problem-solving. Research suggests combining higher-order thinking skills into the coursework can significantly improve academic output and problem-solving by uplifting creative solutions and elevating general rational abilities. This strategy helps students delve into challenging ideas and develop a more complex comprehension of the subject matter.

B. Improving EFL Critical Reading Skills

In EFL, critical reading skills entail assessing, evaluating, and construing texts carefully rather than simply taking their plain meaning. This includes testing claims, noticing bias, and drawing parallels between unlike texts. Students who develop these skills can understand textual content more deeply and severely. Zhang (2016) states in his book *Teaching English* that growing critical reading skills enable EFL students to absorb texts more capably, evaluate claims, and boost their reading abilities.

In line with that, Moore and Reid (2015), in their book *Evaluative Reading Plans for Innovative Learners*, argue that reading is a talent that involves not just grasping explicit text but also testing the reliability of data, recognizing bias, and

decoding veiled meaning. Capable critical reading helps EFL students gain a deeper insight into texts and enhance their academic outcomes.

One of the main aims of evolving critical reading skills is to improve critical abilities in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The main goals involve refining students' logical skills, uplifting deeper cognition, and inspiring active interaction with reading. Instructors can better prepare EFL students to handle various reading elements and develop critical thinking aptitudes, essential for improving reading comprehension. Additionally, reading carefully entails analyzing texts to grasp their meaning, presuppositions and claims. According to research by Hu (2021) published in the *Record of English for Academic Purposes*, critical reading tactics significantly improve students' potential for complex text analysis, which is essential for academic success. According to their research, kids who read judiciously are better able to dissect and assess textual material, which boosts their academic development.

Reading critically also involves questioning the information and determining its suitability. This mental process makes students' reading habits more involving, which is significant for developing their thinking skills. Paul and Elder (2014) assert that building up learners' interest via analysis and inquiry is crucial for developing essential reading skills. Their findings showed that students who eagerly engage with texts can better assess the clarity of information and create claims backed by confirmation.

An inclusive plan for teaching critical reading skills is also Imperative. This integrates many Pieces of critical reading, such as active Connection, deep comprehension, and Rational thinking, to Furnish a Thorough Insight into texts (Moore & Read, 2015). The need to develop critical reading skills fully is Pointed out. The study summarizes that a well-rounded approach that integrates many facets of critical reading is necessary to foster a thorough understanding of complex texts and advance general academic progress (Bean, 2016; Nuttall, 2018).

C. The Relationship Between Higher-Order Thinking Strategies and Critical Reading Skills

Cognitive psychology and educational philosophy support investigating the relationship between critical reading skills and higher-order thinking strategies (HOTS). HOTS includes skills like imagination, analysis, and assessment, all essential for reading information more thoroughly than simple comprehension. HOTS makes it easier to evaluate arguments, comprehend meanings, and synthesize information—all components of critical reading. Recent studies have shown that HOTS are essential for higher-level cognitive functions, such as comprehending and using complicated ideas.

These abilities help students approach texts with a more critical and analytical perspective, which results in greater understanding and more insightful interpretation. Applying HOTS to reading entails activities like evaluating arguments, assessing text structure, and making deductions, all of which improve reading comprehension. According to the theoretical underpinnings, kids who acquire HOTS can better manage challenging reading materials, enhancing their academic performance.

Teachers want to improve students' critical engagement with readings by focusing on HOTS, which will improve their understanding and retention of the subject matter. Implementing HOTS involves developing instructional activities and assessments that encourage critical thinking in students, fostering increased engagement and analytical skills (Yousefi & Mohammadi, 2016). This approach improves students' reading comprehension while preparing them for more challenging academic and real-world issues (Wilson, 2016).

III. METHODOLOGY

The Study Design

A single-group quasi-experimental design was used to evaluate the effect of higher-order thinking processes on pupils' reading comprehension skills. Fifty female third-grade students from Fatima Al-Zahraa Secondary School were chosen as a sample. Before the current learning technique was implemented, a pretest was given to determine the baseline reading comprehension level. A posttest was then given to gauge the improvement in reading abilities.

With a one-group structure and a quasi-experimental design, the current study included a pretest and a posttest. Participants were chosen from all English-teaching students in the first semester of the 2023–2024 school year at Fatima Al-Zahraa Secondary School for Girls. By comparing the student's performance on the pretest and posttest, this design made it easier to evaluate how higher-order thinking techniques affected their reading comprehension abilities. The following tools were used:

1. **Test (Critical Reading Skills Test Using Higher-Order Thinking Strategies):** This test assessed the critical reading ability of EFL students. Twenty questions and one paragraph from each of the four chapters in the English textbook for girls in their second year of secondary school were included in the test. Using a pretest to assess reading comprehension levels and a posttest to assess changes in reading abilities after applying higher-order thinking strategies, the effectiveness of the intervention was evaluated by comparing the performance of students in the same group before and after implementing the techniques.
2. **Questionnaire:** After implementing the educational strategy and conducting the posttest to measure changes in reading skills, a questionnaire was administered. It was designed from existing literature to determine whether the strategy was effective and to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results obtained.

The exam and survey data were evaluated using SPSS statistical software. By comparing the pre-and posttest findings, these studies assessed how higher-order thinking methods affected students' critical reading abilities and examined

whether the techniques improved critical reading skills.

TABLE 1
THE RELIABILITY STATISTICS FOR THE HIGHER-ORDER THINKING-BASED STRATEGY TO IMPROVE EFL CRITICAL READING SKILLS TEST USED IN THIS STUDY

Test	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Spearman-Brown Coefficient
Higher-Order Thinking Strategy	10	0.890	0.902
Critical Reading Skills	10	0.875	0.886
Overall	20	0.884	0.896

The Critical Reading Skills Test and the Higher-Order Thinking Strategy Test have strong reliability, as indicated by their respective Cronbach's Alpha scores of 0.890 and 0.875. The overall Cronbach's Alpha of 0.884 shows a high level of dependability throughout the combined test.

The Spearman-Brown Coefficient, which displays consistent findings across individual and overall measurements, further bolsters the tests' dependability.

Face validity was also used. The Critical Reading Skills Test's face validity was ensured through discussions with experts in critical reading and EFL (English as a Foreign Language), who evaluated the test items to ensure they were pertinent to the objectives of the instructional method. The content validity of the exam assesses how effectively it captures the learning objectives. This was created by consulting with experts in education and ensuring that the exam matched the higher-order thinking goals. In order to verify the efficacy of the test, criterion validity entails comparing the results with an outside benchmark.

The study's criterion validity was assessed by contrasting test results from one group with accepted benchmarks for critical reading skills in EFL contexts. Construct validity was investigated by examining theoretical linkages and empirical data to ensure that the results align with the theoretical frameworks of higher-order thinking. Discriminative validity was ensured by comparing test results with other measures to ensure that the test did not correlate too strongly with these other variables.

The degree to which a test question distinguishes between high and low performers is measured by the discrimination coefficient. Determined by applying the following formula: A more significant coefficient, which is closer to 1, denotes better discrimination, while a lower number, which is closer to 0, denotes worse discrimination. The discrimination coefficient is calculated as (Correct Choices of the Top Group - Correct Choices of the Bottom Group) / Number of People in a Group. The discriminating coefficient is classified as low if it is less than 20%, medium between 20% and 34%, and high if it exceeds 35%. The study's discrimination coefficients are shown in the following tables and computations for "Utilizing an Instructional Higher-Order Thinking-Based Strategy to Improve EFL Critical Reading Skills".

TABLE 2
FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION OF DIFFICULTY COEFFICIENT AND DISCRIMINATION COEFFICIENT OF ALL QUESTIONS

Test	Percentage	Number	Definition	Difficulty coefficient
Higher-Order Thinking Strategy	12.5%	6	Difficult	>30
	55.0%	27	Medium	30-70
	32.5%	17	Easy	<70
	Percentage	Number	Definition	Discrimination coefficient
	45.0%	23	Low	<20
	20.0%	10	Medium	20-34
	35.0%	17	High	>34
Critical Reading Skills	Percentage	Number	Definition	Difficulty coefficient
	14.0%	7	Difficult	>30
	50.0%	25	Medium	30-70
	36.0%	18	Easy	<70
	Percentage	Number	Definition	Discrimination coefficient
	42.5%	21	Low	<20
	22.5%	11	Medium	20-34
	35.0%	17	High	>34

The mean discriminating and difficulty coefficients for the 50-person higher-order thinking-based strategy exams are 23.7 ± 6.40 and 58.0 ± 5.80 , respectively. Twenty per cent of the questions had a medium discrimination coefficient, fifty per cent had a medium difficulty coefficient, forty-five per cent had a low discrimination coefficient, and thirty-five per cent had a high discrimination coefficient.

For the Critical Reading Skills test involving 50 participants, the mean discrimination coefficient is 24.5 ± 6.20 , and the mean difficulty coefficient is 57.5 ± 5.70 . Of the questions, 50.0% had a medium difficulty coefficient, 42.5% had a low discrimination coefficient, 35.0% had a high discrimination coefficient, and 22.5% had a medium discrimination coefficient.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, internal consistency was measured as in Table 3 and 4.

TABLE 3
RESULTS OF VALIDITY OF HIGHER-ORDER THINKING-BASED STRATEGY

Variable	Statement	Internal Consistency	Sig
Higher-Order Thinking-Based Strategy	I find that using higher-order thinking strategies helps in understanding complex texts.	0.722	0.000*
	I use higher-order thinking strategies to analyze and interpret texts more effectively.	0.635	0.000*
	I believe that higher-order thinking strategies improve my ability to evaluate and synthesize information.	0.751	0.000*
	I find that higher-order thinking strategies help me connect ideas across different texts.	0.462	0.000*
	I use higher-order thinking strategies to enhance my critical reading skills.	0.619	0.000*
	I feel that higher-order thinking strategies increase my confidence in tackling difficult texts.	0.368	0.000*
	When using higher-order thinking strategies, I find it easier to identify underlying themes.	0.397	0.000*
	I find that higher-order thinking strategies make the reading process more engaging.	0.640	0.000*
	I regularly apply higher-order thinking strategies in my reading practice.	0.421	0.000*
	I believe that higher-order thinking strategies improve my overall reading comprehension.	0.507	0.000*

** Statistical significance at the level (0.01).

From the previous Table, the following is evident:

With correlation values ranging from 0.368 to 0.751, every item in the Higher-Order Thinking-Based Strategy variable exhibits strong internal consistency. This suggests that the items are closely related to the desired variable and effectively measure the construct of higher-order thinking methods.

TABLE 4
RESULTS OF VALIDITY OF EFL CRITICAL READING SKILLS

Variable	Statement	Internal Consistency	Sig
EFL Critical Reading Skills	I have noticed a significant improvement in my ability to comprehend complex texts.	0.701	0.000*
	Higher-order thinking strategies have enhanced my ability to analyze and critique texts.	0.594	0.000*
	I feel more confident in my ability to understand and interpret challenging reading materials.	0.752	0.000*
	Engaging with texts using higher-order thinking strategies has improved my critical thinking skills.	0.431	0.000*
	My ability to draw inferences from texts has improved due to the use of higher-order thinking strategies.	0.590	0.000*
	I use higher-order thinking strategies to enhance my comprehension of academic texts.	0.362	0.000*
	My critical reading skills have developed significantly through applying these strategies.	0.381	0.000*
	I apply higher-order thinking strategies systematically in my reading tasks.	0.689	0.000*
	I find that using these strategies makes understanding texts more manageable.	0.446	0.000*
	Higher-order thinking strategies have made my reading practice more effective.	0.507	0.000*

** Statistical significance at the level (0.01).

From the previous Table, the following is evident:

The correlation coefficients indicate Strong internal consistency, which varies from 0.362 to 0.752 for each item in the EFL Critical Reading Skills assessment. This suggests that the items are trustworthy measures of critical reading skills and appropriately represent the variable.

The Alpha Cronbach and Spearman-Brown coefficients for each variable were used to evaluate the questionnaire's reliability.

TABLE 5
RESULTS OF RELIABILITY OF EFL CRITICAL READING SKILLS & HIGHER-ORDER THINKING-BASED STRATEGY

Variable	Number of Items	Alpha	Spearman-Brown Coefficient
Higher-Order Thinking-Based Strategy	10	0.806	0.866
EFL Critical Reading Skills	10	0.811	0.872
Total	20	0.808	0.876

From the previous Table, the following is evident:

Observation: With values ranging from 0.806 to 0.811, the Alpha Cronbach values for both variables show high dependability. A good level of reliability is indicated by the overall Alpha Cronbach score of 0.808, which validates the

stability of the questionnaire in assessing EFL Critical Reading Skills and Higher-Order Thinking-Based Strategy.

Conclusion: The substantial internal consistency and high reliability coefficients further validate the credibility and dependability of the measurement tool used in the study. The reliability and consistency analyses confirm that the questionnaire is a robust tool for evaluating the effectiveness of the instructional higher-order thinking-based strategy in improving EFL critical reading skills.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The primary objective of the current study was to assess how effectively higher-order thinking strategies enhance critical reading skills. The study employed pretest and posttest evaluations to measure improvements in critical reading skills after using the higher-order thinking-based instructional approaches. The results were meant to provide insight into how these strategies impacted the students' reading abilities, and the results were analyzed using the T-Test to determine differences in performance.

TABLE 6
T-TEST RESULTS FOR THE ONE GROUP

Test	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std	T -Test	p- value
One Group	50	8	36	19.70	8.03	8.923	0.000**
Pre-Test	50	10	40	26.70	8.03		
Post-Test	50	9	38	23.20	8.03		
Difference	-	-2	-4	7.00	4.962		

** Statistically significant at the ($\alpha = 0.05$) level.

Table 6 illustrates the T-test results comparing students' performance in the One group after applying the higher-order thinking strategies. The Table presents data for both the pretest and posttest assessments.

The pretest mean score was 26.70, with a lowest score of 10 and a maximum score of 40, suggesting a fair distribution of results among the pupils. On the other hand, the posttest mean score ranged from 9 to 38, with a mean of 23.20. The standard deviation was constant at 8.03 even though the mean score dropped from the pretest to the posttest, suggesting that student performance varied similarly across the two assessments.

The T-test results show a T-value of 8.923 with a p-value of 0.000, statistically significant at the $\alpha = 0.05$ level. This suggests that there were notable differences in students' critical reading skills before and after implementing the higher-order thinking strategies, reflecting the effectiveness of these strategies in enhancing students' critical reading skills. The difference in mean scores indicates that while the pretest showed higher initial scores, the posttest revealed a decline, warranting further investigation into the factors influencing student performance post-intervention.

Based on these results, it can be concluded that the higher-order thinking-based strategy had a positive and significant impact on improving students' critical reading skills compared to the traditional method. Thus, *the results support the effectiveness of the modern strategy in enhancing students' ability to analyze and understand texts more deeply.*

The effect size was calculated using the Eta square and Tau-U methods to measure the impact of higher-order thinking strategies on critical reading skills. The following Table shows the effect size results:

TABLE 7
EFFECT SIZE ANALYSIS OF THINKING-BASED STRATEGY

Effect Size Analysis	(η^2)	Tau -u	p- value	Effect size
Impact of Higher-Order Thinking Strategies	0.715	0.681	0.000*	Large

The results showed that the Eta coefficient is 0.715, meaning that 76.1% of student performance in critical reading skills change can be attributed to higher-order thinking strategies. When calculating the effect size using (Tau-U), the result was (P-value = 0.000, CI = 0.95%, 0.681), indicating that using higher-order thinking strategies to improve students' performance in critical reading skills was significant.

The questionnaire was distributed to the experimental sample, as shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR HIGHER-ORDER THINKING-BASED STRATEGY

N	Statement	Mean	Agreement Rate	Std Deviation	Arrangement
1	I find that using the higher-order thinking strategy enhances my ability to analyze texts.	4.20	84.00%	0.70	4
2	I use the higher-order thinking strategy to improve my critical evaluation of information.	4.35	87.00%	0.68	2
3	I find that employing the higher-order thinking strategy helps me develop creative solutions to problems.	4.10	82.00%	0.75	6
4	The higher-order thinking strategy aids me in drawing accurate inferences from texts.	4.30	86.00%	0.72	3
5	I believe the higher-order thinking strategy improves my ability to interpret complex information.	4.00	80.00%	0.80	7
6	I feel that using the higher-order thinking strategy increases my confidence in understanding reading materials.	4.50	90.00%	0.60	1
7	When I use the higher-order thinking strategy, I find it easier to explain ideas concisely.	4.15	83.00%	0.69	5
8	I find that using the higher-order thinking strategy makes the reading process more engaging and effective.	4.25	85.00%	0.70	8
9	I regularly apply the higher-order thinking strategy in my studies or work.	4.05	81.00%	0.77	9
10	I find that the higher-order thinking strategy simplifies complex ideas and enhances understanding.	4.40	88.00%	0.65	2
Total	-	4.23	84.70%	0.52	-

From the previous Table 8, the overall average for the higher-order thinking-based strategy is 4.23, with an agreement rate of 84.70%. This reflects a high level of agreement on the effectiveness of the strategy. The statement with the highest agreement was, "I feel that using the higher-order thinking strategy increases my confidence in understanding reading materials," with a Mean of 4.50. The second-highest agreement was for the statement, "I find that the higher-order thinking strategy simplifies complex ideas and enhances understanding," with a Mean of 4.40.

TABLE 9
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR IMPROVING EFL CRITICAL READING SKILLS

N	Statement	Mean	Agreement Rate	Std Deviation	Arrangement
1	I find that my ability to understand study texts has significantly increased.	4.55	91.00%	0.55	2
2	I feel that the higher-order thinking strategy enhances my ability to express ideas accurately and clearly.	4.48	89.50%	0.60	4
3	I have greater confidence in my ability to comprehend information after implementing higher-order thinking strategies.	4.20	84.00%	0.70	7
4	I find that using interactive exercises helps me develop my reading and comprehension skills.	4.38	87.50%	0.64	5
5	I have noticed an improvement in my ability to express ideas and opinions after engaging in reading exercises.	4.15	83.00%	0.75	8
6	My reading comprehension skills have noticeably improved since the beginning of the study.	4.60	92.00%	0.50	1
7	I have benefited greatly from reading exercises focused on developing reading comprehension skills.	4.50	90.00%	0.58	3
8	I use reading comprehension skills more effectively in various study areas.	4.30	86.00%	0.70	6
9	I systematically and systematically use reading comprehension skills to understand study materials.	4.00	80.00%	0.75	9
10	I find that the higher-order thinking strategy makes my reading process more efficient and straightforward.	4.45	89.00%	0.60	4
Total	-	4.41	88.20%	0.52	-

From Table 9, the overall average for improving EFL critical reading skills is 4.41, with an agreement rate of 88.20%. The highest agreement was for the statement, "My reading comprehension skills have noticeably improved since the beginning of the study," with a Mean of 4.60. The second-highest agreement was for the statement, "I find that my ability to understand study texts has significantly increased," with a Mean of 4.55.

The higher-order thinking technique statistically significantly impacts English as a foreign language learners' critical reading abilities. The association between critical reading abilities as the dependent variable and higher-order thinking approach as the independent variable was examined using simple linear regression to evaluate the validity of this

hypothesis. The following are the outcomes:

TABLE 10
MODEL COEFFICIENTS AND GOODNESS OF FIT FOR THE HIGHER-ORDER THINKING STRATEGIES REGRESSION ON CRITICAL READING SKILLS

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-test	Sig.
	B		Beta		
	0.953	0.141		6.611	0.000
Higher-order Thinking Strategies	0.0730	0.037	0.731	19.691	0.000
Correlation Coefficient	R		0.731a		
Coefficient of Determination (R ²)	R Square		0.534		
Adjusted R ²	Adjusted R Square		0.533		
Degrees of Freedom	Df		19		
F-test	F		387.717		
Significance	Sig.		0.000b		

Correlation is significant at the 1% level.

Accordingly, it can be noticed that:

Total Correlation Coefficient (R): The results show a statistically significant relationship between higher-order thinking strategies and critical reading skills at a 99% confidence level, with a total correlation value of 0.702. This strong positive correlation indicates the feasibility of studying this relationship using a simple linear regression model.

Coefficient of Determination (R²): The model's R² value is 0.493, indicating that higher-order thinking strategies explain 49.3% of the variance in critical reading skills. At the same time, the unexplained portion may be attributed to random error or other independent variables not considered.

F-test for Model Goodness of Fit: The F-test value is 328.657 at a 99% confidence level, indicating the model's quality with a good fit between the actual and estimated values of critical reading skills. This supports the validity of relying on the model's results to predict future values.

Model Equation: The regression model equation is as follows:

Critical Reading Skills=1.028+0.710(Higher-order Thinking Strategies) {Critical Reading Skills} = 1.028 + 0.710 {Higher-order Thinking Strategies} Critical Reading Skills=1.028+0.710(Higher Order Thinking Strategies)

It is evident from the equation that if the level of higher-order thinking strategies increases by 10%, the level of critical reading skills increases by 7.10%.

Based on the results of testing this hypothesis, the significance level is 0.00, which is lower than the significance level of 0.01, leading to the hypothesis's acceptance. This indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between higher-order thinking strategies and critical reading skills.

The researcher has categorized the results of the field study according to the variables set by the study in Utilizing an instructional higher-order thinking-based strategy to improve EFL critical reading Skills so that the benefit is more apparent, especially when formulating appropriate and applicable recommendations for each variable, as follows:

The study found significant improvements in students' critical reading skills and application of the higher-order thinking strategy. Participants reported enhanced understanding of study texts, improved ability to express ideas clearly, and increased confidence in analyzing information. The higher-order thinking strategy was more effective and systematic, leading to noticeable gains in critical reading abilities and overall reading efficiency. Interactive exercises further supported the development of these skills, making the reading process more enjoyable and effective for students.

The study revealed significant improvements in participants' critical reading skills after implementing instructional strategies and engagement in reading exercises. Participants reported notable increases in mean scores, reflecting enhanced abilities in understanding study texts, articulating ideas clearly, and confidently analyzing information. They also observed improvements in their overall reading comprehension proficiency and the effectiveness of critical reading skills across various study areas. Additionally, participants noted that their ability to express ideas and opinions had improved, contributing to a more efficient and effective reading process. This was confirmed by El Soufi and See (2019) and Yousefi and Mohammadi (2016), as they noted the positive effects of instructional strategies on improving critical reading skills. Susanti et al. (2020) and Nourdad et al. (2018) also showed that higher-order thinking strategies significantly boost cognitive and analytical skills among EFL students.

The results showed that pupils' critical reading abilities significantly improved after using the higher-order thinking-based technique. The study showed that participants' comprehension and analysis of complicated texts had significantly improved. After using the higher-order thinking technique, students demonstrated considerable gains in understanding and communicating concepts. Better articulation and clarity in their responses resulted from this strategy's facilitation of a more profound analysis of the study materials. Additionally, participants reported feeling more confident when using their critical reading abilities in various academic contexts. According to the study, students' ability to understand and assess texts significantly improved, demonstrating the significant influence of the teaching strategy. The method improved their capacity for efficient information synthesis, enhanced the reading experience, and increased productivity. Since students could apply these skills more confidently and effectively, this improved performance highlights how well the higher-order thinking-based approach fosters critical reading abilities. The results show that higher-order thinking

techniques can significantly enhance pupils' critical reading skills and academic achievement. Multiple researches have consistently shown that higher-order thinking techniques effectively strengthen critical reading abilities, highlighting their vital role in enhancing educational achievements.

V. CONCLUSION

The study's findings show that pupils' critical reading abilities significantly increase when higher-order thinking-based procedures are used. Participants demonstrated significant improvements in their ability to comprehend and evaluate study materials, articulate concepts effectively, and speak more confidently. Interactive exercises that improved the effectiveness and engagement of the reading process enabled this improvement. The study's conclusions are consistent with those of earlier investigations.

Incorporating higher-order thinking strategies into instructional strategies significantly enhances students' reading comprehension and overall academic performance. This study confirms through its results that targeted teaching methods improve students' critical thinking abilities while simultaneously making reading more effective and engaging for them.

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The Impact of Motivational Teaching Practice on Students' L2 Motivation, Positive L2 Self, and Classroom Engagement

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Abstract—Motivational teaching practice (MTP) is regarded as a determining factor on students' L2 (second language) motivation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. However, few studies have explored how MTP specifically enhances students' L2 motivation and their classroom engagement. The study investigated the impact of MTP on students' classroom engagement and evaluated its effectiveness in guiding students to develop positive L2 motivation. A six-week MTP intervention was conducted in university EFL classes. Likert-scale questionnaires were used to measure students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement pre-MTP and post-MTP intervention. Results of within-group and between-group comparisons revealed that the experimental class exhibited higher levels of post-experimental results in L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement compared to the pre-experimental results. Additionally, the experimental class also demonstrated higher levels of post-experimental results in L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement compared to the controlled class. These findings confirmed that MTP is an effective approach for enhancing students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self and classroom engagement in university EFL classrooms. Integrating MTP with positive psychology offers effective strategies in maintaining students' L2 motivation through the positive L2 learning experience.

Index Terms—motivational teaching practice (MTP), L2 motivation, positive L2 self, classroom engagement, tertiary education

I. INTRODUCTION

Second language (L2) learning motivation, or L2 motivation, has been a heatedly discussed topic in second language acquisition (SLA) area for over 50 years (Taguchi et al., 2009). L2 motivation is a psychological drive that initiates and keeps the process of learning a second or foreign language (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). For many L2 learners, lack of L2 motivation is one of the primary challenges hindering language learning progress. As a result, understanding how to keep and enhance L2 motivation has become a major focus in the L2 motivational research (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

The significance of L2 motivation has received rising recognition and brought attention to the L2 self in L2 learning (Lake, 2013), which was further supported by Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) (2005, 2009). However, the problem remains that L2 learners can show varying levels of motivation, and some even show negative L2 motivation in L2 learning experiences. For example, Lake (2013) linked Dörnyei's L2MSS theory with positive psychology, proposing the concept of positive L2 self. As Lake (2013) claimed, L2 learners who exhibit positive learning behaviors and approach their research with enthusiasm can easily develop positive L2 selves.

In English-expanding countries where English has limited attention in society, like China, Korea, and Japan (Kachru & Smith, 2008), creating a motivational classroom through effective teaching practices is still challenging for many EFL teachers. The English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom is a key context for EFL learning in these countries (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017), making the implementation of motivational teaching practice (MTP) framework essential. MTPs, or motivational teaching practices, include teaching strategies to generate students' initial L2 motivation and maintain their ongoing motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021).

The relationship between MTP, students' self-perception, and in-class responses to the teaching has been investigated in previous studies. Findings have shown that the implementation of MTP directly affects the students' motivational level and their classroom engagement (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008), as well as learning outcomes (Bernaus et al., 2009). In this way, students' classroom engagement has been regarded as a crucial measurement of both students' L2 motivation and the effectiveness of EFL teaching. Students' engagement in school is a broad concept that includes various school activities (Appleton et al., 2006; Fredricks et al., 2004); however, it narrows to students' classroom learning activities (Skinner et al., 2009) in this study, involving behavioral, emotional and cognitive engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004).

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By linking students' classroom engagement and positive L2 selves with teachers' implementation of MTP, this study reinforced the significance of positive psychology in enhancing students' L2 motivation, particularly on the aspect of boosting students' positive emotions in EFL classrooms.

A. Increasing Awareness of Positive Psychology in L2 Motivational Research

In the 2000s, L2 motivational research started to focus on the process-oriented approach. Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 motivational self-system (L2MSS) consisted of constructs ideal L2 self, ought-to L2 and L2 learning experience. However, researchers in the SLA field soon realized that not all motivated L2 learners have a high level of L2 motivation and enjoy the L2 learning process (Lake, 2013). In other words, these motivated L2 learners had L2 motivation but are too weak to maintain a long duration and tended to terminate the L2 learning when their L2 motivation was removed. Therefore, L2 motivational research began viewing L2 motivation as a complicated and dynamic concept. This was the critical time when positive psychology theories were brought into the L2 motivational research.

Lake (2013) proposed an L2 learner who has positive L2 motivation is known as a positive L2 self. A positive L2 self helps extend the language learning process, aligning with the focus on maintaining high learning quality (Lake, 2013). Meanwhile, influenced by the positive psychology, higher demands were given to EFL teachers to enhance learners' emotions, interest and attitudes, which were significant qualities of positive L2 self (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012).

Different categories have been made based on the learners' affection for learning languages (Lake, 2013). By linking L2 individuals to positive psychology, attempts have been made to demonstrate its positive functions, and it is believed that L2 learners can transform themselves into individuals who are more creative, knowledgeable, resilient, socially integrated, and healthy, which enables them to experience happiness simultaneously in the L2 classroom (Fredrickson, 2001). Dewaele (2012) argued that basic emotions play a significant role in triggering a sense of higher L2 motivation in the L2 learning process. This caused current L2 motivational research to look into the factors influencing L2 motivation from the lens of the L2 learning process (Lake, 2013).

The development of L2 motivation research, combined with the positive psychology, contributes to L2 learners' longer and stronger L2 motivation and further achieve authentic happiness from their L2 learning experiences. Achieving the authentic happiness of L2 learning is not solely based on sense and emotion but also requires L2 individuals to find the meaning within L2 learning, which is able to get from meaningful L2 learning activities and contexts.

B. Motivational Teaching Practice, Positive L2 Self and Classroom Engagement

Figure 1 introduces the focuses of MTP framework on four aspects: creating the basic motivational conditions, generating initial motivation, maintaining and protecting motivation, and encouraging retrospective self-evaluation (Dörnyei, 2001). Current MTP investigations have validated its practical application, such as Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) and Sugita et al. (2010). In more recent investigations, Henry et al. (2018) explored specific classroom activities that can enhance students' L2 motivation.

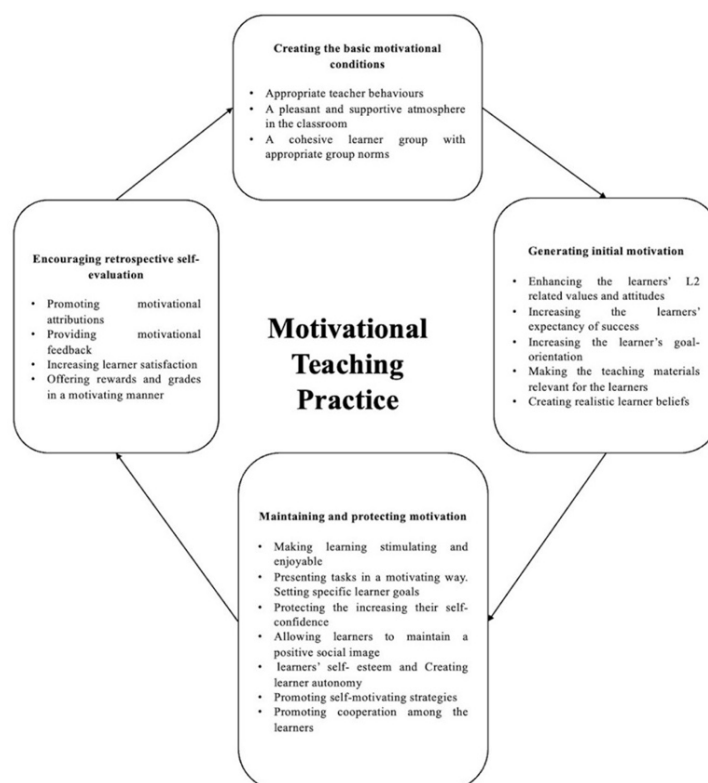


Figure 1. Caption: Four Key Components of Motivational Teaching Practice

L2 motivational research has evolved from traditional, static models to dynamic and multidimensional models (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021). Recent research on L2 motivation has developed to focus on how emotions affect learning (MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012). Research on positive L2 self focuses on students' positive traits, such as confidence (MacIntyre et al., 2016) and willingness to communicate (MacIntyre et al., 1998); however, few studies have explained how to assist L2 learners in building and developing positive L2 selves in EFL classrooms, which is the gap in this study. This gap connects students' self-perceptions to their L2 motivation, and raises teachers' awareness of designing positive and motivating EFL classrooms for more effective EFL teaching and learning outcomes, rather than relying on traditional curriculum-based motivating teaching methods.

Classroom engagement (CE) reflects students' responses to MTP, and has gained rising attention. Recent studies have shifted from behavioral engagement to emotional engagement, including students' interests (Skinner et al., 2009), and its impact on learning outcomes (Liu et al., 2024). Cognitive engagement has also become a key focus, especially the ways to enhance it (Reeve, 2012). Therefore, in this study, students' classroom engagement is regarded as a response to their self-perceptions and teacher's implementation of MTP, suggesting that MTP is effective in helping L2 learners develop positive L2 selves. The three research questions (RQs) were:

RQ1: What are the pre-MTP intervention levels (T1) of students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self and classroom engagement in both experimental and controlled classes?

RQ2: What are the effects of MTP intervention in the experimental class?

RQ3: What are the post-MTP intervention levels (T2) of students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self and classroom engagement in both experimental and controlled classes? What are the differences between the two classes?

II. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study designed an interventional experimental research method to examine the effects of MTP during a six-week EFL course. As shown in Figure 2, before the MTP intervention, students' levels of L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement were measured in two classes. Based on the experimental results, this study compares the differences within each class and between the two classes.

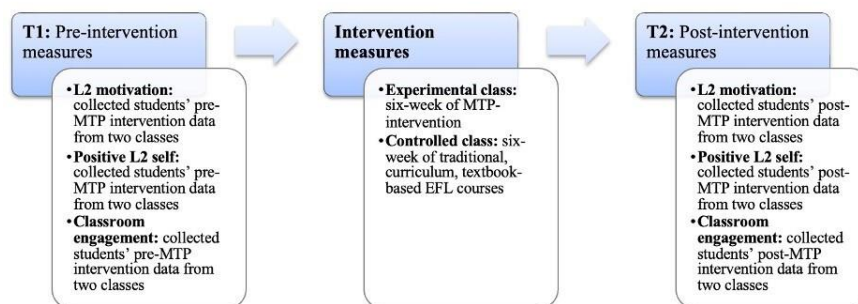


Figure 2. Caption: Research Design

A. Participants

All students from the two non-English major classes were invited to take part in this study. The students were 61 first-year undergraduates aged 19 to 21. They had been studying English for a minimum of ten years. The teacher had been teaching the College English Course at a Chinese university for more than five years. Before completing the questionnaires, students were reminded by the teacher to respond to all items, which avoided any missing data.

B. Instruments

(a). Intervention Instrument

The teacher designed MTP-based activities following Dörnyei's MTP framework (2001a) in the experimental class for 12 sessions, but only used motivating activities as required by the curriculum in the controlled class, the comparisons of the teaching in the two classes are displayed in Table 1.

TABLE 1
IMPLEMENTATION OF MOTIVATIONAL TEACHING PRACTICE IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

Dimensions	Experimental class	Controlled Class
Creating basic motivational conditions	using visualized methods, various teaching resources	not deliberately created, textbook-based
Unit 2 (Session 1 & 2)	Yes (music)	-
Unit 2 (Session 3 & 4)	Yes (music)	-
Unit 3 (Session 1 & 2)	Yes (video)	-
Unit 3 (Session 3 & 4)	Yes (video)	-
Unit 5 (Session 1 & 2)	Yes (video)	-
Unit 5 (Session 3 & 4)	Yes (video)	-
Generating initial motivation	generate earlier	generate later or not prepared
Unit 2 (Session 1 & 2)	unit and today's learning objectives	unit learning objectives
Unit 2 (Session 3 & 4)	today's learning objectives	unclear
Unit 3 (Session 1 & 2)	unit and today's learning objectives	teacher-student interaction
Unit 3 (Session 3 & 4)	today's learning objectives	unclear
Unit 5 (Session 1 & 2)	unit and today's learning objectives	teacher-student interaction
Unit 5 (Session 3 & 4)	today's learning objectives	unclear
Maintaining and protecting motivation	use different MTP-based activities	based on curriculum
Unit 2 (Session 1 & 2)	9 times	3 times
Unit 2 (Session 3 & 4)	8 times	5 times
Unit 3 (Session 1 & 2)	8 times	3 times
Unit 3 (Session 3 & 4)	10 times	5 times
Unit 5 (Session 1 & 2)	8 times	3 times
Unit 5 (Session 3 & 4)	9 times	4 times
Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation	included in the activities	not included in the activities
Unit 2 (Session 1 & 2)	Yes	-
Unit 2 (Session 3 & 4)	Yes	-
Unit 3 (Session 1 & 2)	Yes	-
Unit 3 (Session 3 & 4)	Yes	-
Unit 5 (Session 1 & 2)	Yes	-
Unit 5 (Session 3 & 4)	Yes	-

(b). *Pre- and Post-Intervention Measuring Instruments*

The *L2 Motivational Questionnaire* was in five-point Likert scale, adapted from Taguchi's (2009) validated questionnaire to measure EFL learners' L2 motivational level. During the pilot study, some repetitive items in the original questionnaire were removed to avoid overlap. A total of 29 items were included in the final questionnaire with three subscales: ideal L2 self ($n = 12$), ought-to L2 self ($n = 9$), L2 learning experience ($n = 10$). The Cronbach's alpha values were: overall motivation (0.961), ideal L2 self (0.934), ought-to L2 self (0.842), and L2 learning experience (0.930), indicating a high reliability. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to identify the three constructs of L2 motivation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was 0.902, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($\chi^2 = 3058.652$, $df = 406$, $p = 0.000$), showing the adequacy of the data for factor analysis. The cumulative variance explained by the extracted components was 61.003%.

The *Questionnaire of Positive L2 Self* was in five-point Likert scale. It experienced the same procedure of reliability and validity check. It was adapted from Lake (2013) for assessing students' positive L2 self with constructs of ideal L2 self, interested L2 self, harmonious passion, and mastery L2 goal orientation. The final questionnaire had 26 items with four subscales: ideal L2 self ($n = 6$), interested L2 self ($n = 7$), harmonious passion ($n = 6$), and mastery L2 goal orientation ($n = 7$). In this study, the Cronbach's alpha values were: overall positive L2 self (0.969), ideal L2 self (0.906), interested L2 self (0.891), harmonious passion (0.928) and mastery L2 goal orientation (0.916). The KMO value was 0.926, and Bartlett's test was significant ($\chi^2 = 3042.137$, $df = 325$, $p = 0.000$), showing that the variables were sufficiently correlated for factor analysis. The cumulative variance explained by the extracted components was 73.015%.

The *Questionnaire of Classroom Engagement*, a five-point Likert scale, was adapted from the *Questionnaire of Learners' School Engagement* (Fredricks et al., 2004), which was originally designed to measure students' overall school engagement. This study focused on classroom engagement, so items not applicable to the classroom context were removed. The final questionnaire had 12 items with three subscales: behavioral engagement ($n = 4$), emotional engagement ($n = 4$), cognitive engagement ($n = 4$). The Cronbach's alpha values were: overall classroom engagement (0.847), behavioral engagement (0.954), emotional engagement (0.893), and cognitive engagement (0.876). The KMO value was 0.809, and Bartlett's test was significant ($\chi^2 = 1131.750$, $df = 66$, $p < 0.001$). The cumulative variance explained by the extracted components was 79.544%.

(c). *Data Collection Procedure*

Data collection started after receiving participants' consent forms. To evaluate pre-MTP intervention levels (T1) of students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self and classroom engagement, three questionnaires were given to two classes. During the experimental stage, the experimental class followed the four-step MTP framework, while the controlled class

received traditional, curriculum, textbook-based EFL course. In the post-experimental stage, students were asked to complete the same three questionnaires one more time and their post-MTP intervention levels (T2) were measured. This study applied independent-samples t-tests and Mann-Whitney U tests to analyze T1 and T2 data. Methods of log10 transformation and bootstrap were used to deal with non-normal data and independent-samples t-tests were applied for the normal data. To measure the effect of MTP intervention within the experimental class, paired-samples t-tests were applied.

(d). Data Analysis

This study used SPSS to do statistical analyses. Descriptive statistics for measuring students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement taken at pre-MTP intervention (T1) and post-MTP intervention (T2) are explained in the following section. The main findings were displayed to three decimal places from the statistical analyses conducted to address the research questions.

III. RESULTS

A. Pre-Intervention Measures (T1)

Figure 3 presents the measurements of pre-intervention results for both experimental and controlled classes. In the experimental class, students' L2 motivation was 2.930, positive L2 self was 3.190, and classroom engagement was 2.830. The controlled class showed slightly higher but no significant difference, with L2 motivation at 3.058, positive L2 self at 3.439, and classroom engagement at 2.911.



Figure 3. Caption: Comparison of Pre-Experimental Data Between Two Classes

Statistical tests were applied to measure the pre-MTP intervention data, as displayed in Table 2. For students' L2 motivation, after applying log10 transformation and bootstrap methods, the data of ought-to L2 self remained non-normal. Therefore, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze the data of ought-to L2 self, while the independent-samples t-test was used to assess L2 motivation, ideal L2 self, and L2 learning experience. The results indicated no significant differences between the two classes before the experiment in L2 motivation ($p = 0.374$), ideal L2 self ($p = 0.526$), ought-to L2 self ($p = 0.876$), and L2 learning experience ($p = 0.380$).

For students' positive L2 self, the data for harmonious passion and mastery L2 goal orientation remained non-normal after using log10 transformation and bootstrap methods. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was employed to analyze the harmonious passion and mastery L2 goal orientation data, while the independent-samples t-test was used to examine positive L2 self, ideal L2 self, and interested L2 self. The results indicated no significant differences between the two classes before the experiment in positive L2 self ($p = 0.113$), ideal L2 self ($p = 0.062$), interested L2 self ($p = 0.296$), harmonious passion ($p = 0.127$) and mastery L2 goal orientation ($p = 0.313$).

The classroom engagement and its three constructs remained non-normal after using log10 transformation and bootstrap methods. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was utilized for analysis. The results indicated no significant differences between the two classes before the experiment in classroom engagement ($p = 0.930$), behavioral engagement ($p = 0.616$), emotional engagement ($p = 0.923$), and cognitive engagement ($p = 0.427$).

TABLE 2
CAPTION: PRE-MTP INTERVENTION RESULTS

Tests	Measurements	t-value or U-value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Independent-samples t-test	L2 motivation	-0.896	0.374
	ideal L2 self	-0.638	0.526
	L2 learning experience	-2.117	0.380
Mann-Whitey U test	ought-to L2 self	452.500	0.867
Independent-samples t-test	positive L2 self	-1.611	0.113
	ideal L2 self	-1.903	0.062
	interested L2 self	-1.055	0.296
Mann-Whitey U test	harmonious passion	360.000	0.127
	mastery L2 goal orientation	394.500	0.313
Mann-Whitey U test	classroom engagement	458.000	0.930
	behavioral engagement	430.000	0.616
	emotional engagement	457.500	0.923
	cognitive engagement	410.500	0.427

Note: No statistically significant results were observed ($P \geq 0.05$)

B. Effect of Intervention

Presented in Table 3, paired-samples t-test results revealed significant changes between the pre- and post-experimental data in the experimental class, with three questionnaires showing p-values below 0.05, except the emotional engagement of the classroom engagement.

TABLE 3
CAPTION: EFFECT OF MTP INTERVENTION IN THE EXPERIMENTAL CLASS

Paired-samples t-test	Pairing Dimension	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	P-value
Pair 1	L2 motivation 1– L2 motivation 2	1.037	0.513	<0.001***
			0.642	
Pair 2	ideal L2 self 1– ideal L2 self 2	0.779	0.705	<0.001***
			0.792	
Pair 3	ought-to L2 self 1 – ought-to L2 self 2	0.665	0.545	<0.001***
			0.755	
Pair 4	L2 learning experience 1– L2 learning experience 2	1.606	0.411	<0.001***
			0.519	
Pair 5	positive L2 self 1 – positive L2 self 2	1.075	0.594	<0.001***
			0.520	
Pair 6	ideal L2 self 1– ideal L2 self 2	0.730	0.747	<0.001***
			0.782	
Pair 7	interested L2 self 1– interested L2 self 2	1.094	0.599	<0.001***
			0.558	
Pair 8	harmonious passion 1– harmonious passion 2	1.299	0.629	<0.001***
			0.470	
Pair 9	mastery L2 goal orientation 1– mastery L2 goal orientation 2	1.163	0.598	<0.001***
			0.447	
Pair 10	classroom engagement 1– classroom engagement 2	0.707	0.570	<0.001***
			0.550	
Pair 11	behavioral engagement 1– behavioral engagement 2	1.017	1.068	0.01*
			1.026	
Pair 12	emotional engagement 1– emotional engagement 2	0.327	0.897	0.154
			0.682	
Pair 13	cognitive engagement 1– cognitive engagement 2	0.776	0.831	0.001***
			0.855	

Note: *Significance level: * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$, no significance ($P \geq 0.05$)

In Table 4, the results for the controlled class revealed a clear contrast to the experimental class. While the ideal L2 self and L2 learning experience scales from the *L2 Motivational Questionnaire*, along with the interested L2 self scale from the *Questionnaire of Positive L2 Self*, had p-values below 0.05, indicating some statistically significant changes, the remaining scales exhibited p-values above 0.05. This indicated that the traditional curriculum textbook-based EFL course had limited impact on the controlled class in general, with only small changes in the measured variables.

Although the overall effect of the traditional curriculum textbook-based EFL course was small, three pairs of variables showed changes. Ought-to L2 self (Pair 3) increased (mean difference = 0.121, $p = 0.007$), implying students felt a stronger sense of responsibility for learning. Mastery L2 goal orientation (Pair 9) also increased (mean difference = 0.145, $p = 0.015$), implying that students became more focused on their learning goals. Classroom engagement (Pair 10) increased as well (mean difference = 0.242, $p = 0.003$), implying that students participated more in classroom activities. These changes were likely caused by other factors or natural growth during the study, which was explained in the data analysis part in this paper, not some motivational teaching activities designed by the curriculum.

TABLE 4
CAPTION: EFFECT OF EFL COURSE IN THE CONTROLLED CLASS

Paired-samples t-test	Pairing Dimension	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	P-value
Pair 1	L2 motivation 1– L2 motivation 2	0.068	0.597 0.404	0.113
Pair 2	ideal L2 self 1– ideal L2 self 2	0.044	0.780 0.585	0.307
Pair 3	ought-to L2 self 1 – ought-to L2 self 2	0.121	0.718 0.599	0.007**
Pair 4	L2 learning experience 1– L2 learning experience 2	0.059	0.482 0.245	0.372
Pair 5	positive L2 self 1 – positive L2 self 2	0.051	0.489 0.611	0.085
Pair 6	ideal L2 self 1– ideal L2 self 2	0.088	0.834 0.701	0.161
Pair 7	interested L2 self 1– interested L2 self 2	0.049	0.532 0.423	0.261
Pair 8	harmonious passion 1– harmonious passion 2	0.031	0.608 0.585	0.031*
Pair 9	mastery L2 goal orientation 1– mastery L2 goal orientation 2	0.041	0.710 0.567	0.419
Pair 10	classroom engagement 1– classroom engagement 2	0.145	0.670 0.591	0.015*
Pair 11	behavioral engagement 1– behavioral engagement 2	0.242	1.241 1.096	0.003**
Pair 12	emotional engagement 1– emotional engagement 2	0.203	0.983 0.800	0.185
Pair 13	cognitive engagement 1– cognitive engagement 2	-0.008	0.711 0.665	0.891
Note: *Significance level: *P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001, no significance (P ≥ 0.05)				

C. Post-Intervention Measures (T2)

According to the post-intervention results, the MTP intervention led to significant increases in students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement, with the experimental class showing a higher score than the controlled class.

(a). Students' L2 Motivation

Independent-samples t-tests were used to measure students' post-L2 motivation and its dimensions. Initially, the data were non-normal, so a log10 transformation was performed. After the log10 transformation, the data for L2 motivation, ideal L2 self, and L2 learning experience were normalized, so the independent-samples t-test was conducted on the ought-to L2 self and transformed L2 motivation, transformed ideal L2 self, and transformed L2 learning experience.

The results showed significant differences between the experimental and controlled classes in L2 motivation ($p < 0.001$). The experimental class scored significantly higher in overall L2 motivation (mean = 0.593) than the controlled class (mean = 0.491). To further explore the three dimensions of L2 motivation, the ideal L2 self showed a significant difference, as the p-value of log10 ideal L2 self was 0.002, with the experimental class (mean = 0.568) scoring higher than the controlled class (mean = 0.493). The ought-to L2 self also showed a significant difference ($p = 0.002$), with the experimental class scoring higher (mean = 3.798) than the controlled class (mean = 3.228). The most significant difference was in L2 learning experience ($p < 0.001$), where the experimental class had a mean of 0.631 compared to 0.476 in the controlled class.

(b). Positive L2 Self

Independent-samples t-tests were applied to measure students' post-positive L2 self and its four constructs, as the data were normally distributed. Following the MTP intervention, students' positive L2 self showed a significant difference between two classes ($p < 0.001$). The experimental class had a mean score of 4.265, while the controlled class scored 3.490. Table 5 further presented four dimensions of students' positive L2 self. The MTP intervention had a strong effect on students' interested L2 self ($p < 0.001$). The experimental class had a mean of 4.227, compared to 3.335 for the controlled class. Harmonious passion also showed a significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between the two classes. The experimental class showed a higher mean of 4.483, compared to 3.479 in the controlled class. Additionally, mastery L2 goal orientation was significantly different ($p < 0.001$), with the experimental class achieving a higher mean of 4.404 compared to 3.495 in the controlled class. However, for the ideal L2 self, although the experimental class had a slightly higher mean of 3.931 compared to 3.677 for the controlled class, the difference was not statistically significant ($p = 0.186$).

(c). Students' Classroom Engagement

For students' post-classroom engagement, the data were initially non-normal. After applying the log10 transformation and bootstrap methods, log10 classroom engagement and log10 cognitive engagement became normally distributed;

however, the behavioral engagement and emotional engagement remained non-normal. As a result, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze behavioral and emotional engagement, while the independent-samples t-test was used to analyze classroom engagement and cognitive engagement.

In Table 5, the results of independent-samples t-test showed the impact of the MTP intervention on classroom engagement, particularly the cognitive engagement. For classroom engagement, the experimental class had a higher mean under log10 classroom engagement (mean = 0.509) compared to the controlled class (mean = 0.408), with the difference being statistically significant ($p = 0.019$). Similarly, for cognitive engagement, the experimental class scored significantly higher (mean = 0.544) than the controlled class (mean = 0.478) under log10 cognitive engagement, with a p-value of 0.001, highlighting a significant improvement. Meanwhile, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to analyze behavioral engagement and emotional engagement. For behavioral engagement, the experimental class had a median of 4.000 and IQR of 2.250 while the controlled class had a median of 3.750 and IQR of 4.000. However, p-value ($p = 0.288$) suggested the MTP intervention did not lead to meaningful differences between the two classes. In contrast, for emotional engagement, the experimental class had the median of 3.250 and IQR of 3.000 while the controlled class had the median of 2.500 and IQR of 2.500. The p-value ($p = 0.002$) suggested a significant difference between two classes on emotional engagement after MTP intervention.

TABLE 5
CAPTION: POST-MTP INTERVENTION RESULTS

CAPTION: POST-MTP INTERVENTION RESULTS

Tests	Measurements	Class	Mean	t value	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Independent-samples t-test	log10 L2 motivation	ex	0.593	6.067	<0.001***	
		con	0.491			
	log10 ideal L2 self	ex	0.568	3.236	0.002**	
		con	0.493			
	ought-to L2 self	ex	3.798	3.284	0.002**	
		con	3.228			
	log10 L2 learning experience	ex	0.631	3.328	<0.001***	
		con	0.476			
Independent-samples t-test	positive L2 self	ex	4.265	5.997	<0.001***	
		con	3.490			
	ideal L2 self	ex	3.931	1.337	0.186	
		con	3.677			
	interested L2 self	ex	4.227	7.078	<0.001***	
		con	3.335			
	harmonious passion	ex	4.483	7.339	<0.001***	
		con	3.479			
mastery L2 goal orientation	ex	4.404	6.901	<0.001***		
	con	3.495				
Independent-samples t-test	log10 classroom engagement	ex	0.509	2.404	0.019*	
		con	0.408			
	log10 cognitive engagement	ex	0.544	3.432	0.001***	
		con	0.478			
Mann-Whitey U test	Measurements	Class	Median	IQR	U value	Sig. (2-tailed)
	behavioral engagement	ex	4.000	2.250	391.000	0.288
		con	3.750	4.000		
	emotional engagement	ex	3.250	3.000	254.500	0.002**
		con	2.500	2.500		
	Note: *Significance level: *P < 0.05, **P < 0.01, ***P < 0.001, no significance (P > 0.05)					

Note: *Significance level: * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$, no significance ($P \geq 0.05$)

IV. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the impact of the MTP intervention in EFL teaching in terms of students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement. T1 data addressing RQ 1 showed no statistically significant differences between the experimental and controlled classes before the MTP intervention, confirming that the post-intervention changes can be attributed to the MTP intervention rather than pre-existing differences.

The results of RQ 2 showed significant differences in all dimensions of the L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement, except the emotional engagement, emphasizing the impact of the MTP intervention, confirming its potential as a valuable tool for the SLA area, which was connected with earlier research (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). The results implied the MTP intervention was effective in supporting the development of positive L2 self, L2 motivation, and classroom engagement. As shown in Figure 4, following the six-week MTP intervention, average increases were: L2 motivation (1.037), positive L2 self (1.075) and classroom engagement (0.707), suggesting the MTP intervention could largely increase students' participation in the classroom.

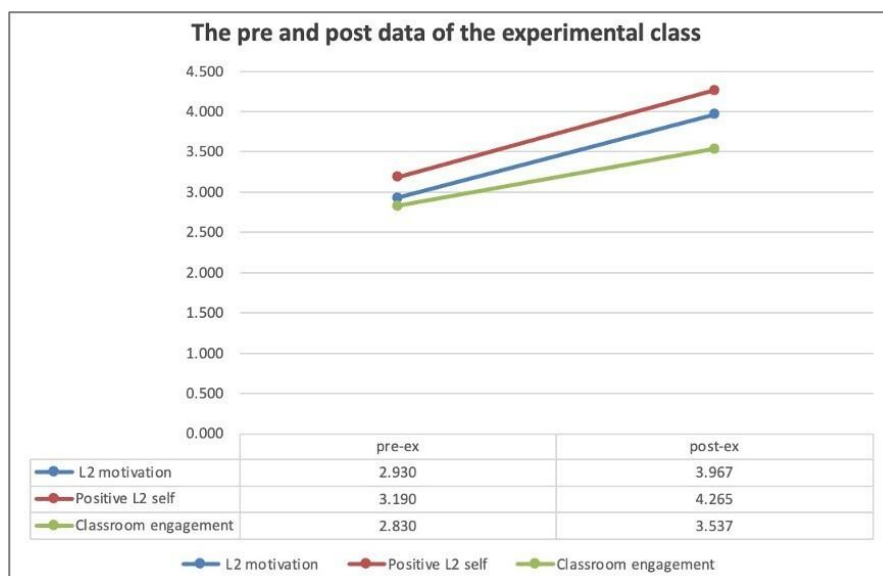


Figure 4. Caption: Pre- and Post-Intervention Comparison in the Experimental Class

However, the emotional engagement in the experimental class displayed a higher but not significant difference. One possible reason for its slight but not significant difference could be the short duration of MTP intervention. Another critical reason could be the influence of external pressure. In Chinese higher education, all the first-year university students face academic demands, particularly from English proficiency examinations such as College English Test (CET) 4 and 6. These examinations are graduation requirements, so students' emotions towards EFL learning may be subconsciously influenced (Wang & Zhan, 2020). The data revealed that students struggled to feel more positive emotions under such circumstances; hence, promoting students' emotional engagement to the greatest extent has always been a huge challenge for teachers (Wang & Liu, 2023).

In contrast, the controlled class showed slight changes primarily in classroom engagement, which were likely due to students' ongoing participation in structured EFL courses where external factors are present rather than the MTP intervention (Lamb, 2017). As shown in Figure 5, the mean change of L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement was 0.068, 0.051, and 0.145 respectively, suggesting the traditional curriculum-based EFL course could increase students' participation in the classroom, the effect of which was limited.

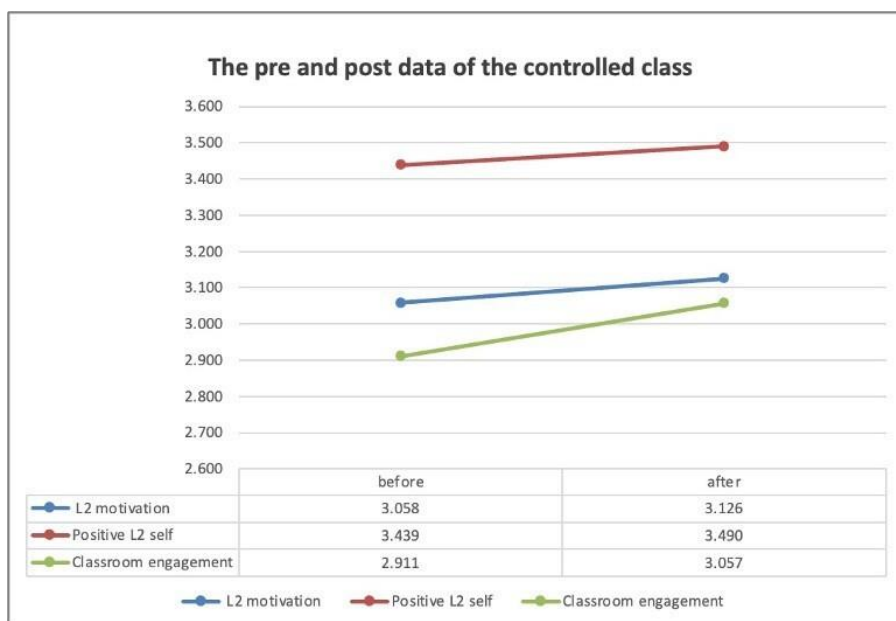


Figure 5. Caption: Pre- and Post-Intervention Comparison in the Controlled Class

The slight increases in the variables in the controlled class were likely due to some applied MTP activities based on the teaching syllabus, such as discussions and visualized tasks. However, these activities, such as Q&A discussions, were less frequent than those applied in the experimental class. In addition, most students in the controlled class who continued learning English during their first year at university might have been driven by external factors, such as the necessity of taking required English proficiency examinations, including the CET 4 and 6 (Wang & Zhan, 2020).

The results addressing RQ 3 confirmed significant differences between the experimental and controlled classes across three variables. As shown in Figure 6, the MTP intervention had a clear impact on the experimental class. Before the MTP intervention, there were no significant differences between the two classes. The controlled class had slightly higher scores in L2 motivation (by 0.758), positive L2 self (by 0.249), and classroom engagement (by 0.081) compared to the experimental class. However, after the MTP intervention, the experimental class achieved higher levels in all three variables compared to the controlled class, with L2 motivation higher by 0.841, positive L2 self by 0.775, and classroom engagement by 0.480.

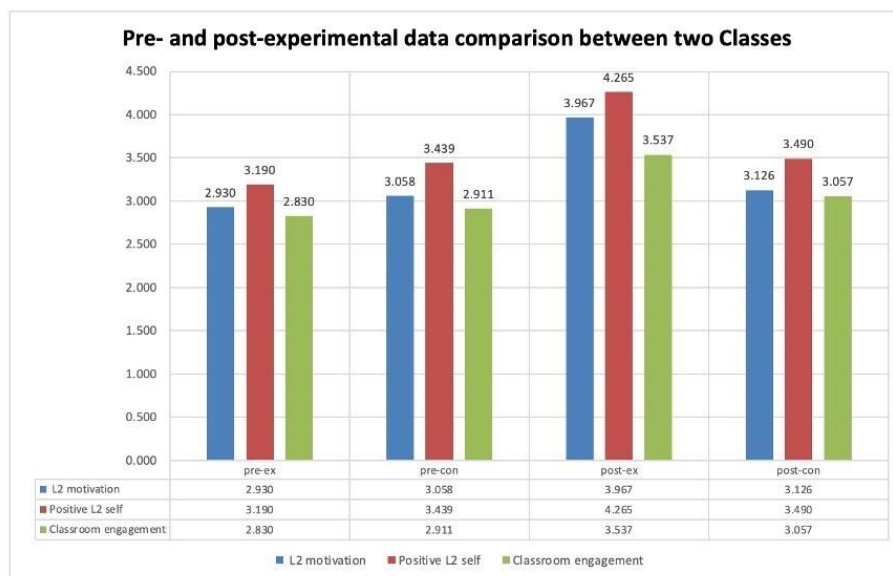


Figure 6. Caption: Pre- and Post-Experimental Data Comparison Between Two Classes

The findings expanded L2MSS by emphasizing the critical role of positive emotions in the EFL learning process. Data from the experimental class showed the use of MTPs, such as cultural-based discussions or role plays, connected English learning to real-life contexts, providing a stronger sense of commitment to their L2 learning journey (Lamb, 2017). It developed students' positive emotions, making them perceive language learning as a meaningful and enjoyable part of their personal growth.

The findings also suggested that the MTP intervention could encourage learners to imagine themselves as capable English users. Activities such as scenario-based discussions (Xie, 2019) and reviewing daily learning objectives (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2021) may have helped students create a clearer picture of their future L2 selves. However, no significant changes were found in behavioral engagement, requiring further exploration into strategies to enhance external L2 motivation. It also showed that external factors, such as meeting social expectations or fulfilling responsibilities, were less effective than intrinsic motivation in sustaining long-term engagement and learning outcomes (Wang, 2024). Therefore, teachers should be aware of the importance of helping students develop a sense of achievement and see themselves as successful language users who actively participate in and accomplish classroom activities.

The MTP intervention also proved effective in enhancing students' L2 motivation, contributing to their personal growth (Lake, 2013). Post-classroom engagement data revealed that MTP activities greatly increased students' cognitive engagement in EFL classes. As Yashima (2002) mentioned, a deeper cross-cultural understanding can increase students' L2 motivation and cognitive engagement; hence, collaborative and interactive discussions, especially cultural-based discussions, should be frequently applied and highly valued in the MTP framework. Incorporating cross-cultural content, the MTP intervention offers a balanced approach to enhance both language skills and cultural understanding in EFL learning.

V. CONCLUSION

As a result of the MTP intervention, significant positive effects were observed in the experimental class on students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement. By integrating positive psychology with L2 motivational research and developing students' positive L2 self, the MTP framework enhances the connection between MTP and students' self-perceptions as well as their positive responses. This study contributes to the limited research on students' L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement in English classrooms where the MTP framework is implemented. Frequent use of the MTP framework, especially focusing on maintaining L2 motivation, can enhance students' L2 motivation for EFL learning.

In addition, this paper calls on EFL teachers to be aware of their role as facilitators rather than knowledge transmitters in promoting students' classroom engagement through L2 motivational research. First, teachers should focus on

facilitating rather than controlling or demanding students' L2 learning, which helps create an engaging and motivating context to encourage students' active participation. Second, the findings suggest that EFL teachers integrate positive psychology when implementing MTP, providing a supportive and relaxing learning atmosphere for students, which is essential for the development of EFL teaching.

A key limitation of the current study is that it lacks a universally effective MTP for maintaining L2 learners' L2 motivation. Therefore, future research is important to explore more details on the application of MTP in EFL classrooms in various learning themes. Additionally, the study focused only on university students, limiting the applicability of the findings to other demographic groups. Furthermore, the six-week duration of the MTP intervention may not fully capture its long-lasting effects, so longitudinal research is needed to evaluate the sustained impact of the MTP intervention.

Future research should address these limitations. Future research can explore the dynamic interactions among L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement using structural equation modeling (SEM). Another direction for future research is to analyze differences across subgroups, such as students with varying levels of initial motivation or cultural backgrounds, to reveal which conditions make MTP intervention more effective. In addition, longitudinal studies are necessary to assess the durability of the intervention's impact, and advanced analytical methods such as SEM could provide insights into the dynamic relationships among L2 motivation, positive L2 self, and classroom engagement. Finally, it is essential to expand the scope of MTP to different students learning various themes under diverse cultural contexts. This can enhance the adaptability and applicability of MTP and provide valuable far-reaching implications and contributions to the improvement in EFL teaching practices worldwide. In conclusion, enhancing EFL teachers' ability to design positive and motivating EFL classrooms through the MTP framework broadens the application of L2 motivational research and enhances students' awareness of the importance of EFL learning.

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Being a Saudi Before Becoming One: Al Biqā'ī's Capitalisation of Paratexts in His Translations of French Books About Arabia

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Abstract—This paper examines the paratexts of Muhammad Khair Al Biqā'ī's translations of French books about Saudi Arabia into Arabic as a socially-situated activity. Drawing on Bourdieu's theory of practice, it analyses Al Biqā'ī's paratextual zone, with particular focus given to prefaces as a site of self-promotion in terms of capital. The Syrian-born translator has recently acquired Saudi citizenship and national prizes of high symbolic capital due to his individual efforts in the field of translation. Al Biqā'ī stands out as one of the few eminent specialists from different fields who have been naturalised as a Saudi citizen by a royal decree in the first wave of such naturalisations in 2021, which offers a unique case for the study of the capitalisation of translation. It is argued here that Al Biqā'ī successfully capitalised the paratexts of his translation products, namely French books about Saudi Arabia, to show how Saudi he is even before acquiring Saudi citizenship. Through an analysis of Al Biqā'ī's paratextual elements (from 2001 to 2020), this study identifies and critically examines the mechanisms of capital through which the translator, then a Syrian national, attempted to promote and distinguish himself and his works. The findings illuminate how paratexts are used as a tool by translators to draw a certain image of themselves.

Index Terms—Muhammad Khair Al Biqā'ī, social capital, symbolic capital, paratexts, sociology of translation

I. INTRODUCTION

Translators are mostly invisible and lost between the lines of translations where the source authors' voices are the only voices heard. Hence, paratexts provide translators with a public space through which their voices are raised and heard outside the lines of their translation products, making them, to use Venuti's (1995) words, 'visible'. Therefore, in the contemporary field of Translation Studies (TS), the notion of paratexts—those supplementary elements that frame a text, such as introductions, footnotes, glossaries, and authorial comments—has garnered increasing scholarly attention. Traditionally, paratexts have been viewed as mere aids to comprehension, providing readers with necessary contextual information and a description of the translation choices taken by translators. However, such a perspective overlooks a crucial dimension of paratexts: their role as a site for the sociological dynamics of translation. Very few have investigated the means by which paratexts become places where translators can signal their agenda, their ideological sympathies, or antipathy towards the author or text (Batchelor, 2018). Paratexts also become venues where the personal interests of translators are exposed.

This article is set out to develop a new reading of paratexts, as a dynamic site of capital employed by a translator to promote a certain image of himself, based on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice. To this end, the study critically examines the then-Syrian translator Muhammad Khair Al Biqā'ī's paratexts of his translation products of French books about Saudi Arabia (from 2001 to 2020, published inside and outside the Kingdom) as a socially-situated activity. Al Biqā'ī, who has recently acquired Saudi citizenship, dedicates a significant part of the paratextual elements of his translation products about Saudi Arabia to portray himself as loyal to the Kingdom, even before acquiring Saudi citizenship. This study illuminates how translators embed their personal stakes within the paratexts, thereby leveraging them as strategic tools for self-promotion and capital accumulation. Al Biqā'ī offers a unique case of such a capitalisation of translation through paratexts where it has paid dividends to him by acquiring Saudi citizenship in 2021.

The following sections present an overview of translational paratexts, drawing on Bourdieu's sociology, and reconceptualise translation as an investment capitalised by translators. Then, a biographical account of Al Biqā'ī is provided to help gain an understanding of how paratexts can serve translators' interests. Finally, an investigation of his paratextual elements is carried out to identify the mechanisms of capital employed by the translator to promote an intended image of himself.

II. TRANSLATIONAL PARATEXTS

The translator's investment in a translation is played out first and foremost in the 'paratextual' zone, which surrounds the text. According to Genette (1997), paratextual elements can be classified into two main categories: peritext and epitext.

The former includes: elements inserted into the core of the text, such as a book's framing, the presentation of a book, the preface, and the notes; while the latter describes "distanced elements" that are the messages located outside the book such as the interviews, letters, diaries (Genette, 1997, p. 5). In TS, Pellatt (2013, p. 2) defines paratext as "any material additional to, appended to or external to the core text which has functions of explaining, defining, instructing, or supporting, adding background information, or the relevant opinions and attitudes of scholars, translators and reviewers".

Genette's concept of the paratext has proved influential in TS. Within the field, paratexts are considered valuable records or artefacts "*because of what they tell us about something else*" (Batchelor, 2018, p. 168). Examining paratexts of the translations has usefully supplemented the understanding of translation as a socially situated activity. The work of Elgindy (2013), Hanna (2016), Ali (2018), and Khalifa (2020) are telling examples demonstrating the importance of scrutinising paratexts when studying translators' interestedness in their work, and their endeavour to distinguish their positions and products in the field. It is through paratexts the (co)producers of translations (i.e., translators, publishers, blurb writers, and cover designers) interfere in different places and through different devices to ensure a dominant position for themselves and their works within the field (Elgindy, 2013). This means that paratexts are powerful tools at the translator's disposal, as they can deliver a certain message and/or portray an intended image of the translator and their products. This said, existing literature, such as Batchelor (2018), asserts that there is still much more to be done in terms of investigating paratexts. To date, most of the research in paratexts is carried out in literary translation, with few endeavours investigating other genres; and hardly any scholars have dealt with research in paratexts (Batchelor, 2018). Hence, the present paper seeks to fill this gap in the field by investigating the paratexts of non-literary texts.

Genette's paratexts and Bourdieu's sociology have proven to be interconnected conceptual frameworks as investigating paratexts is mostly done, in TS, in light of Bourdieu's sociology.

III. RE-CONCEPTUALISING TRANSLATION: A BOURDIEUSIAN PERSPECTIVE

Translation products have been generally seen as filling a gap in the knowledge of cultures or as a representation of the wide success of a source text in a given culture. In this view, translation is the act of producing a cultural product independently of any and all personal interests of the translator themselves. This idea has been generally held by asserting that cultural products and activities are based on 'disinterestedness' (Bourdieu, 1986). This means that all cultural activities, including translation, are purposeless and free from interests other than intellectual and cultural. Claims such as 'value-free research' and 'art for art's sake' are at the core of this idea (Collins, 1998, p. 725).

Several translation scholars have tried to overcome this traditional reductive view of translation, mainly by using Bourdieu's sociological model as an analytical lens. The main conceptual apparatus adopted to achieve this aim is his concept of *capital*. It helps scholars to focus on the translators' personal investment in the translation they produce and their interestedness in the field of translation (to name but a few, see: Alkhamis, 2012; Elgindy, 2013; Hanna, 2016). In TS research, paratextual elements of translations are the main zone that exhibit the stakes motivating the production of translators and reveal their appreciation of the game and its stakes, or in Bourdieu's words, the *illusio*.

Based on a review of the literature cited above, it is true to say that understanding translation as a site of self-promotion, where the translator's personal interests are evinced, resonates with Bourdieu's sociology.

Bourdieu's Concepts of Capital and Illusio

To adopt a Bourdieusian lens is to see translation, like other fields, not as "just simple games of chance" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241), but as a conscious act motivated by its producers' interests. Bourdieu's theory, particularly his concepts of capital and *illusio*, is a vital analytical tool in order to help us to examine the dynamic motivations of agents in translation fields (Hanna, 2016). To achieve this, the process of euphemisation or, in Bourdieu's (1986, p. 243) terms, "dissimulation", needs to be identified. This is the process by which the material interests motivating the sociocultural practices of translators are disguised in claims of disinterest made by them (Hanna, 2016). Disinterested claims in the field of translation can appear in various forms in the translators' statements, such as: serving the translation field, informing readers of successful foreign works, and enriching libraries with valuable works. At the core of these claims lie identifiable forms of capital that translators invest in and pursue in the field. These must be recognised in sociological research to justify the practices in the field under investigation (Hanna, 2016).

The downside of economically focused interpretation of capital is, as suggested by Bourdieu (1986, p. 242), that it reduces the "universe of exchanges to mercantile exchange, which is objectively and subjectively oriented toward the maximisation of profit, i.e., economically *self-interested*". It has implicitly defined the other forms of exchange as non-economic, and therefore *disinterested*". Accordingly, Bourdieu has extended the concept of capital to encompass forms other than the traditional economic sense historically associated with it. Bourdieu (1986) classifies capital into three distinguishable types: *economic capital*, which is money and other material assets; *social capital*, which is social networks and contacts; and *cultural capital*, which is official knowledge of one kind or another. *Symbolic capital* is a fourth form of capital postulated by Bourdieu (1986) as the manifestation of the three previous forms when they are naturalised on their own terms. In other words, it is the resources available to an agent on the basis of prestige or social honour. This classification of capital has been established by Bourdieu to include "monetary and non-monetary, as well as tangible and intangible forms" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 243). Such an understanding helps in defining the practices of any field as oriented not only towards the attainment of economic resources but towards various forms of capital. The importance of capital among agents stems from the fact that power depends on the agent's position in the field, which is obtained through the

amount of capital they possess (Webb et al., 2002). Therefore, the more capital possessed by an agent, the more confidence they have to compete in the field, and the more likely they are to succeed (Webb et al., 2002). Capital is also "accumulated labour" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 241), which means that assembling capital takes time, and it typically cannot be gained at once. The accumulation of capital usually requires continuous work by an agent and struggles with other agents over said capital in order to function and be recognised as a legitimate occupier of an available position in the field.

Another vital concept of Bourdieu that needs to be considered in this paper is the concept of *illusio*. It is a Latin term derived from *ludus* [game] to denote: "the fact of being in the game, of being invested in the game, of taking the game seriously" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 76). *Illusio* is thus the agent's belief that the game is "worth playing and that the stakes created in and through the fact of playing are worth pursuing" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 77). Bourdieu's conceptualisation of *illusio* further challenges the idea of disinterestedness that has been traditionally associated with the agents of the fields of cultural production. That is to say, *illusio* postulates that "what happens matters to those who are engaged in it, who are in the game" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 77).

With reference to the subject of this paper, Al Biqā'ī's translations of French writings about Saudi Arabia manifest this Bourdiesian understanding of capital in his accompanying paratexts and practices on the field.

IV. MUHAMMAD KHAIR AL BIQĀ'Ī TRANSLATING FRENCH BOOKS ABOUT SAUDI ARABIA: SETTING THE SCENE

Muhammad Khair Al Biqā'ī is a Syrian academic and translator. He was born in the city of Homs in 1956. He got his Bachelor's degree in Arabic Language and Literature from Damascus University in 1979-1980, and his MA (in 1986) and PhD (in 1994) in Linguistics from the University of Lyon in France. He moved to Saudi Arabia in 1996 and has worked as a Professor of Linguistics and Literary Criticism at King Saud University for over 20 years (Alweeam, 2021). He translated a huge volume of French works about literary criticism and Arabian history into Arabic. He is a very active agent in the field of translation, particularly the sub-field of translating Orientalists' books about Saudi Arabia (Alharthi, 2021).

For his individual efforts in translation, Al Biqā'ī was granted the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Award for Translation in 2019 (KAAIAT, n.d.). This award enjoys a special status in the field for the substantial amount of material and symbolic resources granted to its winners. Namely, winners gain significant economic capital, with the prize being considered the world's largest for translation (Bloch, 2012). The symbolic capital attached to the award can be also seen as valuable. Besides the large sum of money, the winners receive a commemorative medal that can symbolise the legitimisation and consecration of their cultural production in the field by the members of the award's board of trustees. Awards can, in general, serve as effective means through which cultural producers may internalise collective social norms about what is consecrated and what is irreverent, and who are insiders and who are outsiders (Anand & Watson, 2004; Rossman et al., 2010).

The other form of symbolic capital attained by Al Biqā'ī through this specific award stems from its association with the Saudi field of power i.e., King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, the former King of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Bourdieu defines the field of power as the: "meta-field or macro-concept to describe the way in which individuals and institutions in dominant fields (such as government, the law and business) relate to one another and the whole social field. The field of power operates as a configuration of capital (economic, cultural, and symbolic) that shapes relations and practices within these fields" (Webb et al., 2002, p. xii). Since the majority of Al Biqā'ī's products in the field of translation are translations of French books about Arabia, recognition in the form of an award by the Saudi field of power bestows upon these products formal, national recognition and consecration. That is to say, the award shows how favourably his products were received by the Saudi field of power. This is evident in his page on the database of winners on the award's webpage, where his translations of books about Saudi Arabia are highlighted more prominently than his works in the field of literary criticism (KAAIAT, n.d.).

Although Al Biqā'ī is a professor in Linguistics and Literary Criticism, he has been assigned positions in several committees of Arabian history in Saudi Arabia. The most important committee was King Salman's Centre for Historical and Civilisation Studies of the Arabian Peninsula.¹ He was the only non-Saudi member of the academic committee at the Centre. Being a member of such a committee can be seen as an "institutionalized consecration" of him (Bourdieu, 1995, p. 114). This membership becomes all the more relevant considering that it is the main committee of Arabian history in Saudi Arabia sponsored by the Saudi field of power. This not only consecrates Al Biqā'ī and his products in academic terms, but also confers huge symbolic capital, or what is identified as "nationalist capital"² (Alharthi, 2021, p. 66), on him in the sense that he was directly appointed by the Saudi field of power to serve Arabian history.

The other way in which Al Biqā'ī accumulated nationalist capital, which also reveals the great trust the Saudi field of power has placed in him, is his commission by the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives to translate French books and historical documents about Saudi Arabia, held since 2003, as confirmed by the translator himself in a personal correspondence. The Foundation is the most dominant institutional agent in the given sub-field of translation (i.e., the field of translating Orientalists' books about Saudi Arabia), and it is the official representative of the Saudi field of power as it is chaired by King Salman bin Abdulaziz and its board members include other members of the Saudi

¹ As confirmed by Al Biqā'ī himself through a personal correspondence with him in 13-06-2024.

² It is a type of capital, which is conceptualised by Alkhamis (2012) and developed further by the researcher herself (Alharthi, 2021), can be attained by agents in the field of translating Orientalists' books about Saudi Arabia when their products are seen as serving the Kingdom.

government (Alharthi, 2021). Alkhamis (2012, p. 64) argues that the Foundation strives to attain a "nationalist capital" for the Kingdom and the Saud dynasty by selecting certain texts that correspond to official historical narratives circulating in the Kingdom about its history and monarchy. This is to say, the Foundation endeavours to accrue nationalist capital considering its service of the state (Alharthi, 2021). Given this supposed nationalist capital of the Foundation, the translators commissioned to translate for the Foundation are seen as "political agents" (Alkhamis, 2012, p. 64). Being chosen directly by the field of power can indicate that the translator is trusted by the Saudi government, particularly when we know that a translator's trajectory is taken into account by the Foundation before being commissioned (Alharthi, 2021). Thus, such a commission may bestow nationalist capital on the translators' positions and translations due to the social context where the translations are done. Cultural capital is "conditioned by both the capacities of the individual agents and the dictates of their social classes" (Hanna, 2016, p. 38), which demonstrates that "it yields profits of distinction for its owner" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 245).

In November 2021, Al Biqā'ī was naturalised as a Saudi citizen by a royal decree; the only translator in the first wave of such naturalisations, which included a few eminent specialists from different fields who served the Kingdom during their residency in the country. Obtaining Saudi citizenship by naturalisation is quite difficult, particularly for those born outside the Kingdom to a non-Saudi father or mother (GOV.SA, n.d.), as was the case of Al Biqā'ī. Nevertheless, in November 2021 an unprecedented royal decree was issued granting Saudi citizenship to a number of distinguished people with rare expertise and specialisations (SPA, 2021). According to the Saudi Press Agency, this royal approval of granting citizenship is in response to the royal order "to open the door to naturalise legal, medical, scientific, cultural, sports, and technical specialists in a way that contributes to the promotion of development and benefits the country in various field" (SPA, 2021). This indicates the special status the then-Syrian translator enjoys in the Saudi field of translation, and cultural production in general, insofar as it has reached the Saudi field of power, and has led to him being granted citizenship exceptionally by the royal order.

In light of this, the paratexts of Al Biqā'ī's translations of French books about Saudi Arabia are examined in the following section to explore the mechanisms utilised by the translator to sell a certain image of himself in the field. The investigated peritexts include the translator's prefaces to his translations and the dedications.

V. CAPITAL AT PLAY: PARATEXTS AS A SITE FOR PROMOTING THE SELF

Traditionally, the paratextual zone used to be seen as a main instrument in marketing for publishers to attract more readers (Genette, 1997). However, recent studies demonstrated that paratexts are also "potential sites of self-reflexivity" for translators (Ali, 2018, p. 91). This is to say, they are one of the few spaces where translators can "truly make themselves visible" (Khalifa, 2020, p. 6). As such, translators' interests in the field of translation often find expression in the paratexts accompanying their texts. This investment is apparently evident in the paratexts of Al Biqā'ī's translations of French books about Saudi Arabia.

The analysis of Al Biqā'ī's paratextual elements below is carried out by examining three mechanisms deployed by Al Biqā'ī to draw a deliberate portrayal of himself (i.e., being loyal to Saudi Arabia).

A. *Claiming Exclusive Access to the Source Language: Emphasising a Distinction*

Since his first translation of French books about Saudi Arabia in 2001, Al Biqā'ī has attempted to accumulate cultural capital for himself by claiming that he is filling a significant gap in Saudi knowledge concerning what has been written about the Kingdom in French literature since most Saudis do not command the French language. He claims (2001, p. 7):

إن متتبع التاريخ للدولتين السعوديتين، وللمملكة يلاحظ أن الباحثين صرفوا جهودهم إلى معالجة الوثائق البريطانية [...] ولم تلق الوثائق الفرنسية عن الجزيرة العربية عموماً، وعن التاريخ السعودي بأطواره المختلفة خصوصاً، اهتمام الباحثين، وربما كان الحاجز اللغوي هو السبب.

The tracer of the history of the two Saudi States and the Kingdom would notice that researchers have spent their efforts on dealing with British documents. [...] While the French documents about Arabia, in general, and the Saudi history with its various phases, in particular, have not attracted the researchers' attention. This could be attributed to the language barrier.

He further argues that the volume of translated books about Saudi Arabia from French into Arabic is limited (Al Biqā'ī, 2001, 2007). He adds that his translations of French books will contribute to circulating these products among Arab researchers (Al Biqā'ī, 2001, 2007). The attempt to emphasise his distinction in the field is reiterated in his later discourse. In his collection of some French studies about Saudi Arabia in a form of a book published in 2020, Al Biqā'ī argues that these studies have never been tackled before and without his translating and collecting them in his book قد لا تصل إلى أيدي "القراء" [they may not reach the readers] (Al Biqā'ī, 2020, p. 9).

Through these statements, Al Biqā'ī wants to distance his translations from the majority of the Saudi translations, which are mostly from English. This indicates his endeavours to demonstrate his superior knowledge of the French language and familiarity with sources to which most Saudis do not have access. Claiming access to the source language has been considered an asset to the translator and his translation products, and a mark of distinction that sets one translation off from another (Hanna, 2016). Thus, Al Biqā'ī's claims can distinguish his position in the field and add immense value to his translation products. Specifically, such assertions portray him as an irreplaceable translator in the Saudi field of translation; they suggest to the field that no Saudi agent within it can take his place, which endows him with a distinct

position. Highlighting these claims in the prefaces would, in turn, have the potential to show that the translator is providing Saudi Arabia a service that no Saudi is able to do.

B. Claiming to Have the Saudi Collective Habitus: Capitalising the Habitus for Self-Assertion

Al Biqā'ī's employment of the paratexts of his translations to promote himself is also made visible by his attempts to claim having the Saudi collective habitus. Drawing on Bourdieu's conceptualisation of habitus, it has been previously argued that the Sunni majority of Saudi Arabia shares a collective habitus with regard to their country (Alharthi, 2021). The researcher showed that this collective habitus involves the inculcation of the four main components of Saudi identity through the processes of socialisation and education within the Sunni individuals in the Kingdom: loyalty to the Saud dynasty as the political power, the perception of Sunni Islam as a unifying factor of Saudis, allegiance to Ibn 'Abd Al Wahhāb's Movement, and a proud sense of Arabness (Alharthi, 2021). It is claimed here that Al Biqā'ī does not spare any effort to show that this Saudi collective habitus is also inculcated in his habitus and that he has a sense of belongingness to Saudi Arabia like any Saudi, albeit being a Syrian himself at that time. Such an effort can be called 'capitalising the Saudi collective habitus' since he intentionally signals that he possesses the collective habitus as if it is a resource to be invested in by agents in the field. This is apparent in two main components of Saudi identity the translator claims to have been inculcated into his own habitus.

Firstly, he dedicated his translation of a collection of French studies about Arabia published in 2020 to the King of Saudi Arabia, King Salman bin Abdulaziz. This dedication features at the beginning of the translation after the table of contents and before the translator's preface (Al Biqā'ī, 2020, p. 7):

الإهداء

إلى خادم الحرمين الشريفين الملك سلمان بن عبدالعزيز آل سعود، حفظه الله ورعاه
حارس تاريخ الصرح السعودي العتيق؛
عاشق التراث العربي؛
وملاذ المثقفين العرب والمسلمين ومحط آمالهم.

Dedication

To the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, may Allah protect him
The keeper of the long-standing history of Saudi Arabia;
The lover of Arab heritage;
The sanctuary and hope of Arab and Muslim intellectuals.

Genette (1997, p. 135) argues that "the dedication is always a matter of demonstration, ostentation, exhibition: it proclaims a relationship, whether intellectual or personal, actual or symbolic, and this proclamation is always at the service of the work, as a reason for elevating the work's standing or as a theme for commentary". Dedicating the translation product to the head of the Saudi field of power hence announces Al Biqā'ī's symbolic relation to the King as a guardian and subject. In other words, it is an announcement of Al Biqā'ī's loyalty to the Saudi King and a reflection of his political affiliation.

Through this dedication, Al Biqā'ī intends to publicise his loyalty to the Saudi dynasty as the political power represented here by the King. Genette (1997, p. 134) asserts that dedicating a work is a "public act that the reader is, as it were, called into witness". The dedication is hence addressed to both: the dedicatee and the reader. It is a "performative act" as it constitutes the author telling the reader that he is dedicating his book to that person (Genette, 1997, p. 134). That is to say, he wants the readers to know that he is dedicating his work to the Saudi King. Furthermore, it is noticeable that Al Biqā'ī is capitalising the "Saudi collective habitus" through intentionally using the exact doxic words used by Saudis in referring to their King: [the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques] and [may Allah protect him]. This would demonstrate that he blends in the Saudi society and that he uses their terms.

The second element of the Saudi collective habitus that Al Biqā'ī claims to have allegiance to and hence capitalises in his paratexts is Ibn 'Abd Al Wahhāb's Movement. The researcher claimed elsewhere that, as part of their loyalty to the Movement, the Saudi field of power as well as the majority of Saudi Sunnis reject and avoid the term 'Wahhabism' for ideopolitical reasons (Alharthi, 2021; in press). Thus, Al Biqā'ī tends to refer to the Movement by using the doxic terms in Saudi Arabia that are "الدعوة الإصلاحية" [the Reform Dawah] (Al Biqā'ī, 2003, p. 11) and "دعوة الشيخ" [the Shaikh's Dawah] (Al Biqā'ī, 2005, p. 7, 2020, p. 9). Furthermore, as a header of one of his translator's prefaces, Al Biqā'ī adds one of the most famous historical quotes of King Abdulaziz where he rejects the term Wahhabism (Al Biqā'ī, 2005, p. 7). This is also evidence to suggest that Al Biqā'ī consciously employs the paratextual zone of his translations to demonstrate to the readers that he feels loyalty to Ibn 'Abd Al Wahhāb and his Movement. Accordingly, he wants to indicate that, like any Saudi, the Saudi habitus is inculcated within him.

C. Claiming Strong Relations With Loyal Saudis: Granting the Self a Membership in the Club

Al Biqā'ī always invests in his own social, as well as symbolic capital by emphasising his connection with prominent Saudis in the given field who helped him in revising, correcting and commenting on his translations (Al Biqā'ī, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2011, 2016). In one of his prefaces, Al Biqā'ī (2003, p. 21) states:

ولا يفوتني في ختام هذه المقدمة أن أشكر لشقيقي أبي عبدالرحمن ابن عقيل الظاهري -حفظه الله- أنه راجع هذا الكتاب وشاه بتعليقه القيمة أبقاه الله ذخراً للعلم وأهله. [...] والشكر موصول للدكتور عبدالله بن محمد المطوع الذي قرأ الكتاب ودون عليه بعض الملاحظات المفيدة، وللصديق الدكتور عبدالله العسكر الذي يناقشني دائماً في كثير من الأمور بخلق علمي أصيل، وللأخ الصديق عبدالله المنيف على ملحوظاته القيمة.

I cannot fail at the end of this preface to thank Shaikh Abu 'Abd Ar Rahmān Ibn 'Aqīl Adh Dhāhirī -May Allah protect him- to revise this book, and to adorn it with his comments -may Allah preserve him as an asset of knowledge-. [...] My thanks go also to Dr 'Abd Allah bin Muhammad Almutawa who read the book, and wrote some useful notes. I would like also to thank my friend Dr 'Abd Allah Al-Askar who always discusses ethically and scientifically with me various issues, and my brother and friend 'Abd Allah Al Munīf for his valuable notes [...]

He expresses his gratitude to four well known agents in the given field of translation and the field of Saudi history for their contribution in his translation. All of them are known to be loyal Saudi citizens. Adh Dhāhirī is a famous Saudi historian and jurist who worked as a consultant for Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz, the then crown prince and minister of interior (Alfaisal, 2022). Al Mutawa is a professor in the Department of Dawah at Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University and known for his cultural products and research supporting Ibn 'Abd Al Wahhāb's movement (Prof Almutawa, n.d.). Finally, Al-Askar and Al Munīf were members of the Shura Council [The Consultative Assembly of Saudi Arabia] whose members are appointed by the Saudi King from amongst scholars, those of knowledge, expertise, and specialists (The Shura Council, 1992).

In doing so, Al Biqā'ī does not only claim considerable cultural and symbolic value to his own work as being revised by Saudi historians and academics, but also follows the doxa of deconstruction (Alharthi, 2020, 2021). However, he, at the same time, gives value to himself by mentioning his relation to all these figures. Labelling them as "شيخى" [my sheikh] and "الصديق والأخ" [friend and brother] offers him a kind of social capital in the form of a membership to that elite group of Saudis who are known for their allegiance to the Saudi field of power. This, in turn, would let the public know the social network where he operates. In this respect, social capital is "characteristically symbolic" (Hanna, 2006, p. 61) as it functions as symbolic capital since it brings prestige to its holder.

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper set out to provide a new interpretation of paratexts of translation products on the grounds of Bourdieu's sociology. In the process, the paper questioned the long-held assumption that translation is value-free. The paper investigated Muhammad Khair Al Biqā'ī's paratexts of his translations of French books about Saudi Arabia (2001-2020) into Arabic as a social activity riddled with the translator's interests and claims of distinction. Bourdieu argues that all cultural activities do not occur in a disinterested world. Instead, it is produced in a social and political setting, by agents who have vested interests in producing and consuming texts.

The analysis of Al Biqā'ī's paratexts demonstrated that the translator utilises his paratexts to promote a certain image of himself to the public. The then-Syrian translator wanted to show that he was loyal to Saudi Arabia and found that paratexts could be employed as a tool to promote himself. In doing so, Al Biqā'ī revealed that the game, for him, deserves to be played and that the stakes available in the field deserve to be pursued. It is true to say that Al Biqā'ī provided a unique case where the mechanisms adopted by the translator have yielded tangible results in his acquisition of Saudi citizenship by a royal decree in 2021, as one of the experts who loyally served the Kingdom. Overall, the findings of this paper suggest that a Bourdieusian perspective can redefine and enrich our understanding of paratexts in translation as a dynamic site. They also explain that paratexts should not be perceived as a mere marketing tool for publishers to attract a larger audience, but as a site employed by translators for capital accumulation and self-image creation.

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Digital Detox in the Classroom: Exploring Its Impact on Student Engagement and Communication in ESL Settings in a Military University in Vietnam

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Abstract—The increasing use of digital tools in English as a Second Language (ESL) education has transformed learning, yet excessive dependence may hinder language acquisition, spontaneous communication, and long-term retention. This study examines the impact of a structured digital detox on student engagement and linguistic performance in an ESL classroom at military university in Vietnam. Using an action research approach, 64 military ESL students participated in a 12-week intervention involving classroom observation, instructor interviews, focus groups, and pre-and post-intervention assessments. Results indicate that reducing digital reliance enhances focus, verbal fluency, and critical thinking. While students initially struggled, they showed improved confidence, participation, and retention of vocabulary and grammar. However, challenges such as adaptation difficulties and the need for supplementary learning support were noted. This study highlights the benefits of a balanced technology approach in ESL learning, particularly in military settings. It offers pedagogical recommendations for integrating structured digital detox strategies to optimize language acquisition. Findings contribute to broader discussions on digital dependency in education, emphasizing fostering interactive, technology-conscious learning environments.

Index Terms—digital detox, ESL learning, language retention, military education, technology dependence

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rapid integration of technology into education has reshaped how students learn, interact, and process information. Digital tools, from interactive learning apps to multimedia platforms, have undeniably enhanced access to resources, but their pervasive presence also raises concerns. In English as a Second Language (ESL) learning, where communication skills are paramount, excessive reliance on technology may inadvertently hinder natural language acquisition. While technology provides valuable support, offering translation tools, speech recognition, and instant access to information, it can also become a barrier to authentic language interaction. Many ESL learners depend heavily on digital aids, sometimes at the expense of developing independent speaking, listening, and critical thinking skills. This paradox prompts an essential question: What happens when technology use is deliberately minimized in ESL education?

Digital detox refers to the intentional reduction or temporary elimination of digital tools to promote deeper engagement in learning. In classroom settings, this strategy encourages students to shift away from passive consumption and instead engage in active participation, face-to-face communication, and cognitive processing without digital distractions. The potential benefits of digital detox for ESL learners are particularly noteworthy. Language acquisition thrives on immersion, interaction, and spontaneous verbal expression, elements that can be diminished when students rely on translation apps or prerecorded language exercises. Reducing technological crutches may foster more organic speaking, listening, and comprehension skills.

While extensive research has explored the role of technology in language learning, fewer studies have examined the consequences of reducing digital reliance in ESL education. Existing literature focuses on how technology enhances learning, often overlooking its potential drawbacks, particularly in contexts where face-to-face interaction and cognitive engagement are critical for language acquisition. Moreover, discussions on a digital detox in education are primarily centred on general student well-being, attention span, and productivity. Very little research has been dedicated to its

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impact on ESL learners, who require interactive, real-time linguistic engagement to develop fluency. This gap becomes even more significant in specialized learning environments, such as military training institutions, where technology is restricted to enhance discipline, focus, and collaboration.

In military academic settings, where smartphones and digital devices are often limited or prohibited, students experience an enforced form of digital detox. This unique environment offers an opportunity to examine the effects of technology reduction on ESL learning without external variables interfering. Military trainees must develop rapid decision-making, precise verbal communication, and teamwork under high-pressure conditions, skills that align closely with language acquisition principles. The absence of constant digital access forces learners to engage in direct communication, rely on memory recall, and enhance verbal problem-solving skills, all of which contribute to more muscular linguistic development.

This study, titled *"Digital detox in the classroom: Exploring the impact of limiting technology use on English learning outcomes for students in a military university"* investigates the implications of reducing digital reliance on student engagement, linguistic performance, and overall communication skills. Our research aims to: (1) evaluate how digital detox influences active participation in ESL classrooms; (2) assess the impact of reduced technology on language retention and verbal fluency and (3) explore alternative, non-digital teaching strategies that maintain engagement and comprehension.

This study seeks to redefine the conversation around technology in ESL military learning. Rather than treating digital tools as an absolute necessity or an outright distraction, our research aims to examine when and how technology should be integrated or intentionally minimized for optimal language acquisition. This study will analyze the impact of digital detox on ESL military engagement, communication, and fluency, providing educators with practical insights into balancing technology use with the need for active, immersive language learning experiences. Ultimately, the findings will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of digital dependency in ESL education, offering strategies that empower learners to develop linguistic competence beyond the constraints of digital assistance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Digital Detox in the Context of Education

(a). Definition of Digital Detox

Digital detox in education is not merely about reducing technology use but is also a strategy to restore traditional learning skills and improve psychological, social, and academic factors by reducing the negative influence of technology in the classroom (Rosen et al., 2017). In the recent research, this concept will be explored to identify the impact of limiting technology use on ESL (English as a Second Language) learning outcomes, particularly focusing on how reducing technology use can improve language communication skills among ESL students.

Digital detox, in educational settings, refers to the intentional reduction or temporary removal of technology used to improve focus, psychological well-being, and interpersonal communication skills. In military education, this concept extends beyond mere restriction, it is a pedagogical approach designed to cultivate discipline, cognitive engagement, and real-time communication skills, all essential in academic and operational contexts. The potential benefits of digital detox in military ESL education are not just promising, but also inspiring, offering a pathway to improved learning outcomes and enhanced communication skills.

Existing research suggests that excessive reliance on digital tools can diminish attention spans and reduce the depth of learning experiences (Twenge, 2017). While technology provides valuable resources for ESL students, particularly interactive language exercises and instant translation, an over-dependence on digital aids may weaken language retention and speaking fluency (Piller, 2024). In response to these challenges, military academies worldwide have explored structured digital detox strategies to balance leveraging technology for education and fostering traditional learning competencies (Dahlstrom et al., 2012).

(b). Key Factors Shaping the Success of Digital Detox in ESL Classrooms

1. Teaching Methods

(1). Designing Low-Tech Learning Strategies

How lessons are structured significantly affects how well students adjust to a learning environment with limited technology use. Instructors who find alternative ways to engage students can maintain learning momentum without relying on digital devices. Some practical approaches include:

- Interactive Language Games: Instead of using apps, teachers can introduce verbal challenges, role-playing, and storytelling exercises. These activities make language practice fun and engaging, keeping students focused without the need for screens (Gee, 2003).

- Group Discussions and Debates: Encouraging students to express their ideas, respond to opposing viewpoints, and defend their arguments fosters critical thinking and fluency. Engaging in face-to-face exchanges builds stronger communication skills than relying on digital feedback (Johnson & Johnson, 1999).

- Practical Task-Based Learning: Assignments that require writing field reports, conducting interviews, or explaining concepts to peers make learning purpose-driven and applicable to real-life situations. This is especially relevant for military ESL learners, who must use English in command structures, briefings, and operational planning.

(2). The Role of Educators in Supporting Digital Detox

For digital detox to be effective, instructors must lead the transition, making students comfortable with low-tech learning methods. Some key responsibilities include:

- Framing digital detox as an opportunity, not a restriction – Students should understand that reducing screen time improves focus, enhances memory retention, and strengthens real-world communication (Wilmer et al., 2017).
- Using military-specific training exercises – Simulated mission debriefs, tactical response exercises and chain-of-command communication drills give learners hands-on experience using English without relying on digital tools.

2. Student Characteristics and Learning Environment

Every student approaches learning differently, meaning not all learners adjust to digital detox simultaneously. Several factors determine how well students transition to a low-tech ESL environment:

- Age and Learning Habits – Younger students tend to be more flexible with learning styles, whereas older learners may take longer to adjust if they are accustomed to digital learning. However, structured learning environments in military settings often make digital detox easier to implement, as cadets are already trained to follow discipline-based methods (Vygotsky, 1978).
- Language Proficiency – Beginners might find it challenging to practice without translation apps, while more advanced learners can focus on improving fluency and spontaneity through direct conversation.
- Learning Support Needs – Some students benefit from assistive technology, making digital detox more challenging. Teachers should provide alternative learning tools—such as peer support groups, note-sharing, or hands-on vocabulary exercises to ensure all students remain engaged.
- Understanding how the classroom environment can affect digital detox success is crucial for educators. By being aware of this, they can proactively create learning spaces that minimize digital distractions and maximize student engagement (Turkle, 2016).
- Class Size Matters – Smaller groups allow more interaction, making it easier for teachers to keep students engaged through direct conversation. In larger classrooms, structured activities such as roundtable discussions, peer-led presentations, and interactive group work help maintain active participation without digital distractions.
- Traditional vs. Virtual Learning – In-person classrooms offer more opportunities for spontaneous interaction, making it easier to minimize technology use. In contrast, online courses require a different approach, as completely removing digital tools is impractical.

3. Encouraging Active Participation Without Digital Tools

(1). How Students Stay Engaged in a Low-Tech Learning Space

When students shift their focus away from screens, they naturally become more involved in direct communication and problem-solving activities. Some practical ways to maintain engagement include:

Encouraging peer discussions, allowing students to exchange perspectives and refine their speaking skills through genuine interactions.

- Introducing real-world problem-solving scenarios so learners apply their English skills meaningfully rather than passively absorbing information.
- Focusing on military-specific communication drills, helping cadets develop quick response strategies for operational tasks (Turkle, 2016).

(2). How Digital Detox Boosts Motivation

Reducing screen dependence can increase motivation by fostering self-reliance and confidence in language use. Zimmerman (2008) found that students less reliant on technology became more proactive in their learning, seeking solutions rather than expecting automated answers. In military ESL settings, cadets trained in low-tech environments build more decisive decision-making and communication skills, preparing them for high-pressure command situations.

B. Rationale for Digital Detox in Military ESL Education

(a). Improving Focus and Cognitive Engagement

Studies indicate that reducing digital distractions improves concentration and deeper cognitive processing, particularly in structured environments where students must retain complex information (Ophir et al., 2009; Ward et al., 2017). The potential of a digital detox to enhance focus and cognitive engagement is inspiring, offering a new perspective on learning in military ESL education.

(b). Enhancing Face-to-Face Communication in ESL Learning

One of the primary challenges in ESL education is the over-reliance on digital translation tools, which can inhibit the development of natural speaking and listening skills (Stockwell, 2013). Research in military and discipline-based education shows that reducing digital dependence fosters active verbal engagement, a crucial factor in second language acquisition (Thapa, 2024). Traditional teaching methods emphasizing direct instructor-student interaction and peer discussion have enhanced language fluency and comprehension (Ellis, 2008).

(c). Strengthening Retention and Language Proficiency

Research has consistently demonstrated that long-term memory retention is more muscular when learners actively engage with material rather than passively consuming it through digital interfaces (Mayer, 2003). Salmerón et al. (2023) found that students who participated in low-tech or tech-free learning environments outperformed their peers in comprehension-based assessments. This is particularly relevant in military academies, where structured learning environments emphasize memorization, discipline, and applied knowledge, all benefit from a controlled digital detox.

C. Implementing Digital Detox Strategies in Military ESL Classrooms

(a). Structured Approaches to Digital Detox

For instance, a complete ban on electronic devices, controlled use of technology, dedicated 'no-tech' learning periods, and selective technology use for language learning are four primary models commonly used in military academies worldwide.

1. Complete Ban on Electronic Devices

Some academies enforce a strict no-device policy, removing all digital distractions to cultivate deep focus and interpersonal communication skills. While this approach is effective in enhancing classroom engagement and minimizing distractions, research suggests that it must be complemented by interactive learning strategies to prevent disengagement (Junco & Cotten, 2012).

2. Controlled Use of Technology

Instead of a complete ban, some institutions regulate when and how digital tools are used, allowing selected educational platforms while restricting non-academic technology use. This approach aligns with studies on blended learning, which indicate that controlled technology use leads to higher engagement compared to unrestricted digital access (Means et al., 2013).

3. Dedicated "No-Tech" Learning Periods

Some military academies allocate specific time blocks without digital devices, focusing entirely on verbal exercises, debates, and interpersonal communication tasks. Research on linguistic immersion strategies suggests that structured periods of device-free learning accelerate fluency and conversational confidence (Ortega, 2014).

4. Selective Technology Use for Language Learning

Another approach is intentionally using technology for targeted language-learning applications (e.g., pronunciation tools or interactive simulations) while restricting passive engagement, such as video consumption. This method has been shown to maximize the benefits of technology without fostering dependence (Qiao & Zhao, 2023).

D. Key Insights From Previous Research

A growing body of research highlights the potential advantages of reducing technology use in ESL classrooms, a practice commonly referred to as "digital detox". This approach has been shown to improve communication skills, student focus, and engagement levels. However, these findings mainly apply to traditional educational settings, leaving a significant gap in understanding how digital detox functions in structured and high-discipline environments like military academies.

- Strengthening real-world communication: Cutting back on digital reliance encourages more frequent and meaningful verbal interactions, helping students develop stronger listening, speaking, and comprehension skills through direct engagement (Rosen et al., 2017).

- Enhancing focus and reducing stress: Research suggests that limiting classroom technology improves concentration by removing distractions and lowering anxiety linked to digital overload (Rosen et al., 2017).

- The value of traditional teaching approaches: Instructional strategies such as peer discussions, hands-on problem-solving, and collaborative learning have proven to be highly effective in language acquisition, even without technological support.

- Difficulties in reducing technology use: While digital detox offers clear benefits, removing technology entirely is not always feasible, especially in online ESL programs, where digital tools are integral to lesson delivery, tracking progress, and assessments.

- Encouraging deeper engagement: When screens are removed from the equation, students engage more actively in class discussions and group work, leading to greater language retention and practical communication skills (Turkle, 2016).

- Developing key cognitive and social skills: Beyond language learning, reducing technology use fosters better critical thinking, problem-solving, and interpersonal communication, which is essential in high-discipline settings such as military training programs.

E. Research Gaps

Despite growing interest in digital detox strategies, little research focuses specifically on ESL learners. Most existing studies examine technology reduction in general academic environments without assessing its effects on second-language acquisition in “structured or immersive learning settings”, where students are fully engaged in the learning process.

- Limited ESL-Specific findings: Digital detox has been studied in various educational fields, yet few empirical studies have examined its direct impact on ESL learners, particularly those in structured programs that demand intensive language use.

- Absence of research in military and specialized ESL Programs: Military academies and structured ESL programs present unique linguistic and disciplinary challenges. However, there is little research on how digital detox affects students in these environments.

This study aims to fill these gaps by providing a detailed analysis of digital detox in ESL education, particularly emphasising military training and highly structured learning programs. The findings of this study could potentially revolutionize ESL education, offering a new perspective on non-digital ESL learning and helping educators develop effective, technology-free teaching methods.

- Providing new perspectives on Non-Digital ESL learning: By evaluating how limiting technology affects language acquisition and communication skills, this study offers practical insights for students in regimented programs where real-world interaction is crucial.

- Helping educators develop low-tech strategies: The findings will support ESL instructors in designing effective, technology-free teaching methods, ensuring that students remain engaged while building essential language skills without digital reliance.

By investigating how digital detox impacts ESL learners in structured learning environments, this study contributes significantly to the ongoing debate on how to balance technology use with immersive, real-world language instruction. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights and perspectives, enriching the discourse on ESL education and technology use.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This study employs an action research approach to investigate how digital detox influences student engagement and communication in military ESL classrooms. While pre- and post-intervention tests were not conducted, the study relies on qualitative and observational tools such as instructor interviews, classroom observation, and student surveys to assess changes over time. Action research was chosen for its flexibility in exploring real-time adaptation and feedback in structured learning environments.

Rather than dividing students into separate experimental and control groups, this study tracks a single cohort over multiple weeks, documenting their experiences as they transition into a digital detox learning environment. The iterative nature of action research enables the researcher to assess short-term and long-term changes in students' engagement, focus, and academic performance.

B. Participants and Context

The study occurs in a distinctive setting: a military medical university, where students adhere to strict schedules and have limited access to personal technology. The participants are first-year and second-year ESL medical students enrolled in English courses.

Our study will closely follow a single cohort ($n \approx 64$) over several weeks to evaluate their adaptation to a classroom environment with reduced technology use, a topic of increasing importance in ESL education.

C. Phases of the Study

The study follows the action research cycle (Plan → Act → Observe → Reflect) across 12 weeks, divided into three phases:

- (a). *Phase I: Initial observation (Weeks 1-4)* to evaluate establishing a baseline understanding of student engagement, participation, and learning behaviors in a technology-free environment.

- *Classroom observations*: Teachers pay close attention to how students stay focused, interact with peers, and participate in lessons. They use a structured checklist to document engagement levels.

- *Instructor interviews*: Educators reflect on their experiences teaching without technology, discussing initial challenges, student motivation, and adjustments they have made to their teaching approach.

- *Student group discussions*: Students share their thoughts on learning in a technology-free classroom, discussing the benefits and the difficulties they have encountered while adapting.

- *Student survey (Week 4)*: A short questionnaire helps assess students' ability to concentrate, confidence in speaking, and motivation to engage in class without digital devices.

(b). *Phase 2: Instructional Adjustments (Weeks 5-8)* to implement and refine non-digital teaching strategies based on Phase 1 findings.

- *Modification of teaching approaches*: Instructors adjust classroom techniques, incorporating discussion-based learning to enhance engagement, paper-based resources instead of digital materials and collaborative group activities to maintain interactivity.

- *Classroom observations (Continued)*: to assess the impact of instructional adjustments on student participation.

- *Student focus group (Week 8)*: to collect feedback on teaching modifications, identify effective strategies, and identify remaining challenges.

(c). *Phase 3: Reflection and evaluation (Weeks 9-12)* to assess the long-term impact of a technology-free classroom and finalize best practices.

- *Classroom observations (Final Round)* to evaluate sustained changes in student engagement and participation.

- *Instructor interviews (Week 4 & 12)* to gather final insights on successful instructional methods and overall classroom adaptation.

- *Student group discussion (Week 4, 8 & 12)*: Students reflect on their learning experience, engagement, and personal growth in a non-digital setting.

- *Student survey (Week 12)* measures students' final perceptions of focus, participation, and motivation, compared with Week 4 survey data.

D. Data Collection Methods

A multi-method approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of how students and instructors adapt to a technology-free classroom. This includes observations, interviews, focus groups, and surveys, ensuring data triangulation for validity and reliability.

(a). *Classroom Observations (Weekly, Weeks 1-12)* to track student engagement, focus, and participation throughout the study used a structured rubric to measure:

- Engagement levels (low, moderate, high).
- Participation frequency (active, passive, non-participatory).
- Indicators of focus (eye contact, body language, distractions).

(b). *Instructor Interviews (Week 4 and Week 12)* to understand how instructors adapt their teaching strategies in a technology-free setting.

- Week 4: Initial reflections on student behavior and teaching modifications.
- Week 12: Final reflections on what worked best and what needs further adjustment.

(c). *Student Group Discussions (Week 4, Week 8 and Week 12)* to gather qualitative insights into student adaptation, engagement, and challenges.

- Week 4: Initial experiences and concerns.
- Week 8: Feedback on instructional adjustments.
- Week 12: Final reflections on overall learning experiences.

(d). *Student Surveys (Week 12)* to measure perceived concentration, participation, and motivation at key phases of the study.

- Week 12: Final reflections.
- Likert-scale items (1-5) measuring focus and concentration, confidence in communication, overall satisfaction with learning in a technology-free classroom.

E. Data Analysis

A mixed-methods approach is used, integrating quantitative and qualitative analysis for a comprehensive understanding of learning in a non-digital classroom.

(a). Quantitative Data Analysis

1. Survey Data

- Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) analyze student-reported engagement.
- T-tests identify significant changes.

2. *Observation Data*: Engagement and participation ratings will be quantified and analyzed using trend analysis to track progress over time.

(b). Qualitative Data Analysis

- Instructor interviews and group discussions: Thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns in student adaptation, teaching challenges and effective instructional techniques.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Class Observation

(a). Changes in Student Engagement Over Time

Throughout the 12-week study, classroom observations indicated a gradual shift in student engagement as they adjusted to a technology-free ESL learning environment. While some students initially found it challenging, engagement levels rose consistently as they became more accustomed to interactive learning without digital tools as in the following graph:

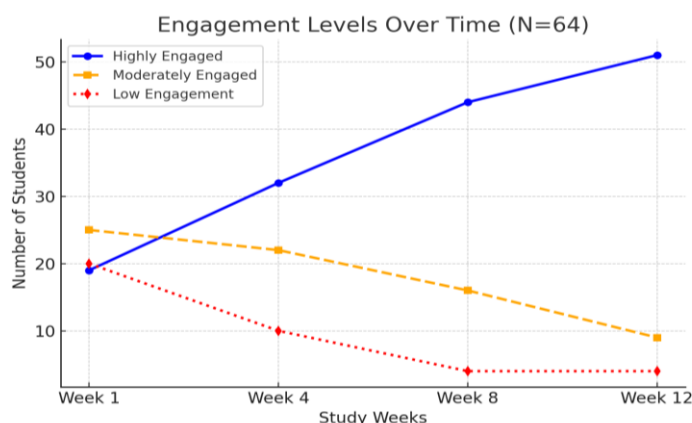


Figure 1. Changes in Student Engagement

One of the most prominent findings from this study is the increased student engagement in verbal communication over the 12 weeks. As students adapted to a technology-free classroom, their reliance on face-to-face discussions, debates, and collaborative tasks became more evident. This observation is consistent with Garg et al. (2024), who argue that limiting technology fosters more assertive listening, speaking, and comprehension skills by compelling students to engage directly with their peers and instructors. The gradual reduction in distractions observed in Weeks 5-12 suggests that students actively participated in discussions rather than passively consuming information from digital devices. The increase in focus and participation mirrors Turkle's (2016) assertion that students become more invested in real-time discussions when technology is removed.

However, this study adds a new perspective by demonstrating that military ESL learners may require a longer adaptation period due to their initial reliance on structured digital learning aids. While engagement levels ultimately increased, some students required additional instructional support in Weeks 1-4 to adjust to the lack of digital learning tools.

(b). Improvement in Focus and Attention

Maintaining focus improved as students moved away from multitasking with digital devices and adapted to a more structured, discussion-driven learning approach.

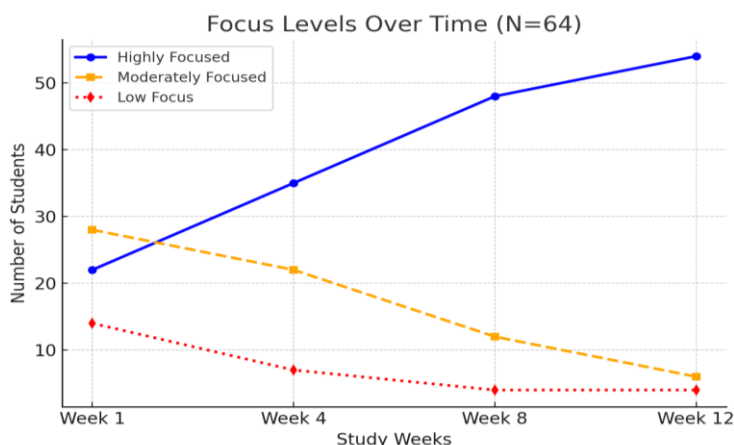


Figure 2. Improvement in Focus and Attention

Findings also support the argument that a technology-free environment promotes better focus and reduces cognitive overload, as outlined in Garg et al. (2024). Over the 12 weeks, students demonstrated progressive improvements in sustained attention, as seen in the steady increase of students exhibiting high levels of concentration (from 34.4% in week 1 to 84.4% in week 12). This aligns with prior research indicating that reducing screen exposure minimizes cognitive distractions, allowing students to engage in classroom activities without digital interruptions fully.

Additionally, qualitative feedback from instructors suggested that students exhibited lower stress levels, particularly when engaging in group discussions rather than managing multiple digital inputs.

However, while focus levels improved overall, a small subset of students (6.3%) struggled with maintaining attention by week 12. This suggests that not all learners benefit equally from a digital detox, highlighting the need for individualized support strategies, particularly in military learning environments where structured training is essential.

(c). Reduction in Classroom Distractions

Observations also tracked behaviours linked to losing focus, such as looking away, fidgeting, and side conversations. A clear reduction in these behaviours was noted as students adjusted to the technology-free setting.

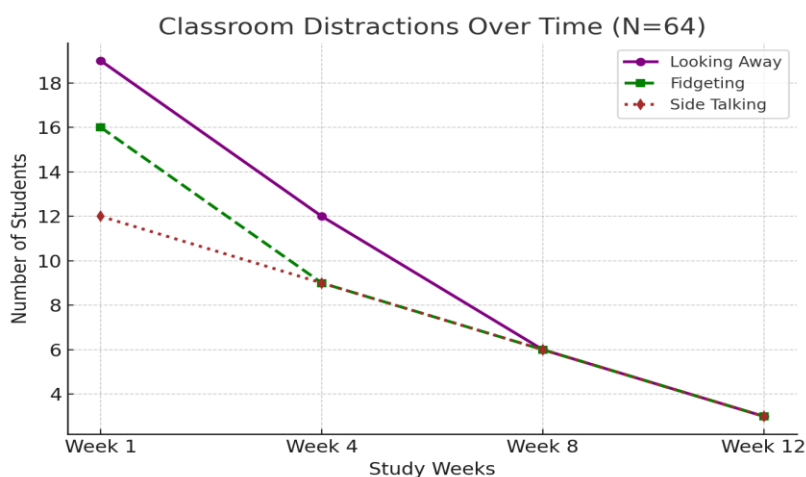


Figure 3. Reduction in Classroom Distractions

Throughout the 12-week study, noticeable improvements were observed in students' ability to maintain focus in a classroom without digital devices. In the beginning, nearly a third of the students frequently lost concentration, 29.7% were looking away, 25% fidgeted, and 18.8% engaged in side conversations. However, as weeks progressed, these behaviours declined significantly, with only a tiny fraction (4.7%) still showing signs of distraction by Week 12. This shift indicates that students gradually adapted to a more discussion-based, technology-free environment, reinforcing findings from Garg et al. (2024), which suggest that reducing screen exposure enhances attention and reduces cognitive overload. Turkle (2016) also emphasized that the absence of digital tools encourages more meaningful engagement in face-to-face discussions, a key component of ESL learning. Despite these positive trends, a few students struggled to maintain focus, possibly due to their prior reliance on digital resources for learning. This highlights the importance of employing varied instructional strategies to support students transitioning to a technology-free classroom while maximizing the benefits of direct interaction and deeper engagement.

B. Instructor Interviews

The semi-structured interviews with instructors at week 4 and week 12 provided valuable insights into how teachers adapted to a technology-free ESL classroom and how student engagement, participation, and communication skills evolved over time. The responses highlight initial challenges in student adaptation, modifications to teaching strategies, and long-term benefits observed throughout the 12-week digital detox period.

(a). Initial Reflections

By the fourth week, instructors observed a mixed but positive shift in student behaviour. Initially, many students felt uneasy without access to digital tools, mainly regarding notetaking and information recall. *"Some of them kept reaching for their phones instinctively, only to realize they were not allowed,"* one instructor noted. However, after a few weeks, students began to find alternative ways to engage, relying more on peer discussions and in-class materials.

One of the most significant adjustments for instructors was keeping students engaged without screens as a fallback. Previously, learners could quickly search for definitions, review grammar explanations, or check pronunciation apps. Without those tools, the responsibility shifted more toward active classroom participation. To adapt, instructors redesigned activities to be more interactive, incorporating role-playing, group challenges, and collaborative exercises. *"It forced them to rely on each other more, which improved teamwork,"* one instructor commented.

Another noticeable change was the way students interacted with their peers. Instead of retreating behind screens, they became more engaged in face-to-face discussions, which previous research highlighted as a benefit of digital detox in language learning (Rosen et al., 2017; Turkle, 2016). One instructor described the shift as follows: *"They were hesitant at first, but now they listen more attentively and respond more thoughtfully in discussions."* However, not all students found the transition smooth. A handful struggled with independent learning, particularly those who relied heavily on

translation apps or digital notetaking. *"A few students mentioned that organizing their notes without a tablet was difficult. They felt like they were losing efficiency,"* another instructor reported. While some learners thrived in the structured, discussion-heavy format, others missed the convenience of digital tools, reinforcing prior research that suggests a complete removal of technology may not work for all learners (Wilmer et al., 2017).

Despite these challenges, most instructors agreed that a technology-free classroom promoted stronger engagement, better focus, and more meaningful communication. While some students required more time to adjust, the majority became more confident in speaking and participating over time. *"By the eighth week, even the quieter students were joining in conversations,"* one instructor noted.

In the long run, the experience highlighted both the advantages and limitations of digital detox. The lack of digital distractions enhanced real-time communication skills. However, some instructors suggested that a hybrid approach that allows limited technology for personal study while keeping classroom interactions screen-free might be a more sustainable model for future courses.

(b). Final Reflections

After three months of learning without technology, instructors noticed a gradual but meaningful shift in how students approached their studies. The transition was not immediate, some students hesitated at first, struggling to adjust to a classroom without quick access to digital resources. However, over time, their engagement levels changed, and so did their approach to communication. One instructor noted: *"At the start, students seemed sure how to keep up without their usual tech tools. However, by the end, they were actually talking more, listening more, and surprisingly, taking more risks in discussions."* This aligns with research suggesting that reducing digital dependency can foster more natural verbal communication (Rosen et al., 2017; Turkle, 2016).

By midway through the study, instructors observed that students participated more frequently, particularly in group discussions. Some key patterns emerged:

- More active engagement: Students relied more on speaking, debating, and asking clarifying questions to their peers and instructors without screens as a fallback.
- Better focus: Fewer distractions meant students were paying closer attention to explanations and peer responses.
- Improved eye contact and body language: Students seemed more present in conversations, mirroring key behaviours of effective communicators.

These findings are consistent with studies by Wilmer et al. (2017), which emphasize that face-to-face interaction enhances concentration and verbal fluency.

Despite these positive shifts, not all students found the transition easy. Some struggled with note-taking, particularly those used to digital dictionaries or online resources for quick word retrieval. One instructor admitted, *"I had to remind myself that some students were experiencing this learning for the first time. They needed extra guidance on how to organize notes effectively."* Another added, *"A few students felt frustrated when they could not just Google something. However, eventually, they started asking their peers instead, which was great for engagement"*.

This suggests that while digital detox can boost classroom communication, it may require extra scaffolding to help students develop new study habits. At the end of the 12 weeks, most instructors agreed that a technology-free classroom had real benefits but also noted the importance of balance.

C. Group Discussion

Student feedback over 12 weeks offered a layered view of how learners adjusted to a technology-free ESL classroom. While reactions varied, clear patterns emerged, revealing this learning shift's struggles and benefits. In the first few weeks, discussions reflected a mixed response. Some students found it refreshing to be without distractions, while others felt lost without quick access to digital dictionaries or online resources. One student admitted: *"I kept reaching for my phone out of habit. It initially felt strange, especially when I wanted to check a word or fact."* Another added, *"Taking notes by hand took more time than I was used to. I was not sure whether I was writing down the right things."* These early struggles align with Turkle (2016) and Garg et al. (2024), who found that reducing digital reliance initially causes discomfort but can lead to deeper engagement. Students accustomed to passive learning, where answers are readily available, had to relearn thinking critically and engaging actively.

By midway through the study, a shift became evident. Students participated more, asked more questions, and relied on peers for clarification instead of digital tools. Classroom discussions became more dynamic, with more back-and-forth dialogue rather than isolated, tech-dependent learning. One student shared: *"At first, I missed being able to Google things. However, now, I listen more carefully and ask my classmates when I do not understand something."* This reflects Wilmer et al. (2017), who argue that peer interaction in a non-digital setting strengthens real-world communication skills. When students no longer rely on digital tools for immediate answers, they engage in deeper discussions and retain information more effectively.

By the end of the study, most students reported feeling more confident speaking in class. Many noted that they had developed better concentration habits and no longer wanted to check their phones or rely on digital shortcuts. One student's final reflection: *"I never realized how much I depended on my phone before. Now, I feel more comfortable speaking up because I have gotten used to thinking through my responses instead of checking everything online."* These findings support Rosen et al. (2017), who argue that a technology-free environment fosters more profound learning and

self-reliance. They also suggest that digital detox does not just reduce distractions and actively helps students develop new language learning and communication strategies.

However, some students still struggled with information retrieval, particularly those used to digital search tools. Besides, a few learners felt note-taking was slower than typing on a laptop. Moreover, not all students adapted at the same pace, some required additional support in organizing study materials.

Despite initial frustration, most students found value in the experience by Week 12. The shift away from technology forced them to engage more, rely on their thinking, and actively contribute to discussions, all crucial skills for real-world communication. One student said, *"It was hard at first, but looking back, I would not change it. I feel like I learned more this way."* These insights reinforce previous research suggesting that while technology has its place in education, limiting its use can lead to stronger engagement, better communication, and more independent learning (Rosen et al., 2017; Turkle, 2016).

D. Student Survey

This study illuminates how limiting technology use in ESL classrooms affects learning, especially in a military setting. The findings reveal benefits and challenges, offering a fresh perspective on how reducing digital distractions influences students' concentration, communication skills, and ability to learn independently.

(a). Improving Focus and Critical Thinking

More than 60% of students reported that they found it easier to stay focused during lessons without digital devices. This supports earlier research suggesting that reducing screen time can enhance attention span and improve cognitive processing. A tech-free classroom may reinforce these qualities in a military environment, where discipline and mental resilience are key to helping students retain information more effectively.

(b). Boosting Real-World Communication

Around 65% of participants stated that digital detox encouraged them to engage more in class discussions and improved their spoken English. Studies suggest that relying too much on translation apps and other digital aids can slow natural language development. Without these tools, students must find ways to express themselves independently, strengthening fluency. This shift is particularly valuable in a military context where clear and confident communication is essential.

(c). The Role of Teaching Strategies

How well students adapt to digital detox depends largely on teaching methods. When instructors replace tech-based activities with interactive learning, such as role-playing, debates, and problem-solving exercises, students tend to stay engaged. In this study, learners who participated in these methods reported greater confidence in speaking English. This suggests that, with the right approach, removing technology does not have to hinder language learning; it can enhance learning outcomes.

(d). Challenges and Adaptation

Despite its advantages, transitioning away from technology was not easy for everyone. Some students struggled initially, especially those used to digital note-taking and online research. However, over time, many adjusted by switching to handwritten notes and engaging more in peer discussions. These findings indicate that a gradual approach to digital detox, rather than an abrupt ban, may be the best way to help students adapt smoothly.

(e). Implementing Digital Detox in Military ESL Training

Military ESL classrooms present a unique learning environment where structured routines and discipline play a significant role. A well-planned digital detox strategy can encourage students to develop stronger problem-solving skills, focus better, and engage more actively in discussions. Research suggests that designated "no-tech" periods, rather than complete bans, may strike the right balance by allowing students to refine essential language skills while benefiting from occasional digital support.

The results, thus, suggest that reducing technology use can help students concentrate better, improve their communication skills, and become more self-reliant learners. However, since some struggled with the transition, future implementations should take a step-by-step approach rather than imposing an immediate ban. By incorporating structured, low-tech teaching strategies, military ESL programs can maximize the benefits of digital detox while ensuring students develop the language skills needed for real-world situations.

V. CONCLUSION

This study explores how limiting digital tools in ESL classrooms, particularly in military education, affects student learning. Although the transition was initially challenging, students gradually became more engaged, improved their communication skills, and demonstrated better focus over 12 weeks.

One notable change was the increase in verbal participation. Without relying on digital devices, students were encouraged to engage in discussions and collaborate with peers, reinforcing findings from previous studies (Rosen et al.,

2017). However, military ESL learners took longer to adjust, which suggests that reducing technology use should be done gradually rather than all at once.

Another key observation was the improvement in concentration. At the start of the study, only 34.4% of students maintained strong focus, but by the twelfth week, this number had risen to 84.4%. Distractions like fidgeting and side conversations became less frequent, supporting earlier research that links lower screen exposure to better attention (Turkle, 2016; Rosen et al., 2017). However, a small group (6.3%) still struggled to focus, indicating that some students may need additional support.

Feedback from instructors and students supported these findings. More than 60% of students reported feeling more focused in class, while 65% noticed improved spoken English due to less reliance on translation apps. That being said, some students found note-taking more difficult without digital tools, highlighting the need for a step-by-step approach to reducing technology use rather than an abrupt ban.

Thus, when applied thoughtfully, limiting technology in military ESL classrooms can improve student engagement and learning outcomes. Future strategies should balance minimal but purposeful technology use with interactive, structured teaching methods. While digital tools still have value, restricting them in the classroom can help students develop stronger focus, better communication skills, and greater independence in their learning. However, reducing reliance on digital devices in ESL classrooms can be both a challenge and an opportunity in a military setting, where discipline and structure shape the learning environment. Instead of removing technology all at once, a step-by-step approach works better. For example, instructors can limit screen use during discussions and writing exercises before transitioning to an entirely low-tech classroom.

Without digital tools, interactive learning methods become even more important. Military students are already trained to work in teams, so incorporating group discussions, role-playing, and tactical problem-solving exercises can make lessons more engaging. These methods also prepare them for real-life scenarios where immediate digital assistance is unavailable.

Another key adjustment is helping students improve their note-taking skills. Many rely on digital notes, so introducing structured techniques like the Cornell Method or handwritten summaries can make the transition smoother. Encouraging students to support one another through peer mentoring ensures that no one falls behind during the shift away from digital aids. By combining gradual changes, practical exercises, and collaborative learning, military ESL students can improve their focus, communication, and adaptability, skills that are just as critical in the classroom as they are in the field.

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Shifts in Qassimi Arabic: A Linguistic Analysis of Lexical and Phonological Changes Between Two Generations

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Abstract—This study investigates the evolution of the Qassimi Arabic (QA) in Qassim Province, Saudi Arabia, with a focus on the lexical changes that have occurred between the past and present forms of the dialect. The findings reveal a significant generational divide, with older speakers (70–75 years old) retaining traditional vocabulary and phonetic structures, while younger speakers (8–10 years old) increasingly adopt modern terms and simplified pronunciations, often influenced by Standard Arabic and the “white dialect”, which is primarily related to the Modern Arabic, where speakers tend to speak in a way that does not designate their origin. The study categorizes lexical items into three classes: those that are understood and used, those that are understood but unused lexical items, and those that are neither understood nor used. Thus, the study illustrates the complexities of intergenerational communication as well as the cultural implications of the evolution of the dialect. The humorous reactions of younger speakers toward traditional terms suggest they have a nuanced relationship with their linguistic heritage, which raises concerns about the preservation of the long-standing, unique features of the QA in the face of rapid changes in the digital era.

Index Terms—Arabic, lexical items, methodology, generational linguistic differences, Qassimi dialects

I. INTRODUCTION

In spite of the importance of passing down vocabulary from generation to generation, dialects may change this transfer, which may vary from context to context in terms of their nature, depth, and extent. Such changes can be observed in phonology, semantic innovation, and the loss of words. A generation gap may be created by some changes, and the new generation may perceive the old dialect as strange. By adopting new changes, a generation may mark itself apart from the previous one. Expatriate workers—e.g., domestic staff and drivers—can all contribute to these changes, as can globalization, television, and social media. Dialects change with the entry of vocabulary from other dialects and languages (Alhumaid, 2024; Stuart-Smith, 2013). Changes in lifestyle and occupation also affect dialect, as was found in AlBader’s (2015) examination of Kuwaiti Arabic.

Qassimi Arabic (QA), an Arabic dialect spoken in Qassim Province, located in the middle of Saudi Arabia, is an example of a dialect that has undergone some phonological changes over generations. Specifically, older QA speakers avoid morpheme-internal CCCs in trisyllabic clusters by inserting a vowel after the first consonant (CVCC) or epenthesizing between the second and third consonants (CCVC). In contrast, younger QA speakers break these clusters by emphasizing the vowel after the second consonant (Alnuqaydan, 2021). Despite these identified variations, a full examination of the generational differences in lexico-semantics has yet to be implemented. To fill this gap, the current study focuses on understanding the differences between the Qassimi dialects of the current and previous generations. The two generations studied consisted of women aged 70–75 and girls aged 8–10, indicating that the participant groups were separated by one generation.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Languages are fluid and continuously evolve. They change pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar (Mantiri, 2010). This evolution impacts all structural levels and is an inevitable characteristic of living languages. Factors influencing such changes include physiological, psychological, and social aspects (McMahon, 1994). Language change results from recurrent processes in language use, leading to both structural shifts and variations (Bybee, 2010). Understanding these dynamic processes is essential for explaining several linguistic aspects, including grammar, variance, and gradience (Bybee, 2010). The rate of change can be different, but all languages undergo transformation, some of them thrive, and some may become extinct (Mantiri, 2010).

There are many past studies that have demonstrated that internal and external factors themselves drive language change (e.g., Milroy, 1997; Yang, 2000; Woods, 2001; Jones & Esch, 2002; Killie, 2006). Among these, they are geography, contact with other languages or cultures, and social dynamics. Variant prestige is the main selective pressure for language change, with some languages being more prestigious than others. Furthermore, the diffusion is also

influenced by transmission error, individual influence, and social structure (Gong et al., 2014). Language change is also influenced by technological advancements and globalisation, which have an effect on the processes of borrowing and inventing new words (Hjarvard, 2004). The changes are manifested in different ways, for example, in grammar, spelling, and phonology. It is important to understand these factors to be able to predict, and hence to understand, language evolution and socio-cultural implications.

Once some factors that lead to language change over time are identified, it is necessary to explore how these processes occur in particular dialects and regions. Such studies have also been conducted in Saudi Arabia, where recent studies have been drawn of significant shifts in dialects caused by rapid urbanisation and socio-economic transformation. Najdi Arabic dialects are experiencing significant changes in pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar as a result of the contact with other linguistic communities and the impact of Standard Arabic in educational settings (al-Rojaie, 2013). Additionally, there's a phenomenon known as 'dialect leveling' – where local variants are abandoned in favour of more prestigious forms, demonstrating the role played in linguistic change by social dynamics and perceived prestige. For example, continuing with the previous example, some dialects in Saudi Arabia may be considered prestigious while others are considered inferior; this is the case with many other languages in various countries. This perception can also make speakers modify their dialect to match that of more prestigious dialects (Gong et al., 2014), as was the case in Najdi Arabic, which some QA speakers consider to be superior. Dialect leveling thus reveals the role social factors and perceived prestige play in the change of language.

A. Factors That Influence Language Change

Communication has always been done through languages. As a product of human dynamic psychology, the language is a notable feature of its evolution in continuous way. Some languages grow and grow in use and become more popular and powerful, while other languages may use up and disappear altogether. This natural cycle reflects the varying fortunes of languages over time. As Mantiri (2010) noted, languages evolve; some thrive, some grow, and some eventually fade away.

These changes are evident in syntax (Van Kemenade, 2007; Mair & Leech, 2020; Valeryevna, 2024), phonetics (Heselwood, 2013; Ohala, 2017; Heggarty, 2000; Baygulyyeva & Orazmyradova, 2023), vocabulary (Jatowt & Tanaka, 2012; Mishra, 2023), and communication patterns (Bala, 2014). Various internal and external factors influence language change; social factors have been found to have a more pronounced and substantial impact on linguistic variation and change in communities experiencing urbanization and modernization. This is the case for many languages around the world, and the Arabic language is no exception. Additionally, QA is one of the many Arabic dialects to have undergone significant changes over the years (Alkhamees, 2023). This might be due to a number of reasons, including those mentioned previously, such as the introduction of new words, old words going out of use, words acquiring new meanings, and grammatical norms becoming obsolete. Notably, social interaction leads to the adaptation of new words (Labov, 1994). Moreover, cultural shifts, technological advancements, and changes in social norms also play significant roles (Crystal, 2003).

What is more noticeable is the effect of geographical movements, such as migration and urbanization, which cause dialect contact and mixing, often resulting in dialect leveling where distinctive features are reduced, and new forms emerge (Trudgill, 1986). In addition, the surrounding environment is influential, as was shown in Alhumaid's (2024) study, where 16.3% of respondents, including 9.7% from the Qassim area and 20.2% from outside Qassim, experienced dialect changes after living outside their region. An individual noted that living in Jeddah for 25 years altered their vocabulary due to different environmental and social interactions. In turn, social media exposure has a particular effect on the younger generations, generational shifts, and other trends that may contribute to dialect change (Eckert, 2000; Thurlow & Mroczek, 2011). Finally, political and economic factors may also affect language, and consequently, a change or shift in an individual's dialect (Fishman, 1991).

B. Changes in Lexical Items

Lexical change is a dynamic process in language evolution, which includes semantic shift, word formation and lexicalization. According to Brinton and Traugott (2005), a unified model of lexicalization and grammaticalization based on the principles outlined above is a useful tool for historical linguistics. Bauer (1994) presents an overview of the kinds of lexical changes that took place in the 20th century in a Standard English language; von Schneidmessenger (2000) examined the connection between lexical change and broader language change. For example, just like the French incorporated terms such as the "le weekend" and "le parking" from English, English imported them as well, such as the 'internet' and the 'smartphone' as it reflects technical advancement and the 'internet' and the 'smartphone' as well (English has adopted terms such as 'internet' and 'smartphone', reflecting the technological advancements). Arabic also has absorbed many loanwords from English, such as "تليفون" (tilifon, "telephone"), "إنترنت" (internet), and "تلفاز" (tilfaz, "television"), as a result of technological and global influences.

The process of borrowing from other languages has also played an important role in the integration of new lexical terms into Arabic. As in Aujara (2023), Arabic loanwords in the form of Arabic borrowing are an illustrative example of lexical change through borrowing. Hausa, a Chadic language of West Africa, has been greatly influenced by Arabic, a Semitic language of North Africa and the Middle East central to Islamic practice. The major reason for this influence is historical trade along the trans-Saharan trade route and the adoption of Arabic into Islamic religious practices among

the Hausa. For instance, the Arabic word “al qalam” (the pen) is used in Hausa as “alqalumàa”, “arba” (four) becomes “arbà”, and “sukuun” (peace/tranquilly/quiet) becomes “sukuunii”. These adaptations show how borrowed terms are phonologically and semantically modified to fit the borrowing language, and as a result, the latter may change (Aujara, 2023).

Collectively, these previous studies prove that lexical change is influenced by cultural, social, and technological factors and appears as the emergence of new meanings, coining of new terms, and fading of others (Brinton & Traugott, 2005; Tahmasebi et al., 2018). Further insights into how and why these changes happen can be gained from theoretical perspectives such as socio-linguistic theories or psychological approaches to language processing. With the burning of social media and online communication, trends in recent decades already sped up lexical change so much that new slang and expressions started to find their niche in everyday language.

Based on these insights, the following discussion will centre around the QA. In the following paragraphs, this dialect will be examined to understand its development and current status, as it is a dialect that is known for its unique linguistic characteristics and historical evolution. Several linguists mention that studying languages and the development of languages can be very important for understanding some cultural and social dynamics of a region. This is a particularly interesting case of a QA which grew from traditional Arabic to include modern language usage.

C. *Qassimi Arabic*

Saudi Arabia is a country with a rich cultural heritage and its dialectal diversity is a reflection of that. This diversity includes the Hijazi dialect in the west, the Najdi dialect in the centre, the Janoby dialect in the south, and the Shamali dialect in the north. This linguistic landscape has an integral part of it, the QA, which is the main focus of this research. According to al-Rojaie (2013), there is little information about the historical development and current status of the QA. It is known that the dialect's origin goes back to the early settlement of Qassim, between the 13th and 16th centuries. It is a member of the Najdi group, spoken in central Saudi Arabia, and has undergone extensive changes in recent social, historical, and economic transformations. Al-Rojaie (2013) reveals that while the QA shares similarities with neighboring dialects, such as Sūdair and al-Washim, it also exhibits unique phonological and morphological features comparable to the Hail dialect.

The linguistic landscape of Saudi Arabia, particularly the QA, offers valuable insights into sociolinguistic studies, given the nation's profound social and economic changes over the past 50 years. Alhumaid (2024) categorizes the population of Qassim into two dialectal groups, which are (a) the Bedouin tribes, including Anizah, Utaibah, Subai', Dawasir, Harb, and Mutair, who have preserved their tribal dialects, and (b) the QA speakers, which is primarily used by the sedentary population who employ a variety of Najdi Arabic. As mentioned earlier, dialect leveling can lead to dialect change by causing regional dialects to become more similar and lose their distinctive features. Therefore, the dialect's evolution can be attributed to “dialect leveling,” a process by which distinct regional dialects converge and become more similar due to increased interaction and communication among speakers (Labov, 1994; Trudgill, 1986). This phenomenon is accelerated by factors such as urbanization, migration, and social mobility, which promote standardized or “supralocal” forms of speech.

The impact of socioeconomic changes on the use of dialect is evident in Al-Rojaie's (2013) study on sociolinguistic variation and change in QA. He discusses the shift from [ts] to [k], and from [dz] to [g], and observes that deaffrication of [k] is perceived as a simpler phonetic form and is associated with urban sophistication. For example, in Buraydah, [bri:dz] (‘teapot’) is pronounced [bri:g] due to this shift. This change is attributed to social attitudes by Al-Rojaie (2013) who argues that [k] is considered modern and urbane, whereas [ts] is considered outdated.

Like many other regional dialects, QA has been greatly affected by social and demographic changes in the last few decades. Notably, everyday speech patterns of the population in Saudi Arabia have been influenced by the widespread urbanisation and modernization of the country. For example, Qassim province has undergone significant social, demographic and economic change. Population has increased from 317,000 in 1974 to over one million in 2004, with the administrative capital Buraydah now housing over half a million people. Qassim has traditionally been an agricultural area, but is now in sectors of industry, business, education, and services (al-Rojaie, 2013).

As Qassim is located in the middle of Saudi Arabia, it is strategically located as a major transit route between different parts of the country, and this might have also played a role in the dialect's development (Alhumaid, 2024). Linguistic changes have been facilitated by interaction with other dialects and languages through media and migration. Urbanization, heteroglotism (exposure to many dialects and languages), and social mobility are the three main factors that have resulted in these changes. These transformations change the way linguistic practises, cultural identity, social cohesion, and notions of modernity and tradition are perceived within the community.

Beyond the regional context, the changes in the QA reflect common regional trends in language and dialect change related to social, economic, and political dynamics. The depth of this ongoing process indicates the stiffness of language and the way in which it is intimately tied to the lived experiences of its speakers. The change of dialect can be attributed to the internal factors like phonetics and vocabulary, as well as the external factors like geographical location and sociolinguistic interaction.

For example, Dorian (1973) found that grammatical change in the East Sutherland dialect of Scottish Gaelic showed that differences between the oldest and youngest fluent speakers occurred rapidly, and thus generational mixing contributes to dialect change. The purpose of this qualitative study is to investigate changes in the speech of older and

younger QA speakers in Qassim. The study specifically aims to find out the key lexical items that have undergone significant changes in their usage in the QA during the two generations. Data was collected from participants who live in Buraydah, Qassim Province using an observation method. All observations were carried out in informal settings. Dialect change (Dorian, 1973). In Qassim, the interaction between different generations, integration with other dialects, urbanization, and the influence of social media all play roles in linguistic evolution. New linguistic trends are introduced by media exposure and educational settings influence language use by changing the dialect. Similarly, migration for better opportunities has increased dialect contact with neighbouring regions, especially Riyadh, which has further contributed to dialect contact and change (Alhumaid, 2024; al-Rojaie, 2013). Overall, these comprise how dynamic and responsive the QA is to such social and environmental influences.

Some of the phonological changes the QA has undergone are best observed when comparing the speech of the older generation with that of the younger one. In an optimality- based analysis of triconsonantal clusters in QA, Alnuqaydan (2021) found that older and younger Qassimi speakers treat intolerance of triconsonantal clusters differently in trisyllabic words, which highlights tension between stress and epenthesis (CVCC), as in the case of /ʃlh/ [ja.(ʃəl).ħuh] “may god guide him.” In contrast, younger Qassimi speakers break it by emphasizing a vowel after the second consonant (CCVC) as in [(l)jaʃ).lə.ħuh]. However, the lexico-semantic changes from one generation to another are still underexamined. Hence, the present study endeavored to thoroughly investigate the differences and changes in the lexico-semantic aspects of QA between the older and younger Qassimi generations (i.e., old and modern Qassimi). To accomplish this, the following research question was established:

RQ1: What are the lexico-semantic changes between old and modern QA as expressed by the Qassimi people?

III. METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study is designed to investigate changes in Qassim in the speech of older and younger QA speakers. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the key lexical items that have undergone significant changes in their usage in the QA over these two generations. An observation method was utilized to collect data from participants who live in Buraydah, Qassim Province. All observations were conducted in informal settings.

A. Participants

The study consisted of a sample of six female participants, including three older women (aged 70–75 years) and three girls (aged 8–10 years). Only female participants were recruited to eliminate the effect of gender. All participants lived in Buraydah and had never left the city for more than 2 months. The younger participants were elementary school students; the older participants were housewives who had received no education (illiterate).

B. Data Collection and Analysis

Natural observations of the older participants’ conversations were conducted to record non-standard Arabic lexical items. When needed, questions were asked to obtain further information or clarification of meaning. The words that emerged were of different parts of speech, including nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Examples of words used by the older participants are presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1
LEXICAL ITEMS OF OLDER PARTICIPANTS

Part of speech	Word	Meaning
Noun	<i>bakhat</i>	luck
	<i>şaggat</i> ⁵	latch
	<i>şadjeh</i>	loud noise
	<i>alşefreh</i>	midday
	<i>maşamyel</i>	tea and coffee sets
	<i>almasyad</i>	mosque
	<i>fatkkeh</i>	ring
	<i>dirisheh</i>	window
	<i>baykeh</i>	garage
	<i>lahdeh</i>	conquer
	<i>ahwikad</i>	The sure thing
	<i>almaseh</i>	The table
Verb	<i>yesed</i>	enough (v)
	<i>dook</i>	take (male)
	<i>ashwaa</i>	got well (male)
	<i>aghul</i>	choke
	<i>aghadi</i>	hopefully do
	<i>yahalet</i>	throw
	<i>khaban</i>	shortened (a dress)
	<i>fitaq</i>	letting out (by removing the stitches from the hem of the garment)
	<i>maşaʿ</i>	twitch
	<i>yaniithakh</i>	show off / brag
Adjective	<i>milbed</i>	sitting quietly (male)
	<i>minnaşbeh</i>	excited (female)
	<i>emtahatem</i>	crumbled
	<i>athram</i>	someone who has lost his front teeth
	<i>tʿameh</i>	vexed
	<i>shareh</i>	reproach

These words were then used, targeted, or implemented in conversations with the younger participants in two ways:

1. The targeted lexical items were used in the phrases produced by a non-participant interactant.
2. The participants were asked questions that triggered the use of these lexical items or their synonyms.

Additional conversations were then also conducted with the older participants to observe any issues, challenges, difficulties, or misunderstandings that might occur when they hear the lexical items that participants from the younger generation used.

IV. RESULTS

Based on the reactions of the younger participants, recorded lexical items were classified into three classes:

A. Understood and Used Lexical Items: This includes lexical items that were used in the conversation with participants from the younger generation and for which they indicated no misunderstanding or comprehension challenge. Furthermore, they were implemented in the responses of the younger participants. Examples of these lexical items are presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2
UNDERSTOOD AND USED LEXICAL ITEMS

Part of Speech	Word	Meaning
Noun	<i>şajjeh</i>	loud noise
Verb	<i>yesed</i>	enough (v)
	<i>dook</i>	take (male)
	<i>ashwaa</i>	got well (male)
	<i>aghul</i>	Choke
	<i>yahalet</i>	Throw
	<i>khanan</i>	shortened (a dress)
Adjective	<i>shareh</i>	Reproach

Additional conversations were then also conducted with the older participants to observe any issues, challenges, difficulties, or misunderstandings that might occur when they heard the lexical items that participants from the younger generation used.

While the non-participant was talking to one of the younger participants, there was some noise coming from the hall. Therefore, she said;

Ya Allh şla haşajjeh.

O' God. On this loud noise.

O' God, what a loud noise!

However, in some situations, young participants understood the lexical items but laughed when they heard them. They mocked the non-participant interactant by implementing the lexical items in their turn, talking while laughing. In the following situation, the younger participant used an old word while talking to another younger participant.

The non-participant interactant said:

yesed ghaweh wa hala, shebeṣna

Enough coffee and sweets. We got full.

We had enough coffee and sweets. We got full.

A young participant then turned to another young participant and said:

Wa Allah yesed sawaleef [laughing]

Wa Allah, enough conversations [laughing]

O' God, we had enough conversations [laughing]

The participants got the old Qassimi words, understood them, and used them in their speech. However, their usage of the words was accompanied by laughter in both scenarios.

B. Understood but Unused Lexical Items: In some other cases, it was noted that the younger participants understood some Qassimi words used by the older participants, however, they did not use them in their conversation. Instead, it was found that the younger participants substituted these old Qassimi words with words from White Arabic or Standard Arabic. Examples of these lexical items are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
UNDERSTOOD BUT UNUSED LEXICAL ITEMS

Part of Speech	Word	Meaning
Noun	<i>bakhat</i>	Luck
	<i>maṣamyel</i>	tea and coffee sets
	<i>almasyad</i>	Mosque
	<i>dirisheh</i>	Window
	<i>ahwikad</i>	The sure thing
	<i>almaseh</i>	The table
Verb	<i>aghadi</i>	hopefully do
	<i>khaban</i>	shortened (a dress)
	<i>fitaq</i>	letting out (by removing the stitches from the hem of the garment)
	<i>maṣaṣ</i>	Twitch
Adjective	<i>minmaṣbeh</i>	excited (female)

During the observations of the conversations of the younger participants, most of these lexical items were not used. They were replaced by words from the White Arabic dialect. For instance, in the following dialogue, the non-participant interactant implemented the word *aghadina* ("hopefully we do") in her turn. However, when the younger participant replied, she replaced the word with *leytna* ("Would that!").

Non-participant interactant:

Aghadina nurooh beyt Amal baṣd alaṣshaa.

Hopefully, we will go to Amal's house after dinner.

Let's go to Amal's house after dinner.

Response from young participant:

Helu wa Allah, leytna nashar ila alfajer

Good wa Allah, would we stay till sunrise?

That is good. Let's stay till sunrise.

In another situation, the same young participant was recorded delivering a similar suggestion to another young participant, saying:

Khalyna nat'laṣ lalmiḍmar baṣd alaṣshaa.

Let's go to the walking track after dinner.

The other young participant responded:

Fikrah wa Allah, helu aljaw.

Idea, wa Allah. Beautiful weather.

Good idea. The weather is beautiful.

Even though the two words *aghadina* "hopefully we do" and *khalyna* "let's us" are almost synonyms, the young participants did not use *aghadina* "hopefully we do" in their conversation.

Another example that was observed is when the non-participant interactant said:

Raḥu ṣaloon balmasyad

Went to pray in the mosque

They went to pray in the mosque.

A young participant asked:

Masha Allah, masjidakum qireeb?

Masha Allah, your mosque is closed?

Masha Allah, is your mosque close?

The non-participant used the standard word *masjid* instead of the old Qassimi word *masyad*, “mosque.” The young participant understood the word and used it in her speech. However, when she used it, it was accompanied by laughter to signal her reaction to the use of the more antiquated word.

In another situation, the non-participant interactant asked one of the girls to close the window, using the old Qassimi word *dirisheh* instead of the standard word *shubak* “window” in the following way:

Takfeen sakree addirisheh, ma nasmaʕ.

Please, close the window. We do not hear.

Please, close the window. We cannot hear.

A young participant transferred the request to another young girl who was sitting close to the window, saying:

Taqul sakroo ashshibak.

Said, close the window.

She said, Close the window.

C. Unrecognized/Unknown and Unused Lexical Items: The third class of the elder participant’s lexical items included words that the younger participants did not recognize and did not use in their speech. Some of these lexical items are presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4
UNRECOGNIZED AND UNUSED LEXICAL ITEMS

Part of Speech	Word	Meaning
Noun	<i>alʕefreh</i>	Midday
	<i>fatkheh</i>	Ring
	<i>baykeh</i>	Garage
	<i>lahdeh</i>	Conquer
Verb	<i>khaban</i>	shortened (a dress)
	<i>fitaq</i>	letting out (by removing the stitches from the hem of the garment)
	<i>ytanithakh</i>	show off / brag
Adjective	<i>milbed</i>	sitting quietly (male)
	<i>emtahatem</i>	crumbled
	<i>tʕameh</i>	vexed

In most cases, young participants asked for clarification or indicated through facial expression that they did not understand the word or what had been said. The following case gives an example of this scenario.

Non-participant interactant said:

Alʕhareen ahsan yanamoon balʕefreh

The little ones had better sleep in the midday

It is better for the kids to take a nap around midday

A young participant replied:

Wish alʕefreh?

What is midday?

What does the word “midday” mean?

In this case, the girls’ comment might have indicated she had not heard the word previously, or she might have been feigning a lack of understanding to appear more modern.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the dynamic nature of the QA and illustrate the significant changes that have occurred over generations. The analysis reveals that while older speakers of the QA retain many traditional lexical items and phonological patterns, younger speakers are increasingly adopting modern vocabulary and structures influenced by various social and cultural factors.

Probably one of the most interesting observations is the generational gap with regard to lexical items: more and more items are disappearing from the lexical repertoire of some generations, replaced by newer ones. Older participants showed a major familiarity for the old terms (*dirisheh*, *masyad* ...) that are replaced as a rule by the Arabic equivalents by younger speakers. This substitution is part of a broader trend of lexical change resulting from exposure to more standardized forms of Arabic, probably due to education and media. The fact that the younger generation understands but does not use these ‘old’ words also shows a shift in linguistic identity where usage of such modern words is associated with modernity.

Furthermore, the way in which some of the younger participants reacted on encountering traditional terms suggests a complicated relationship they have with their linguistic heritage. They may like the historical significance of these words, but their laughter indicates a disconnection, like the older terms are quaint or out of date. This fits with the dialect levelling idea of features of regional dialect becoming more socially prestigious. Another reason for the erosion

of traditional Qassimi linguistic features may be the younger generation's tendency to adopt modern terms, which may be due to their interactions with peers from different dialectal backgrounds.

This situation cannot be understood without the role played by social media and globalization. Younger speakers have more access to a great deal more linguistic styles and vocabularies through the pervasive impact of the different digital communication platforms, and more so to a variety of terms and expressions that are adopted faster. This exposure allows the shift in language use to reflect current cultural trends, and thus changes the QA.

The urbanization and migration have also changed the sociolinguistic landscape of Qassim Province. The older dialect is increasingly in contact with other dialects and languages as the population moves from rural to urban settings. Furthermore, this interaction also shapes phonological changes, since younger speakers modify their speech to match 'heard' modern norms.

The findings also generate important questions regarding the preservation of the heritage of the linguistic. The older generation is dying of and the younger generation acquires a new pronunciation so there is a danger that traditional vocabulary and phonological features of the language may disappear from the everyday use. The loss from this could also have an impact on cultural identity and community cohesion, language being a key marker of social belonging. Future research may examine ways to document and preserve the older QA, and that there be no loss of the rich linguistic heritage in the midst of such rapid change in our life.

It is shown that the QA reflects wider dynamics of language change subject to social dynamics, technological advancement and cultural change. Speech patterns of both old and young generations offer an insight into the play between tradition and modernity, which indicates the multifaceted process of identity and engagement with a fast-evolving environment. Further exploration in these linguistic changes will yield much in terms of cultural and social weaving of the fabric of Qassim Province and a greater appreciation of the dynamic fluidity of language.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study is a comprehensive study of the lexical changes in the QA experienced by different generations in Qassim Province, Saudi Arabia. Qualitative analysis shows that the dialect is undergoing change due to several factors, including globalization, urbanization, and social dynamics. The distinct patterns that the vocabulary usage and the phonological patterns show indicate a clear line delineating the differences between the linguistic practices of older and younger speakers.

Such a rich repository of traditional terms and phonetic structure that older speakers have reflects roots and cultural heritage of the dialect. Compared to younger speakers, younger speakers tend to use modern vocabulary and simplified phonological forms and will favor Standard Arabic equivalents. It is not only a change in how language is used but also a part where part of the wider environment is seen as a shift of language towards a more universally accepted linguistic set of features.

The humorous reactions of the younger speakers towards traditional terms show a difficult relation with their linguistic heritage, one of understanding and ignorance of the older dialect. Such an occurrence prompts questions as to whether Qassimi's linguistic identity will persist during such rapid social change. If there is dialect leveling as regional traits become less distinct, then features of the QA may be lost.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Considering how fast the QA is changing now, it's vital to record and keep the rich linguistic heritage of the QA. Future work will need to expand the sample size and utilize diverse methodologies to gain a more complete understanding of the dialect's development in these various contexts and communities. This allows us to understand the intricate relationship between language, culture, and identity in Qassim Province and to prevent the loss of the linguistic traditions of the region to the waves of modernization.

In short, the QA is a perfect illustration of how language adapts to social, cultural, and technological change. A comprehension of these changes provides a richer picture of the social context from which its speakers live and understand its sociolinguistic landscape. Studies like this one are critical to understanding the importance of protecting regional dialects from being lost as the world becomes ever more globalized, as we try to preserve linguistic diversity. It should be noted that the sample size for this study was small. So, the findings of this study may not be satisfactory for the whole population. Additionally, the study was conducted in Buraydah, and therefore, the results may not be generalizable to other regions in Qassim. Future studies can increase the sample size and include participants from other Qassimi cities to gain a more complete understanding of how the use of dialect changes between generations in Qassim. However, the participants were all female, and two generations apart by at least one generation were studied. In this study, the investigation is essentially comparing the grandmothers' dialect with that of their grandchildren rather than the children and women in their mothers' generation. In the case of their shared exposure to education, technology and other aspects of the modern world, there might be fewer and less noticeable differences between children and their mothers than their mothers experienced.

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The Question of Contextualized ‘Frozen Memory’ in the Self-Narratives of the Aged: A Gerontological Reading of Jamil Gammoh’s *If Only Time Could Tell*

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Abstract—In the Arab ethos, the older generations occupy a significant place as subjects of reverence and respect and as repositories of acquired wisdom. Arabic fiction too is replete with characters in this age category, who project personalized and holistic truths of either a war-torn homeland or a time and context that no longer exist as they feel foreign to their present surroundings whether it is in diaspora or the postmodern present. For the younger generation specifically, the only source of truth are such stories with their details told by a withering generation. However, from a prevalent theoretical perspective, reliability on frozen memories as sources of truth is questioned if these memories are projected as romanticized and exaggerated as they take on a repetitive pattern. This study employs a gerontological approach in Jamil Gammoh’s collection of short fiction *If Only Time Could Tell* in order to highlight the significant role that the older generation plays in recreating their memories of a better, simpler time lived, as experienced socially and culturally in the past against their sense of loss, alienation and confusion toward the drastic change in social attitudes accompanying the technological advancement of the present. The study will also look at the possibility of understanding ‘Frozen Memory’ away from its diasporic context to include the older generation’s sense of presencing in the foreign postmodern age, by highlighting the notable similarities in the urgency of narration given the substantially different circumstances driving them to do so.

Index Terms—frozen memory, Jamil Gammoh, literary gerontology, narrative gerontology, self-narratives

I. INTRODUCTION

Away from its originally medical understanding, gerontology has, especially since the late 1980s, formed a more profound scholarship of its own within the literary corpus focused on matters of representation and reception of the process of aging. Scholars who engage in the development of the discipline seek to understand what growing older means from social, cultural and political perspectives (Kribernegg, 2015, p. 839). They are found to follow the method of exposing hidden socio-cultural ideologies on aging and simultaneously attempting to allocate methods of departure from such dogmas with the objective of debunking them. This process is better described by Felski (2015) as a process that attempts to “demystify, destabilize, denaturalize” and then “to recontextualize, reconfigure, or recharge” (p. 17). However, the method has long been adopted from Jacques Derrida’s ‘Deconstructionist Method’ and employed in different fields of study, namely Feminist Literary Criticism and Postcolonial Studies. The onset of literary gerontology then similarly aims at demystifying the stereotypical assumptions formed over time about older people and instead empowering them with a unique character of their own as an essential category in society. According to Swinnen (2023), literary gerontology “aims to clarify cultural meanings of aging, negotiating and subverting them in a world characterized by structural and everyday ageism” (p. 136). Yet throughout her academic engagement with the interdisciplinarity of literary representations of aging and later age in “literary texts to photography, film, television and performance”, Swinnen expresses discomfort toward the limited and unrealistic literary corpus thus far produced pertaining to the disconnection between the images of age, aging and later life portrayed in fiction and the reality that older people experience (p. 137).

In reality, the cultural reception of older people has chronologically developed over time to suit market-oriented reform policies and socio-economic orders such as those employed in Neoliberalism and Consumerism, whereby older people were projected as mere statistics that reflected negatively on the productivity of society and the welfare of the state according to Katz (1992). Such policy-driven ideologies negatively influenced notions of alarm, forming resentment toward people of old age as early as the second half of the nineteenth century continued through the first half of the twentieth century. However, starting the second half of the twentieth century, Gilleard et al. (2013) argue that a slight move away from the depiction of old age as a problematic category developed with the shift in cultural ideology pertaining to prolonging productivity as long as possible.

Interestingly however, Narrative gerontology has a more personal approach to debunking stereotypical images of old age when older people are viewed as subjective and active agents involved in the telling of their own life-stories. Whether it is considered a conceptual trend linked to critical gerontology (Biggs, 2004, p. 50), or identified as a separate path

within critical gerontology (Katz, 2003, p. 19), or even as a “recognized discipline” in its own right (Phoenix et al., 2010, p. 1), the one interest it looks into is the story-telling of older people and the circumstances surrounding their told narratives. It remains a scope within gerontology that cannot be contained within the limitation of a definition, as it may be employed for different purposes (Randall, 2004, p. 50), as it has, thus far, been “examined as a research method, a description of ageing ... and as a form of therapy [for the story-teller],” offering an amalgam of means by which to study older generations in their later life (p. 50). Its use then, as an approach to fathoming the urgency of narration that older generations have in different contexts opens space for consideration of different possibilities for both aged people and the receptive younger generation. On the one hand, ‘story-telling’ has a subjective character for the aged teller when built on “the recognition that life can be thought of as an actively constructed text that must be part fiction. Just as stories in novels are made up so we ‘make ourselves up’ when we relate the substance of our lives” (Swinnen, p. 12). In other words, all aspects in lived life are personalized and viewed differently depending on individual experiences of it; when narrated, the teller’s perspective necessarily gives him subjectivity as the story would depict his own view on the world, simultaneously adding an individual imprint to his existence in the timeframe and events of the story being told.

To this end, the repetitive mode of narration that characterizes aged people, when viewed from this perspective, distances its reception as a form of loss, confusion and dislocation from the undesired present on the teller’s part, and instead may be received from a more constructive lens as a form of affirmation of the aged-teller’s presencing, subjectivity and a continuation of his mental activity in later life. On the other hand, story-telling of the older generation serves a pedagogical purpose for the recipient, as “the act of reading lives is similar to the act of reading novels” (Swinnen, p. 12). In other words, similar to the aged-teller’s sense of activity experienced when telling their story, the recipient will likewise process the narrated events from their own perspective, experiences and positioning in the world, in addition to placing the narrative within an ethnic time-frame they connect to as part of their heritage and identity-construction, be it within the context of receiving the story in diaspora or in a postmodern present disconnected from a simpler past. The two aspects of gerontology, the literary and narrative, are crucial for the study, whereby literary gerontology deconstructs and reconstructs different articulations of old age in society, while narrative gerontology offers creative means by which to subjectify people of old age not merely as individuals with stories to tell, but rather as stories themselves to be unraveled, thus, deeming both aspects most significant for the analysis of Jamil Gammoh’s semi-autobiographical work of fiction, *If Only Time Could Tell* (2019). The collection of short stories under examination projects the author’s personal experience of the past that he reconstructs amidst the much technological present as told in his aged characters’ self-narratives. However, it is pertinent to commence with an understanding of the contextualization of ‘frozen memory’, since it is thus far merely employed within the realm of diasporic studies.

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the flourishing of Arabic literature has created space for a collective of unique voices to share their stories and to shed light on the diverse experiences that they undergo in identifying with a homeland alongside their identity crises. This state of innovation that Arab scholars call for is reflected in their literary corpus. Whether they speak from within their homeland or as members of diasporic communities, they are found to articulate various accounts of nostalgia through their self-narratives. Those narratives are the stories of their lived experiences of the homeland, based on their different socio-cultural, political and historical backgrounds. In order to better place the study’s theoretical framework within the context of the literary work under consideration, a clear understanding of what is intended with contextualized ‘frozen memory’ is deemed pertinent. The study’s objective however by no means looks to undermine the specific circumstances aligned with the diasporic experience as we understand it. It rather aims at examining certain similarities shared through experience, attitude and narration from a gerontological perspective that may be found in ageing-people’s reactions toward their surroundings in the two contexts, diaspora and the homeland.

As the majority of diasporic fiction is fixated on the narratives of older generations, a single pattern may generally be detected unifying their self-narratives. Respectively, a diasporic experience commences with the urgent move of the subject from his homeland into a foreign country. The subject’s nostalgia for better times lived in the past before leaving the homeland is also aligned with his difficulty or even refusal to assimilate in the country of residence, and rather chooses to limit his interaction to the diasporic community. This is mainly because he has already formed a still image of his homeland based on his past experiences of better times lived there, frozen in his mind, leading to a state of confusion toward current experiences in the land of residence. What remains constant though, is holding on tightly to past experiences and memories associated with the homeland, mixed with the wish of return (Clifford, 1994, p. 304). These nostalgic memories of a homeland that once was, are repeated over time as an outlet to the lack of experience-development into the present, caused by the individual’s forced removal from his natural context. Viewed in this light, these collected memories are frozen within a specific timeframe, and can only be expressed by means of narration. Over time, the more the memories are repeated, the more romanticized they appear to be, as they are mixed with nostalgic feelings of a wish of return to those times. It is significant to point out then that ‘frozen memory’ in the literary corpus has thus far been solely associated with studies of diaspora. However, and from a gerontological perspective, this study stands out with its examination of ‘frozen memory’ away from its normalized diasporic context to include the possibility of its consideration as a condition becoming of all aged individuals.

Similar to the older generation living in diaspora, in the context of one’s homeland and from the standpoint of the present, aging people are found to express a certain alienation from their surroundings with the rapid advancement of

technology over time, to the point of projecting notions of resentment toward the sophistication of their present surroundings, and experiencing a form of mental retreat onto the framework of a certain past, when the rhythm of life was slower, life altogether was simpler and less complex. Nostalgia for those better times that no more exist mixed with a constant wish of reliving them are found to manifest themselves through frozen memories, that, similar to the context of diaspora, are seen to be romanticized and narrated repeatedly. In this sense, 'frozen memory', as the study argues, may theoretically depart from its standardized diasporic connotations and be construed as a necessary mental condition of later life whether there is political urgency or not, the one unifying factor being the feelings of alienation that aged people experience caused by their resentment toward or even rejection of their current surroundings mixed with nostalgic memories and a constant wish of return. In other words, the discourse of memory and the perception of home are the two axes encompassed in the narratives of aged people. In addition, whether they are conscious of it or not, aged people affirm their presence with the repetitive mode their narratives follow.

Memory then is "understood as a complex relation of personal experiences, the shared histories of communities and their modes of transmission" (Baroinan et al., 2007, p. 11) is seen as one of the fundamental factors in shaping the identity of any individual. Shurken (1991) states that memory "forms the fabric of human life, affecting everything from the ability to perform simple, everyday tasks to the recognition of the self" (p. 1). This illustrates that memory is a primary factor in defining the aging condition. For the older generation that experiences life either in their homeland or in diaspora, the discourse of nostalgic memory in the original homeland or/and the past is significant in shaping their longing for it as well as asserting their fixed presence by means of recreating the past in their self-narratives. Put simply, they preserve the memories that they have of the past and project them into their current lives. Therefore, their memories force them to identify with a single home; one that denotes their place of origin in the context of diaspora and their sense of presence and subjectivity in the context of the past.

II. AUTHORIZING NOSTALGIC MEMORY

The late Jordanian author, Jamil Gammoh (1941-2021), published many collections of short fiction, some of which are characterized as semi-autobiographical, and fixated on his personal experience with the past, in addition to the self-narratives of the older generation he had encountered growing up. In his fiction *Trials of Time* (2014), *Memoirs of a Burdened Man* (2015), *If Only Time Could Tell* (2019) and *The Virtuous and the Wicked* (2022), his representation of nostalgic memory and the homing experience for the older generation are overpowering themes that he lays out through the self-narratives of his aged characters or his fictionalized younger self's account of the past.

For Gammoh, memories of the elderly as depicted in his fiction are treated as alternate archives. Every single memory stands testimony of the homing experiences in the past (Hirsch et al., 2002, p. 10). In this sense, personalized and collective memories play a very significant role for the elderly as they serve to unveil the untold insider's experience of history, to project the lost truth of their time otherwise deformed by the drastic shift in societal attitude amidst the rapid rhythm of time and technology. The recording of these memories, thus, becomes a means of "representation [and] interpretation" (p. 5), authenticated by its subjects, and representative of self, home and history. Gammoh's understanding of memory includes the socio-cultural and political heritage of the older generation to satisfy their nostalgia and longing to be in touch with their ancestral history, hence, the representation of their 'Real home', that is their place of residence in a simpler past, with specific fixation on Al-Salt city in Jordan, the inspiration for many of his settings. The constant invasion of cultural symbols in the novel such as folkloric music and local food enhances the sense of pride for the aged characters, whose self-worth has been eroded by the socio-economic shift that accompanied technology (Baronian et al., 2007). Memory is specifically treated in this study as a performative, figurative process rather than a secure space of identity in itself (Douglas, 1975). It cannot serve the younger generation of the present day as a substitute for identity, especially that the memory in question would not ideally be theirs, but rather that of their parents and grandparents; the sum of lived experiences of a different generation. Nevertheless, memory does serve as an incentive for young individuals to embark on their own journey for identity-formation in their present state of confusion with the blurriness of postmodernity, without which they would not be able to create their own self-narratives in turn.

Gammoh's fixation on memory in the semi-autobiographical work of fiction under study serves two purposes: on the one hand, he engages his personal childhood memories of his birthplace to give life to the now considered a historical site in Jordan through his thorough and vivid description of the original houses, streets, and narrow roads during their thriving time of glory, before the original stones were changed, and old houses were abandoned. He is, on the other hand, drawn toward recreating those memories either personally experienced or as told by the elderly residing in Jordan, much like the role that the metaphor 'life as story' plays in narrative gerontology, by means of viewing story-telling as "a lens through which to view the aging process, a unique way of seeing what aging involves" (Kenyon et al., 1999, p. 1). Gammoh (2019) states that "a story-teller's gift of oral narration is an author's art of forming into a novel, and the difference between them remains in the annihilation of the former from one's memory, while remaining immortalized in the latter" (p. 8). In other words, his treatment of the older generation's memories of the past is grounded and projected in an ontological discourse, one that fathoms human beings as "storytellers and story-listeners" as not mere agents that tell stories, but rather as stories themselves (Kenyon et al., 1999, p. 1). In this sense, Gammoh's approach in voicing the memories of the elderly then serves the purpose of recreating lost fragments of their earlier lives, as a form of subjective reconciliation between their active past and what they feel is a static present, as they find themselves alienated from their surroundings with time

pausing for them with the advancement of technology. On the significance of memory in self-narrative, Gammoh (2022) states,

My thoughts wandered back into the past that remains forever unconciliated with the present, no matter how closely intertwined they were, the past could never be retrieved ... with its social and economic conditions, and the many lives of the forefathers from whom we descend ... I found it to be a copious past worth revisiting and forming reflections of; the generation that endured the taste of sour grapes so that the present generation would enjoy the ripened ones ... it is a past that transpired a bit before my childhood. My imagination drove a desire in me to transform my articles into a collection of short stories, all in one book ... and a single imaginary thought was then shaped by the documentation of the lived reality of those who came before us and are today no more. (p. 7)

The widened gap formed by the change in 'social and economic conditions' over time may only be filled through the personal memories of the older generation that he fictionalizes, intertwined with the socio-economic reality of the society they had lived and experienced as documented in Gammoh's articles, thus allowing the older generation to narrate their own experiences and ascribe meaning to them. Although the majority of his fiction gives voice to the elderly's untold stories of a forgotten past amidst the relentlessly fast-paced present, in the semi-autobiographical story "About Life" however, Gammoh (2019) illustrates through his fictionalized 'I' how he personally does not allow himself to be lost in the folds of time as age takes a toll on him. The nameless protagonist states:

Some men pass through life adapting to its different stages passably, and others remain forgotten in the folds of time ... overlooked like ancient history. We allude to those adjustable to life-changes of reminiscing over a past lost in the bends of time. Those we consider worthy do not allow the long years to separate them from today's rising youth. They meet in their view on life, they live their era, they learn from their past and live their present, shorten the space that separates their generation from that of their children, meeting their children's intellect and thoughts, converging with life's modern tools, evolving and not reproving the conceptions of their present day, they live the reality of today's youth and do not feel alienation from them; unlike those obscured by time for inaction toward current requirements and ramifications. (p. 110)

His conscious understanding of the mental shift between differing generations, in addition to his observation of the older generation's sense of loss and alienation from the much changed present allow him to make the required adjustments to his life so that "not a day [would pass] in bad conscience or under-action" (p. 110). In fact, he argues that he would never allow his day to wear him down "so long as [his] blood runs through [his] veins, and [his] heart beats in [his] chest, and [his] soul is capable of letting out [his] breath, in spite of the betrayal of time [... his] will remains relentless" (p. 111). In addition, Gammoh (2019) is seen in many instances positioning himself as a member of the older generation and envisioning his life as an immortalized story. He opines:

If my time neared its end, my withering senses would still have the strength to tell my story. I feel I have a destiny to fulfill, a project that never ceases to exist ... one that continues so long as I live. With every passing day, I am given the incentive and hope to continue; you see it has become my mission that relieves me of my worries and life's dilemmas. It is why I never worry from the snares of death ... and steadfast, I remain on the path I chose for myself, with all the strength that God Almighty has willed in me. (p. 111)

His clear understanding of the quick passing of time becomes his incentive to double his exerted effort into his constant metamorphosis which he believes should be effected in order to distance the sense of alienation that comes with old age amidst the unrelenting postmodern present. He also means to be documented in history, and so is found determined to document his subjective presence throughout his life, till he is no more.

As Gammoh employs his fictional characters to give fragments of their lived pasts, a certain fixation on contrasting societal demeanor between past and present is found fundamentally significant, as it appears to be disturbing for the older generation and a substantial instigator for their sense of alienation from and confusion with the present. Their constant comparison is then deemed most significant if they are to effect a subjective presencing for themselves in old age, as the notion of deconstructing the flaws of the present and refurbishing it with the missing values of the past may only be found in their narrated selves.

Contrary to the state of confusion that the older generation expresses toward their positioning with the unfamiliarity of the present, their homing experience is found to manifest itself in a single 'frozen memory' of a simpler past they find comfort in repeatedly recreating. The aged narrator in "Social Rites and Decrees of Life" (2019) gives himself solace as he reflects;

If only time could take us back to a past of purity and clarity, to the captivating nature destroyed by civilization in the name of advancement, to our organic plants before pesticides were introduced, to our clear seas before they were contaminated by arsenic, zinc and mercury ... if only time could tell us stories of a past when souls were pure and hearts immaculate, when a fellow individual's life was considered precious, to tell us about loyalty, love, sacrifice, empathy, amicable relations, collaboration, social solidarity, respect for human relations ... if only time could distance us from the negativity of hypocrisy, flattery, selfishness, expediency, betrayal, gossip and so on. (p. 162)

Much like the mode of hypnosis that the listener goes through in Coleridge's lyrical ballad "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1798) as the aged sailor is destined to continually retell his story of the Albatross's curse to each passerby, the

silent listener in Gammoh's "Social Rites and Decrees of Life" (2019) also has the old narrator, Radwan, from an adept generation, capture his undivided attention with his fixed gaze as he finds himself forced to tell the story of Jalil, an eighty-year-old man who in turn expresses his discontentment with his present amidst the better past. Jalil explains in dejection that "despite the occasional years of drought befalling them, he cannot recall anyone having met death out of starvation during those years, or even gone hungry, and that the capable did not hesitate from aiding the destitute" (p. 163). He argues that people, with the simplicity of life in the past were simple in demeanor toward one another, as they led a life of social solidarity, without the need to boast that one shines while another remains in the shade. The entire community operated as one body, with every individual assisting with the means possible for him, they all "[shared] their social lives, collaborating in building, farming and harvesting for free" (p. 163). This sense of cooperation was practiced in happy and sad occasions as a form of "spontaneous socialism available to those who asked or did not ask for it" (p. 163). The society operated like "a beehive, each individual well-aware of his duties toward others, in what was known as 'give and take' [...], a simple popular and spontaneous socialism unprecedented by any ideology" (p. 163).

When death befell a community member in the past, Jalil explains how city-folks remained in mourning for forty days, and only after the completion of the period would a wedding be allowed to take place, conditioned to the consent of the mourners. Following the ceremony of death, he attests that no one dared to speak out of respect for the deceased and his family, but when need be, "your words would sound flustered and shaken as they're being uttered out of fear of choosing the wrong words and thus causing a misunderstanding with others. You'd feel people's hearts aching, all decently clothed and grieving" (p. 165). This is so because people used to truly empathize with one another as they came together to share in the weight of each other's plights. In this sense, "the deceased was considered a loss for the entirety of the suburb and city [...] weddings would completely cease as sadness pervaded all, and tongues were tied, merely allowing a necessary amount of words, dipped in the scent of death, to slip" (p. 165).

In "Social Rites and Decrees of Life" (2019), Gammoh's fictionalized 'I' once more employs the standpoint of the older generation reflecting on its alienation and confusion with the present state of humanity. The narrator argues:

People have changed in temperament with this technological revolution eating away at their minds, as they became introverted with the mobile phone occupying the majority of their time. One's world then started revolving around one's self in a similar fashion to that of an electron and a neutron orbiting within the confines of a particle. Social life has shattered within the one family, with mannerisms, sentiments and feelings embodying stagnation and stiffness unbefitting of man or humanity. (pp. 161-162)

In this sense, the aged narrator is seen to reflect on the present-day public attitude and demeanor of able-bodied individuals as gradually degenerating over time with the advancement of technology; an equation he finds puzzling as he describes the basic rules of humanity deteriorate in demeanor toward one another. In contrast with the simpler past, he believes that "human-nature has veered away from the right path onto that of personal interest, selfishness, narcissism and utilitarianism currently controlling societies. Not even air and water are spared from human and country loitering destroying humanity and the environment either ignorantly or purposefully" (p. 162).

Jalil sorrowfully reflects on people's numbness and lack of emotion during the ceremonies and rituals that follow someone's death as he attests; "No one is concerned with others, false and shameful flattery, and the effect one's death has on people is similar to that of a chick" (p. 164). He continues; "the deceased today has no dignity preserved for him, as people's demeanor doesn't match the venerability of the situation" (p. 164). Jalil's shame with today's general demeanor toward one's death is exemplified through his memory of witnessing people as they pay their condolences "conversing over life's dilemmas, children, schools, trade and export, jobs and promotions, politics and news, in relation to each individual concern", that is, beside "the giggles and laughs that occasionally fill the air, even if done coyly, and more befitting an election campaign or a wedding than a funeral", ironically, with the occasional open distribution of wedding invites at funeral halls (p. 164).

As Radwan finishes his account of Jalil's narrative of the past, the younger listener reflects on Radwan's story and concludes;

He then retreated, leaving my heart dejected over the change of people's mannerisms and the degeneration of their values, as the means for life's comforts became available to them, from water, to electricity, asphalted streets, cars, planes, telecommunication and extravagant buildings for many ... while hearts remain distant, full of greed, pride, narcissism, selfishness, and nepotism. I finally attest, nations have advanced technologically and civilization-wise, yet simultaneously degenerating humanely and innately. (pp. 169-170)

The younger listener here, not having experienced the distant past first hand, but rather understood its value through the self-narrative of the older generation, and from his standpoint of the present, he starts to realize that his life too is meaningless and void of true humanity.

The economic factor according to Gammoh has also greatly influenced the shift in societal demeanor. In "The Gray Cat" (2019), the protagonist, a simple employee who comes from a humble neighborhood, has an appointment in the residence of a business man. The vast contrast between the two neighborhoods sets them far apart as though belonging to two different worlds and time-frames, one old and shabby and the other new and modern. The upper-class neighborhood is described as;

an alienated place that left no trace of popular neighborhoods ... a piece extracted from a different world, whereby allusive flattering is almost vanquished, and the accumulating sense of loss is similar to the heaps of

garbage typically found in popular and random neighborhoods. It is in this specific type of neighborhoods that competition tightens its grip over rising assets in bank accounts, companies and the stock market. (p. 141)

However, the cynicism in the story does not merely lie in the contrasting minutely-detailed description of each residence, but rather in the fantastical conversation that occupies the entirety of the story between the protagonist and the upper-class cat. His social status is apparently merely good enough for him to converse with the rich man's pet that, similar to its owners, displays a patronizing attitude and a demeanor of superiority and hegemony over what it claims is an intruder who does not belong in their neighborhood. To the cat's apparent animosity, the protagonist reflects on what the world has come to as he thinks to himself;

Is a creature like this fit to control the animal kingdom? Is this how societies topple one another?! Even mere subordinates are inflicted with this condition! Blessed be Socrates for attesting to the humility and buttering up of the wicked when in need, soon enough to be replaced with arrogance and tyranny when dispensable; an understanding that echoes clearly in this time of ours. (p. 140)

The rhetorical question here indicates the intended use of the cat as a metaphor for individuals unworthy of the positions they reach by means of 'buttering up' and flattery. The sudden shift in social positioning however afflicts these individuals with a certain condition, whereby 'humility' is substituted with 'arrogance' and 'tyranny' toward the rest of society. The protagonist clearly values himself as a hardworking citizen, with the same mental capabilities and potential the upper-class has. He states: "I am a proud man and my sense of loyalty, honor and righteousness in demeanor are not to be taken lightly", with the belief that the only difference separating them is wealth "as it seems to find its way to some to be served on a gold platter, only to be mistaken by them as shrewdness, and it forsakes others who exert tremendous effort and strive, yet are reduced to mere fools" (p. 140). He also wonders how honor is conditioned to wealth, as he believes that it should instead be "conditioned to humility, wisdom, honesty, loyalty, foresight, and benignity and what not, all of which do not go with hypocrisy, flattering, arrogance and beating around the bush" (p. 144).

The suggested implication in the story seems to set wealth, prowess and postmodernity on the one hand, against poverty, simplicity and the withered past on the other, thus, circling the same binary oppositions at work in all Gammoh's stories of the loss of identity and lack of presencing that the old has amidst the unforgiving ruthlessness of the present. To this end, after a long conversation between the two, the protagonist concludes as he leaves;

Likewise is the story of each popular and underdeveloped neighborhood come to such places. No one spares us here, not even the cat that wants us subdued and washed adrift in the wreckage of the fat-whale-current, and so our story is lost amidst high tides invading our hoods. We remain naïve while they perfect their surfing skills [...] And so distances increased and spaces spread between us. (pp. 153-154)

The upper-class residence in this story, set against old neighborhoods, is employed as a metaphor here between a simple past and a ruthless present. However, Gammoh's narration of his childhood home in Al-Salt city does not fall short of accuracy in his attempt to recreate his own safe space existent in a distant past that he gives presencing to.

III. PRESENCING IN THE HOMING NARRATIVE

The question of home is expected to arise in gerontological studies because of the "deep-seated longing in human nature to belong to a place where we can call home ... a safe and supportive place" (Adler, 1938, p. 73). Brah (1996) offers two major definitions for the concept of home; on the one hand it is "a mythical place of desire in the [...] imagination," which addresses the deeply rooted and obsessive wish for return. On the other hand, home, according to Brah, is "a lived experience of a locality, or in other words it is the varying experience of pleasure and pain, terrors and contentment of everyday culture" (p. 192). It may be inferred that the notion of home suggested by Brah is not solely confined to the geographic location to which an individual has a sense of belonging, but may rather include a complex mix of subjectively experienced cultural and personal relations to land as well as to people. For the older generation, these relations are attached to their memory, maintained and continued of the home, experienced in the distant past and projected onto their understanding of life in the place of residence and/or in the present day. Such is the seeming intent that the author projects in his story "The Old House" (2019).

This autobiographical story serves several purposes and works at many levels of consciousness for the author. It recreates the childhood memories of the author's first residence in Al-Salt, Jordan; such memories mark a moment of epiphany for him as he realizes in later life his need to commence with the journey toward his purpose of narrating his life in the old house, its geographic location and the residents surrounding it. From the present standpoint of later life, he looks back at his early years in the house, and feels he had wasted time in heartache when he could have lived in peace had he had his present understanding of life in youth. He states:

There will come a time when we will need to let go of certain people who brought us pain after consuming our emotions, and instead, hold on to those loving souls who provide us with unconditional love and fulfill our needs, with understanding, honesty and purity of heart. This was the thought that sparked a search for a history recollected in memory, narrated by a trust-worthy witness or told by those entrusted with the history and heritage of the old house, in an attempt to bring it back to light from its neglect, before its memory in my mind feeble like fading apparitions desperately holding on to my waning conscience. (p. 122)

The revival of the old house with all its memories becomes the turning point at which he brings himself the subjectivity and presencing his self in later life requires, although the house in its original form no longer exists after its residents vacated it in 1966 (2019).

Having been built before the year 1927, the old house precedes the author's 'existence' (2019). The pride that he shows for the old house does not come from vacuum; its location in Al-Akrad valley in the city of Al-Salt "is testimonial to history, heritage and glory; three pillars anchoring the house, the valley and the city altogether", as ancient as time itself, it may be mistaken for one of those ancient houses out of a fantastical story, whereby one may call out from the threshold "Open sesame ... Oh fortress, do open up your gate and grant us access to the secrets of your making and the lives of your residents, your testimony of history and heritage ... what's the secret behind being the center of gluttony and envy?!" (p. 124). From the very beginning, the high location of the house overlooking the valley made it the center of attention, although "each house had its unique design, but of all, this specific house was considered one of a kind" (p. 124).

The size of the house along with the division of chambers gave it the image of sustainability and self-sufficiency; every detail was well-considered as the house was designed,

[from the huge terrace] centered by a cavity [...] used for storing logs to warm the house in winter [, to the] basement [...] utilized for livestock, cattle and guard-dogs. The house may be considered a civilian-barrack with its residents and animals [...] its enormous repository and aperture specified for shedding light onto the stored wheat and [...] other grains [...] in addition to the containers of barley and hay for the animals [...] it is after all where the winter's supplies are stored until the next harvest. (p. 128)

Its provisions were not merely enjoyed by its residents, but rather "generously available to those in need for them" by the entire valley (p. 128). The power, generosity and magnanimity of the house also echoed its master, Barham Al-Tafesh, the author's father, who was likewise "a power to be reckoned among the men of the neighborhood, the valley and the city", constantly sought for company and advice, and so the house was never empty as far as the author recalls (p. 131). However, as much pride as Gammoh may express toward the location of the old house and high-esteem it held during his years of childhood and adolescence, his self-narrative is more fixated on the memories that embodied strong sensations that awoke in him, surrounding certain events that took place in the house.

What sets Gammoh apart from the self-narratives of the older generation known to him, is his recognition that his 'frozen memory' of the house's image of grandeur will only be complete and closest to its reality, without romanticization or exaggeration of its truth by means of reviving past events through old letters he was able to find (p. 122). On the manner of processing the emotions he experiences manifested in his memory, Gammoh explains:

I felt the beats of my heart skip through its walls. I tried to calm myself and my sense of loss, but revealing the long-kept memories in my chest was of a stronger sensation, exhaling the old house's history poured out my deepest, most concealed emotions attached to it after all the turbulences It had witnessed ... the letters put together forming the appropriately meaningful and expressive words were oozing with life's chronic pains experienced in that house, some of which were mesmerizing, and many other could not be explained. They become painful images when brought together rushing through what I thought were fading memories; with the newly acquired realization that the imagined magical realms we once lived are not real, and that friends we once had are now nowhere to be found. (p. 122)

In other words, beside the memories he already has in the house, revealing the details of old letters he has do not merely bring back memories to him but rather help him relive the original emotions he had experienced retrospectively in the house as the events unfolded then; he is able to relive his past emotions with their past intensities within the 'frozen memory' at hand. This is where he allocates his homing experience, by reliving the same intensity of his past pain and joy, which ultimately bring him the same subjectivity he had lived in his youth. Therefore, the homing experience for Gammoh lies in recreating the intensity of emotions he had originally experienced in his youth, and reliving his original emotions within his memories.

The old house, or rather 'the fortress' as known to the entire valley, is "not mere stone and mud" but rather personified and venerated as "a living being, nurtured by its own residents, guests and visitors" (p. 127). Just like the cycle that the seasons repeat, "[the house too] grows, matures and ages, then rejuvenates like planted seeds and repeats its cycle through those who work hard and labor all year round to sustain a prospering home with which they share an interminable story" (p. 127). In this specific description, the author projects the house as an entity and a medium that documents and voices the daily lives of all the generations that have lived within its walls, a strong bond is formed between the residents and the house over the years to the point of merging all individual memories into one under the same roof, and so the cycle of rejuvenation that describes the house echoes the cycle of rejuvenation that the older generation goes through, as its residents also 'grow', 'mature' and 'age', while the house simultaneously vouches for their history within its walls and testifies to their presence and subjectivity in its every chamber;

They speak and inscribe the letters of their words and effort onto its walls, thus immortalizing their trace in the house. Their connection remains an effective element that leaves its trace on our present; our blood, our flesh and of our fathers and forefathers merge with each fold within the house to urge us to build upon the legacy they left us. (p. 128)

The unbreakable bond between the house and its residents may then be likened to the exchange of roles as pertaining to memory preservation and documentation, which constitutes an interplay between the house and its residents continued

through the generations residing in the house; this bond, as strong and solid as it is, carries their self-narratives to the present day, and becomes the very representation of their story-telling process.

IV. CONCLUSION

It may then be construed that the repetitive pattern that 'frozen memory' takes for the older generation is caused by the sense of alienation they feel toward the postmodern present. This repetitive pattern serves the purpose of narrating themselves in a present that feels foreign to them. From a gerontological perspective, transcending societal stereotypical projections requires the operation of both the literary and narrative aspects, if presencing for the older generation is to be reached. In other words, their told self-narratives become the very means by which to demystify and destabilize their perception of themselves and by others in the present as alien, and simultaneously recontextualize their presencing and subjectivity by means of recreating the past. Narrating 'frozen memory' also serves a pedagogical purpose for the listener of the narrative in order to form a connection in the chronology of time and assess oneself by means of contrasting societal demeanor between the differing generations and times. Gammoh's long years and effort exerted in research, critical reflection and mental projections through article-publications finally found their creative release in his semi-autobiographical fiction authored in later life. The story-telling of his self-narrative is exceptional because of his conscious documentation of it. It also comes as a consequence to the accumulation of his life experiences segmented and fictionalized in short stories, each holding a special memory within it that contrasts past simplicity with present complication. His documentation, however, of his personal memory of the old house stands out with his autobiographical account of it because he does not merely depend on his memory of it, but rather different sources of information that either complete his understanding of the unexplainable events he could not fully comprehend as a child, or more importantly help him recreate the intensity of emotions he had experienced in youth and project them onto his present day, thus bringing him the homing experience and presencing he seeks.

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Gender Representation in Portuguese as a Foreign Language Textbooks Used in China

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Abstract—Foreign language textbooks play a crucial role in education, subtly shaping students' perceptions through the hidden curriculum, with gender representation being a significant element. This study, based on the perspective of the hidden curriculum, examines gender representation in four Portuguese as a Foreign Language textbooks (two published in China and two in Portugal) and assesses whether they reflect the roles of men and women in contemporary Chinese society. With the aid of the corpus analysis tool AntConc, it analyzes the frequency and proportion of male and female characters, their family and social roles, and gender stereotypes in linguistic structures, such as gendered pronouns and the order of mention of male and female characters. The findings reveal a marked gender imbalance. The representation of genders in four textbooks used in China reflects, to some extent, the current social situation between men and women in China. Chinese textbooks show a significant dominance of male characters, while Portuguese textbooks exhibit a less pronounced imbalance. Gender roles follow traditional stereotypes, with men being associated with leadership and physical work, while women are primarily linked to caregiving, service-oriented roles, and support tasks. Although social activities display greater diversity, stereotypes persist. Portuguese textbooks, however, actively encourage discussions on gender issues. Linguistic analysis highlights the predominance of male characters and their prioritized mention in both types of textbooks. To reduce gender stereotypes, the study recommends implementing editorial guidelines, raising awareness among authors, promoting equitable teaching practices, and training educators and students to identify and address subtle stereotypes.

Index Terms—textbooks, teaching and learning of Portuguese as a foreign language (PFL), gender representation, China

I. INTRODUCTION

Textbooks, as one of the important tools in the teaching and learning process, as pointed out by Smith (1985), convey values and attitudes to young people in various ways. Given that students generally attribute a high degree of credibility and authority to educational and reference materials, they are relatively less likely to critique these materials compared to others (Lee & Collins, 2010, p. 124). Moreover, as learners often need to assimilate and internalize the details present in textbooks, they tend to pay close attention to the information conveyed by them and are easily influenced by it (Lee & Collins, 2010, p. 124). Thus, the analysis of the content of textbooks used in schools constitutes an important part of research in the field of education. Gender equality, as a fundamental value, has garnered attention from researchers worldwide. Differences in gender representation in textbooks have increasingly become a focus of study (e.g., Benla, 2023; Dahmardeh & Kim, 2020; Dalle et al., 2023; Evans & Davies, 2000; Law & Chan, 2004; Lee & Collins, 2008, 2009, 2010; Lee, 2014a, 2014b, 2016, 2018; Porreca, 1984; Poulou, 1997; Suwarno et al., 2021). Some studies conclude that there are significant differences in gender representation on a global scale (Sunderland, 2015), so it is essential to conduct further research in different global contexts (Dong & Li, 2023). Given the continuous development of the teaching of Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PFL) in China, this study presents the results of an analysis of the language and content related to male and female gender in PFL textbooks used in China.

Before 1949, women in China were seen as subordinate to men, with limited access to education and work, as reflected in the proverb, “A woman’s lack of talent is a virtue”. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the government enacted laws to promote gender equality, declaring it a fundamental policy in the Constitution. Key laws, such as the Civil Code, Marriage Law, Labor Law, and the 1992 Law on the Protection of Women’s Rights and Interests, strengthened women’s rights across various domains. Decades later, how does the situation of gender stand in contemporary Chinese society?

According to the China Population Census Yearbook – 2020, the male population was 723.34 million, and the female population was 688.44 million, with a gender ratio of 105.07 males for every 100 females. Moreover, according to the 2022 Statistical Monitoring Report on the “Outline for the Development of Chinese Women (2021–2030) of the National Bureau of Statistics of China, in 2022, the number of female university students was 29.03 million, an increase of 1.225 million compared to 2021; representing 50.0% of the total student population, maintaining a balanced gender ratio. Of this total, 1.871 million were women enrolled in postgraduate programs, accounting for 51.2% of all postgraduate students. Regarding access to education, not only is the gender ratio in higher education essentially balanced, but women’s rights to higher education are strongly protected. The proportion of women enrolling in higher education courses has already surpassed that of men.

According to the latest data from The Third National Time Use Survey Bulletin (No. 3) —Time Use of Participants in Major Activity Domains by Urban-Rural Areas, Gender, and Age Groups, participants in the area of paid work¹ spend an average of 6 hours and 23 minutes per day on it. Of this total, men spend 6 hours and 44 minutes, while women spend 5 hours and 55 minutes. Participants in the area of unpaid work² spend an average of 2 hours and 45 minutes per day on it. Of this total, men spend 1 hour and 52 minutes, while women spend 3 hours and 29 minutes. These data reflect the imbalance in gender roles in Chinese society, particularly about family responsibilities and unpaid work, which falls more heavily on women. Thus, although women’s position in education and the workforce has improved, traditional gender roles still influence differences in time distribution between men and women, particularly regarding family and caregiving responsibilities.

The social context presented highlights the importance of analyzing gender representation in textbooks used in China, as this representation forms a component of the hidden curriculum.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW: GENDER REPRESENTATION IN LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS

As an essential part of foreign language teaching, textbooks have increasingly attracted researchers' attention regarding the issue of gender representation (Dong & Li, 2023). Among language textbooks, English textbooks are the most frequently analyzed, while studies on textbooks in other languages are relatively scarce. Based on the analysis of previous research on gender representation in foreign language textbooks, a review will then be carried out based on three main dimensions of study: the frequency of references to figures of both genders, gender roles, and the language in terms of gender.

A. Analysis of the Frequency of Appearance of Male and Female Characters

Most studies on language manuals analyze the frequency of male and female character appearances. Some focus on textual content (Hellinger, 1980; Porreca, 1984; Lee & Collins, 2008, 2010; Lee, 2018), others on images (Law & Chan, 2004; Sui, 2022), while some combine both (Lee & Collins, 2009; Lee, 2014b). These studies consistently reveal an imbalance, with male characters outnumbering female characters.

Hartman and Judd (1978) conducted a groundbreaking study on gender representation in language textbooks, analyzing the characteristics and linguistic features of English as a second language (ESL) materials. Their findings revealed that women were underrepresented and portrayed in stereotypical roles.

Lee (2018) used corpus linguistics tools to study gender representation in English textbooks in Japan, showing that women are underrepresented. In a study by Lee and Collins (2010), by comparing 10 English textbooks currently in use in Australia with 10 English textbooks from Hong Kong, they found that in the Australian textbooks, the proportion of female and male mentions was more balanced, while in the Hong Kong textbooks, it was much more male. A study by Porreca (1984) of ESL textbooks in the USA also revealed an asymmetry in the representation of men and women in the illustrations.

B. Analysis of Gender Roles (Gender Stereotypes)

In this section, we mainly look at research on gender roles. The researchers’ findings highlighted many different aspects. Evans and Davies (2000) conducted a specific study on how men are represented in reading texts in primary English textbooks in California, USA. They found that men are still mostly represented through stereotypes, generally described as “aggressive, argumentative, and competitive” (p. 255). In an analysis of images in Chinese language textbooks used in Hong Kong primary schools, Law and Chan (2004) observed that women were predominantly depicted in family and domestic settings with a narrower range of occupations, whereas men were more prominently featured in public domains.

Lee and Collins (2009, 2010) found that in English textbook illustrations in Australia and Hong Kong, many images show women in family activities more often than men, while images related to sports and work are generally dominated by men. Yang (2012) investigated illustrations in Hong Kong primary school English textbooks from the News Magic

¹ According to the explanation of The Third National Time Use Survey Bulletin (No. 2), the area of paid work includes domestic labor, the care and companionship of family members, the purchase of goods or services, as well as unpaid employment activities such as internships, under the category of labor activities, and voluntary social activities under the category of social interactions.

² According to the explanation in the Third National Time Use Survey Report (No. 2), the area of paid work includes all employment-related activities, except for unpaid internships and other similar activities.

series and found that women were no longer depicted with the traditional image of fragility. Furthermore, they are no longer limited to domestic roles, but are also active in society, reflecting gender equality in more recent textbooks.

Lee (2014a) analyzed two English as a foreign language (EFL) textbook series in Japan and found men linked to physical strength, wealth, success, and wisdom, while women were associated with appearance and delicacy. The number of verbs associated with conversations with male characters is significantly greater than with female characters, indicating that men often have more discursive power. However, the textbooks highlight some notable women, like the first female solo percussionist and the first female U.S. congresswoman.

In short, most studies examine gender roles in textbooks from two main perspectives: images and text. The representation of gender roles can be analyzed through personality characteristics, family roles, occupational roles, social activities, and appearance descriptions, among others.

C. *Analysis of Linguistic Structures That Mention Masculine and Feminine Genders*

In EFL textbooks, the analysis of linguistic structures focuses mainly on the following aspects: frequency of occurrence of masculine and feminine pronouns (such as He and She); the order in which men and women are mentioned when they occur together; the use of masculine generic constructions (such as they); and the use of titles of address (Mr, Mrs, Miss and Ms). In the analysis of linguistic structures, the methodology of corpus linguistics is often applied to obtain broader data and more accurate results (Carroll & Kowitz, 1994; Lee, 2014a).

Lee and Collins (2009) analyzed ten Australian secondary school English textbooks and found editors used strategies like “generic they”, “paired pronouns” (he/she, his/her), and “symmetrical sentences” to avoid gender bias. However, in gender pairs, excluding fixed expressions, the “male first” order was still predominant (pp. 354-356).

Lee (2014a, 2016) used Wordsmith tools to analyze high school EFL textbooks in Japan and found a preference for gender-neutral vocabulary. Masculine suffixes in derived nouns were replaced with neuter ones, but gender-neutral designations (Mrs) do not fully cover all textbooks. While masculine terms no longer refer to both genders, the traditional “male-first” order persists when men and women are mentioned together.

In China, PFL teaching has evolved, and researchers have begun to explore this field. Sui (2022) analyzed four university Portuguese textbooks (local and imported versions) as objects of analysis, comparing and exploring the gender roles portrayed in the illustrations, and discovering a situation of gender imbalance. However, the analysis of gender roles in the textual sections is still missing. To fill this gap, as well as explore whether gender representation in PFL textbooks used in teaching in China reflects the characteristics of gender dynamics in the social context of China and analyze whether there are gender stereotypes in the PFL textbooks used in China, this study selected four PFL manuals used in China (two published in China and two in Portugal) and analyzed the gender representations present.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM

Jackson (1968) introduced the concept of the hidden curriculum. Later, researchers have approached its concept from various perspectives. According to Huang (2014), “the hidden curriculum” relates to the formal curriculum and its fundamental characteristic is that it is not explicitly included in the curriculum plan (p. 164). Kohlberg and Mayer (1970) identify the hidden curriculum concerning moral education and the role of teachers in transmitting moral standards. Yang and Wang (2008) consider that the hidden curriculum plays a very important role in the development of students’ moral cognition and emotional abilities.

According to Lee (2014a), one of the main agents of the hidden curriculum is textbooks, which play a significant role in transmitting values and norms that are not explicitly taught, but indirectly affect students. Students’ perceptions of gender roles are an example of this, that is, textbooks not only convey academic content but also influence the way students view social gender roles (Stromquist et al., 1998) and their perception of social equity (Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2008). Thus, the content of textbooks implicitly transmits meanings to students and this influence is exerted and assimilated subtly and unconsciously, but it cannot be guaranteed that this impact on students will always be positive and constructive. The hidden curriculum contains many implicit moral assumptions and values that may differ completely from the beliefs that educators consciously recognize and incorporate into their system of moral consciousness (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977). Therefore, critical analysis of the hidden curriculum present in the content of textbooks is an important step.

Furthermore, “hidden curriculum is acknowledged as the socialization process of schooling” (Kentli, 2009, p. 83). Through this process, education plays a crucial role in deconstructing prejudices and stereotypes, promoting a culture of respect and equality. This impact goes beyond the transmission of formal knowledge, subtly influencing students’ perceptions of social issues such as gender roles and equality, often unintentionally. Thus, by promoting awareness of the implicit meanings conveyed by the hidden curriculum, education becomes a powerful tool for forming critical and responsible citizens, capable of challenging and transforming social dynamics. True transformation does not depend solely on government public policies, but also on the mobilization of each individual, starting with education, which acts as the basis for profound and lasting changes in society.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The four textbooks analyzed include two published in Portugal: *Português em Foco (MPF)* and *Português XXI (MPXXI)*; and two in China: *Português para Ensino Universitário (MPEU)* and *Curso de Português para Chineses (MCPC)*. Considering that most of the information contained in the Teacher's Books is based on the contents of the Student's Books, the content of the corpus of analysis only includes the texts present in the Student's Books and the Exercise Books of the textbooks.

Thus, to achieve the objectives mentioned above, the research questions are:

1. In the PFL textbooks analyzed, how many male and female characters appear, and how often are they mentioned?
2. What are the family roles and social roles played by male and female characters in the textbooks? Are there gender stereotypes in the assignment of these roles?
3. What types of activities do male and female characters participate in the PFL textbooks? Are there gender stereotypes in these activities?
4. From the perspective of linguistic structure, how often do masculine and feminine personal pronouns appear? When female and male characters appear together, what is the order in which they are mentioned?
5. Regarding the four aspects mentioned above, are there any differences between the textbooks published in China and Portugal? If so, what are these differences?

To answer research question 1, we manually extracted all textual references to male and female characters present in the four manuals (excluding images and auditory content). These references were recorded and accounted for in Excel.

To answer question 2, during the manual extraction of male and female characters, we also recorded the family roles and social roles played by these characters. In this process, we used Lee's (2018) categorization of family roles: "father/papa" and "mother/mama/mom"; "husband" and "wife"; "son" and "daughter"; "brother" and "sister"; "grandfather" and "grandmother"; "uncle" and "aunt" (p. 210). In addition, we added the categories of family roles identified in the database of this study – "cousin (female)" and "cousin (male)"; "nephew" and "niece"; "brother-in-law" and "sister-in-law"; "grandson" and "granddaughter"; "son-in-law"; "father-in-law" – thus forming the final framework of analysis. Regarding social roles, according to Law and Chan (2004), social roles can be divided into five main categories: monopolized by men, dominated by men, monopolized by women, dominated by women, and shared between genders. Male-dominated roles refer to those predominantly played by men rather than women in textbooks, while female-dominated roles refer to those in which women are portrayed more often than men. If the role type was played exclusively by men, it was called male-monopolized; Similarly, if a role was played exclusively by women, it was called a female-monopolized role. The last category, shared gender roles, refers to those with a balanced number of male and female representations. In this process, due to the variation in the level of detail with which information about characters is presented in the manuals, some characters had no mention of their roles. On the other hand, some characters played more than one family or social role. Thus, when carrying out the final accounting, the number of family and social roles recorded does not necessarily coincide with the total number of characters identified.

To answer question 3, during the extraction of male and female characters, we also recorded the different types of activities they participated in. According to Law and Chan's (2004) classification, the activities related to the characters' roles were divided into seven categories: "Doing household chores", "Working in workplaces", "Studying at school", "Participating in social activities", "Talking to other people", "Thinking" and "Personal activities" (p. 59).

To answer question 4 and ensure a more comprehensive analysis, we also extracted some content from a linguistic point of view using the corpus linguistics instrument Antconc (Anthony, 2024), as a complement to the analysis: a) we extracted and counted the masculine and feminine personal pronouns in Portuguese and Chinese — "Ele(s)/Ela(s)" and "ta" (他)/ "tamen" (他们)/ "ta" (她)/ "tamen" (她们) (node words) — as well as their frequencies; b) we extracted all conjunctions in Portuguese, "e/or", and Chinese, "he" (和)/ "tong" (同)/ "yu" (与) — as Node Words/Keywords and the five words before and after these conjunctions (Collocates). We then manually identified all situations in which male and female characters appeared simultaneously, recording the order in which they were mentioned.

To answer question 5, we separately classified the data obtained in the analyses of questions 1, 2, 3, and 4, presenting the results of the statistics relating to textbooks from Portugal and China, to explore the differences between them.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Female and Male Characters in the Four Textbooks

Table 1 presents the number and proportion of male and female characters in the four manuals analyzed and the frequency and proportion of mentions of male and female characters in these manuals. According to the values of this table, we can observe that, in the four manuals analyzed, the number of male characters is significantly higher than that of female characters (MPEU: 329 vs. 189; MCPC: 427 vs. 237; MPF: 836 vs. 624; MPXXI: 327 vs. 233), and the frequency with which male characters are mentioned is also higher than that of female characters (MPEU: 852 vs. 369; MCPC: 836 vs. 503; MPF: 1884 vs. 1539; MPXXI: 744 vs. 441).

TABLE 1
CHARACTERS AND FREQUENCY OF REFERENCE TO MALE AND FEMALE CHARACTERS IN MANUALS

Textbooks		No. of characters					Frequency of reference to characters				
		Female		Male		Total No.	Female		Male		Total No.
		No.	%	No.	%		No.	%	No.	%	
Chinese textbooks	MPEU	189	36.5	329	63.5	518	369	30.2	852	69.7	1222
	MCPC	237	35.7	427	64.3	664	503	37.5	836	62.4	1340
Portuguese textbooks	MPF	624	42.7	836	57.3	1460	1539	45.0	1884	55.0	3423
	MPXXI	233	41.6	327	58.4	560	441	37.2	744	62.8	1185
		1283	40.1	1919	59.9	3202	2852	40.0	4316	60.2	7170

This result is similar to that presented by Lee and Collins (2008) and Lee (2014a), who indicated a lower female representation compared to male representation in textbooks. However, we found that this inequality in the numbers of female and male characters presents a certain similarity with the contemporary social context of China, where the female population is smaller than the male population. In addition, we found that the difference in the number of male and female characters in Portuguese textbooks is slightly smaller than that in Chinese textbooks. This suggests that Portuguese textbooks pay slightly more attention to the representation of female characters compared to Chinese textbooks.

B. Family and Social Roles of Female and Male Characters

Table 2 presents the family roles played by male and female characters in the four textbooks analyzed, along with the corresponding frequencies. As illustrated in Table 2, both types of textbooks present men and women in traditional family roles, such as father and mother, husband and wife, daughter and son, sister and brother, etc. In Portuguese manuals, the family roles played by the characters are more varied, still including, for example, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, aunt, father-in-law, son-in-law, and grandfather. However, we found that in Chinese textbooks, men appear more frequently as fathers than women as mothers, while in Portuguese textbooks the opposite occurs. However, this does not seem to indicate that Chinese manuals place greater emphasis on the role of men in the family and family activities. A closer look reveals that only women are described as “housewives.” For example,

1) “离新年还有半个月，我妈妈和别的家庭主妇一样，忙着打扫家里。” (There are still two weeks until the New Year, and my mom, like other housewives, is busy cleaning the house.) (MCPC, Student’s Book, Volume 2, Unit 2, p. 18)

2) “A minha mãe está sempre ocupada com os trabalhos domésticos.” (My mother is always busy with housework.) (MCPC, Student’s Book, Volume 1, Unit 8, p. 73)

3) “Em casa, eu ajudo a minha mãe a fazer os trabalhos domésticos, e o meu irmão ajuda o nosso pai a fazer outros trabalhos.” (At home, I help my mother with the housework, and my brother helps our father with other chores.) (MPEU, Student’s Book, Volume 1, Unit 8, p. 117)

On the other hand, we identified contradictory messages in Chinese manuals, as they promote the idea that women should work outside the home and be independent. For example:

4) “...na China, a grande maioria das mulheres volta a trabalhar logo depois de terminar a licença de maternidade.” (...in China, the vast majority of women return to work soon after finishing their maternity leave.) (MCPC, Student’s Book, Volume 4, Unit 6, p. 97)

5) “Uma mulher não pode viver dependendo de um homem.” (A woman cannot live depending on a man.) (MPEU, Student’s Book, Volume 2, Unit 14, p. 379)

Thus, we can summarize that, although Chinese textbooks demonstrate a conscious intention to highlight female independence, they also perpetuate stereotypes related to the role of women as “housewives” and those largely responsible for carrying out domestic tasks.

TABLE 2
FAMILY ROLES PLAYED BY MALE AND FEMALE CHARACTERS IN THE TEXTBOOKS

Chinese textbooks				Portuguese textbooks			
Family roles	Women	Family roles	Men	Family roles	Women	Family roles	Men
Mother	8	Father	15	Mother	30	Father	21
Wife	19	Husband	21	Wife	25	Husband	21
Daughter	23	Son	46	Daughter	34	Son	50
Sister	11	Brother	9	Sister	13	Brother	11
Cousin (female)	6	Cousin (male)	5	Cousin (female)	5	Cousin (male)	4
Niece	2	Nephew	3	Niece	2	Nephew	9
Sister-in-law	0	Brother-in-law	0	Sister-in-law	1	Brother-in-law	1
Aunt	0	Father-in-law	0	Aunt	7	Father-in-law	1
Grandmother	4	Son-in-law	0	Grandmother	6	Son-in-law	2
Granddaughter	8	Uncle	1	Granddaughter	8	Uncle	2
		Grandfather	0			Grandfather	6
		Grandson	7			Grandson	6

After analyzing the family roles played by male and female characters in textbooks, we will now look at the social roles they play and see if there are gender stereotypes. Table 3 shows that, in the two types of textbooks analyzed, men

play broader social roles in the male-monopolized and male-dominated categories: in the Portuguese textbooks, the numbers are 57 and 10, respectively; in the Chinese manuals, 51 and 16. The corresponding numbers for the female-dominated and monopolized categories are significantly lower: in the Portuguese textbooks, 2 and 4, and in the Chinese textbooks, 1 and 6. Thus, in both the Portuguese and Chinese PFL textbooks, the social roles performed by women are consistently more limited than those performed by men. This finding is similar to that observed by Gupta and Lee (1990), Law and Chan (2004) and Lee and Collin (2010).

TABLE 3
FEMALE AND MALE SOCIAL ROLES

	Chinese textbooks	Portuguese textbooks
Male-monopolized social roles	57	51
Male-dominated social roles	10	16
Female-monopolized social roles	2	1
Female-dominated social roles	4	6
Gender shared social roles	6	9

Further analysis of the textbooks revealed that traditional stereotypes associated with female and male professions persist. Women are often portrayed in professions related to care, service, and support, such as teachers, babysitters, company secretaries, and saleswomen. However, women are also occasionally represented as sociologists or pianists. As mentioned by Lee and Collin (2010), these occasional representations may suggest progress toward gender equality. Male representation remains limited to traditional “masculine” roles, ranging from lower-prestige positions such as factory worker, welder, and meat cutter, to higher-prestige positions such as president of the country, prime minister, diplomat, (former) minister of national government bodies, (former) member of parliament, politician, among others. Men tend to be more often associated with physically demanding jobs or activities, such as (ex-)football player/soccer player, fisherman, and vegetable garden owner. In addition, men are also associated with roles and activities such as “criminals”, such as thieves. In the MCPC, in Volume 3, Student’s Book, in Unit 12, a text presents the criminal behavior of Johansen, a 16-year-old Norwegian boy who created a program capable of breaking the anti-piracy protection of DVDs, allowing the content to be copied without paying copyright fees, and made the program available on the Internet, harming the Hollywood film industry, which invested millions in this technology. As a result, his equipment was seized and he was questioned along with his father, accused of violating copyright laws.

Men always occupy leadership or decision-making positions in companies, such as (sub)/(ex)-director, general manager, and company president; women are rarely portrayed in these roles. In the academic and artistic fields, men always play creative and intellectual leadership roles, such as anthropologists, philosophers, historians, film directors, composers, playwrights, and architects, among others. Although this phenomenon is a type of gender stereotype, this representation reflects the workforce patterns in China’s censuses, that is, according to the data shown in the China Population Census Yearbook - 2020, the distribution of work between men and women reveals that, although many men occupy technical and leadership positions, women have a greater presence in service and technical areas (such as teachers and nurses), with a smaller share in leadership positions. As Lee and Collins (2010) state, the question remains whether authors should portray reality or promote gender equality by representing men and women in a balanced way. However, for teachers, adopting proactive and positive teaching methods will provide students with the opportunity to reflect and explore ways to correct the gender imbalance (Lee & Collins, 2010).

This point is reflected in Portuguese manuals. For example, in MPXXI, in Volume 1, in Student’s Book, in Unit 11, a discussion on this topic is mentioned, that is, a reflection on the role of women in society and in the family, as can be seen in the sentence: “A Teresa fez um trabalho sobre a desigualdade profissional entre homens e mulheres. Acha que há profissões próprias para homens e profissões para mulheres?” (Teresa did a job on professional inequality between men and women. Do you think there are professions for men and professions for women?). In addition, some statements about the social roles and activities of male and female figures are presented, asking for the students’ opinions (Figure 1). MPXXI launches this topic for discussion among students, and this teaching method can not only draw students’ attention to the issue but can also lead them to reflect on the social roles of men and women.

1. Concorda com estas afirmações ?

	SIM	NÃO
a. Os homens devem partilhar os trabalhos de casa.	☐	☐
b. As mulheres devem ter um emprego, mesmo quando têm filhos.	☐	☐
c. Só as mulheres que trabalham têm independência económica.	☐	☐
d. A sociedade ainda vê a mulher essencialmente como mãe e dona de casa.	☐	☐
e. Quando a mulher trabalha fora de casa, há mais problemas para o casamento e para os filhos.	☐	☐
f. Um homem pode educar os filhos tão bem como a mulher.	☐	☐

Figure 1. Questionnaire on the Social Role of Gender (MPXXI, Student’s Book, Volume 1, Unit 11, pp. 178-179)

C. Activities of Female and Male Characters

Intending to investigate the possible existence of other gender stereotypes, according to the classification of the activities carried out by the characters of Law and Chan (2004) previously mentioned, we obtained the data presented in Table 4, which shows the number and proportion of activities divided by gender in textbooks from China (MPEU and MCPC) and Portugal (MPF and MPXXI). We observed that in both Chinese and Portuguese textbooks, female protagonists are more often associated with household chores such as making beds, washing clothes, and cooking than male protagonists (6 vs. 1; 8 vs. 5). On the other hand, male protagonists appear more frequently associated with workplace activities, with proportions of 18.4% vs. 9.0% in Chinese manuals and 8.0% vs. 6.6% in Portuguese manuals. This pattern is consistent with the most recent data from The Third National Time Use Survey Bulletin (No. 3), that is, women are associated more with housework and men focus on paid work. To the activities of “Studying at school” and “Participating in social activities”, it was found that, in absolute terms, male characters appear in greater numbers than female characters. However, in proportional terms, the differences between the genders are minimal. In the case of “Thinking” activities (such as “finding”, “thinking”, “wanting”, etc. mental activities) in Portuguese textbooks, the proportion is identical between male and female characters. In the categories of “Personal Activities” and “Talking to other people”, in both Chinese and Portuguese textbooks, male characters appear more frequently in absolute terms. However, in proportional terms, female characters slightly outnumber male ones.

TABLE 4
ACTIVITIES BY CHARACTER GENDER IN CHINESE (MPEU AND MCPC) AND PORTUGUESE (MPF AND MPXXI) TEXTBOOKS

Textbooks	Types of activities	Female Characters		Male Characters	
		No.	%	No.	%
Chinese textbooks	Doing household chores	6	1.6	1	0.2
	Working in the workplace	33	9.0	121	18.4
	Studying at school	22	6.0	40	6.1
	Participating in social activities	37	10.1	70	10.7
	Talking to other people	139	37.9	195	29.7
	Thinking	18	4.9	48	7.3
	Personal activities	112	30.5	181	27.6
	Total	367		656	
Portuguese textbooks	Doing household chores	8	1.1	5	0.5
	Working in the workplace	48	6.6	75	8.0
	Studying at school	25	3.4	34	3.6
	Participating in social activities	57	7.8	75	8.0
	Talking to other people	232	31.8	276	29.4
	Thinking	48	6.6	62	6.6
	Personal activities	301	41.3	358	38.2
	Total	719		885	

The results of the analysis show that traditional gender stereotypes are still present, especially in Chinese textbooks — where the idea of “the man outside the home and the woman inside the home” is reflected, with men working and supporting the family and women to take care of children and household chores. For example, in MPEU, in Volume 2, in Student’s Book, Unit 10, there are descriptions such as:

6) “A Isaura dedica todo o seu tempo aos filhos.” (Isaura devotes all her time to her children.) (p. 257)

7) “O João dedica-se de corpo e alma ao seu trabalho.” (João dedicates himself wholeheartedly to his work.) (p. 257)

In MPXXI, Volume 1, Student’s Book, Unit 9:

8) “A mãe, a Cristina, está a preparar uma festa para o aniversário do filho.” (The mother, Cristina, is preparing a party for her son’s birthday.) (p. 144)

In the MPF, in Volume 1, Student’s Book, Unit 4, an exercise presents:

9) “O Jorge nunca ____ (fazer) os trabalhos de casa.” (Jorge never ____ (do) his homework.) (p. 59)

These results are in line with those of previous studies, such as those by Law and Chan (2004) and Lee and Collins (2008). In a study of image analysis in Chinese language textbooks used in Hong Kong primary schools, Law and Chan (2004) concluded that female characters tend to be more visible in family contexts, with a limited range of occupations, while male characters predominate in public settings.

Additionally, we observed other differences, particularly in the representation of driving abilities. In Volume 1, Student’s Book, Unit 8, of the MPF, the lowest driving competence is attributed to a female character:

10) “A Sara conduz pior do que o Paulo.” (Sara drives worse than Paulo.) (p. 102)

However, we also notice that these gender stereotypes are weakening, especially in Portuguese textbooks. These show women and men sharing social responsibilities and the female characters having a rich and autonomous personal and social life.

D. Feminine and Masculine Pronouns

To further explore the issue of gender representation in the four textbooks analyzed, this study also includes a quantitative analysis of the pronouns used to refer to male and female characters. Table 5 presents the frequency and proportion of occurrence of masculine and feminine personal pronouns in the four textbooks analyzed. According to Table

5, in all the textbooks, the frequency of masculine personal pronouns is higher than that of feminine personal pronouns. This result once again confirms the lower representation of women, consistent with the previously presented data on characters and mentions. The result of Lee's (2014b) study is similar. When Lee (2014b) analyzed two sets of primary school ELT textbooks in Hong Kong, published in 1998 and 2005, he found that masculine pronouns were more frequent than feminine pronouns.

TABLE 5
MASCULINE AND FEMININE PRONOUNS IN THE FOUR MANUALS

Manuals		Personal pronouns (referring to male characters) ³		Personal pronouns (referring to female characters) ⁴		Total No.
		No.	%	No.	%	
Chinese textbooks	MPEU	729	82.4	156	17.6	885
	MCPC	449	72.9	167	27.1	616
Portuguese textbooks	MPF	648	61.7	403	38.3	1051
	MPXXI	753	62.6	449	37.4	1202
Total No.		2579	68.7	1175	31.3	3754

When comparing the two types of textbooks, it is observed that the difference in the number of masculine and feminine pronouns is greater in textbooks published in China compared to those published in Portugal. This is in line with the results of the previous analysis of male and female characters. It can be seen that Portuguese textbooks give greater attention to female characters compared to Chinese textbooks.

E. Order of Mention

Although in contemporary society we often say “ladies first” or “ladies and gentlemen”, expressions that, on the one hand, demonstrate respect for women and, on the other, reflect the chivalrous behavior of men, in practice, when we mention men and women together in social life, it is common for men to be subtly placed first. As Lee and Collins (2010) point out, this can be observed in traditional foreign works, such as “Romeo” and “Juliet”, and in the four great love stories of Chinese folk tradition, such as “Liang Shanbo” (梁山伯) and “Zhu Yingtai” (祝英台). Table 6 presents the order in which female and male characters are mentioned (women first and man first), along with the corresponding frequencies.

TABLE 6
ORDER OF MENTION OF FEMALE AND MALE CHARACTERS

	Woman first	Man first
Portuguese textbooks	35	67
Chinese textbooks	13	25

From the data, we found that, in Chinese manuals, mentions of male characters appear first more often than female characters, with 25 and 13 occurrences, respectively. In Portuguese textbooks, the numbers also show a male predominance, with 67 mentions of men first against 35 of women, as examples 11 and 12 present.

Examples:

11) “O **Sr. Silva** e a **mulher** trabalham num hotel: ele é cozinheiro e ela trabalha na lavandaria.” (**Mr. Silva** and his **wife** work at a hotel: he is a cook, and she works in the laundry.) (MPXXI, Volume 1, Student's Book, Unit 12, p. 186)

12) “**马里奥**喜欢和他**女朋友**一起去海滩。” (**Mário** likes going to the beach with **his girlfriend**.) (MPEU, Volume 1, Student's Book, Unit 12, p. 215)

Furthermore, when mentioning roles in the family context, “father” is always referred to before “mother”, “grandfather” before “grandmother”, “grandson” before “granddaughter”, “uncle” before “aunt” and “brother” before “sister”. This phenomenon has been observed 9 times in Chinese manuals. For example,

13) “O **pai** ou a **mãe** receberão a primeira fatia do bolo.” (The **father** or the **mother** will receive the first slice of the cake.) (MCPC, Volume 4, Student's Book, Unit 9, p. 161)

14) “O filho do **neto** ou da **neta**” (The son of the **grandson** or **granddaughter**) (MPEU, Volume 1, Student's Book, Unit 8, p. 129)

Some results similar also were found in the study of Lee (2014b). When the author examined the content of a widely used series of primary school English-language textbooks from 2005 and the same series from 1988, he also observed that in gendered noun pairs, men were more frequently mentioned before women (p. 367). The other result is different from our study. Lee (2014b) observed, “informal domestic terms for family *mom* always appeared before *dad*” (p. 370). The author interpreted this fact as an indication of the more significant role of women in the family context. However, in our study, we found that, in the order in which family roles are mentioned, men are invariably mentioned before women, which seems to reflect a deeply rooted mentality of male priority.

³ In Portuguese, it refers to the masculine personal pronoun, “Ele” and “Eles”. In Chinese, it refers to “ta” (他) and “tamen” (他们).

⁴ In Portuguese, it refers to feminine personal pronouns, “Ela” and “Elas”. In Chinese, it refers to “ta” (她) and “tamen” (她们).

VI. CONCLUSION

This study, through a content analysis combined with the use of corpus linguistics instruments, employed quantitative and qualitative analysis methods to examine four PFL manuals used in PFL teaching in China (two published in China and two in Portugal). The research focused on the statistical analysis of the quantity and frequency of male and female characters mentioned in the Student's and Exercise Books of the manuals, verifying whether there are gender stereotypes in social and family roles even from the perspective of language. The aim is to verify whether the conditions of gender social roles presented in textbooks used in China reflect the current social reality in China.

The results of this study allow us to conclude that:

1) The number and frequency of mentions of male and female characters in the four PFL textbooks analyzed show a notable imbalance, especially in Chinese textbooks, where the number and frequency of male characters significantly outnumber female ones. On the other hand, in Portuguese textbooks, the gender imbalance is less pronounced.

2) Regarding the analysis of gender roles in the texts, although some Chinese manuals present textual descriptions of "women working outside the home independently and autonomously", male and female roles are still often limited to traditional stereotypes, with men focused on careers and women dedicated to family care. In addition, the social roles played by men are significantly greater in both quantity and diversity, with them mainly occupying leadership positions (national leaders, decision-makers in companies, creative and intellectual figures in academic and artistic fields), as well as roles that require physical effort and related to crimes. On the other hand, women are more associated with care, service, support, and assistance roles.

3) In the analysis of male and female activities, although the stereotypical perception that "women take care of the house" and "men go out to work" persists, in other activities (social/conversations/personal activities), both men and women can take on multiple social roles and have their own more diverse lives. In Portuguese textbooks, the approach of directly posing questions (about the social division of gender) is used so that students can discuss and reflect, providing an opportunity to explore topics related to gender imbalance.

4) In the analysis of the linguistic structure, the frequency of masculine and feminine personal pronouns also confirms the discrepancy in the number of female and male characters appearing in the manuals, further reinforcing the imbalance between male and female characters; as for the analysis of the order in which male and female characters are mentioned, it is revealed that in both Chinese and Portuguese textbooks, the male character is mentioned first in most situations.

In summary, the gender representation in the four PFL textbooks used in China reflects, to some extent, the current social situation between men and women in China. For example, the number of male characters in the textbooks exceeds that of female characters, which corresponds to the current population size, where men slightly outnumber women. In addition, the social role assignments between men and women in the textbooks show similarities, i.e., men often take on leadership roles, while women are underrepresented. In social activities, there are also similarities, such as the fact that household chores are more often undertaken by women, while men participate more in paid activities. However, much of this content perpetuates gender stereotypes. Therefore, for social progress, breaking these stereotypes is an essential task in the educational process, and it is crucial that the hidden curriculum receives more attention from education-related researchers.

Based on the above findings, we present some suggestions on how to try to reduce gender stereotypes in textbooks and promote gender equality. From the perspective of publishing and supervising institutions, it is essential to implement guidelines to avoid gender stereotypes in textbooks, helping students form a fairer and more balanced perception of gender issues. As for textbook authors, it is important to be aware of national and international research on gender representation in textbooks, avoiding stereotypes and prejudices. Educators and students, as the main users of these textbooks, should focus on gender equality in their educational practices, promoting a balanced and ethical awareness regarding gender. In education, gender stereotypes are often more subtle than unbalanced representations and explicit discrimination, making it essential to train educators and students to develop skills in dealing with issues of gender representation. This study also has some limitations, such as the manual process of extracting male and female characters, which may introduce errors in the data due to human constraints. Future research could include a greater focus on the actual users of the manuals, i.e., teachers and students, as well as investigating the practical use of PFL manuals by observing classroom interactions between students and teachers based on these manuals.

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